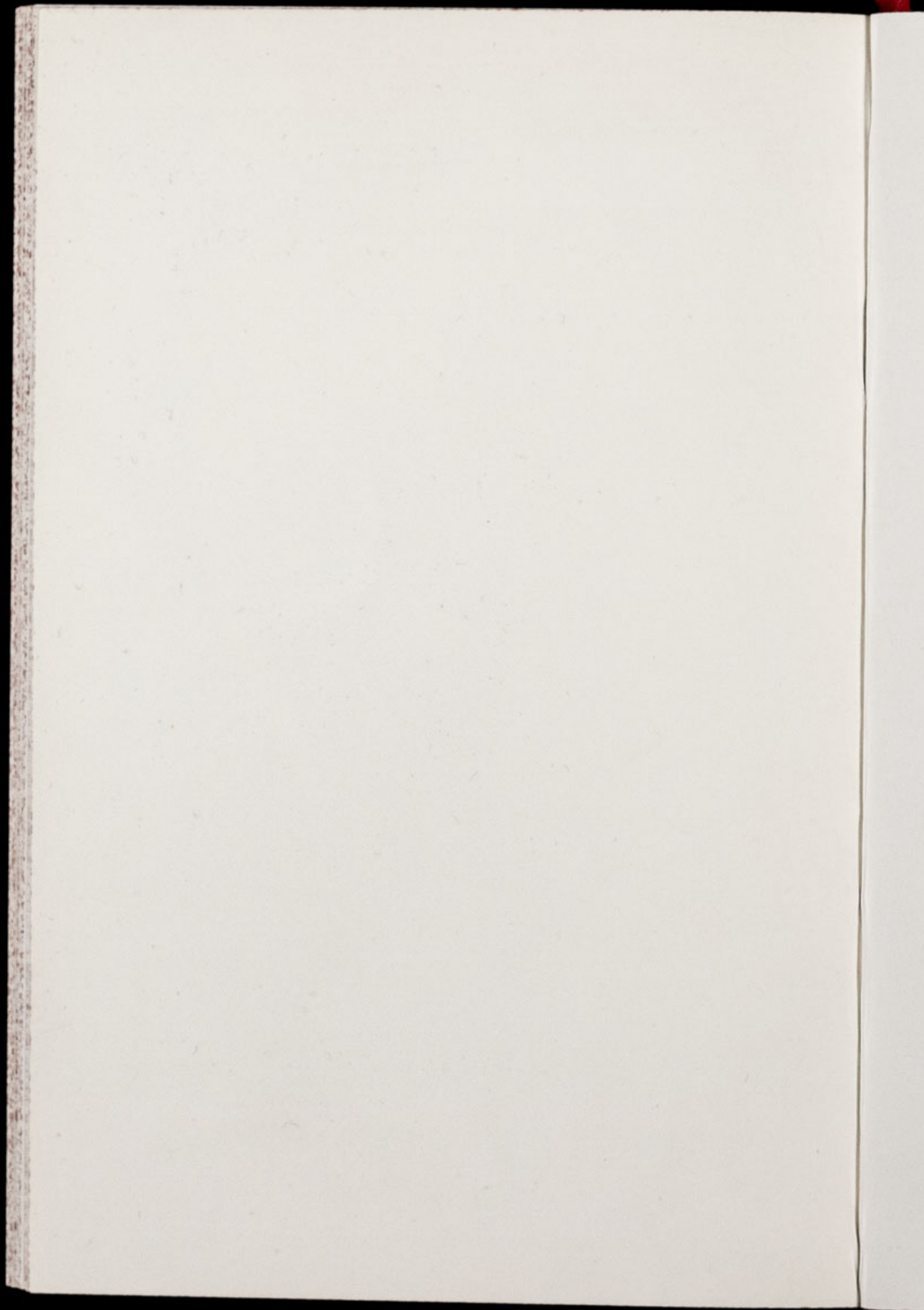




CHESTER ZOO NEWS
AND GUIDE

November 1973

Price 6p



The North of England Zoological Society

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COVER: Blue-eyed Cockatoo chick; see page sixteen.

By Courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

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ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

The busy season at the zoo has now drawn to a close though on fine days there are plenty of visitors about. We are finding that an increasing number of school-teachers are taking advantage of this quieter time of year, as well as the hectic months of May, June and July, to bring parties of children to study various aspects of animal life.

