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**NAME THAT RHINO! Help Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo Name the Endangered Indian Rhinoceros Calf**

***Small Steps for a Big Baby as She Begins to Explore Exhibit***

**TAMPA, Fla. (July 29, 2009)** – A 3-week-old endangered Indian rhinoceros (also known as the great one-horned rhinoceros) calf born at Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo July 7 continues to develop and is beginning to explore her habitat in the Asian Gardens exhibit area. The Indian rhino birth is a significant conservation milestone for the Zoo and for this endangered species, with less than 60 Indian rhinos living in AZA-accredited zoos in North America.

Zoo staff reports that the calf, estimated to be 75-80 pounds at birth, continues to nurse and has "filled out" considerably. Indian rhino calves can gain an estimated 100 pounds a month for their first year of life, which means the new calf will likely double in size in this first month.

In addition to gaining weight, the calf is well-bonded with mother "Jamie" who has met and exceeded expectations as a first-time mother said Dr. Larry Killmar, the Zoo's director of collections. "Indian rhino cows are known to be extremely protective and always close by, ever watchful and attentive to their calves. Jamie is no exception – we are very pleased with her progress as a first-time mother. Step by step, she will allow the calf to become more adventurous and independent, while keeping a close eye on her playing in mud wallows and exploring."

The calf is not yet named, but the Zoo has launched a naming contest on its web site for the entire online community to participate. A selection of Hindi names -- starting with the letter J in honor of mother Jamie -- are posted [online](#) and included below (in alphabetical order).

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- Jaba (jeh-ba) “a flower or hibiscus”
- Jahki (jaan-kee) “of the earth”
- Jama (jeh-ma) “daughter”
- Janya (jahn-YAH) “born of the earth”
- Jaya (JAY-ah) “victory or victorious”

The female calf will receive the name with the most votes; one vote per email address.

Voting will continue through August 14.

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Indian/Nepalese Rhinoceros Species Survival Plan (SSP) maintains a record of all captive specimens of that species in North America. According to the SSP’s most recent report in June 2009, there were a total of 54 Indian rhinos among 17 AZA-accredited institutions in North America, with just nine animals born in the last three years. Indian rhinos are listed as an endangered species, with an estimated wild population of about 2,000.

The Indian rhinoceros is one of five species of rhinos worldwide and one of three species found in Asia. It is native to the remote, swampy grasslands of India, Assam and Nepal. Weighing several thousand pounds on average, the Indian rhino’s most distinct feature is a single horn on the end of its muzzle (three species have two horns), which is composed of keratin – the same protein that forms human fingernails and hair. The species has a unique upper lip, known as a prehensile lip, which acts as a hook to grasp onto plants and food in its herbivore diet (grass, twigs, bamboo shoots, water hyacinths and various produce). Indian rhinos have been described with “armor-like skin” due to the presence of skin folds, however the skin is actually supple due to frequent wallowing in water and mud.

The gestation period for Indian rhino pregnancies is approximately 16 months. When born, calves normally weigh in the range of 75-100 pounds and will nurse throughout their first two years.

### **About Tampa’s Lowry Park Zoo**

Tampa’s Lowry Park Zoo is operated by the Lowry Park Zoological Society, an independent 501(c)(3) charitable organization committed to excellence in education, conservation and research. Tampa’s Lowry Park Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), and has been named the No. 1 zoo in America by both *Parents* magazine (2009) and *Child* magazine (2004). The Zoo is located at 1101 W. Sligh Avenue in Tampa, one mile west of I-275 (exit 48) and is open seven days a week, from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, with extended hours on select nights during the summer. Parking is free. Visit [LowryParkZoo.com](http://LowryParkZoo.com) or call (813) 935-8552 for information. Also find the Zoo on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).