

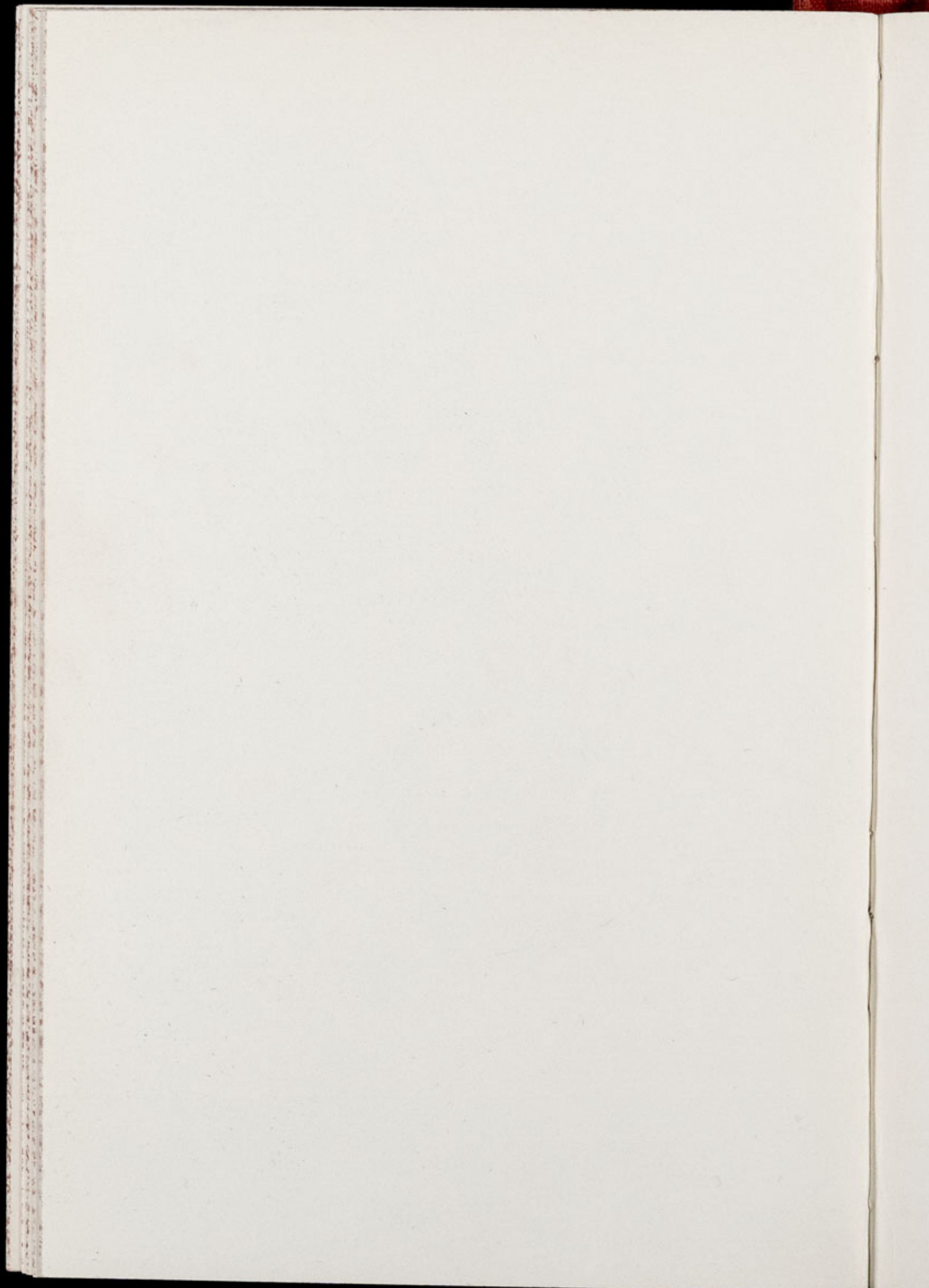


CHESTER ZOO NEWS

AND GUIDE

July 1972

Price 6p



The North of England Zoological Society

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

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION — NINETY-FIVE PENCE POSTAGE PAID