We have registered the first degrees of frost and in the gardens the summer bedding has been removed and is now being replaced by the spring displays. There are still many young animals to be seen but the only birth to report this month is that of a Chinchilla (*Chinchilla laniger*) born to a group which is resident in the Small Mammal House, No. 84.

The only arrival has been a female Mona Monkey (*Cercopithecus mona*) which was a presentation to the collection. This specimen was offered as an "organ grinder's monkey" and zoo staff were expecting to see a Capuchin. They were delighted therefore when the new arrival turned out to be a fine young Mona Monkey. At the time of writing she is undergoing a period of observation but eventually she will be introduced to a small group of Monas, comprising adults and young, in the Monkey House, No. 96.

AQUARIUM NEWS

Blennies, Green Wrasse and young Grey Mullet, all species which flourish around our own coasts, were among recent additions to the local marine tanks. Several Plumose Anemones were also collected and have been introduced to our exhibit of anemones. As a matter of interest, the lobster which visitors can see in this section has been here for several months and is preparing to shed its skin for the second time since its arrival.

One of the new exhibits in the tropical marine section is a Cardinal Fish (*Apogon nematopterus*), a species found in Indo-Pacific seas. The single specimen has been released into a tank

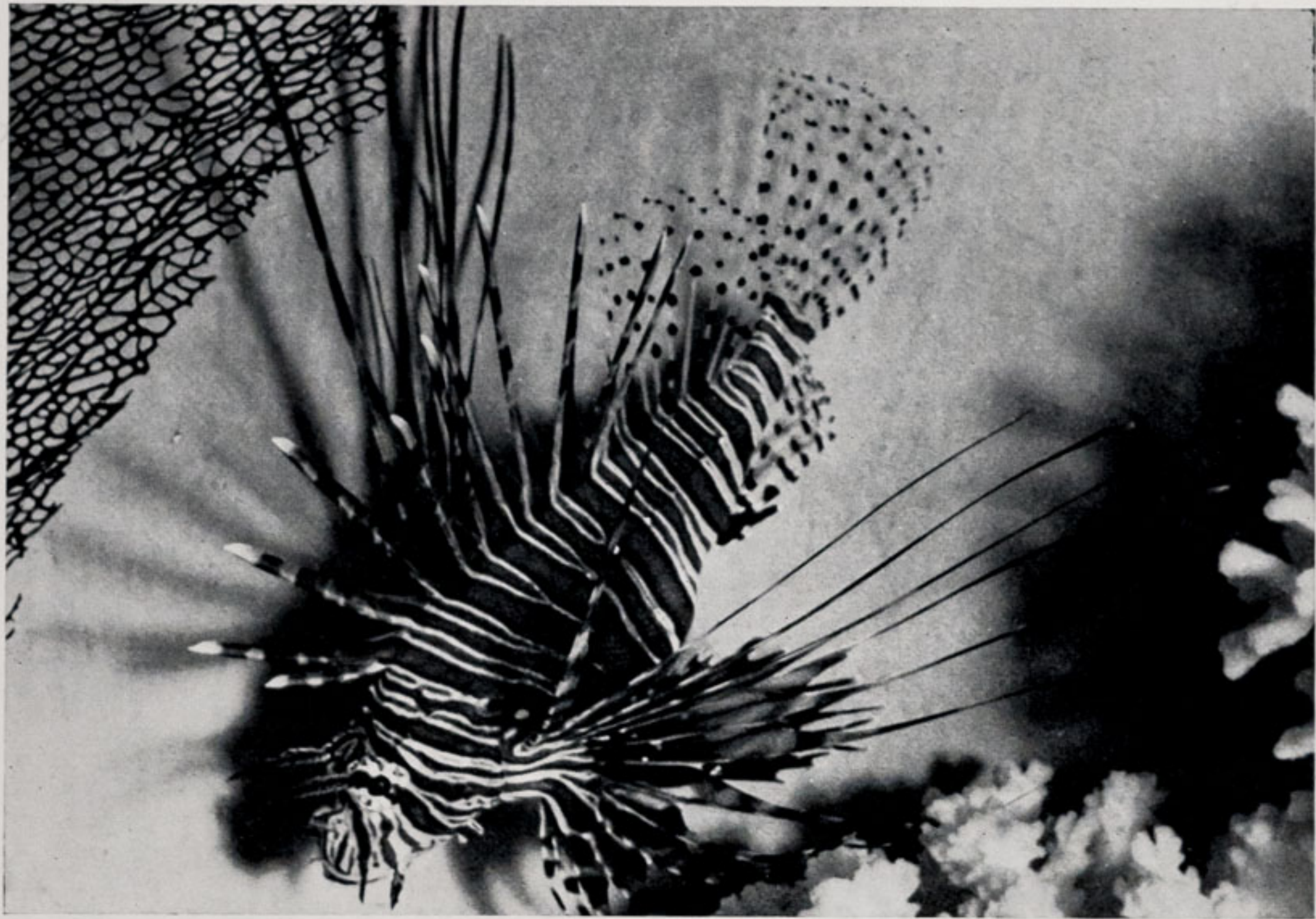
containing Bannerfish, Butterfly Fishes and various other small, colourful marine fishes. Cardinal Fishes are nocturnal and accordingly they have large eyes. Their two dorsal fins are comparatively large and stand upright, looking very much like sails. As their name suggests, most forms of Cardinal Fishes display reddish colouration and this species has red spots on its lower flanks. The rest of its body is yellowish white with a single, fairly broad, dark stripe on each side running vertically from the dorsal to the ventral fins. The Cardinal Fish is not expected to grow to much more than its present length of three inches.

