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ROGER WILLIAMS PARK ZOO AND OREGON ZOO ANNOUNCE RARE HATCHINGS

Roger Williams Park Zoo and the Oregon Zoo recently welcomed three rare

Humboldt penguin chicks, important additions to the captive population of this threatened species.

Hatched just five days apart in late February, the two chicks at Roger Williams Park Zoo are thriving. Though their gender has not yet been

determined, Zoo staff have named them Puck and Pocket. Both are offspring of Pita (female) and Pinto (male), 2 of the 11 penguins that reside at the Zoo. The new parents continued to care for the chicks off-exhibit through late April, when the pair naturally began the weaning process. Zoo staff expects the chicks to begin learning to swim and to accept hand-feeding from zookeepers soon.

At the Oregon Zoo on 17 March, an endangered Humboldt penguin chick broke through its shell as zookeepers looked on. The newest baby brings the Zoo's penguin population to 37. The chick is living with its parents in a nest box, although keepers take the chick off exhibit twice a day to check on its hydration status and weight. Removing chicks from the nest to check their health is necessary, but not always simple. "Some of the parents are really good about it," says Shawn St. Michael, penguin keeper. "Some of the parents try and fillet

you." The chicks themselves, he notes, are "sweet and tractable."

Humboldt penguins, which are found along the coast of Chile and Peru and on islands west of the South American coast, are the most threatened of the 17 penguin species. Their population in the wild is on the decline, currently estimated at 10,000 to 12,000. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) placed Humboldts on the Appendix I list in 1981. Commercial guano interests are increasingly encroaching upon their native habitat. Although the two governments

protect much of the habitat, it is not uncommon to find penguin meat and eggs in local markets. There are about 270 Humboldt penguins in captivity at AZA-accredited zoos. The Oregon Zoo has one of the largest collections of Humboldt penguins in the United States and, along with Roger

Williams Park Zoo, is a participant in the Humboldt Penguin Species Survival Plan (SSP). The births of these three chicks are a significant contribution to SSP efforts to sustain the species.

OKLAHOMA CITY ZOO SAYS HELLO TO PYGMY HIPPO

The Oklahoma City Zoo and Botanical Garden has experienced another significant birth as a female pygmy hippopotamus was born on 17 March. The parents are 8-year-old female Hope and 29-year-old male Wolee. Both arrived in Oklahoma City in 1999—Hope from the Zoological Society of London and Wolee from the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. This is the second pygmy hippo offspring born to the pair at the Zoo.

"We are tremendously excited about this birth and our success with the pygmy hippopotamus is something in which we can take extreme pride," said Director of Animal

Management Dwight Scott. "Hope came to the Zoo through a recommendation of the Species Survival Plan (SSP) and Wolee is a good genetic match because neither are largely represented in the captive pygmy hippo population in North America."

The pygmy hippopotamus is native to northwest Africa from Sierra Leone to Nigeria. Found along streams and wet lowland forests, the pygmy hippo is about one-tenth the size of the Nile (or "common") hippo. They grow to approximately five feet long and weigh between 400 and 600 pounds. Their barrel-shaped bodies are greenish-black in color and hairless except for sparse bristles on their lips and tail. They have no sweat glands but secrete a pink fluid, which dries to form a protective layer against the sun and parasites. Their diet consists of vegetation, including water plants, fruit and grass. Roaming alone or in pairs, the animal is not vicious but is dangerous when disturbed. Uncontrolled hunting and destruction of habitat jeopardize the survival of the pygmy hippo.

RARE STORK AND AN ENDANGERED WHITE RHINO ARRIVE AT JACKSONVILLE ZOO

The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens welcomes two new additions to its animal family. A rare saddle-billed stork was hatched 31 January, and is the first living chick for this particular pair of storks at the Zoo. According to its review of historical records, the Jacksonville Zoo is only the sixth institution to breed saddle-billed storks. With just 74 in U.S. zoos and only 110 total in captivity worldwide, the hatching of this stork is especially significant. Additionally, saddle-billed storks have not bred well in captivity, according to Karl Kranz, Director of Biological Programs.

Saddle-billed storks are brightly colored and have very long legs and a long, pointed bill. Both sexes have a saddle-like shaped yellow patch on the upper part of their beak, which gives the bird its name.

The chick is currently being hand-raised by staff at the Zoo hospital following the parents' unsuccessful attempt.

The Zoo has also announced that Gabriella, a white rhino, gave birth to a 156-pound male calf on 5 February. With less than 12,000 white rhinos remaining in



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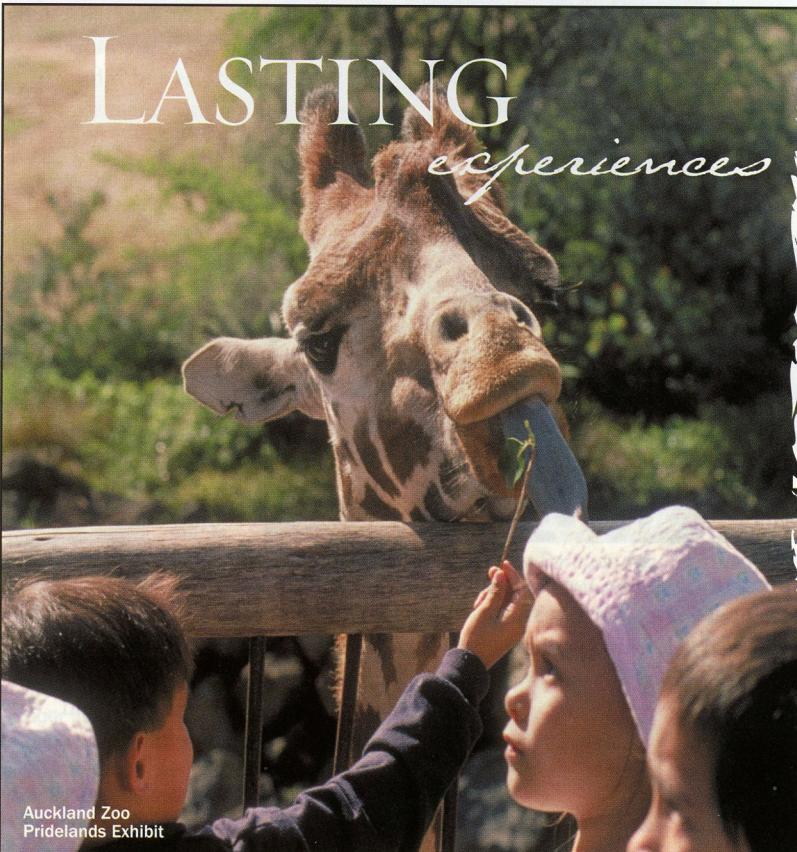
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Africa, they are an endangered species, due in part to illegal poaching.

The calf is the third born to 10-year-old Gabriella, and the Zoo currently has six white rhinos on exhibit. "This little guy had a rocky start," said Dennis Pate, the Zoo's Executive Director. "Since his birth, the veterinary staff has been monitoring him closely. He's responded well and he appears ready to be introduced to the herd. We'll continue to observe him closely as he goes on exhibit, as we do with any youngster."

According to Craig Miller, Curator of Mammals, the calf will be completely dependent on his mother until he starts eating a small amount of solid food, which will likely occur in five to six months. Until then, he will stay close to her at all times. Rhino calves commonly nurse for up to two years, and their horn formation usually becomes visible at one year. When fully grown, rhinos are the second largest land mammals (following elephants) weighing up to 5,000 pounds. ■

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