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Chester
ZOO
Life

Chez Nous



Chester Zoo Life is published by the North of England Zoological Society,
Upton-by-Chester Cheshire CH2 1LH
Telephone (0244) 380280
Director: Dr. M. R. Brambell Editor: Pat Cade.

Discount Tickets

I want to thank the very many members who responded to my suggestion about discounted tickets. It was very heartening to find out that the idea has received virtually unanimous support, once I had reassured that the Membership privilege of up to 20 pre-paid tickets at half price is to be maintained.

It was also very heartening to know that this column can be an effective way of seeking members' views on special issues.

The new discount tickets are enclosed with this mailing. I am asking all members to use them not just as a means to be nice to special friends and relations, but as a way of helping us to market the zoo, by helping us to attract new visitors. By giving a couple of

tickets to a family group, you may encourage them to bring many more people – a sort of priming the pump. If you feel your friends and neighbours are beginning to sponge on you for your tickets, I am sure you can work out stratagems to politely tell them that they've had enough already!

Council will be wanting to see how the scheme makes out, and for that reason we are not going to say that it is to become, for ever and a day, a fixed privilege of membership, but rather a way in which members can help us, and we can help members, to market the zoo.

"The Ark"

No doubt many of you will have seen the series of programmes on BBC2 called "The Ark," featuring London Zoo. The critics have tried to say it was an allegory about the BBC itself; perhaps it was. I found it very unpleasant, for it seemed to show so much that I thought was unprofessional at all levels of zoo work nowadays. Some people came across as very professional and caring, and many scenes were equally reassuring. But the effect on me was one of sadness. I don't believe that people can really

forget that a television team is filming them, and for it not to affect their judgment.

The television camera does not convey the same balance as the eyes and ears on the spot perceive. It was an odd decision to give any outside commentator such a mandate. The elephant Thi-Hi-Way was filmed being persuaded into the wagon for transport to Chester. At least her arrival here was a quiet and dignified event – but I am glad we were left to manage it without the distraction of a media team.

One Hundred Club

On this page you will find details of our new "One Hundred Club" and included in this mailing is a banker's order relating to this. It's a way in which those who want to can have some pleasure whilst helping to raise funds for the zoo.

Please do not feel that this is yet another thing you ought to be doing. It's there for you to take part in if you want to. Providing we get at least one hundred people taking part, we will be going ahead.

So how about joining our Chairman, Beatrice Jones – whose idea it was – and me in the first One Hundred club? We have so much work to do to keep the zoo and its animals in the forefront and this idea can provide very real help whilst offering the participants very reasonable odds of winning some handsome prizes.

WILL YOU BE ONE IN A HUNDRED?

We invite members, adopters and staff to join a new fund-raising scheme – the Chester Zoo 100 Club.

The idea is to establish 100 members, who join the scheme by signing a banker's order for £5.00 per month, in favour of the North of England Zoological Society.

If – and only if – we achieve 100, the forms will be sent to the banks and the scheme will begin. This will achieve a monthly income of £500, and a yearly income of £6,000.

Half of this will go to the Chester Zoo Trust Fund. The other half will form a prize fund for the 100 participants. Each month – from May '93 – there will be a draw. The first prize will be £100, and the second prize will be £50.00. In alternate months (from June onwards) there will be two second prizes – i.e. 2 x £50.00.

In June '94 and subsequent Junes, the first prize, instead of £100, will be £1,000.

If you can follow this arithmetic, you will see there are 11 x £100 prizes; 1 x £1,000, and 18 x £50 – making £3,000 in all.

Wherever possible, the draw will be made at members' meetings.

Should there be more than 100 would-be participants, we will increase the prize money by £30 p.a. per additional member, and increase the number of prizes rather than the size of the prizes. Thus if we have 200 members subscribing, we will have exactly double the number of prizes listed above.

So there's a chance of a big prize in mid-summer, and regular worthwhile prizes each month. The odds on a 100 club member winning in a year are

almost 1 : 3.

You will find a banker's order enclosed with this mailing. Please fill in the details, and return it to:

One Hundred Club,
Chester Zoo,
Upton-by-Chester CH2 1LH.

We will only send these to your banks if we receive a minimum of one hundred, and we will inform you at the same time.

It's a way of supporting the zoo – and having a high chance of winning some welcome cash!

The scheme is limited to members, adopters and staff and cannot be extended beyond them. So if you know anybody who would like to join in, get them to become a member or take out an adoption.

The scheme is not open to Junior Members.

CHESTER ZOO ONE HUNDRED CLUB.



Full details of this scheme are on page 2 of the Spring 93 issue of Chester Zoo Life.

If you would you like to help the zoo and have a one in three chance of a cash prize during the year, please fill in the attached banker's order, and **return it to the zoo -NOT to your bank.**

- * Sign the banker's order for £5.00 per month in favour of the North of England Zoological Society.
- * Each month, starting May 1993, there will be a draw. First prize, £100, second prize £50.
- * Each alternate month (from June 93) there will be two second prizes - i.e. two times £50.
- * In June 1994 and subsequent Junes, the first prize will be £1,000.

The club depends on a minimum of one hundred participants. If we receive fewer applications, we will return your banker's order. If we get more, the number of prizes will be increased.

Half the income from the club goes to the Chester Zoo Trust Fund; the other half is used as prize money.

*Please complete the form below and send it to Chester Zoo, One Hundred Club,
Upton-by-Chester, CH2 1LH. (NOT your bank)*

Name & full address of
YOUR BANK

Please pay to Barclays Bank plc, 30 St Werbergh Street, Chester, CH1 1XB (sort code 20-20-46) for credit of North of England Zoological Society, Trust Fund Account No. 10670626.

Monthly the sum of £5.00 on the first day of May 1993, and a like sum each month until further notice.

Signature -----

Full Name in capitals

Mr\Mrs\Miss\Title -----

Address -----

Account No: to be debited -----

Bank Sort Code: : : : -----

NEW TELEPHONE SYSTEM



If you have called the zoo recently, you will know we have a new telephone system. Calls are now answered automatically, and most enquiries are dealt with, without operator intervention. In the past, the operator's time has been taken up answering questions about opening times and directions, and other incoming calls have sometimes had to wait a long time before being answered.

