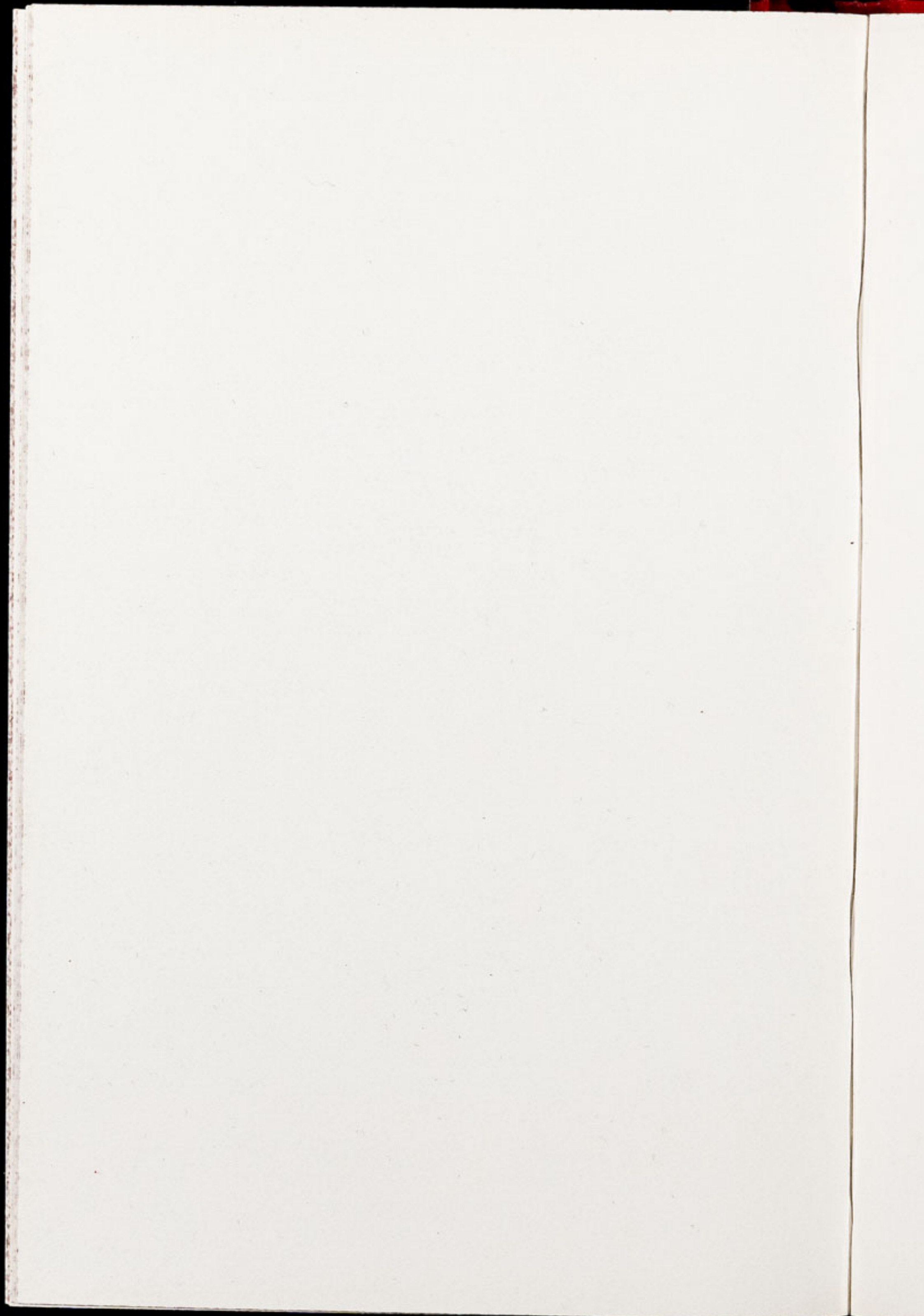




CHESTER ZOO NEWS
AND GUIDE

November 1970

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The North of England Zoological Society

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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COVER: *Mountain Gorilla 'Mukisi'.*

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

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ARRIVALS

We have been presented with a pair of Plains Viscachas (*Lagostomus maximus*) which are on exhibition in the Small Mammal House. This species is found in Buenos Aires State, Argentina, where it inhabits areas of scrub and grassland. It is a rodent, belonging to the same family as the Chinchilla and four species of Mountain Viscacha.