A black and yellow Ribbon Eel was another addition to the tropical marine tanks but in the short time it has been here this specimen has already caused considerable alarm. Ribbon Eels are partial to small fishes and shortly after it had been placed in a tank where it could do no harm, the eel vanished. It soon reappeared, looking extremely alert, in the tank containing the little Damsel and Clown Fishes. Fortunately there were no casualties but of course the eel had to be transferred to another tank from which it is hoped it will not be able to make hunting trips! This species is particularly striking. It is black apart from a bright yellow dorsal fin which runs the length of the body. At the present time the eel is about three feet long but it could reach five feet.

Another Scorpion Fish (*Pterois volitans*) has also been acquired. The photograph on page four of another Scorpion Fish in the collection was taken a few weeks ago. It looks a fearsome creature and its warning stripes are no bluff. Each of these long spines is poisonous and the Aquarium Keeper displays great caution in his dealings with the Scorpion Fishes. The new specimen is similar in colour to the one illustrated but its spines are curled quite distinctly at the tips. It is also younger and therefore smaller.

Other new arrivals of tropical marine fishes include several Electric Blue Damsels (*Pomacentrus coeruleus*) and a single Mandarin Fish (*Synchiropus splendidus*). The latter specimen is extremely beautiful but as it needs extra care initially, it is not yet on show in the main tanks.

The rest of the new arrivals are freshwater species. In a tank occupied formerly by an Electric Catfish, visitors can now observe



SCORPION FISH (*Pterois volitans*)

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

a young Pike Cichlid (*Crenicichla lepidota*). Incidentally the Electric Catfish has been transferred to more spacious surroundings, as it has grown appreciably since its arrival earlier in the year. The Pike Cichlid is a South American species with a distribution from the Amazon to northern Argentina. Like the true Pikes, these fishes are predators, lying in wait for their prey and darting out quickly to seize it. They have wide gapes and consequently are capable of swallowing fishes only slightly smaller than themselves. The bodies of these Cichlids are Pike-like in appearance and are greyish green with a mottling of white spots on the flanks and a short black line behind the gills. Maximum length is a little over eight inches.

A number of Dwarf Golden-eye Cichlids (*Nannacara anomala*) are new exhibits. The home of these fishes is western Guiana and the largest specimens, which are the males, grow to no more than three and a half inches long. The male has a brownish body with a metallic blue-green sheen and two broad dark stripes along his sides. His eyes are orange and his dorsal and anal fins large and pointed. On the other hand, the female, which reaches only two and a half inches, is lighter brown and has rounded dorsal and anal fins. Dwarf Golden-eye Cichlids are inoffensive aquarium exhibits and popular with aquarists though they tend to be shy at first and hide in vegetation.

Black Paradise Fishes are merely a variety of the common form of this species (*Macropodus concolor*). Except when ready to spawn, when they are a dark brownish black, Black Paradise Fishes are basically silvery with a wash of what can only be described as a muddy brown. A number of these fishes were among recent additions and they have been released into a tank containing several of the normal coloured forms which were bred in the Aquarium earlier in the year. It is hoped that the two forms will breed, in which event it will be interesting to note the colours of the offspring. The natural range of the Paradise Fishes is in China, Korea, Vietnam and Formosa and they have long been popular, if somewhat aggressive, aquarium fishes in the eastern world. At the zoo, the Paradise Fishes breed regularly.