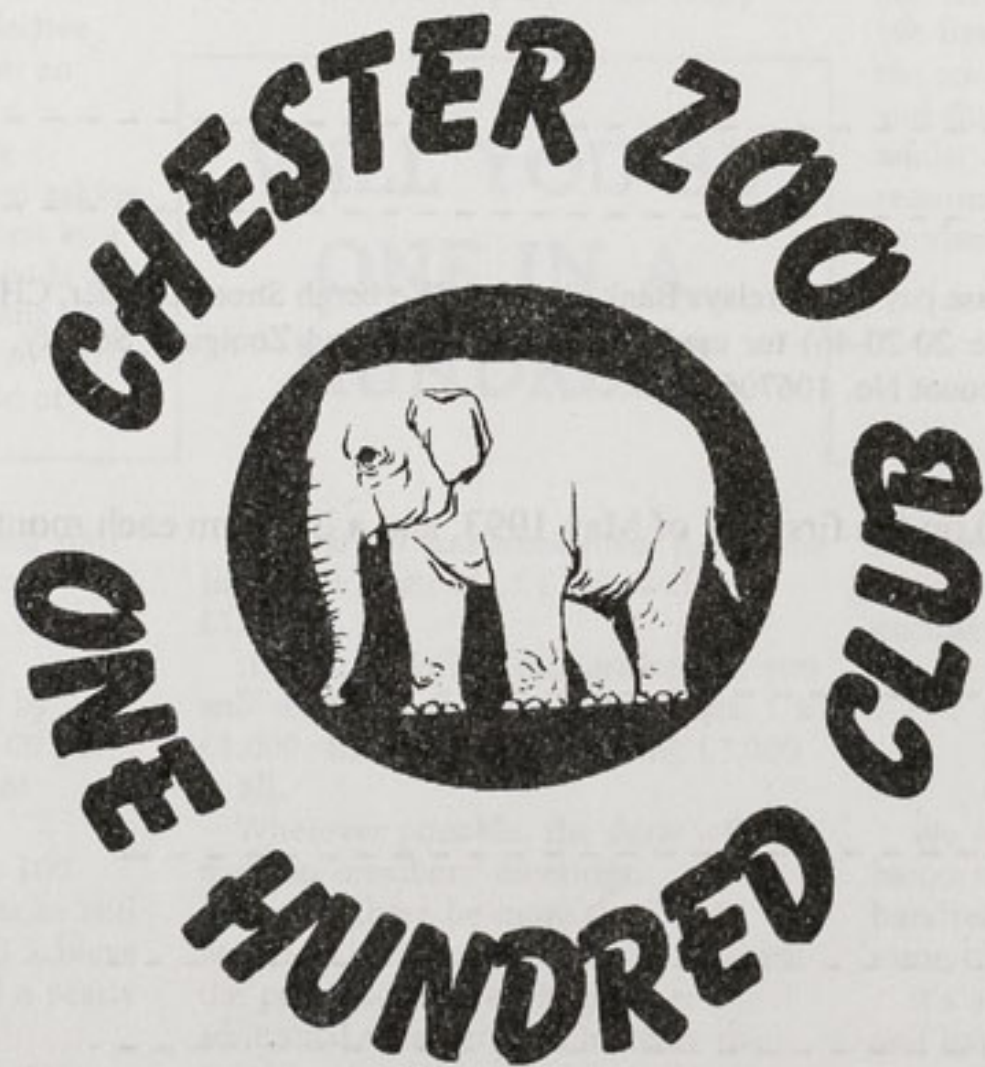
When you ring the zoo, you are asked to make choices by pressing buttons on your phone. Different numbers connect you to different information - for instance, press 7 and you will hear a daily-updated brief weather report for the zoo.

If you press 8 when the recorded announcement begins, you will be transferred to the operator. During business hours, if you know the extension number you wish to contact, press *9, extension number followed by #, and you will get straight through. For instance, the membership office extension is 203. So dial the zoo number - 0244 380280; when the announcement starts, press *9; when the voice starts again, press 203#.

If you have a dial telephone, or one without * and # keys, you will be connected to the operator after about 30 seconds.

It is not as complicated as it sounds, and the system means you won't have to hang on for an unacceptable length of time waiting for someone to answer your call. This has been a real problem in Summer months, when the switchboard is swamped with callers asking for times, prices and directions.

Remember, if you can't get the system to respond, don't ring off! Your call WILL be transferred to the operator automatically if you need personal assistance. And because of the new system, she will have more time to deal with your query.



NOTICE BOARD

MEMBERS' MEETINGS 1993

24 April: 2.30 pm in Lecture Hall. "A Zoo Review" by the Director, Dr. M. R. Brambell.

8 May: A.G.M: 2.30 pm in Lecture Hall. A token admission charge of 50p for meetings covers expenses and includes tea and biscuits.

Please Note: The new access road to the lecture hall from the A41 is now open. Take the road signed "Park and Ride" at the new roundabout close to Mostyn Garage and then follow special zoo signs to the lecture hall, which will be in place for meetings.

MEMBERS' CONCESSIONARY TICKETS PRICE REVISION

These special tickets are still available to members who wish to purchase them as an alternative to the new half-price vouchers. As the zoo entrance price increased at the end of March, there is also an increase in the cost of concessionary tickets.

Adult members may purchase up to 20 tickets each year at half the normal gate price for family and friends. These are sold in blocks of five (two child/OAP tickets count as one of the 20). The prices from 28 March 1993 are:

Adult Tickets: Block of five - £15.00

Child/OAP Tickets: Block of five - 8.75

These tickets must be purchased in advance, through the Membership Office. They are not on sale at the gate. Postal applications are preferred. Please make cheque payable to Chester Zoo and enclose a s.a.e. We sometimes get requests from Junior Members for concessionary tickets. Sorry, Juniors - they are available only to Adult Members

The Fauna and Flora Preservation Society North West Group

Friday 30 April 1993: - Chester Zoo Lecture Theatre. 7.00pm for 7.30. "The Art of Nature"