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ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

During the past month the following mammals have been born:

- 1 Barbary Ape (*Macaca sylvana*)
- 1 Vervet Monkey (*Cercopithecus pygerythrus*)
- 1 Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*)
- 5 Spiny Mice (*Acomys cahirinus*)
- 8 Nile or Kusu Rats (*Arvicanthis niloticus*)
- 1 Red Lechwe (*Kobus leche*)
- 1 Wapiti (*Cervus canadensis*)
- 4 Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*)

The group of nine Barbary Apes in enclosure No. 89 are all members of the same family, the parents being a male named Sailor and a female Trixie. Trixie is the only breeding female in the group but produces regularly every year. Without exception her offspring have been daughters though as yet we do not know the sex of the latest baby.

Fluffy, the female Vervet Monkey, has also bred regularly for several years. She is quite an old animal, as she was adult on arrival in January 1957. The baby is a male and may be seen with its parents and one year old brother in an enclosure in the Monkey House. Both adults were collected in the Zambezi Valley of Northern Rhodesia.

The Chimpanzee has been born to a female named Judy. She was about nine years old when she came to the Zoo in October 1965 and has bred twice before. The baby was born very easily and in fact four hours later Judy had carried it out onto one of the islands.

We have been obliged to hand-rear a female Wapiti calf whose mother was unable to produce milk. It is growing strongly and may be seen with a young American Bison in enclosure No. 68. So far this year there have been four Wapiti calves which have been sexed as a male and three females.

New arrivals in the Small Mammal House are six Sierra Leone Striped Squirrels (*Funisciurus pyrrhopus leonis*), a male and five females, which have come from Jersey Zoo. The genus of African Striped Squirrels contains fifteen full species and these are found in a variety of habitats including savannah, forest and palm scrub. They are active in the early morning and evening and tend to associate in pairs or singly. The diet, typical of Squirrels, consists of nuts, seeds, fruits, insects, birds' and lizards' eggs.

REPTILE NOTES

From Lt. Col. C. R. Rubenstein in South America we have received five Common Boas (*Constrictor constrictor*), a female Brazilian Tortoise (*Testudo denticulata*) and two unspecified snakes.

The arrival of a female Brazilian Tortoise was welcomed very much as we have had a male of this species in the collection for many years. Sent also by Lt. Col. Rubenstein, the male has attempted mating females of several other species and when the new Tortoise has settled down, it is hoped that this pair will breed.

One of the unidentified snakes is believed to be a False Coral Snake but at the present time enquiries are being made about both snakes and the results of these will be reported in a future issue of the "Zoo News".

BIRD NOTES

During the past month the following birds have been bred:

- 1 Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)
- 3 Weka Rails (*Gallirallus australis greyi*)
- 12 Cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*)
- 2 Louisiade Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematod aberrans*)
- 2 Crimson-winged Parrakeets (*Aprosmictus erythropterus*)
- 5 Red-rumped Parrakeets (*Psephotus haematonotus*)
- 2 Cordon Bleu (*Uraeginthus bengalus*)
- 4 Red-billed Weavers (*Quelea quelea*)
- 1 Jerdon's Starling (*Sturnus burmanicus*)

In the large flight aviary, No. 18, the Weka Rails built their nest in the same small cave that they used last year. The three chicks are progressing well and the hen is again displaying the unusual behaviour which was first observed with her second brood last year. Regular readers will recall that her first brood was lost soon after being hatched. In typical Rail fashion these two chicks left the nest very early and were probably taken by Herons or Kites in the aviary. With the second brood, which was reared successfully, the hen's behaviour was unexpectedly and astonishingly different. The two chicks were confined to the area of the nest and were carried back swiftly if they strayed too far. The hen is even more cautious with the latest chicks, not allowing them to move more than a radius of two feet from the nesting cave.

