HIGHLY ENDANGERED BLACK RHINO BORN AT FOSSIL RIM WILDLIFE CENTER

Fossil Rim Wildlife Center announced that Coco, a resident black rhinoceros, has given birth to her fourth calf after about 15 months of gestation.

The baby male is healthy and weighed 106 lbs. 30 hours after birth. Fossil Rim's conservation efforts are part of the SSP and have attained great success in black rhino breeding, helping other cooperating institutions work to ensure the long-term survival of this species.

The baby is the fifth black rhino to be born at Fossil Rim. The father, Kusamona, came to Fossil Rim in 2001 from Australia, increasing the genetic variability within the black rhino population in the United States.

Fossil Rim staff pioneered the use of non-invasive ultrasound technology to monitor the reproductive physiology of rhinos, determine periods of fertility and monitor each pregnancy. The public can visit Coco and her baby on a special behind-the-scenes tour through the Center's Intensive Management Area (IMA), where Fossil Rim tour guides will lead visitors to see black rhinos, wolves, cheetahs and its population of highly endangered Attwater's Prairie Chickens.

At Fossil Rim, the calf is one of five black rhinos. When it grows older, it will be allowed to roam a three-acre pasture within the compound reserved for these species. As opposed to white rhinos, which roam together, black rhinos occupy their own pasture.

The International Rhino Foundation estimates the current worldwide population of black rhinos at 2,400. Its numbers have been reduced by 85 percent in the past 30 years.

The new Fossil Rim baby will grow to be nearly 10 feet long and weigh 2,500 pounds. What distinguishes the black rhino from other species of rhinos is its long, pointed, prehensile upper lip and two prominent horns, the longest of which average 20 inches in length. Its horn is made up of millions of tightly compacted hair-like fibers.

The wild populations of southern black rhinos are located in pockets in Zimbabwe and South Africa. They are herbivores and enjoy trees and brush.

HAWAI'I ENDANGERED BIRD CONSERVATION PROGRAM RELEASES SEVEN PALILA

On 1 December, seven rare Hawai'ian birds were released into their native habitat on the island of Hawai'i. The birds, which were hatched and reared at the Keauhou Bird Conservation Center, are part of an effort to establish a new population of this species on the north side of Mauna Kea.

Palila are a critically endangered species of honeycreeper native to Hawai'i. Like many native bird species on the Hawai'ian islands, the palila has become critically endangered due to loss of habitat and the threat of introduced predators.

Since 2003, 22 palila have been released back into the State's Puu Mali Forest Reserve on Mauna Kea. Tracking of released birds indicates that they are doing well. There has been one documented case of a captive-reared, released male breeding with a wild female that had been previously trans-located by U.S. Geological Survey biologists from the west side of Mauna Kea.

Established in 1996, the Hawai'ian Endangered Bird Conservation program (which includes the Keauhou Bird Conservation Center on the island of Hawai'i and the Maui Bird Conservation Center) works with eight species of endangered birds native to the Hawai'ian Islands, including the 'Alala, Puaiohi, Palila, Maui Parrotbill, Hawai'i 'Akepa, 'Akohekohe, Hawaii Creeper and the Nene.

The Hawai'i Endangered Bird Conservation Program is a part of the San Diego Zoo's department of Conservation and Research for Endangered Species (CRES). Operated by the not-for-profit Zoological Society of San Diego, CRES is working to establish field stations in five key ecological areas internationally and participates in conservation and research work around the globe.

OKLAHOMA CITY ZOO EMPLOYEE PARTICPATES IN RARE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Jim Stout, supervisor of the Herpetarium at the Oklahoma City Zoo, recently participated in what was originally a two-year population ecology study of a federally protected cave in northeast Oklahoma. However, the results turned into a collaborative article published in one of the world's leading scholarly journals, the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London: Biological Sciences.*

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