The Plains Viscacha grows up to 2 feet in length which includes about 8 inches of furry tail. The head is large and has broad black and white bands across the muzzle. On the back the fur is greyish and on the underparts it is white. There are four digits on the front paws and three toes bearing sharp claws on the hind limbs. The female Viscacha is rather smaller than the male.

These are highly social animals which live in colonies of up to thirty individuals, each dominated by an adult male. The home of the colony is a complex system of burrows having several entrances and known as a viscachera. The burrows are kept very clean by the Viscachas, all refuse being carried to the surface and deposited on the mound of earth produced by their excavations. In addition they seem to decorate this mound with sticks, stones, lumps of mud or dung and even objects dropped by humans. Some viscacheras are in use for many years, even centuries, and they are often shared by other animals, particularly the burrowing owls, snakes and lizards.

Plains Viscachas are nocturnal. Their diet in the wild consists of grasses, roots and seeds and since they have insatiable appetites, large areas of grassland can be cleared of vegetation very quickly. Added to this is the fact that most of the Pumas, which preyed a great deal on the Viscachas, have been driven from the area and are no longer a check on their numbers. Much of the pampas is used as grazing land and the Viscachas' habits bring them into direct conflict with the farmers. Their fur is of no economic value so they have been declared as pests and attempts to exterminate them are in progress.

March is the breeding season and the gestation period ranges from 149 to 162 days. There is usually only one litter of two young per year.

The Viscachas have settled down very quickly in the Mammal House and are being fed a diet of hay, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, rat pellets and a small quantity of dog biscuits.

BIRD NOTES

From Australia we have acquired four young Emus (*Dromaius novae-hollandiae*). These have been accommodated in quarters at the rear of the Monkey House.

Other acquisitions are two pairs of Quaker Parrakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*), a species which originates from grassland areas of Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina and Uruguay. Quaker Parrakeets are unique among the Parrot-like birds in that they build nests. Constructed entirely of twigs and rather untidy in appearance, the nests are large and usually have several compartments each inhabited by a pair of Parrakeets. The compartments are occupied continuously, those birds which are not rearing young using them for sleeping.

The Quaker Parrakeets can be seen in one of the Rainbow Aviaries. They are green birds with grey breasts and throats, and emit the most piercing shrieks. In the wild they are extremely gregarious and the birds can usually be seen together.

Although an interesting species, the Quaker Parrakeet has been labelled as a pest in South America. The advances in farming have led to a considerable increase in the Parrakeet population. Besides an abundant food supply from crops, there are also more nesting sites available as many trees have been planted. The damage caused to crops by the birds has resulted in a campaign to destroy them whenever possible.

Several years ago we had a flock of Quaker Parrakeets which lived freely in the Zoo grounds but with the expansion of the gardens it was necessary to return them to aviaries.

PYGMY HIPPOS

There are only two living species in the Hippopotamus family, the Common Hippo and the Pygmy Hippo. At first glance the Pygmy Hippo (*Choeropsis liberiensis*) might be taken for a young Common Hippo (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) but closer investigation reveals several fundamental differences resulting in it being classed in a separate genus. The head is far more rounded in shape and there is only one pair of lower incisor teeth instead of the two pairs present in the larger Hippo. The eyes are positioned on the side of the head and do not protrude like those of the Common species; also the nostrils are rounded instead of slit-like.

The Pygmy Hippo measures from 2½ft. to 3 feet high at the shoulder and up to 6 feet in length. Its thick hide is a shiny dark greyish-black colour with lighter underparts. On each foot there are four toes bearing sharp nails, the Hippopotamus family being a member of the Order Artiodactyla or Even-toed Hoofed Mammals. Like the Common species, the Pygmy Hippo is said to "sweat blood". In fact the "blood" is a thick oily substance containing red pigment which is secreted from pores in the skin. When this lies on the surface of the body it appears red and very much like blood. The purpose of the secretion is to protect the skin when the animal is immersed in water for long periods or in very dry conditions.

