

of injury which might account for this fact. The claws of this species are, of course, small short and non-retractile so that it has nothing to grip with except its soft small pads, and even from the examination of a dead specimen this would have led me to suppose that the animal was unable to climb. The behaviour of my living pet specimen therefore confirms this.

The litter of five babies cannot be more than two or three weeks old at the time of writing, so that we are not able to confirm this from observations of their behaviour yet.

'THE FROGS',

HARRY MILLER

TIRUMULLAIVAYAL,

VIA AVADI,

MADRAS,

March 2, 1971.

3. THE TEPPAKADU TWINS

(With a plate)

The elephant camp at Teppakadu situated in the middle of Mudumalai Wild Life Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu enjoys the reputation of having produced the largest number of elephant calves in captivity. But this record would have been incomplete had not Devaki, the 40 year old cow given birth to twins recently. Twin births and even triplets are not unknown. But they are distinctly rare. The chances both calves surviving are rarer still.

Sanderson the well-known authority on the Indian elephant and the father of the Mysore Khedda did not come across a single case of twin births in his thirteen years in India. He, however, acknowledges that this is possible and writes 'I have heard of what appears to be a well authenticated case of a female, elephant having two calves at birth'. Birth of triplets in Siam and two pairs of twins in Burma are recorded in this *Journal*.

The fact that Devaki was pregnant was known at the camp. She was given progressively lighter tasks and special rations like all expectant mothers. She looked normal and none suspected that she was carrying twins. On 20th May 1971 at 6.45 p.m. after all the camp elephants were assembled and fed, it was noticed that she was in distress. She bit her trunk, sat on her haunches and showed other signs of discomfort. This first spell of pains lasted 5 minutes. At

this stage Forester Selvaraj who is in-charge of the elephants took charge. Instead of letting Devaki go out into the jungle at night as usual he had her secured on the outskirts of the camp.

The second bout of pains set in at 8.40 p.m. and at 8.45 p.m. the first calf arrived—a normal birth, head first.

Devaki set to work cleaning the calf of the amniotic fluid with earth gathered from the area, and in 10 minutes the calf was able to get up.

At 9.00 p.m. the 2nd calf was born, also a normal birth. To Devaki who had given birth to four calves before this was something new and she kicked the calf aside, perhaps mistaking it for the placenta. The calf fell into a depression and Forester Selvaraj and his assistants dragged it aside and cleaned it of the birth fluid. This calf took half an hour to stand up. It took Devaki considerable time to get reconciled to the fact that the second calf was hers.

The calves were not weighed, but their weight, according to the Forester, was normal. They stood 2' 11" and 3' at the shoulder—the average height at birth being 3'.

Tara, another cow elephant at the camp gave birth to twins some five years previously. Only one of the calves survived and the other was presumed to be a still birth. These calves were born in the jungle as in the majority of cases.

But for Forester Selvaraj's initiative and the care and attention he and his staff bestowed on Devaki; the 2nd calf would have surely been trampled and written off as a still birth if it had been discovered at all in the jungle. This may, perhaps, be the reason why twins are thought to be so rare among elephants.

'CANOWIE',

COONOR-1,

NILGIRIS,

August 11, 1971.

PRIYA DAVIDAR

4. BREEDING OF THE INDIAN RHINOCEROS (*RHINOCEROS UNICORNIS*) AT DELHI ZOOLOGICAL PARK

(With a plate)

The Great Indian One-horned Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), like all rhinoceroses, does not breed readily in captivity. Till 1960, only five calves were born in captivity. One reason for few rhino births in captivity might be the violent battles that take place between the sexes



Davidar, P. 1971. "The Teppakadu Twins." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 68(3), 819–820.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/188616>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/214165>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In Copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>

Rights: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions/>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.