

The Condor Ridge inhabits California Condors. This habitat tells the stories of native North American species that have experienced both decline and recovery, compelling tales of survival that have much to teach about caring for native wildlife heritage.

In the Asian Plains Great Indian one-horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) are being exhibited along with Spotted deer, Sambar, Gaur, Black buck and Barasinga. The Asian Waterhole a 35 acres exhibit, which is quite a big area, houses hog deer, Sika deer and Pere Davids' deer.

The backdrop of the rhino exhibit has a typical terrain view covered with green grass, which meets most of the animals' needs. As we know Indian rhinoceros is mainly a grazer but also browses, and has a prehensile tip in the upper lip. The rhinos prefer cool climate (for few months San Diego is very cold) and swampy habitat (which they may be missing in San Diego due to soil quality and rocky terrain). However efforts have been made by the Zoological Society of San Diego to recreate the vegetation type. I witnessed rhinos grazing in the exhibits as one sees in wild. There was tall grass missing inside the exhibit and wallow pond to cool the body. As during a hot day they may spend their time wallowing. There are quite a few small mud pool, but they need to be made more spacious as preferred by rhinos. We know in the wild Rhinos are fond of *Saccharum* and *Cynodon dactylon* species of grasses, similar species may be planted in the exhibit area.

While discussing with Randy Rieches and Linda Sullivan, Project Manager of Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle, USA during their study visit to Rhino Facility at Delhi Zoo and Kaziranga during February 2004, that rhinos maintained in U.S. Zoos have foot infection suspected as they spend most time on harder surface. According to the experience of B.S. Bonal, Director, Delhi Zoo, the rhinos maintained in Indian zoos do not have such problems. The matter is subject to discussion among the experts.

I feel that the rhino enclosures can be provided with a combination of grass, shrubs and saplings of species like *Polygonum*, *Solanum* even though they keep destroying the vegetation. The animals can be rotated between enclosures to allow vegetation to grow. The park may create some marshy habitat. The enclosure can also have species of grasses similar to those *Typha elephantina*, *Aciculate*, *Phragmites karka*, *Andropogon*. Overall the rhino facility and their holding areas are designed and managed to excellence. The habitat is maintained very well. Lot of hard work has been put forward by the team in maintaining the world class San Diego Wild Animal Park.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Dr. Arthur C. Risser, Director and Dr. Donald Lindburg, Associate Director at Zoological Society of San Diego and Mr. Randy G. Rieches, Curator of Mammals at San Diego Wild Animal Park for their help during my visits to San Diego Zoo and San Diego Wild Animal Park. I am grateful to Dr. Tom Foose of International Rhino Foundation, USA for providing travel grant to attend the conference at San Diego.

Note : to see beautiful colour photos of San Diego WAP'a rhinos, please consult our website at url : www.zoosprint.org where this issue of ZOOS' PRINT magazine has been uploaded.

CALL TO ARMS FOR GHARIAL (*Gavialis gangeticus*)

The Crocodile Specialist Group, acting on information about the precipitous decline of Gharials (*Gavialis gangeticus*) in the Chambal River Sanctuary, has drafted a resolution addressing the issue to the IUCN World Conservation Congress to be held in November in Bangkok. The draft resolution acknowledges India's deep, long term commitment to conservation and to preservaton of Gharials in Chambal Sanctuary and elsewhere. CSG calls for the intervention of India's senior NGO's so that the actions to solve the problem and save the animal will be strengthened. Last year this method worked well as a similar resolution to save the Chinese alligator was introduced at the last World Conservation Crogress and led to active efforts to save this species.

Gharial in the wild has been of concern for a long time to the Government of India. The gharial was classified as Endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals 2003 and has been given high priority for conservation action by the Crocodile Specialist Group, IUCN SSC.

The resolution from the Congress reviews the success of actions initiated in the past by the Government of India and encourages the Government to continue its efforts to save the Gharial in Chambal and elsewhere. It encourages all IUCN members to support the Government of India in their efforts to :

- maintain a strong research presence dedicated to the species
- manage biodiversity within the tri-state Chambal Sanctuary
- take actions necessary to ameliorate current threats to the existing population with the aim of improving its status.
- undertake measures to reverse population declines of Gharial in Chambal.
- The resolution requests SSC within available resources to offer assistance to India via the CSG in convening a technical workshop to implement the foregoing actions.

Information courtesy IUCN SSC Crocodile Specialist Group