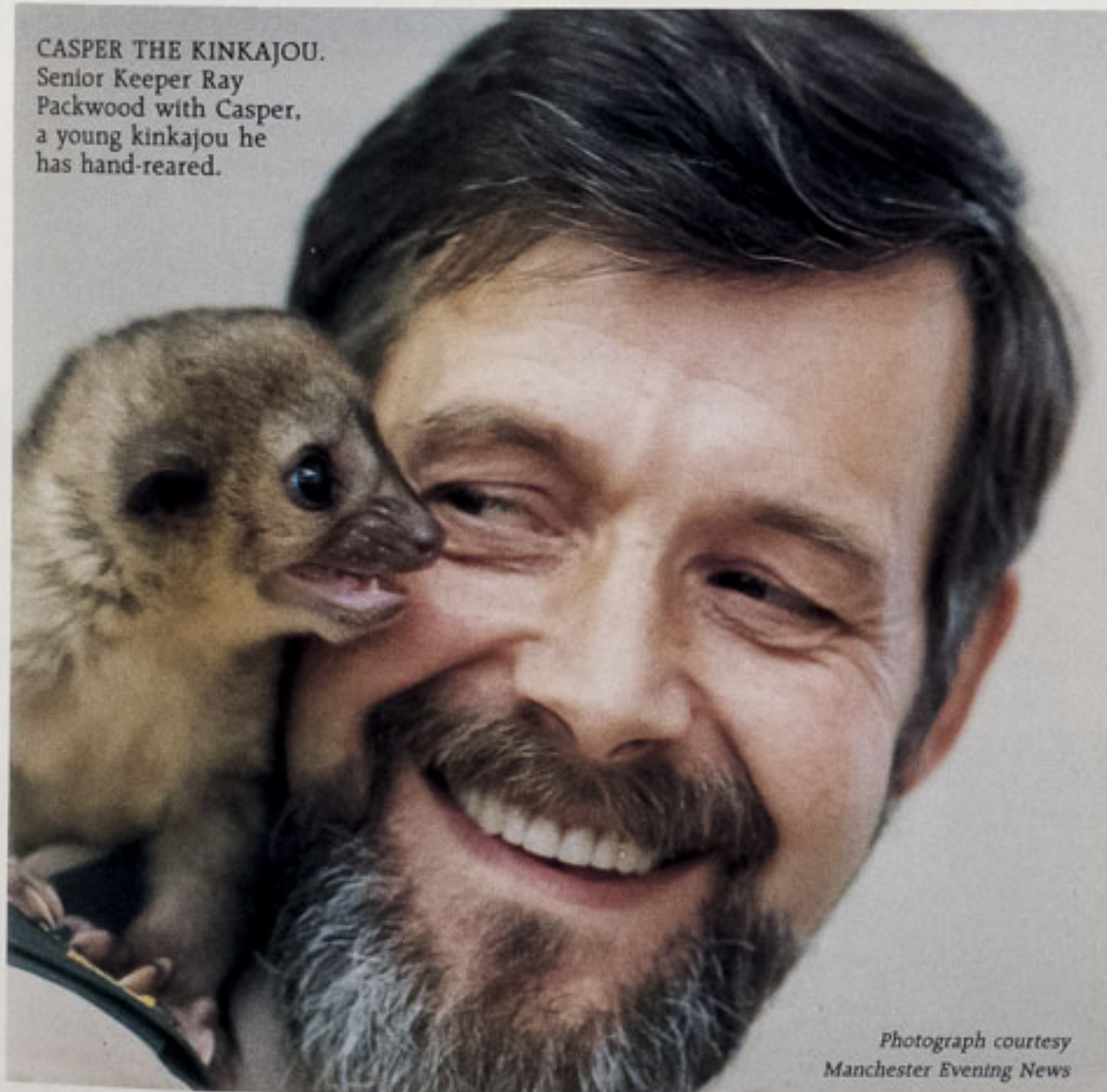
By Bruce Pearson. Bruce Pearson is now a wildlife artist based near Cambridge, having spent several years with the British Antarctic Survey. His work has recently been featured in the BBC Wildlife magazine and he is currently the subject of the television programme "Birdscape" being shown on Channel 4. This will be an excellent chance to gain an insight into the artistic mind of an ardent conservationist.

Ticket prices are £5.00 for FFPS Members and £5.50 for non members. A light buffet supper and wine will be served. Tickets are available on the door, but it is helpful if they are booked in advance through Alan Woodward (Tel: 0244 373312 evenings) or Penny Rudd at the zoo. Please refer to note at the top of this page regarding access to the Lecture Theatre.

Elephant Experiences!

Book Now! Tickets are now available from the Membership Office for the three elephant experience evenings planned this year. Dates are: 3rd June, 1st July and 5th August. Places will be limited to a maximum of 70, and the waiting list from people who were unable to buy tickets last year has been given priority - so act quickly if you plan to come! Special concession prices for members and adopters are £3.00 adult, £2.00 12 - 18 year olds. The event is not suitable for under-twelves. The full price, for the general public, is £6.00 adult, £3.00 for 12 - 18's. Price includes tea and biscuits.

CASPER THE KINKAJOU.
Senior Keeper Ray Packwood with Casper, a young kinkajou he has hand-reared.



Photograph courtesy
Manchester Evening News

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

- 1993 -

This year's photographic competition could be your chance to get into exciting new technology. The first prize winners in the print, slide and junior sections will receive a Kodak Photo CD player - the newest way of looking at your photographs. Photo CD is a new technology which allows images captured on any 35mm film to be transferred in a digital format and stored on a specially developed compact disc.

These discs are then played on Photo CD players, which allow the pictures

to be shown on your television set. The players will also play conventional audio CDs, either through the hi-fi or through the television speakers.

In addition there will be a range of other prizes for runners up in each section.

All photographs for the competition must have been taken in Chester Zoo during 1993. The competition forms will be available at the zoo, or by post from the Marketing Department.



Can You Help?

Keeper John Frost is working on a project on hippos in the British Isles, including information on collections that have kept them in the past. He is hoping to illustrate the project with photographs and would be grateful if any members or adopters could help with pictures taken when there were hippos at Chester Zoo. He is particularly keen on photographs of:

- ★ pygmy hippos in the interior of the old pygmy hippo house.
- ★ pygmy hippos in the enclosure that was in the Tropical House (the area now used by the alligators).
- ★ pygmy hippos in the fenced part of the waterbus canal.

John Frost would be grateful for the loan of any such photographs, and promises to return the originals safely, and to acknowledge any used. Please send them to John at the zoo.

ZOO POO

The press cuttings are still coming in ... from New Zealand, Australia, the Gambia, Dubai, America (North and South), - and practically every other corner of the world! Chester Zoo has never had such world-wide publicity. The reason for all this attention is the rich by-product of our seven Asian elephants - otherwise known as Zoo Poo.

It started as a bit of a joke, and

quickly caught the imagination of shoppers looking for a gift for the "man who has everything." Marketing Secretary Pauline McKee took over an empty office to use as a packing station; the elephant staff shovelled their way through December, and the elephants themselves obligingly produced enough tonnage to fill all the orders!

The photograph shows Mick Jones, with product, and part of the manufacturing team looking on.



