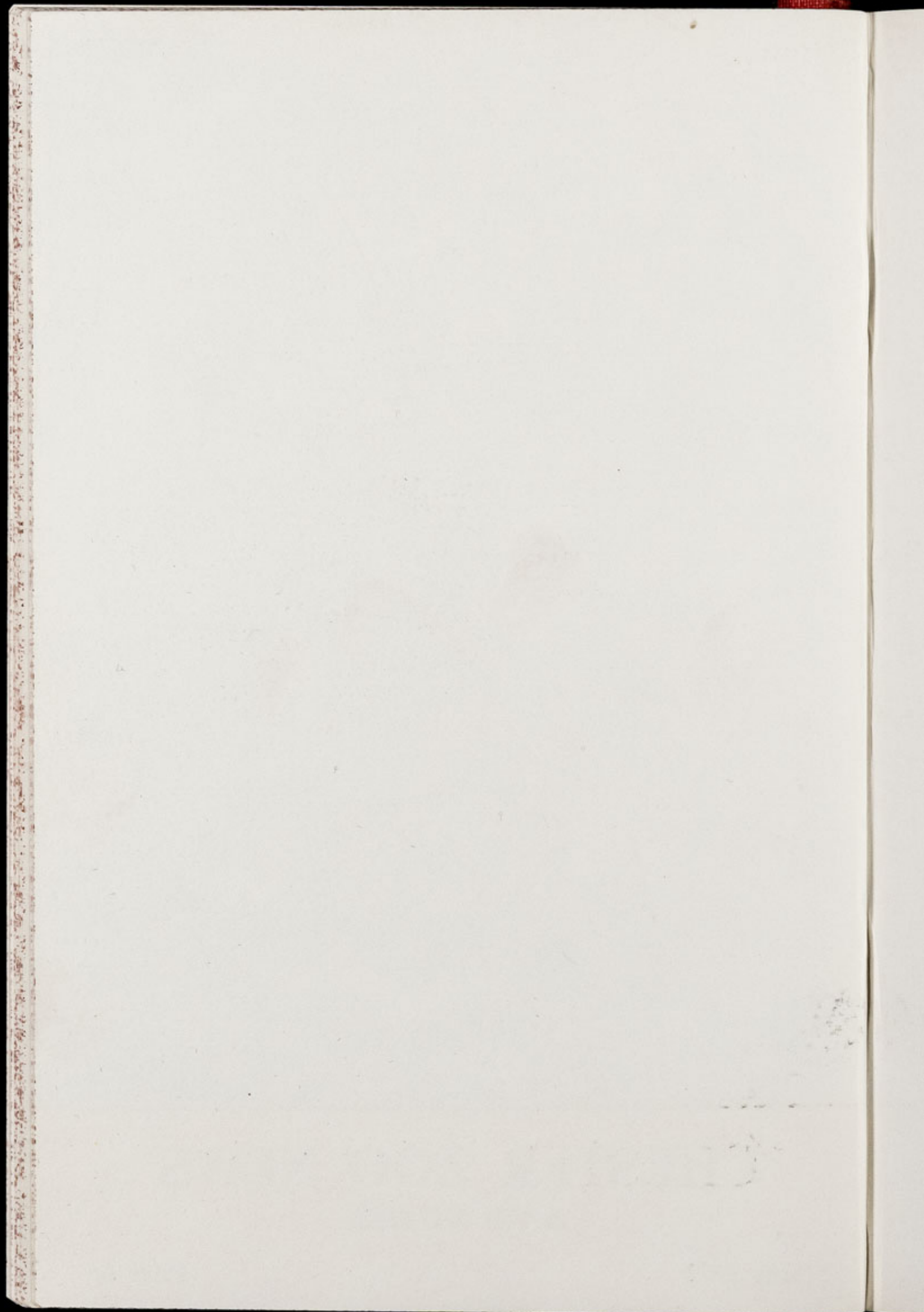




**CHESTER ZOO NEWS**  
**AND GUIDE**

**March 1972**

**Price 6p**



# The North of England Zoological Society

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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COVER: "Mukisi." Male Mountain Gorilla.