A Congo Catfish (*Schilbe marmoratus*) and a Discus Fish (*Symphysodon aequifasciata*) have also been obtained. The Discus, actually the result of a cross between Blue and Seven-coloured

varieties, was one of two presented to the Aquarium. Regrettably the other Discus died but the survivor has settled well in a tank with its Blue and Seven-coloured relatives and is feeding.

A month or two ago all the Goldfish pools in the Tropical House were drained and cleaned and at the moment a programme of restocking is under way. This involves the rearing of large numbers of young Goldfishes and Golden Orfe in the Aquarium for eventual release into these pools.

Finally the new varieties of fancy Goldfish acquired bear such elaborate names as Blue Comet Shubunkins, Red Fantails and Black Moors.

REPTILE NOTES

The past month or two has witnessed several exciting arrivals in the reptile section, including five species of snake which have never been exhibited here before. The majority of the snakes obtained are venomous and originate from ranges in South East Asia.

First on the list and one of the five species new to this collection, is a single female Wagler's Pit Viper (*Trimeresurus wagleri*). Reptile enthusiasts may know this snake by its alternative name of Temple Viper. Often it is kept and permitted to roam freely in the temples of the east, one famous instance being at the Snake Temple in Penang.

The full range of the Wagler's Pit Viper is from Thailand, through Malaysia, Indonesia and Borneo to the Philippines where it is located in lowland jungle and frequently on plantations. It is a most attractive reptile with a fairly stout body and a large triangular head. Usually colouration of the adult is predominantly black with scattered green spots on the back which gradually become more numerous on the snake's sides until its ventral surface is totally yellowish green. Chiefly an arboreal snake, it has a prehensile tail. The average length of the adult Wagler's Pit Viper is a little over three feet and it is reported to possess a fairly lethal venom. However this is somewhat compensated by the fact that it is a mild tempered snake and often tolerated around human habitation.

The female acquired is not yet on show. She is very heavy in the abdominal region, we believe with young, and for that reason no attempt has been made to move her or to photograph her. She is feeding well and seems to have settled, so we hope the news of any progeny will be good.

The Pope's Pit Viper (*Trimeresurus popeorum*) is already represented in the collection by an adult female and a photograph of this snake was included in the October 1970 issue. The female has now been joined by another five of these rather splendid, bright green, pit vipers. The range of the Pope's is also South East Asia, from Assam and Burma eastwards to Cambodia and southwards through Malaysia to Indonesia. Normally it inhabits hilly regions between 3,000 and 5,000 feet.

The Shore or Mangrove Viper (*Trimeresurus purpureomaculatus*) is another new species for this collection. One of the three specimens which arrived recently can be seen in the photograph on page ten. Again of South East Asian origin, the Shore Viper is found in eastern Bengal, southern Burma, the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra and the Andaman Islands. Within this range it would be encountered only near the coasts, as it is an inhabitant of mangrove swamps. Its colour varies but more often it is purplish brown overall with a patterning of greenish spots. Three feet would be a reasonable length for an adult. This is another potentially dangerous species though few fatalities have been attributed to it. At the zoo the Shore Vipers are on exhibition in a vivarium with the snakes mentioned below.

Malay Pit Vipers (*Ancistrodon rhodostoma*) are reputed as being ill-tempered snakes, the cause of numerous bites and some fatalities each year in South East Asia, though in actual fact at the zoo their vivarium companions, the Shore Vipers, are noticeably more aggressive. Three Malay Pit Vipers have been acquired.

The distribution of the Malay species is in Thailand, northern Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Java and Sumatra and it is recorded as requiring a climate with well pronounced wet and dry seasons. It is often seen in the vicinity of plantations which is probably one of the reasons why so many bites occur. This snake has a typical pit viper body with a triangular head, pointed snout and