The photograph on the right shows one of the Louisiade Lorikeet chicks shortly after it had left the nest and was still looking rather bare of feathers. Since then the plumage of both chicks has filled out and their bills have turned black. They may be seen with their parents in a lower aviary of the Tropical House.

The Crimson-winged and Red-rumped chicks are accommodated in the Parrakeet Aviaries. Both species have bred in the collection before but there have not been Red-rumped chicks for some years. Actually six of this species left the nest but one died shortly afterwards. When the chick emerged its plumage was unusual in that it appeared more like that of an adult male. The cock attacked it, most probably mistaking it as a rival.

The photograph on page 7 shows a Jerdon's Starling leaving its nest high in the Tropical House. Shortly after this photograph was taken, the nest was appropriated by Bank Mynahs which ousted three young Jerdon's Starlings inside. Two were killed by the fall but a third, which no doubt had softened its fall by landing on



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

LOUISIADE LORIKEET CHICK (*Trichoglossus haematod aberrans*)

vegetation, was found unharmed on the ground. It was just beginning to feather and after being hand-reared by the Curator for about three weeks was re-released into the Tropical House. It can be distinguished from the adults as it has very light, almost white, plumage. So far as is known this is only the second time the Jerdon's Starling has been bred in the British Isles. Another pair of this species have a nest in the same house and at the present time are feeding young.

A Spectacled Owl (*Pulsatrix perspicillata*) has been received from Jersey Zoo in exchange for one of ours on a special loan basis. The sexing of Spectacled Owls is very difficult and depends as much on observations of their habits as anything else. For some time we were convinced that our two birds were both females and this was more or less confirmed during the earlier part of the present season as the number of eggs laid was more than one female would produce. Clutches have been laid for three years and the birds have made nests and incubated but the eggs have always been infertile. Jersey Zoo were equally as convinced that both their Spectacled Owls were males. They had observed displaying but neither bird had attempted nest building. The solution was obvious!

The first Spectacled Owl arrived at Chester Zoo from South America as a chick in July 1967 and a year later was joined by the other. The young of this species are delightful with fluffy white down contrasting with a mask of black around the eyes. It is generally believed that Spectacled Owls attain adult plumage at five years of age but judging by our birds this would appear to be much earlier, at three to four years.

The Spectacled Owl lives in dense jungle in Central and South America. It is nocturnal and secretive in habits though fairly plentiful over its range. Specimens are not seen often in captivity