*By Courtesy of J. Whitworth*

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION — NINETY FIVE NEW PENCE POSTAGE PAID

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### ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

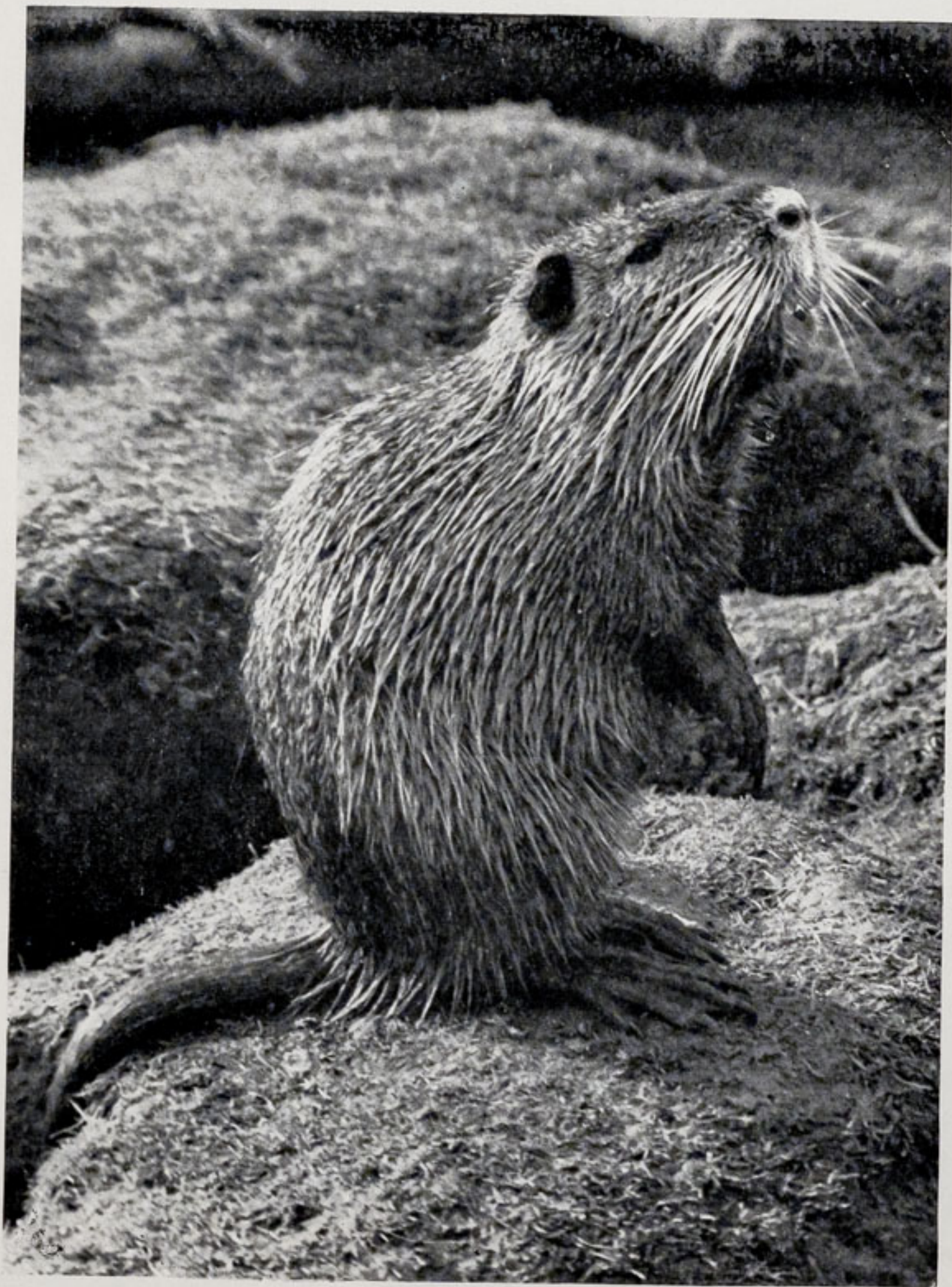
There is only one birth to report this month but it is one about which we are especially pleased. Towards the end of last spring we introduced our pair of Beisa Oryx (*Oryx gazella beisa*) and they have just produced their first calf. Over the years we have bred a number of this species, the female herself being born here in 1963. The male is unrelated and was acquired in June 1970 from Bristol Zoo where he was also bred, so this is a second generation breeding of zoo animals. At the time of writing the calf is not venturing far from the stable although sometimes it can be observed skipping about near the entrance. However during the next few weeks it should become bolder and visitors will be able to see it more clearly.