CHESTER ZOO

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

TO LECTURE HALL
(PRIVATE)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. SOUTH ENTRANCE | 41. H.T. Rose Garden |
| 2. Peacock Enclosure | 42. Aviaries |
| 3. Wapiti Paddock | 43. Flamingoes |
| 4. Lesser Pandas | 44. Waterfowl Enclosure |
| 5. Aviaries | 45. Waterfowl Enclosure |
| 6. Milk Bar | 46. Capybara and Waterfowl |
| 7. CORONATION HALL | 47. Penguins |
| 8. CLOAKROOM, FIRST AID,
TOILETS, MOTHER AND BABY
ROOM | 48. Sealions |
| 9. CAFETERIA | 49. Rock Garden |
| 10. Picnic Lawn | 50. Polar Bears |
| 11. Bears | 51. Tigers |
| 12. Animal Enclosure | 52. Waterfowl Enclosure |
| 13. Kiosk | 53. Anteaters |
| 14. AQUARIUM | 54. BIRD HOUSE |
| 15. NORTH ENTRANCE | 55. FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT |
| 16. PUSH CHAIRS, WHEEL CHAIRS,
LOST CHILDREN | 56. Ape Nursery |
| 17. Parrot House | 57. TOILETS |
| 18. Free Flight Aviary | 58. Lions |
| 19. APE HOUSE | 59. SOUVENIR SHOP |
| 20. RAINBOW CAFE AND SHOP | 60. TOILETS |
| 21. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn | 61. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT |
| 22. TOILETS | 62. G.P.O. Telephone |
| 23. Tuatara Exhibit | 63. Gibbon Pen |
| 24. Peccaries | 64. Animal Enclosure |
| 25. Waterbus Halt | 65. Cheetahs |
| 26. Birds of Prey Aviaries | 66. Ornamental Rock Garden |
| 27. Condor Aviary | 67. Malayan Bears |
| 28. Jackal and Hyaena Enclosures | 68. Animal Enclosure |
| 29. Animal Enclosure | 69. Aviary |
| 30. Porcupine Enclosure | 70. Wallabies |
| 31. Coypus | 71. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE
AND KIOSK |
| 32. Beavers | 72. Waterbus Halt |
| 33. Giraffe House | |
| 34. Camel House | |
| 35. Waterbus Halt | |
| 36. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL AND
REPTILE HOUSES | |
| 37. CHIMPANZEES | |
| 38. Floribunda Rose Garden | |
| 39. Mammal House | |
| 40. Gibbon Island | |