JERDON'S STARLING (*Sturnus burmanicus*) LEAVING NESTBOX IN TROPICAL HOUSE

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

CHESTER ZOO

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

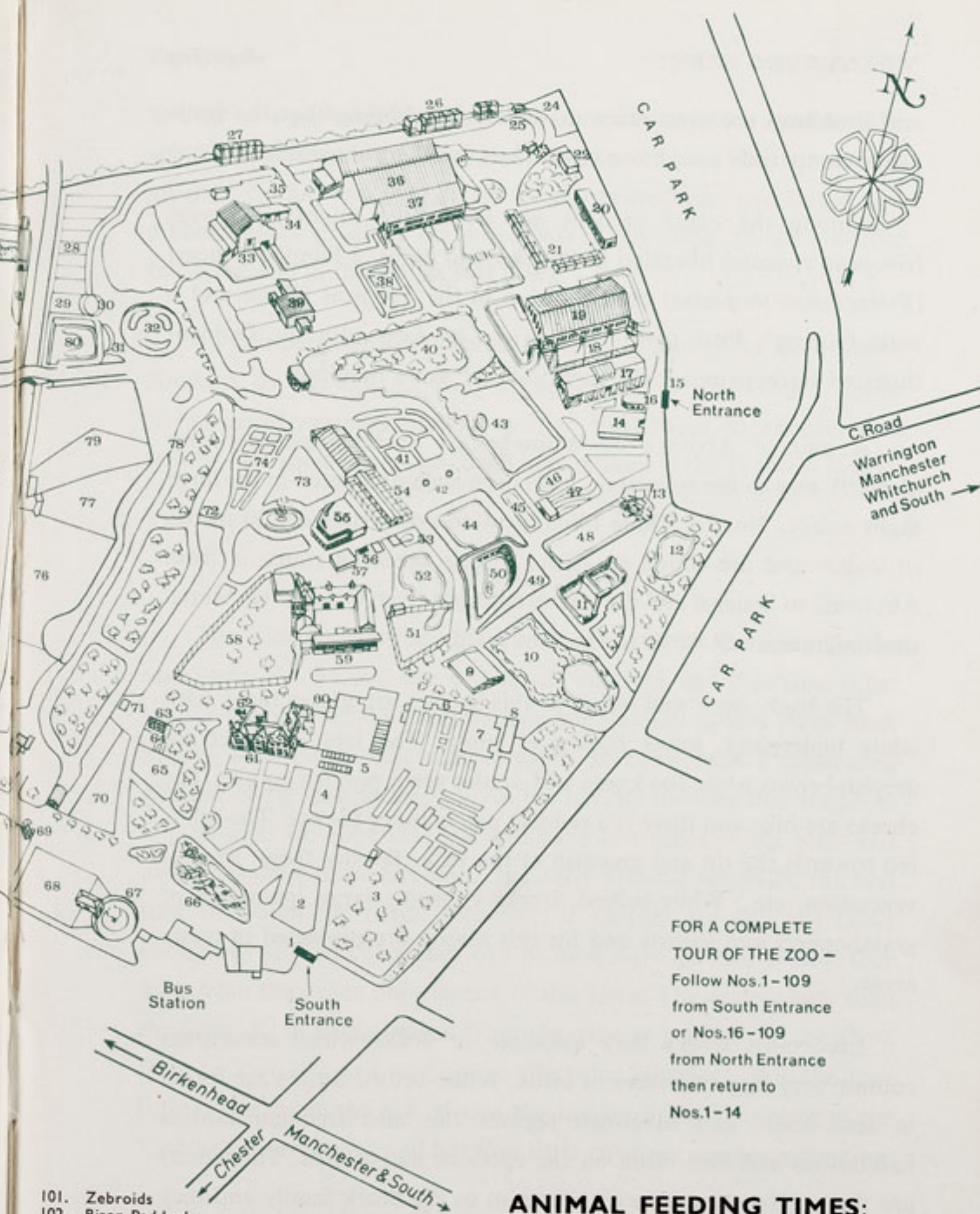
TO LECTURE HALL
(PRIVATE)

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|--------------------------------|
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| 109. Antelope Enclosure |

Animals may be moved from
time to time



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

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

and breedings are even rarer so we are just hoping that the birds prove compatible and, more important, are the right sexes!

Among the other arrivals are a pair of Diamond Doves (*Geopelia cuneata*) liberated in the Oakfield flight, a Banded Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) on exhibition in the Tropical House and a male Gurney's Pitta (*Pitta gurneyi*) to be seen with the Golden-throated Barbets in a lower aviary of the same building.

A pair of Abdim's or White-bellied Storks (*Sphenorynchus abdimii*), new to the collection, have been accommodated in the large flight aviary, No. 18. These birds grow to approximately 30 inches in length and are found in Africa. Their breeding range is from Abyssinia to Senegal and the Cameroons but from October to March they migrate southwards to the Transvaal.

The back, neck and wings of this species are glossy black with white underparts, lower back and rump. The legs and feet are greyish-brown while the knees and ankles are a pinkish colour. The cheeks are blue and there is a reddish patch under the eye. The bill is red towards the tip and greenish at the base. Besides frogs, lizards, vegetation, etc., White-bellied Storks consume large quantities of grasshoppers and locusts and for this reason are protected in many areas.