The Beisa Oryx is found in East Africa where it is still relatively abundant, unlike its close relatives the Arabian and Scimitar-horned Oryxes, which are both in danger of extinction. Beisa Oryxes congregate in small herds on the savannah lands and have the advantage of being able to exist for long periods without visiting water holes, obtaining moisture from the succulent roots of certain plants. They are elegant animals with long rapier-like horns which often are an effective defence against their enemies, the Lions and Leopards. The legend of the Unicorn is thought by some to have originated with a species of Oryx as viewed from the side the animal appears only to have one horn. The gestation period for the Beisa Oryx is between nine and ten months.

A male and two female Coypu Rats (*Myocastor coypus*) have been acquired and can be seen in enclosure No. 31.

### BIRD NOTES

There have been several new arrivals in this section including a male Hyacinthine Macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*) which is a replacement for a male that died some weeks ago. The female soon accepted her new mate and the pair can be seen in the Parrot House, No. 17.



COYPU (*Myocastor coypus*)

K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

An Abyssinian Ground Hornbill (*Bucorvus abyssinicus*) was received in an exchange but will not be on show to visitors until the weather becomes warmer. It is a young male specimen which when adult will be about the size of a Turkey.

There are only two species of Ground Hornbill, both found in Africa. The Southern species (*Bucorvus cafer*) can best be described as living south of the equator while the Abyssinian form has a distribution in the savannah lands from Senegal and Sierra Leone in the west across Africa to the Sudan and Ethiopia.

The male Abyssinian Ground Hornbill in the illustration on the right is an adult which was in the collection some years ago. Its plumage is mainly black with white primary feathers that are just visible in the photograph. The area of bare skin around the eye is blue in this species, but red in the Southern form, while that on the throat which forms a wattle is blue and red. The huge bill has patches of red at the base but otherwise is black and the casque on the head is unusual in that it is open at the front. The presence of the large casque is the main distinguishing feature of the Abyssinian species since it is barely noticeable in the Southern bird. The female is of smaller stature and lacks the red colouration on the throat.

As the name implies these birds spend much of their lives on the ground foraging through the vegetation for food. However they are by no means incapable of flight. If pursued they will take to the air and at night roost in trees or bushes. Insects form a large percentage of the diet and include many creatures pestilential to man, such as locust hoppers. Small mammals, birds and reptiles are also eaten. At the Zoo the Hornbill is being fed day-old chicks, mice, rats and chopped meat. Ground Hornbills are more often observed in pairs or small family groups and live within a territory. They have a low booming call employed both in communication and during the display.



ABYSSINIAN GROUND HORNBILL (*Bucorvus abyssinicus*)

W. Timmis

The nest is a mound of dead leaves in a hollow tree or cave and the clutch varies from one to three eggs. The chicks remain in the nest for approximately two and a half months during which time the female may be fed by other members of the group or leave the nest herself to seek food. The chicks do not become adult for about a year.

Three female Red-rumped Parrakeets (*Psephotus haematonotus*) also arrived. This Australian species has been bred here on a number of occasions but we were left lately with only two male birds.

Finally, a new pair of Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) can be seen in aviaries No. 5 and in the Temperate Bird House we have a Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*) the latter having a wide range in Europe and Asia.

### GENERAL NEWS

Our Orchids are now in flower and we shall continue to have groups of these beautiful plants in the Tropical House until at least the middle of May. The photograph on the right shows one of the Cymbidium spikes which have been staged in groups from mid-December and will continue into May. Other Orchid varieties on display are *Odontoglossums*, *Miltonias*, *Cattlyas* and *Dendrobiums*.

In an earlier issue we mentioned a female Talapoin Monkey that had been left with her parents and a subsequent baby in order to gain maternal experience. During the past month this young female has been introduced successfully to a single male Talapoin, which we hope will result in a second breeding pair.

