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Photo: Rob Doolard/ZP

New animal records keeping software under construction



Births and Hatchings

WALSRODE - GERMANY

We can report exciting developments in our collection of Madagascan birds. The delicate **sickle-billed vangas** (*Falculea palliata*) had shown no sign of reproductive activity since their arrival in January 2000. In March 2002, one pair played around with little twigs and investigated potential nest sites prepared in various sites in their enclosure. Since vangas are highly social and curious, intensively investigating everything that is novel, we did not pay much attention to these activities. We saw one vanga sitting on a nest in the indoor area of the enclosure on 6 April, and found three eggs. Following our practice of artificially incubating first clutches of eggs of species that are rare either in captivity or in the wild, we removed the four eggs present in the nest one week later. Two chicks hatched on 26 April, while two embryos died shortly before hatching. The chicks were fed mainly with baby mice and rats similar to the young trogons and other small insectivorous and carnivorous birds. Unfortunately, one chick died at the age of ten days, but the second grew up very well. However, the vangas did not produce a replacement clutch after we had removed the eggs, which is rather unusual for passerines. Sickle-billed vangas are rather intelligent birds, and perhaps the disturbance at the nest stopped all breeding activities.

We received five more sickle-billed vangas early this year, and now have four pairs and one juvenile bird, giving some hope that we can establish this species in captivity.

Our groups of **crested couas** (*Coua cristata*) and **Madagascar crested ibises** (*Lophotibis cristata*) with three breeding pairs each, are growing slowly but continuously, and seem well established now. Both species had a good start into this year's breeding season and we reared five ibises, hatched from six unrelated birds, which raises the captive population to twenty birds, 1.2 at Tokyo Ueno Zoo, 1.1 at Parc Botanique et Zoologique de Tsimbazaza (PBZT), and 8.7 at Vogelpark Walsrode.

In early 2002, a number of **long-tailed ground-rollers** (*Uratelornis chimaera*) was collected from the wild in south-western Madagascar. While we had problems with an unidentifiable parasite, which caused balance disturbances in some of the birds, one pair, which remained back at PBZT, started digging a burrow under a big rotting log, and by the end of September, the birds apparently had laid eggs and bred. The two birds were observed carrying live insects into the burrow by the end of October. Unfortunately, torrential rains hit the capital of Madagascar shortly thereafter, and the burrow had to be destroyed in order to rescue whatever

Adult ground-roller in quarantine



Photo: Dieter Rinke/Vogelpark Walsrode

had been in there. One chick, approximately five days old, was rescued and reared artificially.

This is an outstanding event, because it shows that our engagement in Madagascar bears its first fruits at PBZT itself. We had rebuilt the bird centre of PBZT, and we had trained two bird keepers of PBZT at Vogelpark Walsrode for seven weeks with the goal to maintain and breed endemic Malagasy bird species at PBZT. The breeding of the long-tailed ground-roller, a world's first, is proof of improved management of birds at the zoo, and another may follow soon: the pair of Madagascar crested ibises at PBZT has produced its first clutch of eggs.

Source and photo: Dieter Rinke

STUTTGART - GERMANY

Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) 'Shiva' was born late in the evening of 13 April 2002. She is the second calf of female 'Sami'. Sani, a gift from the government of Nepal in 1993 and came from the Royal Chitwan National Park when she was approximately six months old. Our Friends of the Zoo Society celebrated Sani's first birth by donating DM 10,000 (€5,112.92) to the Royal Chitwan National Park. Shiva's father is the male 'Bruno', who arrived from Köln Zoo in 1997, but had not bred before. Bruno was born at Wilhelm in 1985 and is a son of our former breeding pair, 'Nanda' and 'Puri', both from Basel Zoo (Nanda arrived in 1968, Puri in 1969). Nanda and Puri produced ten young in Stuttgart, of which nine were reared; the first (1971) died on the day of birth, after the inexperienced mother attacked it. The other nine rhinos (7.2) were reared and later sent to other zoos.