This species is found in West Africa in parts of Portuguese and French Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Ivory Coast and possibly Nigeria. It inhabits dense swampy jungle and if alarmed will bolt into the undergrowth rather than make for water as the Common Hippo does. The diet of the Pygmy Hippo consists of shoots, leaves and fallen fruit which it finds on the floor of the forest. Being a very secretive, nocturnal animal which leads a fairly solitary existence, the Pygmy Hippo is rarely seen and not a great deal is known about its habits. Throughout its range it is sufficiently scarce to warrant inclusion in the I.U.C.N. Red Data Book. However it does adapt to captivity extremely well and several have been bred in zoos.

A single young is born after a gestation period lasting from 201 to 210 days and individuals have lived as long as 40 years.



PIGMY HIPPOS (*Choeropsis liberiensis*)

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

Our Pygmy Hippos have an enclosure and pool in the Tropical House with a connecting outside run. The female "Phyllis" was born in a zoo and arrived at Chester in 1956, while the male, "Max", was captured on the Ivory Coast, arriving here in 1963.

A few months ago the gentleman who captured "Max" paid a visit to the Zoo. When he arrived at "Max's" enclosure he spoke a few words of French to the animal and although he had not seen the Hippo for several years there was no doubt that it recognised him.

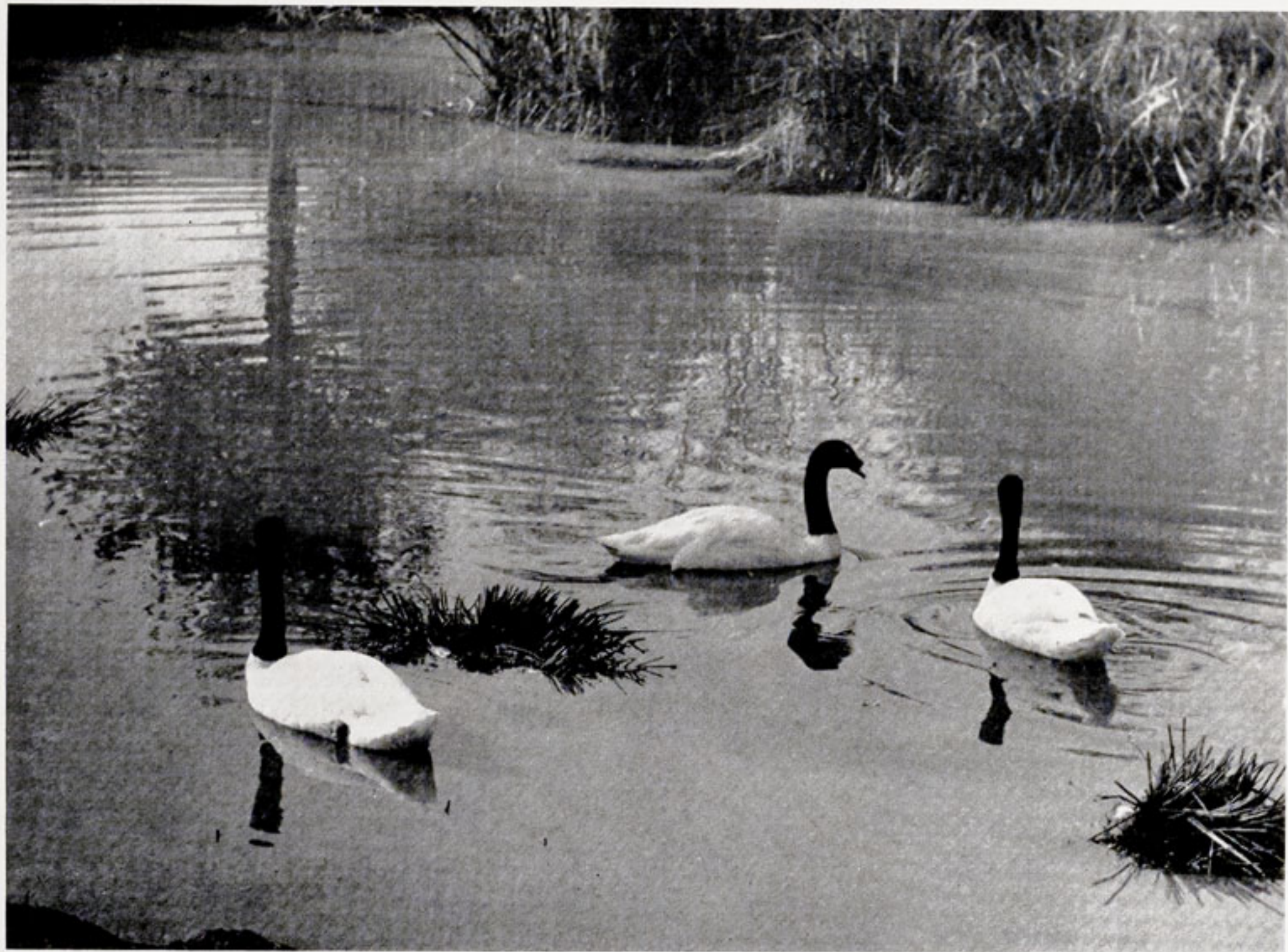
BLACK-NECKED SWANS

The beautiful Black-necked Swans (*Cygnus melanocoryphus*) on the right might almost be on a lake in their native South America. In fact they can be seen on the pond in the Sitatunga enclosure, No. 86 on the Plan. Their arrival as part of a consignment from Montevideo Zoo was reported in the September issue of the "Zoo News".

HYAENAS

The Hyaena family consists of four species, the Spotted, Striped and Brown Hyaenas and the Aardwolf. In appearance these animals look rather like mis-shapen dogs but are more closely related to the cat family. With the exception of the Aardwolf which is adapted for a different way of life, Hyaenas are carrion-eaters and have tremendously powerful jaws which make short work of crushing the toughest bones. Their stomachs are capable of digesting bone and gristle quite easily. The forequarters are extremely muscular and strong but the back slopes down to comparatively weak hind limbs. In all four species there are scent glands underneath the base of the tail.

At one time it was generally thought that Hyaenas were total scavengers and this earned them the reputation of being cowardly, skulking creatures but this is not entirely true. They frequently hunt and kill their own food. The Spotted Hyaenas in particular form packs and prey on large game although it is said that if the intended victim defends itself they do not press the attack. A large group has been seen to drive Lions from a kill.