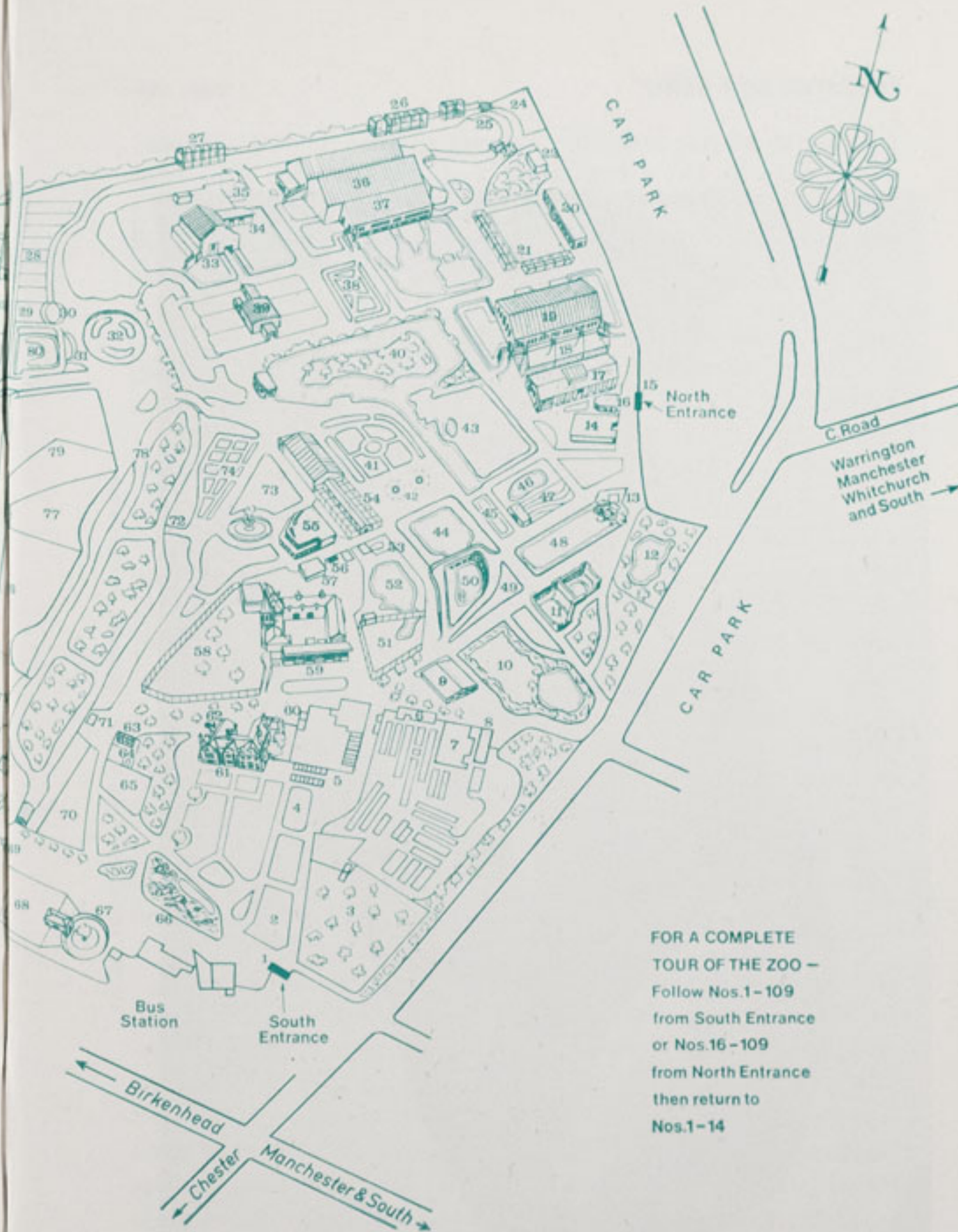
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| 73. Fountain Flower Gardens |
| 74. Rose Garden |
| 75. Red Lechwe |
| 76. Red Lechwe |
| 77. Deer or Antelope Enclosure |
| 78. Waterbus Halt |
| 79. Zebra and Deer Enclosure |
| 80. Kamchatka Bears |
| 81. ELEPHANTS |
| 82. Hippos |
| 83. Tapirs |
| 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. Zebra Enclosure |
| 96. MONKEY HOUSE |
| 97. Waterfowl Enclosure |
| 98. Wallabies and Waterfowl |
| 99. Cranes and Waterfowl |
| 100. Llamas and Alpacas |

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|--------------------------------|
| 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





SHORE OR MANGROVE VIPER (*Trimersurus purpureomaculatus*)

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

facial pits. Its body colour generally is reddish or purplish brown with paler sides speckled with dark brown and a row of dark brown triangular patches on each side of the back. The Malay is also one of the few species of vipers which is oviparous, the female laying and then guarding her eggs.

Since the last report, a single Horned Sand or Cerastes Viper (*Cerastes cornutus*) has been added to the collection. As might be expected with a desert dweller, the ground colours of the Cerastes Viper are pale yellows, pinks and greys, all shades which would enable it to blend with its surroundings. There is also a row of darker bands along its back. The deserts of North Africa and Arabia are the home of this snake and like several other species which live on sand, its method of travelling is by "side-winding". Furthermore by using this action in a stationary position, the Cerastes Viper is able to bury itself rapidly in sand until only the tops of its head and back are visible. The first time the specimen at the zoo buried itself, the Curator of Reptiles got quite a start, as the movement was so vigorous and the snake disappeared so quickly. The horns referred to in its popular name are two projections of skin, one above each eye, which vary in length according to the individual. With a maximum body length of two and a half feet, this is not a large viper, and while its venom is certainly toxic, as a rule the Cerastes is not aggressive unless cornered.

A Mexican West Coast Rattlesnake (*Crotalus basiliscus basiliscus*) was also among the new arrivals and is another species making its first appearance in this collection. This is a brightly patterned, basically olive green snake which comes from a comparatively small range on the western coast of Mexico. Its habitat is listed as both tropical and deciduous forest. It is one of the larger rattlesnakes and an adult would be likely to reach between six and seven feet. However it is said to tame quickly and this can be borne out by the specimen we have received which has been heard to rattle only once. Usually rattlesnakes are quick to show their displeasure. The Mexican West Coast Rattlesnake has been released into a vivarium which also houses Western and Eastern Diamond-backed species.

The remaining three snakes that we have acquired are not poisonous. Not yet on show, though possibly it will be by the time this issue is published, is a very beautiful Brazilian Rainbow Boa. This snake is only a subspecies of the common Rainbow Boa (*Epicrates cenchris*) but has a striking brick red body with far more vivid patterning than the normal form.

