

## Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo: The birth of a Greater One Horned Rhino

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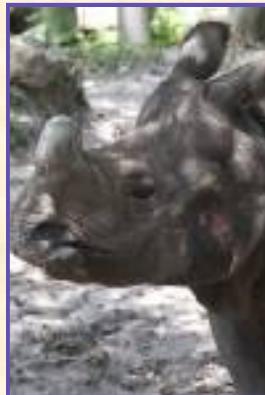


Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo (TLPZ) is proud to announce the birth of our Greater one-horned rhino. She was born just before 7 pm on July 7<sup>th</sup> and she is the first rhino born at our zoo! Estimated to be just less than 100 lbs at birth, our little girl is growing fast and motoring around her exhibit.

This happy occasion was several years in the making and involved a tremendous amount of hard work and dedication. TLPZ first acquired Arjun, our male, in June of 2001 at the age of three. More than two years later our breeding pair was complete when Jamie came to the zoo from Oklahoma City Zoological Park at the age of two. For the next couple years they lived in different exhibits at the park until the summer of 2006, when TLPZ moved Arjun down to Jamie's exhibit so they could start getting to know each other. For the next several months we kept all the interactions between them through protective contact. Although they were not in together, they could still come nose to nose and nuzzle, lick and even lay side by side next to their gate.



Arjun



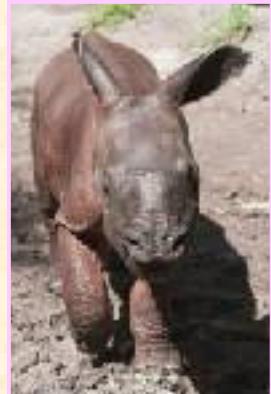
Jamie

In preparation for the introduction, TLPZ added an addition to the rhino exhibit, doubling the original size and designing the exhibit so that it would better facilitate an introduction of Greater One-horned rhinos.

In April of 2007, TLPZ introduced Arjun and Jamie, and they "hit it off" immediately. Within a month of their introduction, they were being kept together 24 hours a day. At this point, we did everything we could do. Now it was up to them to figure things out.

Jamie was very patient with Arjun over the next couple months. She knew exactly what she was supposed to be doing, even presenting to him, but it took him about four months to catch on. After they sorted everything out, Jamie continued to cycle regularly and they were breeding without issue over the next few months, until March of 2008. At this point, everything stopped and we knew it was time to mark our calendars. Sure enough, sixteen months later we had the first ever rhino born at Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo.

As we came closer to the birth date, we had more work ahead of us. Although, the exhibit was great for two adult rhinos, we were going to need to do some "baby proofing." The exhibit was already set up so Arjun and Jamie could have their own personal exhibits, but we needed to make sure that the new calf couldn't just go wherever she pleased. TLPZ's Asian Garden's keeper staff went through every inch of the exhibit addressing any areas of concern. The fun thing of course is that we couldn't just "baby rhino proof," we also needed to make sure that our work was "mama rhino proof." When we were finished, we had used thick 4"x6" timbers, 8" round poles, chains, cable and heavy duty straps to fill in any space our little calf might slip through.



It has been just over a month now since the birth and our little girl is doing very well. We couldn't have asked for a better mother in Jamie, who has done everything she was supposed to do and made this entire adventure successful from the beginning. The calf is growing rapidly and getting very active. She and Jamie are now being exhibited for a limited time in the morning as they adjust to their new situation. And what about Arjun? Even though, he can only interact with them through protective contact, he still enjoys nuzzling with the girls at their gate.

Although it took several years and a lot of hard work, the one thing we can say without a doubt is that it was definitely more than worth the effort. The only people who enjoy our new calf more than the zoo's visitors, who gather around the exhibit in massive groups, are the keepers, who have fallen in love with this little girl the moment they laid their eyes on her.

I want to thank everyone who came out to Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo during the IRKA conference and offered their suggestions and advice. We're very pleased to be a part of the IRKA community.

It's a Girl!!