

---

# BOOK REVIEW

## AZA RHINOCEROS HUSBANDRY RESOURCE MANUAL

Edited by Michael Fouraker & Tarren Wagener  
Fort Worth Zoological Park and Cockrill Printing Co., Fort Worth, TX, 1996

Reviewed by Thomas W. deMaar

D.V.M., OI Jogi Game Reserve, PO Box 259, Nanyuki, Kenya.

As the management of rhinos becomes more intensive and more urgent, whether in zoological parks or large reserves, experiences must be shared by all participants. Several good works have come from African sources on large scale management and husbandry. Now, this manual, written by a number of authors, funded by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association's Rhino Taxonomic Advisory Group and the International Rhino Foundation, and produced by the Fort Worth Zoological Park, provides an easily readable compilation of the experiences of zoological parks in the USA regarding the husbandry of all rhino species. While rhinos are managed on a continuum, from captive to free-ranging populations, there are grey areas between the various management levels, from zoos to sanctuaries to parks. However, knowledge and expertise can still flow between these various management layers, and this manual should serve as a catalyst for further inquiry and dialogue in rhino management.

The book is an impressive collection of data in the science and practice of rhino husbandry. The handbook is well laid out in a two column format, with one column for the major body of text and the second for informative tables, diagrams, photographs and appropriate text boxes on particular subjects. The graphics are exemplary with a large amount of simple rhino artwork. However, the editors readily admit that many gaps remain and further contributions are requested from all readers.

There are excellent sections on taxonomy and conservation status, management and behaviour, and design. The descriptions and visual examples of rhino enclosures, behaviour and management strategies should be of interest to all people who work with rhinos. In particular a rhino behaviour ethogram in appendix II provides a useful tool to ensure that all rhino facilities describe their observations with the same terminology. The nutrition and health sections are very brief reviews and could have been expanded.

The research chapter is important and provides discussion and a listing of research priorities for the captive rhino community. The chapter provides guidance to any facility holding and researching rhinos, and provides excellent suggestions for field-based rhino researchers on topics that could parallel research on captive rhinos.

A few areas of the book require improvement, and the following points were noted. There are references to protocols for rhino blood and tissue collection, but, no indication of a source for these protocols is given. A central source (print or internet bulletin board) for guidance regarding sample collection and dispersion would be of use to all researchers. Sections on manual restraint have been duplicated by two authors and combining them would be appropriate. The anaesthesia discussion lacks a mention of medetomidine as an exciting new tool to be explored. To counter these small shortfalls, the book contains an ample international bibliography to allow the reader opportunity to study further.

Appendix I is a short summary regarding Sumatran rhino husbandry. Considering the poor captive breeding successes with this species, the section needs to be expanded. Certainly the caretakers of wild Sumatran rhino populations should study this section, and provide input for conservation of the species.

In Appendix III, the final page, there is a plea for information, and on the back cover a list of international contacts is included as an aid to continue the discussion. It is this reviewer's sincere wish that many people will study this manual and contribute to future editions. This manual will be of use to all institutions where rhinos are held and in particular for groups building or remodelling rhino holding facilities. Additionally, all rhino researchers should be familiar with the priority list. In particular, the experiences of facilities in rhinos' countries of origin will be most useful to expand the body of rhino husbandry knowledge.