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(MOLDVILLE is not affiliated with **Mold-A-Rama, Inc.** of Chicago, IL nor with the 1960s company **Mold-A-Rama, Inc.** of Los Angeles, original operator of the "Disneyland Toy Factory.")

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## Club-A-Rama v2.0

### WEEK 35

# CHIMP & BABY

Late 1980s

Miami MetroZoo, Miami, FL



The **CHIMP & BABY** from late 1980s Miami MetroZoo!

As mentioned last week with the **AARDVARK** at Crandon Park Zoo, by 1980 Crandon Park Zoo had relocated to its current location in Southwest Miami-Dade under the name "Miami Metrozoo". For decades the Miami MetroZoo has had a nationally renowned captive-breeding program.



## Metrozoo Takes Pride In Its Current `Baby Boom`

October 27, 1986|By BUDDY NEVINS, Miami Bureau Chief

At Metrozoo, the animals are breeding like, ah, animals.

“We just put them together and they go. It doesn’t take anything but compatibility,” said Rick Barongi, curator of mammals.

The premiere South Dade County zoo is in the midst of a baby boom. With a new bird hatchery and an especially fertile mammal population, the zoo is alive with little ones.

 <http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/images/pixel.gif> There are babies to trade, babies to sell and babies to keep and display. Zoo babies are big business.

A baby kudu, an African antelope, is worth \$10,000. A baby chimp fetches \$7,000. A red-ruffed lemur gets \$10,000 a pair. A baby slender-horned gazelle, extinct in the wild, is \$1,000.

“Our breeding program has been very successful,” Barongi said.

So successful that the female Bengal tigers and European brown bears are on birth control. The male lions have had vasectomies.

“There are too many of those,” said Barongi.

This year, Metrozoo has had 110 mammal births through mid-October. During all of last year, 90 mammals were born.

There already have been more than 200 birds born in the 6-month-old bird hatchery, with its ultramodern incubators and its sparkling clean indoor pools for raising waterfowl.

“We’re cranking out a lot of birds,” said Ron Johnson, curator of birds.

The chief breeding time for birds is in the spring but since Florida is semitropical, some are always laying eggs. Residents of the hatchery include a black-naped fruit dove and three East African crowned cranes born this month, along with an Andean condor born in May.

Not content to leave breeding to chance, Johnson encourages it by making the birds as comfortable as possible. He recently acquired 30 new flamingos from Hialeah Park Race Track because those birds breed better in larger groups.

Johnson also tricks birds into laying more eggs. Condors, an extremely rare species, will usually raise one chick every two years but by removing their egg, the condor will produce an egg once a year.

As soon as eggs are laid, Johnson’s staff places them in incubators that automatically rotate to duplicate a mother bird’s turning of the egg. Eggs left in the nest could be damaged by other birds or ignored by parents.

Once a bird is hatched, it is fed a customized diet to approximate its wild food until it is large enough to be placed with adults. Surplus birds are sold or traded to other zoos.

Some birds, such as condors, require specialized treatment. Since condors will confuse human caretakers with their parents, zookeepers have been feeding the chick using condor-shaped hand puppets so the bird thinks it is being fed by its real parents.

Mammal babies usually require no special care. Metrozoo doesn't have a mammal nursery; unless a baby is sick or ignored by mama, it is left with its parents.

If something is wrong, the baby is taken care of by a veterinarian. Last week, a Malayan [sun bear](http://images.intellitxt.com/ast/adTypes/icon1.png) that was being pushed away from its mother's teat by its brother, and a kudu born with a deformed shoulder, were being specially treated.

Eventually, the curators have to decide whether to keep, trade or sell the babies. Many times they opt to trade them for other animals that Metrozoo doesn't have.

"We would rather trade than sell. That way we end up getting new animals without having to go through the complications that handling money creates for a government agency," said Barongi.

Metrozoo, which is a part of Dade County government, runs an account at many large zoos. For instance, if Metrozoo gives a California zoo a \$1,000 Malayan sun bear and a \$1,000 slender-horned gazelle, that zoo owes the Dade zoo \$2,000 worth of animals.

"We collect (the debt) when they have something we want," Barongi said.

With its stepped up breeding program, Metrozoo has a lot of animals other zoos want.

The Dade County facility already has logged the first captive U.S. breedings in five bird species: the grosbeak starling, the greater coucal, the black-naped oriole, the yellow-billed stork and the far-tufted barbet.

Malayan sun bears are only bred at three or four zoos. Kudus are in demand worldwide.

One benefit is that many animals that are becoming extinct in the wild can continue to flourish at Metrozoo.

"Our goal is to become captive self-sustaining," Johnson said. "We want populations that are self-sustaining because we can no longer depend on the wild. The wild is disappearing."







This vintage photo was taken at Miami MetroZoo in the early 1980s. This machine was making the **GIRAFFE!**





Here's another style plexi backglass used at the MetroZoo - still in the 50c era (those were the days!)



Also taken in the 1980s at the Miami MetroZoo: the **PANTHER** and the **SMALL GORILLA** machines!





This is the original sculpture from which the Mold-A-Matic **CHIMP & BABY** moldset was made!





The **CHIMP & BABY** moldset was commissioned by the Florida operator Tom Leslie in the early 1990s.

he specific engraving that all Club-A-Rama members will receive on their **CHIMP & BABY** is "MOM-KAYDEN". This was for a baby shower (what a GREAT baby shower favour!) There is only one 'finished' moldset of the CHIMP & BABY, and before it was engraved with MOM-KAYDEN it was originally engraved as shown to the right: "METRO ZOO".





In 2010, Miami MetroZoo was again renamed to "Zoo Miami".

Disclaimers: The color and/or exact condition of the MOLD you get in the CLUB-A-RAMA may or may not be as shown. Not for children under 3.

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