Photograph courtesy Manchester Evening News

SANCTUARY FOR CONGO CHIMPS

Just a year ago, in the Spring '92 issue of *Zoo Life*, Chimpanzee Keeper Vince Smith reported on his trip to Brazzaville. He had been invited by the Jane Goodall Institute to help with the rehabilitation of chimpanzees evacuated from Zaire. In November 1992 he returned to Brazzaville to assist in the field work of the Institute.

It hardly seemed a year since I was last in the Congo. Seeing the smiling face of Graziella Cotman was a very reassuring sight. Graziella was running the Chimp Orphanage and she kindly offered to put me up for my three weeks in Brazzaville.

The political climate of the country had changed a great deal since my last trip. There was a newly elected President, a new Prime Minister, and with them new ideas and fresh hopes. Unfortunately another face of politics came to the fore. Bernard Kolela, who had narrowly lost the presidential election to Pascal Lisouba, was loudly voicing his dissatisfaction at the way the country was being run. I had landed in the middle of a power struggle. The normally stable Congo was looking more and more like its politically volatile neighbour, Zaire.

There were countless roadblocks, with soldiers and tanks on every corner. For three days no cars were allowed in the city. During one morning, eight people were killed and 27 injured near the zoo. Although we were advised by the US Embassy to remain indoors, we carried on working as usual in the zoo. The constant crackle of machine gun fire every half hour made the atmosphere very tense!

Confiscation

In the 14 months since my last trip, 17 chimps had been confiscated. It was depressing to see that nothing had changed. Chimps and gorillas were regularly sold as pets in the city, or their dismembered parts were sold as fetishes to the locals in the market. For every young chimp for sale, at least one other (the mother) has died during its capture. Distraught and afraid, the youngster then embarks on a long journey, usually down the Congo River to Brazzaville. They are usually tied around the waist with rope and put in a basket. Many of the chimps at the orphanage bear the scars of this ordeal.



◆ The Chimp Sanctuary at M'Pili

One in particular, a male called Jo – pictured in the Spring 92 edition of *Zoo Life* – was cut to the bone on both sides of his waist and although he contracted tetanus from these wounds, he miraculously survived.

On route to Brazzaville, the hunters normally stop off at their village. It may be several weeks before the chimp reaches his destination. The vast majority die before ever reaching the city. A few lucky ones are confiscated. The ones that are bought as pets will invariably be killed when they become too old.

I was personally involved in two confiscations. On 13 November, I was showing Graziella and her staff how to use the power hose that had been generously donated by Chester Zoo. Marc Attwater, who runs the gorilla orphanage, came to tell me there was a report of a chimp for sale outside the Score supermarket. We arranged to meet near the shop with two agents from the Ministry of Eaux et Forêts. Fortunately the chimp was still there. I picked it up, pretending to be

interested in buying it. It looked in reasonable condition, although a bit dehydrated. At this point the two agents stepped forward producing their papers and officially confiscated the chimp. We quickly got into the car as a crowd was rapidly gathering.

Chimp for sale

A week later I was approached by three men from Zaire. One of them was carrying a bag and asked if I was interested in buying a chimp. I told them I was unable to make that decision, but that if they left the chimp with me and came back the next day, I would arrange for them to meet my boss. I didn't tell them that my "boss" would be an agent for the Eaux et Forêts. I asked them how they had come by the chimp. They naively told me that they had shot the mother in Zaire and had been forced to knock the baby out with a machete because it refused to let go of the dead mother. They returned the next day and the chimp was officially confiscated. Although these hunters get away with



"Pasy" is one of the three chimps confiscated on Vince's last trip to the Congo. He was delighted to see the progress she has made since – as these "before" and "after" photographs show.

just a warning and the confiscation of their animal, this is usually a sufficient deterrent. The sheer waste of their time and energy with no financial reward hopefully puts them off doing it again. A fine would serve no purpose as they are too poor to be able to pay one.

The chimp was a female called Ritha. She was a bag of bones, severely malnourished and dehydrated. Her eyes were badly disorientated and she bore the mark of the machete scar across her head. Sadly, she died three days later.

One of my tasks was to anaesthetise a chimp called Grand Maitre and remove a leadshot pellet from his hand. He had been injured when hunters killed his mother.

Deforestation

Apart from the pressures of poaching, deforestation poses the biggest threat to the continued existence of our closest relative. The World Wide Fund for Nature estimates that unless immediate action is taken, the rainforests of the Congo Basin may disappear by the year 2025.

The logging companies are responsible for carving great chunks out of the forest. These cleared areas are often replaced by plantations of eucalyptus creating the same sterile environment as our coniferous forests in this country. The eucalyptus is a cash crop, and because of its rapid growth it is ready to be harvested within five years.

Another major problem is the rather crude agricultural technique used by the local farmers known as "slash and burn." The indigenous trees are cut down and then burnt. Crops are planted for two, maybe three years. Because the soil is so thin and infertile, the farmers are then forced to move on and clear a new area of forest.

The land they leave behind never recovers and becomes a pseudo savannah. Where the forest was once continuous, it soon becomes fragmented, isolating populations of chimps from contact with others, thus losing the genetic diversity vital for their existence.

Sanctuary

There were 28 chimps at Brazzaville Zoo. Of these, 25 were to be transported to a sanctuary that had been built along the coast at M'Pili, near Pointe Noire, the second largest city in the Congo. The three remaining were adult males, too aggressive to be integrated with the rest of the orphans. One of these was Gregoire, still going strong at 49 years. He must be one of



◆ An example of the "slash and burn" practice.

the oldest chimps in the world – remarkable, considering he had lived his life in such abused conditions.

On 2 December, the chimps were caught up and placed in five crates. The exercise took almost eight hours but went surprisingly smoothly. A truck



◆ "Chimp for Sale" Ritha, who sadly died shortly after confiscation.

took us to the airport next morning. I flew down to Pointe Noire with the chimps in the company of Graziella, Dr Cedric Dumont, the U.S. Embassy doctor and part time vet, his wife, Ruth, David Bowerman, who was filming the operation and Ludovic, a Congolese keeper. Four of the youngest chimps slept on our laps for the hour and a half flight. There then followed a tediously slow and bumpy two hour journey by truck to M'Pili.

Rainforest

The sanctuary consisted of ten roomy

cages adjoining a large central play-yard. This led to 20 acres of rainforest enclosed by a solar powered electric fence. The intention was that the chimps would spend just a couple of months in these cages, familiarising themselves with their new surroundings, getting used to the electric fence and becoming integrated into one group.

