

Baby rhino born at ZSL Whipsnade Zoo

Tuesday 17 December, 2019

Zookeepers are celebrating the birth of a giant this week – after welcoming a baby rhino to the herd at ZSL Whipsnade Zoo, just in time for Christmas

The female greater one-horned rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) was born to mum Behan and dad Hugo at 5am on Sunday 8 December.

At 70kg, the youngster weighed more than twenty times the average 3kg human at birth and was born with furry ears and soft pink folds of skin, which will toughen to form the characteristic 'armour-plate' the rhinos are known for.

ZSL team leader Mark Holden, explains: "We knew Behan was expecting so ZSL's zookeepers have been keeping a close eye on her throughout the 16-month-long pregnancy - we checked on her the night before and found her calm and relaxed in her indoor dens.

"Coming in early the following day they were delighted to find a healthy female calf standing next to her mother, having been born in the early hours.

"Since then, she has been getting more adventurous every day: under her mum's watchful gaze she has even started to tentatively venture outside, so lucky visitors will be able to spot her stretching her legs over the Christmas holidays.

"The calf's name is being chosen by one of ZSL's generous supporters and will be revealed in the new year on ZSL's social channels."

Born as part of the European Breeding Programme (EEP) for the species, the calf is Behan's fifth calf and the 15th greater one-horned rhino to be born at ZSL Whipsnade Zoo, which was one of the first zoos in the world to breed the species in 1957.

"With only around 3,500 greater one-horned rhinos left in the wild, this little one's arrival is the best Christmas present we could have wished for."

Visit ZSL Whipsnade Zoo to meet the rhino herd this Christmas – to book tickets or find out more head to www.zsl.org

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