Apart from one or two brief falls of snow in early February, the weather has continued to be exceptionally clement. However as all



CYMBIDIUM

*J. Whitworth*

# CHESTER ZOO

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND  
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

1. SOUTH ENTRANCE
2. Peacock Enclosure
3. Wapiti Paddock
4. Lesser Pandas
5. Aviaries
6. Milk Bar
7. CORONATION HALL
8. CLOAKROOM, FIRST AID, TOILETS, MOTHER and BABY ROOM
9. CAFETERIA
10. Picnic Lawn
11. Bears
12. Animal Enclosure
13. Kiosk
14. AQUARIUM
15. NORTH ENTRANCE
16. PUSH CHAIRS, WHEEL CHAIRS, LOST CHILDREN
17. Parrot House
18. Free Flight Aviary
19. APE HOUSE
20. RAINBOW CAFE AND SHOP
21. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn
22. TOILETS
23. Tuatara Exhibit
24. Peccaries
25. Waterbus Halt
26. Birds of Prey Aviaries
27. Owl Aviary
28. Jackal and Hyaena Enclosures
29. Animal Enclosure
30. Porcupine Enclosure
31. Coypus
32. Beavers
33. Giraffe House
34. Camel House
35. Waterbus Halt
36. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL AND REPTILE HOUSES
37. CHIMPANZEES
38. Floribunda Rose Garden
39. Zebra House
40. Gibbon Island

41. H.T. Rose Garden
42. Aviaries
43. Flamingos
44. Waterfowl Enclosure
45. Waterfowl Enclosure
46. Capybara and Waterfowl
47. Penguins
48. Sealions
49. Rock Garden
50. Polar Bears
51. Tigers
52. Waterfowl Enclosure
53. Anteaters
54. BIRD HOUSE
55. FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT
56. Ape Nursery
57. TOILETS
58. Lions
59. SOUVENIR SHOP
60. TOILETS
61. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT
62. G.P.O. Telephone
63. Gibbon Pen
64. Animal Enclosure
65. Cheetahs
66. Ornamental Rock Garden
67. Malayan Bears
68. Animal Enclosure
69. Aviary
70. Wallabies
71. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE AND KIOSK
72. Waterbus Halt

73. Fountain Flower Gardens
74. Rose Garden
75. Red Lechwe
76. Red Lechwe
77. Deer or Antelope Enclosure
78. Waterbus Halt
79. Zebra and Deer Enclosure
80. Kamchatka Bears
81. ELEPHANTS
82. Hippos
83. Tapirs
84. Small Mammal House
85. Waterfowl Enclosure
86. Ankole Cattle
87. Gazelle Paddocks
88. Storks and Ostriches
89. Baboon Pens
90. Cat House
91. Lions and Tigers
92. Antelope Enclosure
93. Antelope Enclosure
94. Antelope Enclosure
95. Highland Cattle
96. MONKEY HOUSE
97. Waterfowl Enclosure
98. Wallabies and Waterfowl
99. Cranes and Waterfowl
100. Llamas and Alpacas

101. Zebroids
102. Bison Paddock
103. Pere David's Deer Paddock
104. Eland and Marmots
105. RHINO HOUSE
106. TOILETS
107. Mpila Snack-bar and Kiosk
108. Antelope Enclosure
109. Antelope Enclosure

Animals may be moved from time to time.

## ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES:

LIONS—3 pm except Fridays  
BEARS—3-15 pm  
POLAR BEARS—4 pm  
SEA LIONS 3 times daily—  
2-40 pm, 3-40 pm, 4-40 pm



FOR A COMPLETE  
TOUR OF THE ZOO —  
Follow Nos.1-109  
from South Entrance  
or Nos.16-109  
from North Entrance  
then return to  
Nos.1-14

aviculturists know, this can be most hazardous for birds. Prompted by the mild temperatures many, especially those in the Parrakeet family, come into breeding condition. However if there is a sudden cold spell the hens may become eggbound. This condition arises quickly and requires immediate attention or else the bird will be lost. The usual method of extricating the egg is to rub warm olive oil into the cloacal vent and to hold the hen over steam, easing the egg towards the opening very gently. It is imperative that it is removed without being broken otherwise peritonitis may result. For this reason keepers are instructed to maintain a careful watch on all species. The adult female Weka Rail has been our only casualty so far and after being treated successfully she is making a good recovery in one of the older breeding aviaries.