Another species we have not exhibited here before is the Boipevussu Snake or False Water Cobra (*Cyclagras gigas*), whose distribution encompasses Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil. Two young representatives of the species were acquired and at present they are off show in a vivarium where the Curator of Reptiles can keep a close watch on their progress. The Boipevussu Snake bears no venom at all but is able to inflate its neck into a hood in the manner of the cobra. In addition it is a fish eater and invariably is found near water, which explains the origin of its other common name.

LION AND TIGER ENCLOSURES

In last month's issue we described the recently completed extension to the Lion and Tiger enclosures on site No. 91. The photograph on page thirteen shows a Lioness and one of her cubs relaxing in a corner of this large new area.

BIRD NOTES

Since the last report the following chicks have been recorded as bred:

- 1 Weka Rail (*Gallirallus australis greyi*)
- 6 Fischer's Lovebirds (*Agapornis fischeri*)
- 2 Red-rumped Parakeets (*Psephotus haematonotus*)
- 2 Swainson's Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*)
- 2 Louisiade Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematod aberrans*)
- 62 Cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*)
- 2 Grand Eclectus Parrots (*Lorius roratus*)
- 2 Sundervall's Waxbills (*Estrilda rhodopyga*)



LIONS IN NEW ENCLOSURE

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

The Weka Rail chick is a second generation zoo breeding. The parent birds were bred at Chester from a pair of Wekas which came from Auckland Zoo and this is the second occasion they have reared chicks themselves. Their earlier clutch, hatched in July this year, contained three chicks, two of which have survived to independence. Visitors can see this family in the large flight aviary, No. 18.

The figure of sixty-two Cockatiels represents the minimum number bred this year. In fact it is thought there have been well over seventy hatchings but as the Cockatiel colony occupies one of the long Rainbow flights and there is a constant, noisy, stream of birds to and fro, it will be appreciated that one count of chicks rarely tallies with the next. Though these birds are in no way rare, we are extremely pleased with the results from the breeding colony over the past few years. Since 1970, approximately 250 Cockatiels have been reared. The photograph on page fifteen shows a clutch of four chicks a few weeks before they were ready to leave the nest.

The Grand Eclectus Parrots are accommodated in the Parrot House, No. 17, and this is where the two chicks may be seen. It was quite a relief to discover that both young birds were hens, as most of the Eclectus Parrots bred here, Red-sided and Grand species, have been males.

In colouration the male Eclectus Parrot is mainly bright green and differs enormously from the red, purple and blue female. There are several varieties of Eclectus Parrot distributed through the islands of the East Indies but at Chester we exhibit just the Grand and the Red-sided. The Moluccas are the home of the former species while the Red-sided is found in New Guinea and neighbouring islands, and in northern Queensland. The difference between these two forms is slight. The male Red-sided displays a large red patch on either side of his body and the female is a brighter red than the female Grand.

It is intended that when they are independent of their parents, the two female Grand Eclectus chicks will be introduced into the Red-sided group which will result in a ratio of six cocks to four hens. If eventually the two forms breed, it will be interesting to see which colour combination the chicks adopt.



COCKATIEL CHICKS (*Nymphicus hollandicus*) IN NESTBOX

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

The subject of this month's cover photograph is also resident in the Parrot House. This beautiful Blue-eyed Cockatoo chick (*Kakatoe ophthalmica*) was hatched at the zoo in the summer and its emergence from the nest was recorded in last month's issue.

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 can be obtained from the souvenir shop. An annual subscription (12 issues) costs £1.05, 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.

MEMBERS' MEETINGS

The next meeting for Members of the Society will be held on Saturday, 26th January, 1974, when Mr. Geoffrey Greed, Curator at Bristol Zoo, will talk about White Tigers and his recent visit to India. Further details will be sent to Members nearer the time.

Members may also like to make a note that the next Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Saturday, 25th May, 1974.

NATIONAL PETS CLUB DIARY 1974

Once again the Daily Mirror National Pets Club has published a diary for the forthcoming year. The cost of the 1974 Diary is 42p, post free, and it can only be obtained by writing direct to the National Pets Club, Daily Mirror, Box 205, London NW99 4XA.

The Daily Mirror Book of Pets, another recent publication by this organisation, is available at most bookshops, price 75p.

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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