

BIRTHS HATCHINGS

SNOW LEOPARDS BORN...AND BORN...AND BORN AT OKC ZOO... Steve A. Clever.

Spring is understandably the time we all look forward to as zoo-keepers for it is then that the procession of young creatures begins anew. For those of us involved in the Snow leopard breeding program at Oklahoma City, however, the winter months are a necessary precedent, for it is then that we observe for signs of estrous and attempt introductions. The winter quarter was especially rewarding this year as we successfully introduced our resident male to all three of our females, including the youngest ("Tangla") for the first time.

Three litters of young were produced (see below): all are being successfully mother-reared. The average gestation was just over 98 days.

Animal	First Obsvd. Copulation	Birth	Gestation
"Damascus" (2/1)	28 Dec 79	6 Apr 80	99 days
"Tangla" (2/0)	17 Feb 80	25 May 80	97 days
"Elektra" (1/1)	16 Mar 80	22 Jun 80	99 days

Additional details on the specifics of our program are available in the September 1979 Animal Keepers' Forum. Significant observations during 1979-80 include:

- Seclusive behavior was shown in all three females for the two days prior to birth.
- The youngest female ("Tangla") did not eat for the first seven days after giving birth. Her young, however, were observed nursing and gained weight steadily. This was her first birth.

With the last two litters we also began separating the mothers from the kittens for short periods of time after the first several days. This allowed for examination by the zoo veterinarian and for determining the sex of the youngsters. No problems have been encountered thus far with this procedure.

*****This selection was taken from Animal Keepers' Forum; August 1980.*****

If the fisherman was looking at the reflection, he would not know when he had a nibble! I know from my own experience that he may cast his line right over the most elysian landscape and sky, and not catch the slightest notion of them.

-Henry David Thoreau, *Journals*