BLACK-NECKED SWANS (*Cygnus melanocoryphus*)

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

GUIDE TO ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES

LIONS—3 p.m. except Fridays

BEARS—3-15 p.m.

POLAR BEARS—4-0 p.m.

- | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. MAIN ENTRANCE | 31. Beavers | 63. Cheetahs |
| 2. Bird Enclosure | 32. Giraffe House | 64. Malayan Bears |
| 3. Wapiti Paddock | 33. Camel House | 65. Animal Enclosure |
| 4. Lesser Pandas | 34. Waterbus Halt | 66. Aviary |
| 5. Aviaries | 35. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL AND REPTILE HOUSES | 67. Wallaby Enclosure |
| 6. Milk Bar | 36. Chimpanzee House | 68. Island |
| 7. CORONATION HALL | 37. Chimpanzee Islands | 69. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE |
| 8. CLOAKROOM, TOILETS, FIRST AID, MOTHER AND BABY ROOM | 38. Floribunda Rose Gardens | 70. Islands |
| 9. CAFETERIA | 39. Zebra House | 71. Waterbus Halt |
| 10. CAFETERIA | 41. Gibbon Island | 72. Flower Gardens |
| 11. Picnic Lawns | 42. H.T. Rose Garden | 73. ROSE GARDENS |
| 12. Bears | 43. | 74. Red Lechwe |
| 13. Animal Enclosure | 44. Waterfowl Enclosure | 75. Red Lechwe |
| 13a. Kiosk | 45. Pelicans | 76. Deer or Antelope Enclosures |
| 14. NORTH ENTRANCE | 46. Flamingos | 77. Waterbus Halt |
| 15. AQUARIUM | 47. Waterfowl Enclosure | 78. Zebra and Deer Enclosure |
| 16. PUSH CHAIRS, WHEEL CHAIRS, FIRST AID, LOST CHILDREN | 47a. Penguins and Otters | 79. Kamchatka Bears |
| 17. Parrot House | 48. Sea Lion Pool | 80. Elephant Paddock |
| 17a. Large Flight Aviary | 49. Rock Garden | 81. Hippo Paddock |
| 18. APE HOUSE | 50. Polar Bears | 82. PACHYDERM HOUSE |
| 19. RAINBOW CAFE AND SHOP | 51. Tigers | 83. Tapir Enclosure |
| 20. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn | 52. Waterfowl Enclosure | 84. Small Mammal House |
| 21. TOILETS | 52a. Anteater | 85. Waterfowl Enclosure |
| 21a. Tuatara House | 53. BIRD HOUSE | 86. Antelope and Cattle |
| 22. Peccaries | 53a. Nursery | 87. Storks and Ostriches |
| 23. Waterbus Halt | 54. FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT | 88. Monkey Enclosures |
| 24. Birds of Prey Aviary | 55. TOILETS | 88a. Lion and Tiger Enclosure |
| 25. Birds of Prey Aviary | 56. Lions | 89. Cat House |
| 26. Owls | 57. NEW ZOO SHOP | 89a. Jaguars |
| 27. Jackal and Hyena Enclosures | 58. TOILETS | 90. MONKEY HOUSE |
| 28. Animal Enclosure | 59. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT | 91. Waterfowl |
| 29. Porcupines and Raccoons | 60. G.P.O. Telephone Kiosk | |
| 30. Coypus | 61. Animal Enclosure | |
| | 62. Animal Enclosure | |



