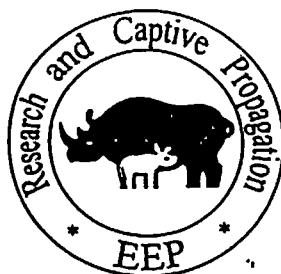


Research Group Newsletter

6th Issue, July, 1999



Preface from the editor

This issue of the Research Newsletter, the 6th already, has taken somewhat longer than expected to produce. The reason is mostly that my co-editor of previous years, Dr Jutta Meister, following her successful completion of her PhD, has changed her career orientation and is no longer available. Thus I had to finish this issue on my own, with some help in lay-outing by my wife.

The contents again are covering a broad range of subjects, and again some new research groups and individual authors are contributing. I hope that this trend will continue and that we will be able to further expand the scope of our publication.

For this reason also, again I urgently ask you to send abstracts, reports, questions for discussion, comments, conference announcements etc as soon as they cross your mind or desk. Even though the deadline is again end of December please send material earlier as well, just to make sure you don't miss the deadlines!

For each contribution please try to send a disk in IBM/PC (not Mac) format and a good quality printout.

One last thing: As already mentioned last year we can no longer distribute the Newsletter free of charge. Enclosed you will find an invoice, and I would urgently ask you to forward payment (please avoid cheques except Eurocheques, and, if you plan to use bank transfer from outside Germany, make sure that bank charges are covered from your end). Whoever does not forward payment (or has not paid already in advance) will not receive the next issue. Enclosed you also find an order form - you may use this for additional copies, or for renewal of your subscription.

ADDRESS for all correspondence, payments, subscription and contributions:

PD Dr Udo Gansloßer Zool Inst. I Staudtstr 5 D - 91
058 Erlangen. Fx - 49 - 911 - 9795 800

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aspects obviously are more flexible than previously thought, e.g. the caste system among non-reproducing members seems to be less strictly size-dependant, but the basic facts of eusociality remain. Several chapters include broad comparisons with eusocial insects, birds and communally breeding mammals.

The book is very helpful both for curatorial staff planning to keep these animals and for educators - the latter even if they do not have these fascinating creatures in their collection.

Captive Rhinos of all times

The Rhinoceros in captivity, SPB Acad. Publ., The Hague 1998, iv + 409pp, ISBN 90-5103-134-3, at US 128,-.

L.C. "Kees" Rookmaaker, now curator of the Rhino Museum at Melkrievier, Northern Province, South Africa, has published an enormously informative book on all rhinos every reported to be kept in human care (or neglect), since the Roman and Chinese imperial times of 2000 years ago. The book is a source of previously unknown data, by including all reports of animals kept by dealers, circuses and private collectors, statistics on longevity, age/sex distribution, birth records, monthly distribution of births, percentage of females giving single and multiple births, chronological and geographical lists of collections holding each species, countries/areas of origin, etc. The book is illustrated with b/w pictures of live animals and museum specimens, logos of zoos with rhino motives, contemporary drawings/etchings/posters from early and recent times, and facsimile copies of original descriptions. The photographs not only show animals, but also a variety of enclosure types and husbandry situations (I found, e.g., a very interesting picture of a Black rhino feeding peacefully with a group of obviously impala at Taipeh Zoo). The book includes 14 pp of references (in very tiny letters, with appr. 50 references printed per page).

A must for every rhinophile, zoo history enthusiast and studbook collector.

Feeding Ecology of Baboons

Feeding for Survival (Stuart Altmann, Chicago Univ. Press, 622 pp, 1998, \$ 55.95 for hard bound copy)

Is an extraordinarily detailed account of foraging behaviour, nutritional intake and survival of 11 yearling Yellow baboons (*P. cynocephalus*) at Amboseli NP, Kenya. Altmann not only collected data on dietary composition but also compares these real diets to values of nutrient, vitamin, mineral and toxin content as well as to theoretical values for ideal diets. The astonishing result is that, more than anything else, diet and foraging at 1 year's age are predictors for later survival and reproductive success as adults. This leads to a detailed discussion of constraints on optimal foraging in an electric omnivore.

The book is a rare example of interdisciplinary research in disciplines that not only in the field but also in zoos

tend to be kept separate, and as much a demonstration of the mutual benefits for a coordinated approach.

Publications from South African Veterinary Association

SAVA, the South African Veterinary Association, has a very active Wildlife Group, which is regularly organizing symposia on wildlife management - related issues. All these can be purchased from SAVA Wildlife Group, PO Box 12900, Onderstepoort, 0110 Rep. of South Africa.

In the last few years, they published among others

Proceedings from a Symposium on Wildlife Rehabilitation

discussing among others the role of hand-raised/orphaned animals, pathological/epidemiological and vet issues, the role of farmers, land-owners, the media and other members of the public, and establishes minimum operating guidelines for a rehab centre.

Symposium on African Elephants as Game Ranch Animals

including chapters on boma and fence design, suitability of electric fences, several veterinary and pathological chapters; and short-term management of newly captured juveniles; a similar volume on Rhinos, with a lot of data on habitat, foraging, reproduction and diseases of both African species; including a bibliography; a similar one on Sable antelope, including habitat selection, and feeding, genetic diversity, census techniques, oestrus, cycle and non-surgical removal of embryos, and a sable/roan bibliography; one on Lions and Leopards, including several chapters on conflicts with humans, social structure, handraising, genetics; several veterinary chapters, and several on the ecological role of these big cats; again a very extensive bibliography.

Symposium on the African Buffalo

a similar one on the African Buffalo, with reproduction, applied anatomy, parasites and diseases, also with bibliography.

Rhino ranching manual

A volume on use of tranquilizers in wildlife, which includes also stress and chemical capture drugs - a rhino ranching manual, on 60 pp describing the biological, financial and political side.

Handbook of Marine Mammals Vol 6

"The second book of Dolphins and the Porpoises" is the subtitle of the 6th Volume in this series, edited by Sam Ridgway and Sir Richard Harrison. 486pp. for L 69.96, is very good value, because, like the earlier volumes, each chapter is a comprehensive overview of taxonomy, distribution, external characteristics, internal anatomy, physiology, life history and population dynamics, abundance, behavior, parasites and diseases, "life maintenance".