

Golden Girl Weds in the West

Golden Girl, the Zoo's rare Indian rhinoceros is "honeymooning" at San Diego Wild Animal Park where hopefully she will mate with a proven breeding male.

The rhino departed on December 7, 1976, aboard a DC-8 cargo flight out of JFK Airport accompanied by Superintendent of Animal Services William J. Maloney. Upon arrival at Los Angeles, she was transported by truck 90 miles down the coastline to the Wild Animal Park in Escondido, where she was checked out on her arrival by Park veterinarians Lester S. Nelson and James E. Oosterhuis.

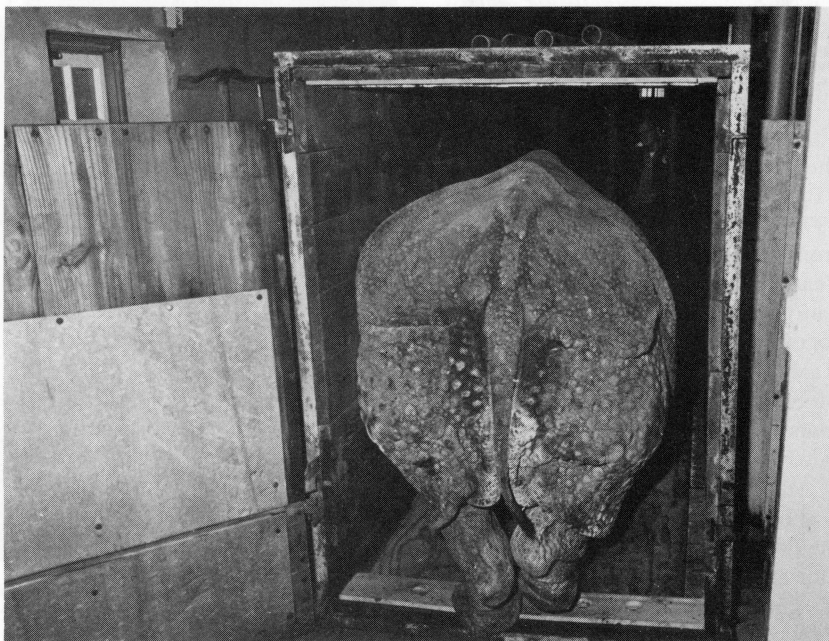
She was then released to a fenced holding area where she remained in quarantine for about 30 days. Quarantining newly arrived animals is a standard protection measure in nearly all zoos. During her quarantine period she was observed by the Park's animal management staff, whose primary interest was to determine when her estrous cycle began so that she could be introduced to the Park's male rhino, "Lasai."

Lasai, meaning "Chubby" in Indian, is 14 years old and weighs about 2475 kg. (5500 lbs.).

Golden Girl was sent to San Diego to breed because she and her mate here at our Zoo, Golden Boy, had not bred since they were placed together in 1955. Despite periodic separations to stimulate interest and hormone treatments, the two never produced any offspring.

Golden Girl, who weighs an estimated 1800 kg. (4000 lbs.) is still not beyond breeding age, and because Indian rhinos are an endangered species threatened with extinction, captive breedings are an important hope for survival.

Excessive hunting over the past decades has diminished their population to an estimated 900 in 1973. Ironically, one of the primary reasons for their present population plight has been their much sought



Above: The end is just the beginning for Golden Girl on her long journey to California.

Below: Traveling companion Bill Maloney coaxes "Goldie" to smile pretty for press photographers.



AMERICA'S FIRST ZOO



Above: A forklift truck carries the 4,000 lb. rhino to the liftoff area.

Below: A 30-foot crane was used to lift the crate onto the truck which transported the rare rhino to JFK Airport.



after horns which are considered by many oriental cultures to possess the powers of an aphrodisiac when ground into a powdered form.

If Golden Girl does breed successfully it will be quite some time before the "pitter-patter of little feet" is heard. The gestation period for Indian rhinos is about 16 months.

Lectures

Nature-photographer William Hawkins will present a slide-lecture on the N.J. Pine Barrens in the Zoo classrooms on Sunday, March 20, at 1:30 and 3 p.m. The lecture is free to Members and \$2.00 to non-members. For reservations, contact the Public Relations Department.

Judith Rudnai, animal behaviorist and noted authority on lions, will discuss "Nairobi Park Lions," their social behavior, reproduction, and feeding habits, at a lecture to be held at the Zoo on Thursday, May 12, 1977, at 7:30 p.m. at the Educational Center/Administration Building Classrooms.

A native of Budapest, Hungary, Ms. Rudnai has been conducting field study research on lion behavior and ecology since 1968. Her latest project, sponsored by the National Geographic Society of Washington, D.C., was a field study on lions in Kitengela Conservation area near Nairobi.

She has authored various articles pertaining to her work with lions for several publications, including the *East African Wildlife Journal* and "The World's Cats." She has also appeared on various radio and TV programs around the world, including CBS.

Admission to Ms. Rudnai's lecture is \$2.50 for Members and \$5.00 for non-members. Checks should be made payable to the Zoological Society of Philadelphia. For reservations please call the Zoo's Public Relations Department, 243-1100, extension 223. Reservations will be accepted until May 10. No refunds will be issued after that date. Early reservations are recommended as seating is limited.