The two young Plains Viscachas born in December have been sexed as a male and female. They are the second litter of a pair presented to us in November 1970, the first also containing one of each sex. It is our intention to build up a colony of these appealing rodents and all are now living together in an enclosure in the Small Mammal House.

#### **UNIVERSITIES FEDERATION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE**

At Chester Zoo we are concerned with the welfare of wild animals in captivity but domestic pets and farm animals also require a considerable amount of attention. With this in mind, the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare has prepared some very informative leaflets on the care of animals such as Rabbits, Guinea Pigs, Horses and Donkeys. Anyone interested in obtaining details of these and the Federation's other publications, which deal also with wild species, should write to the U.F.A.W., 230 High Street, Potters Bar, Herts.

### REPTILE NOTES

New arrivals are a Common Boa (*Constrictor constrictor*) about five and a half feet in length, a female Leopard Tortoise (*Testudo pardalis*) and a Shinglebacked Lizard (*Trachydosaurus rugosus*).

We have another two Shinglebacked Lizards in the collection but the new specimen is larger with light greyish mottling on its ventral surface in comparison with the cream markings of the former and obviously originates from a different area of Australia. As this species is prone to parasitic infection, the new lizard was kept off show for a time to undergo medical checks before joining the other specimens in their vivarium.

### AQUARIUM NEWS

Each year about this time stocks of various young fishes are acquired for the Aquarium in readiness for the coming season.

Among the more interesting of the specimens to arrive recently were a number of young Freshwater Garfish (*Xenetodon cancila*) which originate from inland waters of S. E. Asia. Attaining an adult length of about twelve inches, Freshwater Garfish have attractive pencil-slim bodies with elongated jaws containing numerous teeth which reminds one very much of the mouth of the reptilian Gharial. The new Garfish are barely four inches long and will accept only live food such as daphnia, mosquito larvae, baby Guppies and other fry often swallowing prey which has a larger girth than themselves. An older specimen of the same species, measuring between seven and eight inches, is kept in a nearby tank and has progressed to feeding on small Rudd. When the Garfish catches a fish it is manoeuvred round in the mouth until it can be swallowed head first.