We then also had to bring a further nine chimps from Pointe Noire Zoo to the sanctuary. I had to anaesthetise the adult ones in this group in order to move them.

The enclosed forest was perfect for chimps. The huge mature trees, thick with lianes, breaking through the dense, sometimes impenetrable undergrowth, formed an impressive sight. There was an abundance of insect life in the forest – and, incidentally in my bedroom! It was an entymologist's dream. At night, if you weren't an entymologist, it soon became a nightmare.

The local village was amazed to find these 34 chimps in the middle of nowhere. Word soon got around and people came from all over the area to see and to ask for work.

Thanks

I would like to thank the Institute and Jane especially, for again giving me the opportunity to return to the Congo, and Graziella for her kind hospitality. I would also like to thank Chester Zoo for supporting me in this worthwhile project. I am sure the sanctuary will be a success and hope one day to be able to return again, to renew the friendships I made – both human and ape.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION WINNERS 1992



◆ First Prize, print section: Orang utan by John Dinham



◆ First Prize, junior section: Elephants by Charlotte Thomas



◆ First prize, Staff section: Margay by Graham Lyth

The judges of last year's photographic competition had a very difficult job. Over 1,000 prints and slides were entered, and there were many outstanding pictures.

Our judges were Mike Arron, Daily Telegraph photographer; Herbert Bowker, of Ness Photographic and George Green, Picture Editor of the North Wales Newspaper Group. After much deliberation, the winners were chosen:

◆ First Prize, gardens section: The Fountain Gardens by Ted Keane.



◆ Second Prize, print section: Lions by Carl Fletcher.

PRINT SECTION:

First Prize: Sunmed Holiday - Mr John Dinham of Birmingham
Second Prize: British Airways tickets - Mr Carl Fletcher, Stockport.

SLIDES SECTION

First Prize: Canon Camcorder - Mrs Christine Jackson, Halifax
Second Prize: British Rail tickets - Mr Peter Tryuk, Scunthorpe.

JUNIOR SECTION:

First Prize: Scandinavian Seaways trip to Denmark - Charlotte Thomas of Burtonwood, Warrington.
Second Prize: Ness Photographic voucher for £50 - Neil Busby, Telford.

GARDENS SECTION:

First Prize: Bridgemere Gardens trophy and vouchers - Mr Ted Keane of Wigan.

STAFF SECTION

Graham Lyth, Oakfield Restaurant.
The winning slide, by Christine Jackson, is shown on the front cover of this magazine. The other winning pictures are shown here:





MORE TALES FROM BRAZIL

Words and pictures by
Roger Wilkinson, (above)
Curator of Birds.

In the last issue of Zoo Life I recounted some adventures searching for birds in Brazil – highlights being the many brilliant species of Tanagers in the montane forests of Itatiaia, and Hyacinth Macaws and water birds in the Pantanal.

The story continues with an account of journeys to the southern edge of Amazonia and the remaining patches of Atlantic rainforest in eastern Brazil. These visits were punctuated by brief visits to other areas including stunted orchard bush 'cerrado' areas near Chapada and the Brasilia National Park.

Chapada

We forced ourselves out of our beds before 4 a.m. in order to get a good start for the journey to Chapada. The open back of the jeep was wet and cold as we drove through the rain up country to Chapada. It was still raining when we arrived at Chapada to find hundreds of cars full of sleeping occupants after last night's annual carnival. Soon we had forgotten the rain as through the mist we began to find some excellent birds including flocks of Blue-headed Parrots, Peach-fronted and White-eyed Conures, a Blue-crowned Motmot, and the exquisite Dot-eared Coquette – a tiny hummingbird with fancy facial frills.

Birds were watched catching the insects disturbed by an army ant trail and these included a female



◆ Red-billed Curassow.

CURASSOWS AND CURIOUSER

White-backed Fire-eye, Large-billed Antwrens and both Saffron-billed and Pectoral Sparrows. Aviculturists would perhaps have been more taken by the brightly coloured Swallow Tanagers and Purple-throated Euphonias but like ourselves may have had difficulty in deciding whether the Toucans we saw were Yellow-ridged or Cuvier's.

Both look identical but the former croaks whilst the latter yelps. These just remained silent!

Alto Floresta

Next day we flew over burning forest to Alto Floresta. There on the southern edge of the Amazon we enjoyed our first views of Chestnut-fronted Macaws and saw our only Hawk-headed Parrots of the trip.

These, unlike the Hawk-heads at Chester Zoo were of the Brazilian race, distinguished by their browner foreheads. Because of the ban on export of Brazilian birds these are rarer in aviculture than the nominate form. Also here were other really exciting rainforest birds including Spangled Cotingas, Bare-necked Fruit Crows and Paradise Tanagers. It was like being in paradise to be surrounded by such wonderful birds!

The next day involved some relatively easy birding as we walked a number of trails cut in the forest behind our hotel. A flock of ten Crimson-bellied Conures were seen. This is a bird previously kept at Chester

Zoo, the breeding of which in 1976 was a U.K. first. Our birds were later sent to Rotterdam Zoo to join their group of breeding birds. Although an extreme avicultural rarity the Crimson-bellied Conure is presently considered to be safe in the wild.

It was nonetheless extremely gratifying to see such a beautiful bird in its native range. Other brightly coloured birds included Turquoise Tanagers and their yelping calls betrayed the identity of a group of Cuvier's Toucans. The real highlights were two White-browed Hawks (a very uncommon bird confined to Brazil and Peru and listed by ICBP as near-threatened) and excellent views of an Amazonian Pygmy Owl.

The latter species was described only recently and our individual responded to the playback of its distinctive calls by flying in to investigate the 'newcomer' in its territory.

River trip

The next stage of our journey involved taking a small boat along the Teles Pires river (a tributary of the Amazon) and then up along its smaller source – the River Cristalino. That journey was excellent and we were rewarded with good views of Swallow-winged Puffbirds, Swallow-tailed Kites and White-banded Swallows.

Trails in this area were thick and seeing birds very difficult. Nonetheless good birds were found including such

'zoo' birds as Blue and Yellow and Scarlet Macaws, Amazonian Umbrellabirds and Dark-winged Trumpeters. Blue and Yellow Macaws were watched prospecting for nest sites in dead palm trunks and a pair of Blue-headed Parrots roosted in a tree hole close to our night quarters.

