



TRAPPED, rhino tosses its mud-smeared head in effort to escape from the pit as natives prepare to transfer it to cage.

CATCHING A RARE RHINO

Assam hunters easily capture one-horned specimen in trap but have tough time getting it out again

In the marshy elephant-grass country of Assam in eastern India the great one-horned Indian rhinoceros, cousin of the common two-horned African rhino, has made its last stand. Once down to a few dozen specimens, it has come back under protection until today there are about 300 in India and Nepal. Thanks to this revival, Assam now allows one or two specimens to be trapped from time to time for zoos.

Hunters first locate the animal's regular path, which is marked by its dung heap and its tunnel through the grass, then dig a deep pit. They cover the pit with grasses and lay a trail of salt to it. Because rhinos always use the same path and because they love salt, catching the big rhino above was easy. But getting it out of the pit, into a cage and out of the back country was another matter (*following pages*).



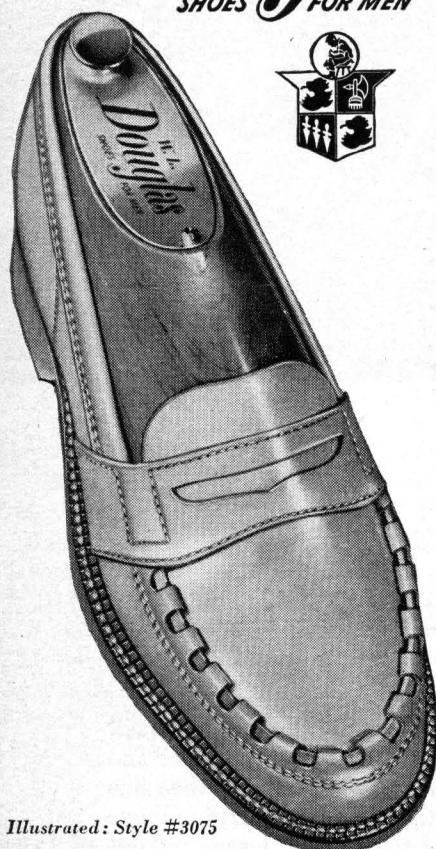
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DIGGING CREW of 50 natives cuts away ground in front of pit so that open cage can be backed up to rhino (left). The digging operation takes eight hours.



LASSOED RHINO is restrained by ropes from breaking wall of pit. Cage is now ready. Pit is full of mud because land is marshy and water seeps into hole.



CAGED, rhino thrashes wildly as men struggle to fasten doors. Rhino enters cage voluntarily as soon as wall is removed but once inside, gets obstreperous.

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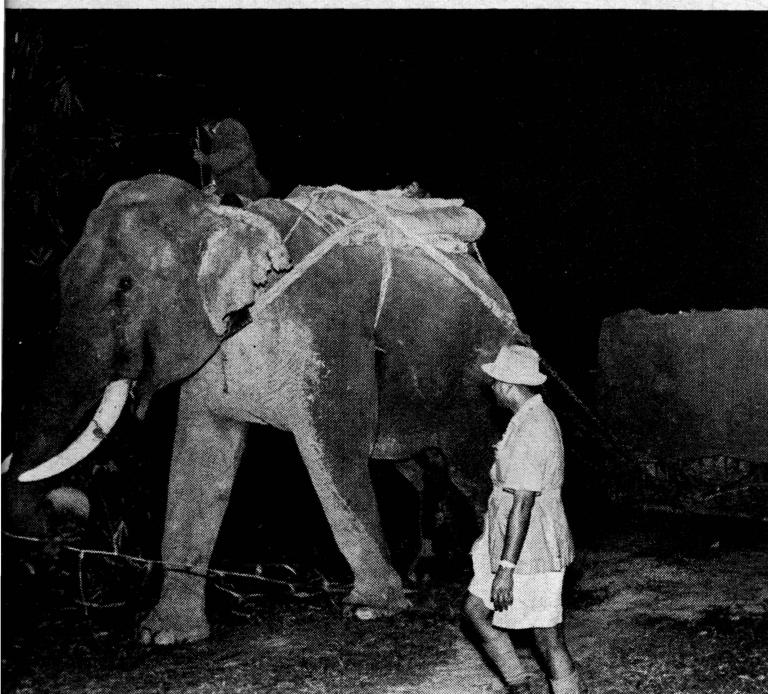
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ELEPHANT HAULS caged rhino to stockade. The rhino weighed an estimated 2½ tons, and over rough parts of road it took two elephants to pull cage.



YOUNGER RHINO captured earlier has already calmed down in its stockade pen. In wild state rhinos are ill-tempered but grow relatively tame in captivity.



RESTING RHINOS relax in their stockade pens. Ten-year-old male (right) whose capture is shown in these pictures will take six weeks to become docile.

goes on 'n' on 'n' on...



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