- | |
|-----------------------------|
| 91a. Highland Cattle |
| 92. Waterfowl and Wallabies |
| 92a. Llamas and Alpacas |
| 93. Cranes and Waterfowl |
| 93a. Zebu cows |
| 94. Bison Paddock |
| 95. Deer Paddock |
| 96. Eland and Marmots |
| 97. Rhino Paddocks |
| 98. RHINO HOUSE |
| 99. TOILETS |
| 100. Mpila Snack-Bar |
| 101. Antelope Enclosure |
| 102. Antelope Enclosure |

Animals may be moved from time to time

Though sometimes active during the day, Hyaenas hunt mainly at night, locating their food by smell. When not hunting, they lie up in dens which may be either in caves or burrows.

The Spotted or Laughing Hyaena (*Hyaena crocuta*) is found over most of Africa, south of the Sahara Desert. Standing up to 36 inches at the shoulder, it is the largest of the Hyaenas and also the most aggressive and vociferous. Its coarse fur is yellowish grey with brown or black spots and it lacks the erectile mane which is found in the other species. The male and female external reproductive organs are very similar in appearance and this gave rise to an ancient belief that Spotted Hyaenas were hermaphrodite. The famous "laughing" noise is made during the breeding season and at other times when the animal is excited.

If unable to locate carrion or kill an animal itself, the Spotted Hyaena will eat fish and insects, particularly locusts.

This species has a gestation period of approximately 110 days and usually there are one or two young in a litter. Life expectancy is about 25 years.

The Striped Hyaena (*Hyaena hyaena*) is smaller and less stocky than the Spotted Hyaena with a range in Southern Asia, Asia Minor and N.E. Africa. Also it lacks the ferocity of the Spotted species. In colour the coat is greyish brown with dark stripes and there is a mane along the back and neck. Normally this lies flat but is erected when the animal is frightened or angry. Typically the Striped Hyaena feeds on carrion and also catches small prey. The gestation period is approximately 90 days and the litter numbers from 2 to 6 young.

The Brown Hyaena (*Hyaena brunnea*) is very similar to the Striped in build and temperament although its range is in South Africa and is well separated from that of the Striped species. Its long coat is dark brown apart from light greyish colouration on the neck head and paws. In addition to eating carrion and small prey, this animal scavenges along beaches in search of crabs, dead fish and other marine life washed ashore.



STRIPED HYAENA (*Hyaena hyaena*)

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

The Brown Hyaena has been persecuted for many years by hunters and also farmers, since some animals take livestock. The result has been its inclusion in the I.U.C.N. Red Data Book list of endangered species. At the present time it seems that sufficient individuals exist under protection in nature reserves and parks to ensure the survival of the Brown Hyaena but in populated areas it will soon be eradicated.