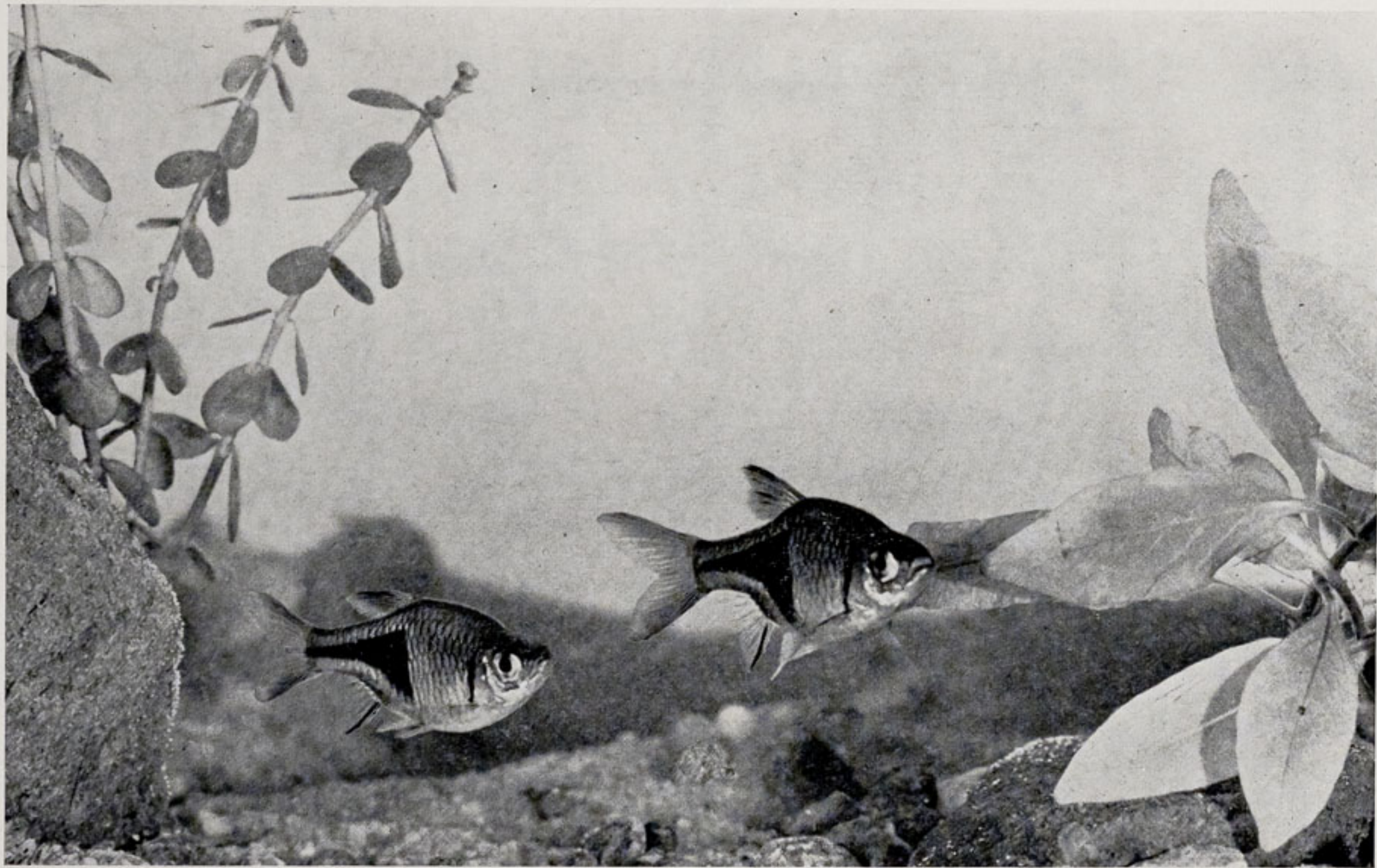
In the photograph on the right are two very pretty Harlequin Fishes (*Rasbora heteromorpha*), young specimens of which were in the latest batch of arrivals. These fishes are found in the Malay Peninsula and eastern Sumatra and grow to a length of not quite two inches. Other S. E. Asian species we have restocked include Dwarf, Kissing and Blue Gouramies and a variety known as the Crosby Gourami which is bred from the Blue, along with a number of the Barbus family. From South America we have new Penguin Fish, Silver Hatchetfish, Beacon Fish and Glowlight, Neon, Jewel and Pretty Tetra. Several Silver-tipped or Copper Tetra from the San Francisco Basin were also acquired, these not having been exhibited in the Aquarium for some time.

Mr. William Bailey of Liverpool, who from time to time has given a number of birds, reptiles and fishes to the collection, has presented us with another Arowana to replace one which jumped out of the tank when the cover was pushed aside by a Pond Terrapin that had climbed out of its own tank. At the same time we received another six Apollo Sharks (*Luciosoma serigerum distichodus*). Despite its name this species belongs to the Carp family and is not related to the true Sharks. It is found in Thailand and grows to a length of nine to ten inches. At the Aquarium the Apollo Sharks are fed on young fish, meat, worms and daphnia.

In the Local Marine Section the Plumose Anemones have multiplied and tiny specimens can be observed around the bases of the adults. The female Lobster mentioned in the last Aquarium News is thriving and recently has cast her shell. On arrival she had only seven legs but the eighth reappeared after shedding.

### NEW ZEBRA ENCLOSURE

One of the major projects this winter has been the construction of a new enclosure for Grevy Zebras on the site occupied formerly by the Highland Cattle No. 95 on the Zoo plan. The original Zebra House was erected in 1950 and is one of the oldest buildings in the Zoo. At one time it accommodated both Grevy and Common Zebras but a few years ago the latter were transferred to another spacious paddock, No. 79.