A series of wooden slats were nailed, ladder like, up this tree to the height of the roost hole. Presumably this was a regular nest site from which chicks were regularly 'harvested'. Brazil does not permit export of its birds so I suspect the chicks would have been sold locally.

Parrots – and monkeys

Other parrots seen in these forests included Orange-winged Amazons, White-bellied Caiques and Painted Conures. Mammals seen included three Tapirs swimming down river and a group of Black Spider Monkeys. The exhilarating experience of being woken at 4 a.m. by the surround-all wall of sound created by chorusing Howler Monkeys is incredible. So intensely deep and loud was this dawn-chorus that it could be felt as well as heard.

Working the trails and sometimes (rather uncomfortably for fear of losing ones bearing) striking into the forest off the trails, produced a large number of 'difficult' birds including many species of Antbirds, Antshrikes and Antwrens and such celebrated obscurities as Sneath's and Zimmer's Tody Tyrants. Montezuma gained his revenge on me on the last day here and by the time we returned to Alto Floresta I was well and truly exhausted. Being otherwise occupied cost me missing the only encounter with Gould's Toucanet and I also 'dipped' on the White-fronted Nunbird.

Arriving at the airstrip for our return flight to Cuiba we found our small plane surrounded by armed guards. With sirens blazing a Brinks' van raced across the runway and very heavy crates (gold was panned locally) were loaded into our plane. A gun-toting guard accompanied us on the plane to Cuiba. This was the most bumpy flight I have experienced. Only a double dose of immodium, taken for different reasons, saved me from travel sickness.

The real sadness of this flight was that the journey was spent travelling through smoke-filled air from burning forests. The scale of deforestation and land degradation was more than I had expected. Brazil is currently burning and destroying 8.5 million acres of rainforest each year!

Vanishing Forests

Species presently considered 'safe'



◆ Blue and Yellow Macaw.

including Crimson-bellied Conures really are only as safe as the forest areas they inhabit. The forests are vast beyond belief but so it would appear is man's greed. Zoos like Chester have to now concentrate their captive breeding programmes on those species immediately endangered but also must educate their visitors to the fundamental problems of habitat destruction.

My own greed overcame me at Cuiba when despite rumblings to the contrary I was unable to resist eating at the Churrasco. I regretted this the next day when we revisited the area south of Chapada. However such problems were temporarily forgotten when we scored where we had previously failed in seeing Red and Green Macaws, Blue-winged Macaws and Burrowing Owls.

The scenery in the area around Chapada dos Guimares was outstanding with high inland cliffs and waterfalls and the sight of Red and Green Macaws winging their way across a forested canyon can only be described as magnificent.

Brasilia

Another flight that evening (our itinerary was extremely tight!) took us to the ultra-modern capital of Brasilia

whose city plan is in the shape of an aeroplane. We only had one morning available to explore Brasilia National Park and our man in Rio had been unable to obtain permits for this.

Feeling very uncomfortable we entered the public swimming pool area at 6 a.m. then by driving up a shallow stream sneaked into the park proper. After an excellent couple of hours in this cerrado habitat watching Yellow-faced Amazons and finding a pair of the increasingly scarce Cock-tailed Tyrants (a small flycatcher in which the male has an amazing Cockerel shaped tail) the park guards finally caught up with our party. Fortunately on discovering that we had binoculars and not guns they allowed us to continue our bird watching.

Linhares

A late afternoon flight then took us to Vitoria on Brazil's Atlantic coast. From there we drove through the night to Linhares where we eventually found beds at the Pratti Park Hotel.

The following morning we left the hotel before 5 a.m. to arrive at the gates of the CVRD Linhares Forest three-quarters of an hour later. This time we had the required passes and a letter of introduction but were in danger of losing valuable birding time



◆ Frilled Coquette

on finding that the bossman (the 'chef') was not on site.

The Atlantic rainforests now only exist as remnant patches having been reduced to 4% of their original extent and hold some of the world's most endangered birds. Two areas of particular importance are the privately owned CVRD Linhares Forest reserve and the nearby Sooretama Forest Reserve. The Linhares reserve is owned by the Campanhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD) and was set up forty years ago to supply timber for railway sleepers. The enlightened attitude of this major company in preserving this area, promoting field research and setting up on-site captive breeding facilities can only be commended.

A visit to the CVRD breeding facilities showed the success of their captive breeding programme for the Solitary Tinamou. Unfortunately their captive pair of the highly endangered Red-billed Curassow had not been successful. Only two hundred of these birds are believed to remain and it was certainly one of the birds we most wanted to see at Linhares.

Our first morning's survey was rewarded by seeing one male and two female Red-billed Curassows as they walked up and across a forest trail at the far end of the reserve. This was followed by a brief encounter with one of the world's rarest primates, the Woolly Spider Monkey. The area proved very productive and after several days our species inventory for this reserve included Rusty Margined Guans, Reichenow's Blue-headed Parrots, Red-browed Amazons, White-eared Conures, and my target bird the Blue-throated Conure.

A pair of the latter species have been kept at Chester for several years but

although eggs have been laid (and in 1991 chicks were hatched) success still eludes us for this important species. Other memorable birds seen at CVRD Linhares included Bare-throated Bellbirds, White-crowned Manakin, and the tiny Minute Hermit hummingbird. Perhaps most unexpected of all was a beautifully marked Yellow-footed Tortoise deep inside the forest.

Agouti

Another welcome surprise was a Red-rumped Agouti which quickly ran across one of the forest tracks. The closest we came to seeing the regal Harpy Eagle was to poke a stick at the carcass of a Maned Three-toed Sloth which it had killed the previous day.

A Brazilian ornithology student researching the feeding habits of the parrots at Linhares had seen the Harpy Eagle attacking this unfortunate sloth and clearly enjoyed recounting how close the Eagle had been to him.