Like most storks they associate in flocks which sometimes contain very large numbers of birds. White-bellied Storks are found in semi-desert and savannah regions but also frequent human habitations and nest often on the roofs of native huts. Their nests are the untidy piles of twigs common to the Stork family and they lay from two to four eggs.

A newly arrived pair of Moustached Parrakeets (*Psittacula alexandri fasciata*) are already showing interest in a nesting log placed

in their aviary. Adult birds measure some fifteen inches long and the species originates from India and Southern China. They are mainly green in colour with lilac on the head, upper cheeks and throat and a broad black stripe on the lower part of the cheek. In the male the bill is red and in the female it is black.

In company with a number of animals sent to us from South America by Lt. Col. C. R. Rubenstein was a Red-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos tucanus*) which has been introduced to another also sent by him some years ago. Both may be seen in the Tropical House.

GENERAL NEWS

The Lioness is bringing her two cubs out of the den into the enclosure, No. 91, but she is intensely cautious and if anyone other than a member of staff approaches, she quickly carries them back inside. This means that visitors catch no more than a frustrating glimpse of the disappearing tip of her tail. By the time this magazine is published we hope that she will have lost some of her fears and allow her cubs more freedom. The early evening would be the best time to watch for them. However, if visitors are still not lucky enough to see the cubs, they can at least have an idea of how they look from the cover photograph of this issue. The male which sired the litter, Kim, is segregated from the cubs as yet but can see them from his own den and we hope to effect this introduction in the near future. Nearby in the Cat House the female Puma has none of the Lioness's reservations and her four little cubs are a great attraction.

In last month's issue it was reported that a Viscacha had been born. It has since been discovered that the litter contained two young and both are males. They can be seen in the Small Mammal House where the group of Viscachas consists now of eight animals.

We mentioned last month that a pair of Wagtails had nested and reared five young on a bench in one of the greenhouses. They have returned and built another nest a short distance from the first. The gardeners have surrounded this with plants to provide cover for the pair and the hen has laid six eggs.

One of two pairs of Common Rheas has been transferred to another enclosure. Previously all these birds lived together in one of the waterfowl enclosures, but it soon became obvious that this arrangement was not conducive to rearing young. Both hens were laying and the males, which in this species incubate the eggs, were scraping nests. Unfortunately both were so anxious to sit on the eggs that they began pushing each other off the nests and squabbles resulted. With the element of competition removed it is hoped that their attempts will now be more successful.

In 1970 Meg, one of the older Chimpanzees in our group, gave birth to a female which the keepers named Sue. As she has been with all her other offspring, she was an excellent mother during Sue's early months and the baby thrived but recently we have encountered the same old problem, Meg's refusal to wean her daughter onto solid food. Naturally this would result in stunted growth and eventual death if the youngster was not removed.

Meg and Sue shared their enclosure with a female named Jane and her baby, Kate, and it was decided that the best course of action was to remove both little Chimps. They had played together constantly and would undoubtedly miss each other's company if they were separated. The operation was delayed until the last possible moment and was effected with little difficulty. The mothers soon recovered and have now joined the group of adult Chimpanzees. Sue and Kate were transferred to the ape nursery where they are being cared for by one of the keepers. They were nervous at first but adapted quickly to their new home and already Sue is showing the benefits of a balanced diet.

The photograph on the right shows the Spotted Eagle Owl chick hatched during May.



SPOTTED EAGLE OWL CHICK (*Bubo africanus*)

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

AQUARIUM NOTES

The Koran Angelfish (*Pomacanthus semicirculatus*) gets its name from markings on its body which are said to represent words in Arabic from the sacred book of the Mohammedans. A specimen of this species can now be seen in the marine section of the Aquarium. The waters of the Indo-Pacific are the home of the Koran Angelfish which can grow to a length of fifteen inches. The young are bright blue with white stripes which alter position as the fishes grow and eventually become broken to form the "Arabic words".