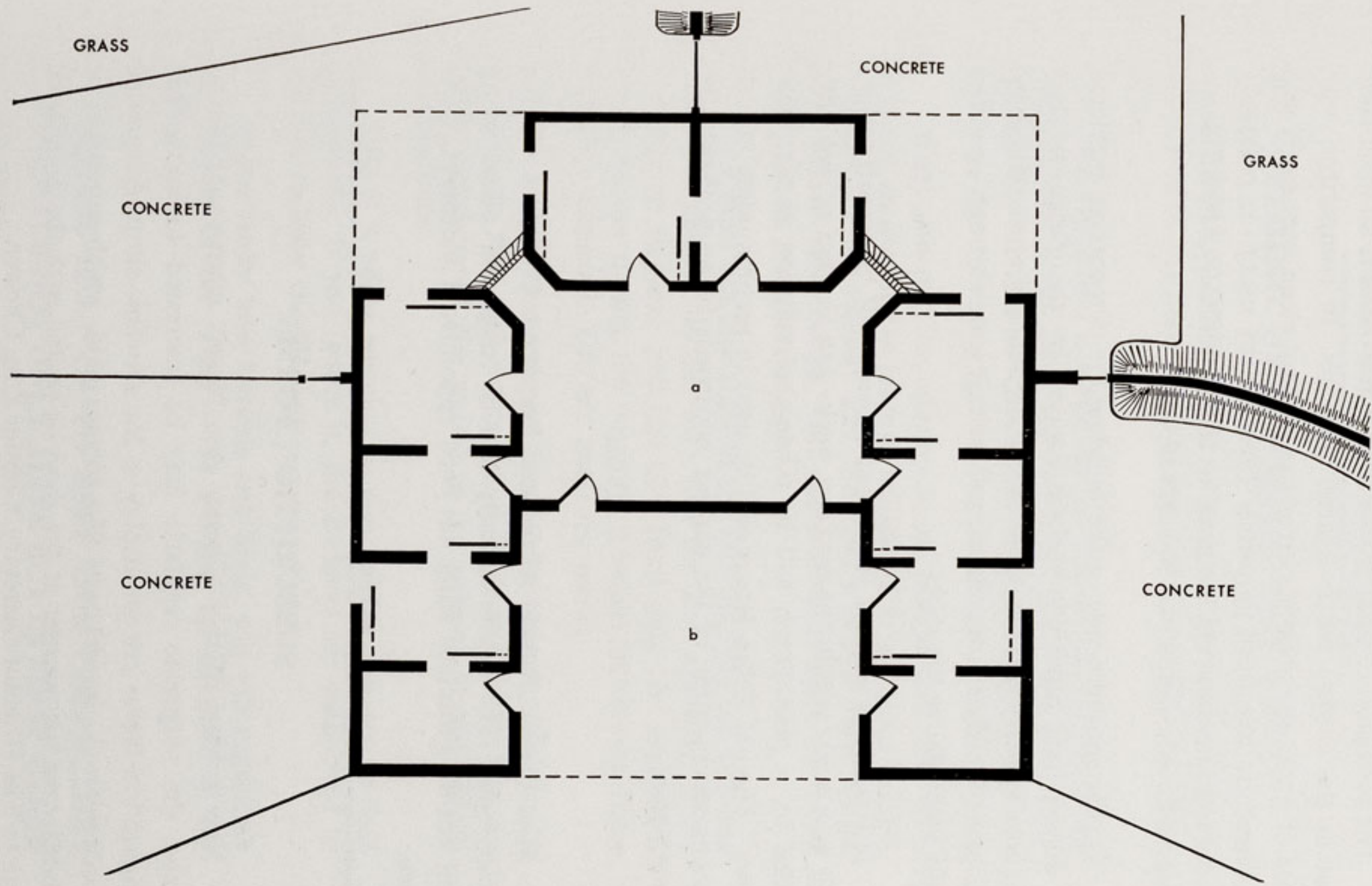
HARLEQUIN FISH (*Rasbora heteromorpha*)

The new enclosure for the Grevy Zebras is some three acres in extent. Part of the perimeter is fenced but adjacent to the public pathways we have employed the aha principle of a ditch on the inner side flanked by a sandstone wall, over which visitors will have an unimpaired view of the animals.