The awful feeling an avid



◆ Yellow-footed tortoise

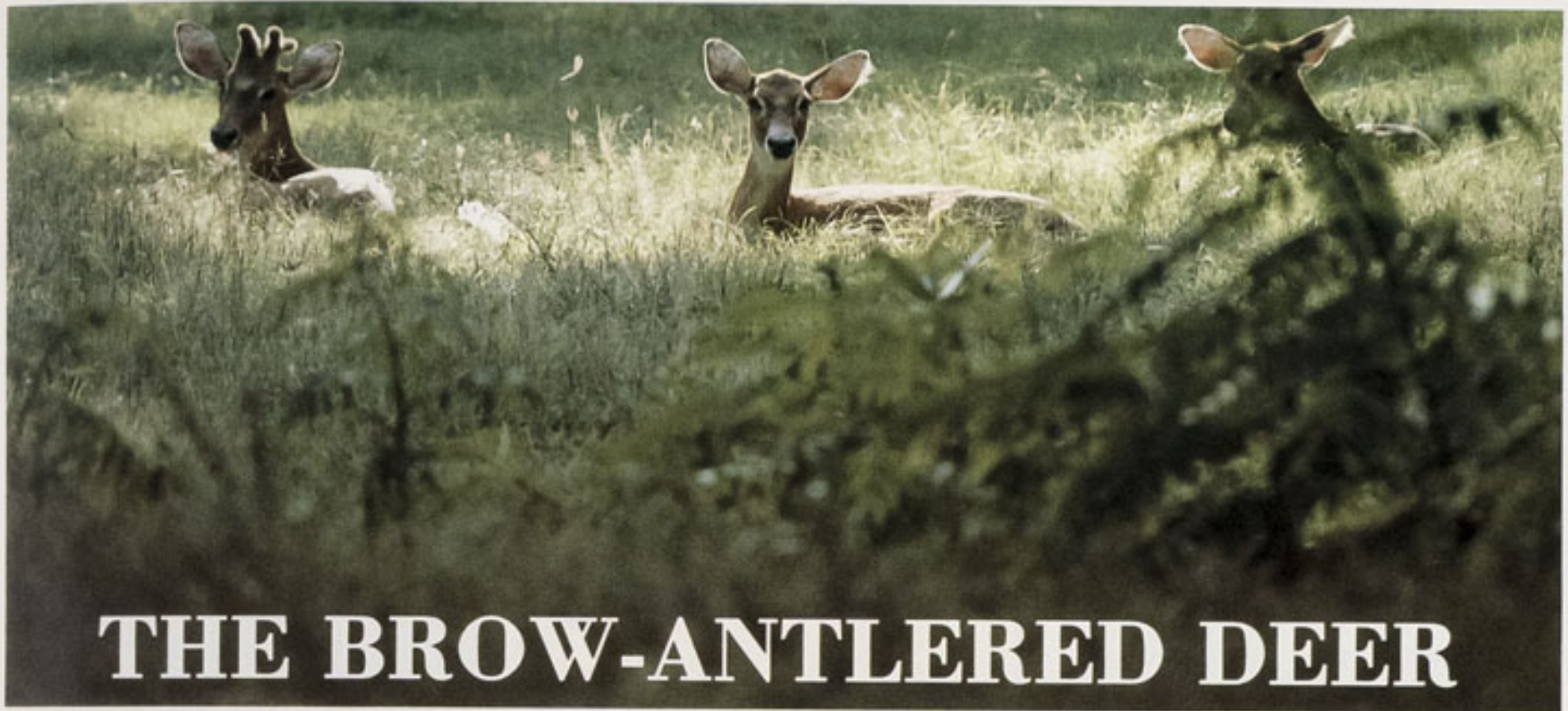
birdwatcher gets on being told in detail about birds he has missed is difficult to describe – we certainly had been 'gripped' on this one!

Leaving Sooretama we drove to Santa Teresa where we hoped to be able to see a good selection of rarer hummingbirds. Our destination was the former home of the late Professor Augusto Ruschi: a world expert on hummingbirds, now commemorated on one of Brazil's banknotes.

We were delighted to be allowed onto the verandah of his widow's house to watch and photograph the wild hummingbirds attracted to the nectar feeders. Fifteen species were seen including the magnificent Black Jacobin, Brazilian Ruby, Violet-capped Woodnymph, Glittering-throated Emerald and an exquisite Frilled Coquette. Similar to the Dotted Coquette we had seen earlier at Chapada this tiny hummingbird was elaborately coloured and sported fancy facial frills. Darkness forced us to leave and we headed back to Vitoria each having bought a copy of Professor Ruschi's book 'Hummingbirds of State of Espírito Santo'.

The next day, my last in Brazil, began with a fly-by of five American Oystercatchers along the shore across the road from our hotel. We then caught a flight to Rio de Janeiro. A couple of hours to spare in Rio were occupied by taking a taxi to Tijuca National Park. There below the statue of Christ we had excellent views of the normally secretive White-eyed Foliage Gleaner and saw Red-necked Tanagers.

Relieved to be leaving Rio with our wallets now empty but not stolen I relaxed on the plane by counting up my tally of over 470 bird species seen in a hectic three weeks. The finer identification points of many of those birds I must soon forget but the Brazilian experience will remain for ever. I wish I could guarantee the same for the future of Brazil's many rare and threatened birds.



THE BROW-ANTLERED DEER

The workshop centred on the Manipur Brow-antlered deer (*Cervus eldi eldi*) or Sangai, a critically endangered Cervid restricted to the Keibul Lamjao Sanctuary in the State of Manipur. The Sangai has a total wild population of 62 (21 males, 32 females and nine young) and a captive population of 101 (49, 45, 7) animals held in 15 Indian zoos. None are held outside India. Sadly, this limited population ensures that the Sangai is eligible to join the elite "under 200 club."

The aims of all the PHVA's are to draw together a wide range of people indirectly or directly in either the species or taxon of the targeted animal. These will include field biologists, wildlife managers, captive breeding specialists and officials from the relevant wildlife departments. PHVA's are held in the range state of the species in question wherever possible. These people, with the use of computer models and utilising the input of the assembled specialists, can predict the extinction processes which are likely to occur to both the captive and wild population. This having been determined, a number of management actions or inactions can be added to the computer programme.

Action Plans

Through these simulated models, positive action plans can be drawn up. Both "in situ" and "ex situ" strategies are developed and formalised. PHVA's, although still in their infancy, are proving to be powerful and effective tools for the conservation of critically endangered species.

The North of England Zoological Society has been involved with the captive conservation of the Sangai for the past five years, having been first invited by the World Wildlife Fund,

By Nick Ellerton, Curator of Mammals, who visited Mysore Zoological Gardens last October, to take part in the first Indian Regional Meeting of the Captive Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) and the first Population and Habitat Viability Analysis (PHVA) Workshop held in India. This is his report of that meeting:

Bengal, and sponsored by the British Council in early 1988. Since our initial input, much has been done by Indian zoos to ensure the long term survival of this species in captivity. Ear-tagging, all tags provided by NEZS, is now being implemented; a stud book has been produced (although sadly the founder population originates from only four animals) and active and co-ordinated management is taking place in all collections holding the Sangai.

