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The compact, contoured case is 5½" long, 3" wide, 1¼" high and weighs only 8 oz.

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# ZOOLOGY

## Rescue effort on shoestring budget

An intensive but inadequately funded rescue effort in a Panamanian jungle is saving the wildlife from threatening floods caused by the Bayano River Dam. Ever since March, the dam has backed up some thirty rivers in the area, site of a Cuna Indian reservation, and many trapped animal species including such rarities as the two-toed sloth, anteater, kinkajou (a slender, woolly, yellowish brown mammal), puma, ocelot, jaguar and tapir have been driven to near starvation, clinging to life in the tentative sanctuary of tree tops. The animals are snatched by rescuers from mango, cacao, avocado and banana trees amidst swarms of insects, scorpions, snakes and tarantulas and transported to habitats not threatened by the flooding.

The rescue effort, called Operation Noah II, is sponsored by the International Society for the Protection of Animals and directed by John C. Walsh, a trained biologist who has enlisted the assistance of some 20 Choco and Cuna Indians. A collaboration including the Gorgas Memorial Institute and the Smithsonian Institution is continuing its animal research studies which began there well before the current rescue effort was initiated. The primary concern of the rescuers is lack of funds. According to Walsh, a request of the top 980 United States companies for financial assistance netted \$100 and 10 cases of powdered milk. They're being subsidized by small donations from school children, he says, and have yet to hear from the myriad of purported conservationist hunting associations. Their immediate needs include more rescue boats and equipment.

## First hybrid of captive marine fish

The first hybrid marine tropical fish ever bred in captivity was recently produced by Neptune Nurseries, Inc., in St. Petersburg, Fla. The parents of this unique specimen of clownfish are *Amphiprion frenatus*, whose natural habitat is the South China Sea and *A. ephippium*, indigenous to the northeast Indian Ocean. Both parents are predominantly red and show a white headband and partial midbody stripe when young. As adults, *A. ephippium* loses both stripes but retains a dark spot behind its dorsal fin and *A. frenatus* retains only its headband.

The hybrid progeny are still quite young and only exhibit the head and midbody stripes. Although some of them are about one and one-half-inches long, they are expected to mature into three-inch-long adults. It's possible the hybrid species already exists in the wild, but it hasn't yet been observed, said Frank Hoff, director of the nurseries. Because of the expensive back research and cross-referencing involved in doing so, "we are not planning to name" the aquatic hybrid, he said.

## Washing the Bengal tiger's appetite

Indian scientists are exploring the Bengal tiger's taste for water in order to curtail his appetite for humans. Every year the majestic cat manages to consume about 40 human inhabitants of the Sunderbans, 500 square miles of mangrove swamps and forest. The stunted trees and the tigers are "nourished" by the brine flowing into the area from the Bay of Bengal. As an alternative to violent retaliation, Indian officials are speculating that if the tigers are given fresh water to drink instead, it will curb their voracious appetite for human flesh.

At least the prospective solution has the advantage of not further jeopardizing the severely endangered species, which in the Sunderbans numbers only 150 tigers, down from 1800 in 1974. Forestry workers will construct giant troughs to contain the fresh water. Watchtowers to be built for scientists to observe the tigers' reaction to the experiment will later serve as lookouts for tourists.