The diagram on the right is a ground plan of the new indoor quarters which are situated on the northern side of the enclosure (see Zoo plan). Currently nearing completion, the building covers a total area of approximately 50 x 50 feet and contains ten stalls, six measuring 12 x 8 feet and four 12 x 12 feet. As indicated on the diagram, sliding doors have been fitted between each of these and on all exits to the paddocks. By means of bars connected to handles through the walls, the keepers can operate the doors without the need to enter the stalls. The floors are made of rough concrete which is an important measure in maintaining the health of the Zebras. Their hooves are worn down continually from being scuffed on an uneven surface and thus are prevented from becoming overgrown and deformed. A water trough and hay rack are provided in each of the stalls.

In keeping with other buildings in the Zoo, the new Zebra quarters are constructed mainly of sandstone and roofed with translucent plastic which makes the interior light and airy. Opening north onto the public pathway, the two large areas marked (a) and (b) are a hay store and general purpose yard respectively.

Zebra stallions are notoriously aggressive and so it was vital to design a building in which animals could be segregated quickly and easily and, where necessary, accommodated singly. The enclosure itself is divided into five sections, three being areas of concrete and two of largely grass. Although it could not be indicated practicably on the diagram, the two grass paddocks at the rear of the building are extremely large. All the paddocks are accessible from the indoor quarters and are connected to each other by gates, thus it will be seen that there are numerous combinations for running Zebras together or keeping them separately.



GROUND PLAN OF NEW INDOOR QUARTERS FOR GREVY ZEBRAS

The provision of both grass and concrete areas is an invaluable asset in the endless battle against parasites. In comparison with those of grass, the concrete areas can be kept clean very easily and consequently free from parasites. Therefore by using the paddocks in rotation and allowing the grass to rest periodically, the incidence of parasitic infestation can be controlled.

On the southern side of the building the two corners bordered by dotted lines represent shelters for use by the Zebras in bad weather. The hay racks in these, which are marked on the diagram, will be replenished from the central storage area through openings in the walls above the racks.

It is anticipated that the Grevy Zebras will be transferred to their new home within the next few weeks and as soon as they have settled in, a photograph will be taken for inclusion in the "Zoo News." The old Zebra House will be used to accommodate miscellaneous stock, some of the earliest occupants being probably the Cassowaries.

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Miss G. M. Russell-Allen who has been Chairman of the Society since 1963 has reluctantly had to resign her office owing to ill health. Professor King has been appointed Chairman in her place.

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### SUBSCRIPTION FORMS

New readers of the "Chester Zoo News" who would like to receive the magazine regularly may be interested to know that subscription forms are on display in the souvenir shop. An annual subscription (12 issues) costs 95p postage paid, which can either be handed over the counter at the shop or posted with the completed form to The Director-Secretary, Chester Zoo, Chester.

**The following notice is displayed on several boards in the grounds**

**Please comply with it at all times.**

### **FEEDING OF ANIMALS AND BIRDS**

**IT IS AN OFFENCE** for any member of the public to offer food of any description to any Animal or Bird in Chester Zoo.

This regulation is made for the sake of the health of the Animals and Birds. Since the NO FEEDING rule was introduced, the number of deaths has dropped appreciably and sickness, due to wrong feeding has been virtually eliminated.

What you may be offering to an animal may only be a sweet or an inoffensive piece of bread, but it can mean a death sentence for the animal. For example, a cough drop, which may relieve your cough, can cause instant death to many Animals and Birds in the Zoo.

You must not lose sight of the fact that you are only one of over a million visitors who visit the Zoo annually. If for instance an elephant had one bun from only one tenth of a day's visitors during the summer, it would eat between three and four thousand. You can guess the result.

We realise what a temptation it is for visitors, particularly children, to feed our Animals and Birds and this is why we invite members of the public to be present at the official feeding times.

This is a polite warning to you, asking you not to feed the animals. If you ignore it, the Keepers are authorised to ask you to leave the Gardens.

**If you really love Animals and Birds, you will appreciate the wisdom of the ruling — No Feeding by members of the public.**

**PLEASE HELP US TO KEEP OUR COLLECTION OF ANIMALS NOT ONLY ALIVE BUT IN FIRST CLASS CONDITION.**

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Printed in England by  
G. R. Griffith Ltd.  
Castle Printing Works  
Chester

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