In Manipur, the wild population faces a bleak future. Once considered extinct, the Sangai was "re-discovered" in the mid 1950's. In 1954 the Keibul Lamjao National Park (40 square kilometres) was formed. In 1959 an estimated 100 animals lived in this area. However, animal censuses revealed a population of only between 14 and 30 animals recorded from 1977 to 1980. The Sangai in Keibul Lamjao National Park face a number of immediate threats, both intrinsic and external. All small isolated populations face a number of genetic and demographic risks to their survival - the Sangai is sadly facing more than its fair share of both.

National Park

The remnant Sangai population is now restricted to Keibul Lamjao National Park, three quarters of which consists of vegetation mats (phumdi) floating on the surface of Lake Loktak. It is this area that faces a number of threats, all of which could prove catastrophic to

the Sangai. Estimates put the number of cattle and domestic buffalo around the park at around 10,000.

Understandably, the park is "eyed" enviously as a source of rich grazing. This illegal grazing not only reduces the suitable habitat, but could expose the Sangai to both anthrax and foot and mouth disease. Much is done to curb illegal grazing and this in turn promotes adverse feelings towards the Sangai. No Sangai equals no need for a National Park, equals more resources for the people. Very understandable. On at least two occasions the park has had to dissuade angry villagers from entering the park and slaughtering the deer, yet again providing us with an example that a national park and the species which it conserves must also be proved to be beneficial to the people that live around it. This is so often an insurmountable problem in areas with so few of the resources which we take for granted.

Risks

Added to these risks, occasional poaching, accelerated eutrophication of the lake and the increased use of toxic chemicals for illegal fishing, are affecting the increase of the Sangai population.

Good fortune has also played its part for the deer to have survived at all from such a small population. If this continues and the government of Manipur maintains its congratulatory up-grading of its present park management, this beautiful deer still has a chance to survive.

I must thank and congratulate Mysore Zoological Gardens and CBSG, India, who together with the Zoo Outreach Organisation in India, organised and hosted this meeting. The report and resolutions made will be published this Spring and will be placed in Chester Zoo's library.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU!



Junior Club activities kicked off this year with the ever-popular Contact Session. Lots of animals and over 160 Juniors met in the lecture hall to get to know each other better. Snakes, tortoises, chicks, rabbits, guinea pigs, locusts, rats, ferrets, ducks, doves, goats, wallabies - to say nothing of Jessica the Vietnamese Pot-bellied pig - combined to make the afternoon a memorable one for many. A few of those memorable moments are captured in these snapshots.



Arrivals ○ Births ○ and ○ Hatchings ○

NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 1992, JANUARY, FEBRUARY 1993



◆ Black Rhinos



◆ Black Vulture

MAMMALS

Great Grey Kangaroo	<i>Macropus fuliginosus</i>	1.1	received
Rodrigues Fruit Bat	<i>Pteropus rodricensis</i>	0.0.1	born
Rodrigues Fruit Bat	<i>Pteropus rodricensis</i>	0.5.0	received
Pygmy Marmoset	<i>Callithrix pygmaea</i>	0.0.1	born
Cotton-topped Tamarin	<i>Sanguinus oedipus</i>	0.0.1	born
Orang-utan	<i>Pongo pygmaeus pygmaeus</i>	0.1	received
Bush Dog	<i>Speothos venaticus</i>	1.0	received
Coati	<i>Nasua nasua</i>	2.0	received
Margay	<i>Felis wiedi</i>	0.0.1	born
Caracal Lynx	<i>Felis caracal</i>	0.1	received
Black Rhino	<i>Diceros bicornis</i>	1.1	received
Guanaco	<i>Lama guanicoe</i>	1.0	born
Axis Deer	<i>Cervus axis</i>	2.1	born
Eland	<i>Taurotragus oryx</i>	2.0	born
Nilgai	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>	0.3	born
Congo Buffalo	<i>Syncerus caffer nanus</i>	0.1	born
Blackbuck	<i>Antelope cervicapra</i>	4.2.2	born
Arabian Gazelle	<i>Gazella gazella arabica</i>	1.0	born

BIRDS

Humboldt's Penguin	<i>Spheniscus humboldti</i>	0.0.1	h'tchd
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	1.0	received
Ringed Teal	<i>Anas leucophrys</i>	0.1	received
Rosy-billed Pochard	<i>Netta peposaca</i>	0.1	received
Smew	<i>Mergus albellus</i>	0.1	received
White-headed Duck	<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>	3.3	received
Hooded Merganser	<i>Mergus cucullatus</i>	1.0	received
Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	0.2	received
Black Vulture	<i>Aegyptius monachus</i>	1.1	received
Wattled Crane	<i>Bugeranus carunculatus</i>	1.1	received

BIRDS continued

Superb Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus superbus</i>	0.0.1	h'tched
Stella's Lorikeet	<i>Charmosyna papou</i>	0.0.2	h'tchd
Blue-eyed Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua ophthalmica</i>	1.0	received
Red-vented Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua haematuropygia</i>	1.1	received
Eclectus Parrot	<i>Eclectus roratus vosmaeri</i>	0.1	received
Greater Vasa Parrot	<i>Coracopsis vasa</i>	0.1	received
Blue-throated Macaw	<i>Ara glaucogularis</i>	1.0	received
Lilacine Amazon Parrot	<i>Amazona autumnalis lilacina</i>	1.0	received
Slender-billed Parrakeet	<i>Enicognathus leptorhynchus</i>	1.1	received
Schalow's Turaco	<i>Tauraco shalowi</i>	0.0.1	h'tchd
Pekin Robin	<i>Leothrix lutea</i>	2.1	received
Glossy Starling	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>	0.0.2	received

REPTILES

Tokay Gecko	<i>Gekko gekko</i>	0.1	received
Leopard Gecko	<i>Eublepharis macularius</i>	1.1	received
Green Iguana	<i>Iguana iguana</i>	0.1	received
Plumed Basilisk	<i>Basiliscus plumifrons</i>	1.0	received

AMPHIBIANS

3-striped Poison Arrow Frog	<i>Epipedobates trivittatus</i>	80	meta-morphosed
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FISH

Lake Victoria Cichlid	<i>Haplochromis nyererei</i>	54	bred
Lake Victoria Cichlid	Hap. 'Velvet black-blotched'	27	bred
Lake Victoria Cichlid	<i>Hap. sauvagei</i>	30	received
Panda Catfish	<i>Corydoras panda</i>	20	bred

Key: Col.1 = Male, Col.2 = Female, Col.3 = Young, or unknown

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