The fourth member of this family is the Aardwolf (*Proteles cristatus*) which differs in several ways from the true Hyaenas. It is considerably smaller than the other species, measuring only some 20 inches at the shoulder, its ears are relatively larger and its face narrower. Also there are five toes on the forefoot instead of four as in the Hyaenas. However, the most striking difference is found in the structure of the skull and teeth. The skull is much weaker and, apart from the canines, the teeth are small and spaced widely apart. The reason for this is that the Aardwolf lives on a diet of insects particularly termites, and does not require the bone-crushing talents of the Hyaenas. When termites are scarce the Aardwolf's diet is supplemented by beetles, small rodents, birds and occasionally the eggs of ground nesting birds. Its fur is yellowish grey with dark stripes and black colouration on the lower legs. There is also a mane.

Since it is a secretive, nocturnal animal, the Aardwolf is rarely seen. Its range is in South and East Africa in open bushland country but nowhere is it thought to be numerous. During the daytime it sleeps in a burrow, either of its own making or that borrowed from another species, often the Aardvark. In defence the Aardwolf will bite with its canine teeth and emit an evil-smelling musky fluid from the anal glands. The young average three to a litter and are born in the burrow.

At the Zoo we have a pair of Striped Hyaenas which can be seen in one of the enclosures marked No. 27 on the Zoo plan. A female of the Spotted species named "Gladys" died recently after having lived at Chester for 18 years.



ALPACA (*Lama pacos*)

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

ALPACAS

Rather surprisingly, the Alpaca in the above photograph is preparing for a mud bath. Firstly, in the manner shown it splashes water from the tub over itself and onto the concrete which surrounds the indoor quarters. The water drains down the concrete onto the earth and is trampled into mud by the Alpaca. Then the animal wallows in the mire it has produced. In the wild this is a common practice amongst many species which rids them of lice and other parasites living in the fur. At the Zoo the habit is more instinctive as veterinary treatment combats the problem.

GENERAL NEWS

The Brindled Gnus have taken up residence in one of the new paddocks at the rear of the Jaguar enclosures. Since several calves were born this year, the herd required more extensive indoor accommodation during the winter and this is available in the new enclosure.

The paddock which the Gnus vacated is now occupied by the Nilgai.

On fine days the three Puma cubs may be seen in their outside area in the Cat House. At the time of writing they are only eight weeks old and look like large spotted kittens. Our breeding record for Pumas is very good, with about 24 cubs being born in the last 10 years.

The Coatis have been transferred to quarters in the Mammal and Camel Houses for the winter months.

FUTURE CONSTRUCTION WORK

Work is about to commence on the reconstruction of the Sea Lion Pool and details of the new design will be published in a later issue.

The use to which the site of the old Parrot House will be put has not been definitely decided but it is thought that it will be converted into a Tortoise enclosure. The area would include a small Tortoise House with underground heating so that the Tortoises could remain active during the winter.

NEW CAPYBARA ENCLOSURE

In the photograph on the right are three Capybaras (*Hydrochoerus capybara*) which were received two months ago in an exchange with Montevideo Zoo. At the moment they are borrowing one of the Pygmy Hippo enclosures in the Tropical House while their new home is being constructed on the site of the old Flamingo enclosure.

The new enclosure covers an area of approximately 650 square yards and is planted with numerous willow trees which of course will have to be protected from the Capybaras. As they are semi-



CAPYBARAS (*Hydrochoerus capybara*)

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

aquatic animals and water is essential in maintaining their good health, a large pool for swimming has been provided in the centre of the enclosure. During their first few days at Chester Zoo the new Capybaras did not have access to a pool and instead were provided with large tubs of water. The sight of one of these animals sitting with all four feet in a tub was amusing, to say the least!

In one corner of the site are the indoor quarters, built of sandstone and having large windows through which the public will be able to view the Capybaras whilst they are inside. The house will be moderately heated.

The area has been surrounded with a fox-proof fence as it is intended to keep various specimens of wildfowl in the enclosure also. Like the Capybara these will be South American species, such as the Coscoroba and Black-necked Swans.



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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