Exhibited in the same tank as the Malayan Angelfish (*Mono-dactylus sebae*) are new specimens of another marine species, the Bannerfish (*Heniochus acuminatus*). These very attractive fishes attain a length of ten inches and are also found in Indo-Pacific waters. Their bodies are barred with black and white and they have long white dorsal fins and yellowish tail fins.

In this tank also visitors can see a Butterfly Fish (*Chaetodon auriga*) which has a distribution from the Red Sea to the East Indies and on across the Pacific to Hawaii. Butterfly Fish belong to one of the largest of the coral fish families and owe their name to their brightly coloured bodies. The species on exhibition has criss-crossed lines on its body, a yellow and black tail and black stripe through the eye.

Found in the coastal waters of East Africa, the little Domino Damsels (*Dascyllus trimaculatus*) are easy to identify since their bodies are black with just three white spots. New specimens of these and Yellow-tailed Blue Damsels (*Pomacentrus melanochir*) from the East Indies were introduced recently to a tank containing Humbug Damsels (*Dascyllus aruanus*) also from the East Indies.

Two half-grown Giant Gouramies (*Osphronemus goramy*) have been released into a tank containing Bony-lipped Barbs and

Metynnis. Since the adult length of these fishes is approximately two feet, they are not a species found in most domestic tanks but are ideal and interesting exhibits for the larger aquarium. Their natural home is in the Sunda Islands of the East Indies where they are caught by the local peoples and are considered extremely palatable. It is the male of the species which is responsible for the young. He builds a nest of bubbles and having enticed the female to lay her eggs, catches them up and deposits them in the nest. Then he chases her away and continues alone the task of guarding the eggs and later the fry until they are a few days old.

The Piranhas are always a popular exhibit in the Aquarium, most probably because of their sinister reputation. Among the latest additions were three of these dangerous fishes which inhabit the Amazon River. Their voracity was attested by the fact that a small skull, which the keeper had placed in the tank feeling that it would be a fitting adornment, was quickly demolished by the Piranhas. Some visitors have remarked that the Piranhas do not look very vicious but their secret lies in their exceptionally strong, sharp teeth. If a shoal falls on a carcass it will be stripped to the bone in a very short time.

Since the last Aquarium News the Axolotls have spawned once more and we have bred Goldfish, Paradise Fish and Marbled Angelfish. Most of the fry are off show in nursery tanks but three young Marbled Angelfish can be seen in a tank with Cardinal Tetra. These Angelfish have magnificent long fins and are a variety of the Common Angelfish (*Pterophyllum scalare*) from the Amazon. In their own tank the parent fishes have laid more eggs.

As the Rockhopper Penguins have rarely used the deep swimming tank adjoining their enclosure, No. 47, it was decided to repaint the tank and establish a display of young Trout. The two species on show are the American Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) and the Rainbow Trout (*Salmo gairdneri irideus*). The American

Brook Trout was introduced to England and Europe during the last century from eastern North America. Measuring between 8 and 9 inches at the moment they can grow to about 14 or 15 inches.

The Rainbow Trout is a native of western North America and of course has been released into rivers all over the world. The young Rainbow Trout now on exhibition are about the same length as the Brook Trout but will grow much larger, up to three and a half feet.

As an added attraction at feeding time the keeper suspends a piece of meat about three inches above the tank and the Trout leap out of the water to reach it. When the experiment was first tried the fishes misjudged the distance to the meat and flopped back into the water. The mistake was soon remedied and now they fasten their jaws onto the meat, becoming suspended until they succeed in tearing off a chunk of flesh. Needless to say, it was necessary to erect a grill to separate the new display from the Rockhopper Penguins!

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 shops. 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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