Nanda died in 1992 and Puri in 1997, thus hopes to continue breeding this species focussed on the new pair, Sani and Bruno. As Sani was so young and inexperienced, it was not at all certain that she would accept her first calf. Moreover, her first daughter 'Sarasvati', born on 12 February 2000, arrived

Births and Hatchings

Indian rhinoceros young 'Shiva'



Photo: Wilhelma Zoo

after only 14 months (normal gestation period is 16 months). But Sani proved to be a calm and perfect mother from the beginning, and we are sure that this is a result of the very good relationship our rhino keepers have with their animals! Saravati left Wilhelma for Madrid Zoo on 28 January 2002, and Shiva was born soon thereafter, following a gestation period of nearly 16 months. Shiva is the twelfth Indian rhino born at Wilhelma and is well cared for by Sani. We did not weigh Shiva, but Saravati weighed 47 kg at the age of five days. Shiva seemed bigger and heavier to us, which is no surprise, as she had nearly two months longer to grow before birth. Shiva is also a significant contribution to the EEP and the species concerned, given that 39 Indian rhinos have been killed by poachers in the Royal Chitwan National Park, Sani's former home, in the last year.

Source: Marianne Holtkötter

OVERLOON/BRATISLAVA

A Northern white-cheeked gibbon (*Hylobates concolor leucogenys*) was born at Zoo Parc Overloon on 12 October 2002. This is the first time in the history of this new zoo (opened April 2001) that this species successfully reproduced. Although it is also the first time for both parent gibbons, 'Nonkel', an 18 year old male received from Cleres and 'Kanette', a 9 year old female from Apeldoorn, they have been taking care of their offspring. This is especially noteworthy as Kanette was handreared herself.

Bratislava Zoo also reported the birth of a female Gabriella's gibbon (*Hylobates concolor gabriellae*) on 6 April 2002. The baby 'Natalia' is being hand-reared, just like her older brother 'Oliver', born on 24 May 2001. The parents of the gibbons born at Bratislava are the female 'Misa', born in Zoo Ljubljana in 1990 and male 'Serzo', born in Usti nad Labem in 1992.

Source: Peter Wolters/Miloslava Savelova

ROTTERDAM - NETHERLANDS

The first **Gila monster** (*Heloderma suspectum*) to hatch at Rotterdam Zoo (Diergaarde Blijdorp) officially hatched on 18 November 2002. The egg pipped on 16 November and the hatchling emerged from the egg in the night of 17 November. This was the sole hatchling from a clutch of five eggs laid on 5 July. The other eggs were infertile, or possibly died at a very early stage. The adult Gila monster group consists of two males donated by the Dallas Zoo (USA) in 1999 and a male and a female that came from two different private breeders, the female also in 1999 and the other male in 1987.

Rotterdam Zoo kept Gila monsters for more than two decades without any breeding success before the animals were transferred to their new 'Sea of Cortez' enclosure in the Sonoran desert habitat of the new Oceanium building in 2000. The improved temperature regime there – the temperature is allowed to drop to as low as 12°C in winter – may be the main key to this first success. Additionally, the fact that there are three males to one female is regarded as beneficial to the mating process, as the males can perform their ritualised combat.

Breeding of Gila monsters in European zoos has been rare: four hatched at Glasgow Zoo in 1989 and ten in 1991, and one hatched at London Zoo in 1989 (Source: ISIS). The year 2002 is an important one for the Gila monster EEP, as after no hatchings in eleven years three zoos virtually simultaneously produced young. One Gila monster successfully hatched at Zoo Köln on 12 October 2002 and four Gila monsters also hatched at Jihlava Zoo (CZ) between 14 and 19 November 2002! The EEP is coordinated by Jaroslav Zima of Usti nad Labem, Czech Republic. The hatchling at Rotterdam Zoo seems to do well and started feeding readily on dead pink mice.

Source: Gerard Visser

Young Gila monster



Photo: Rotterdam Zoo