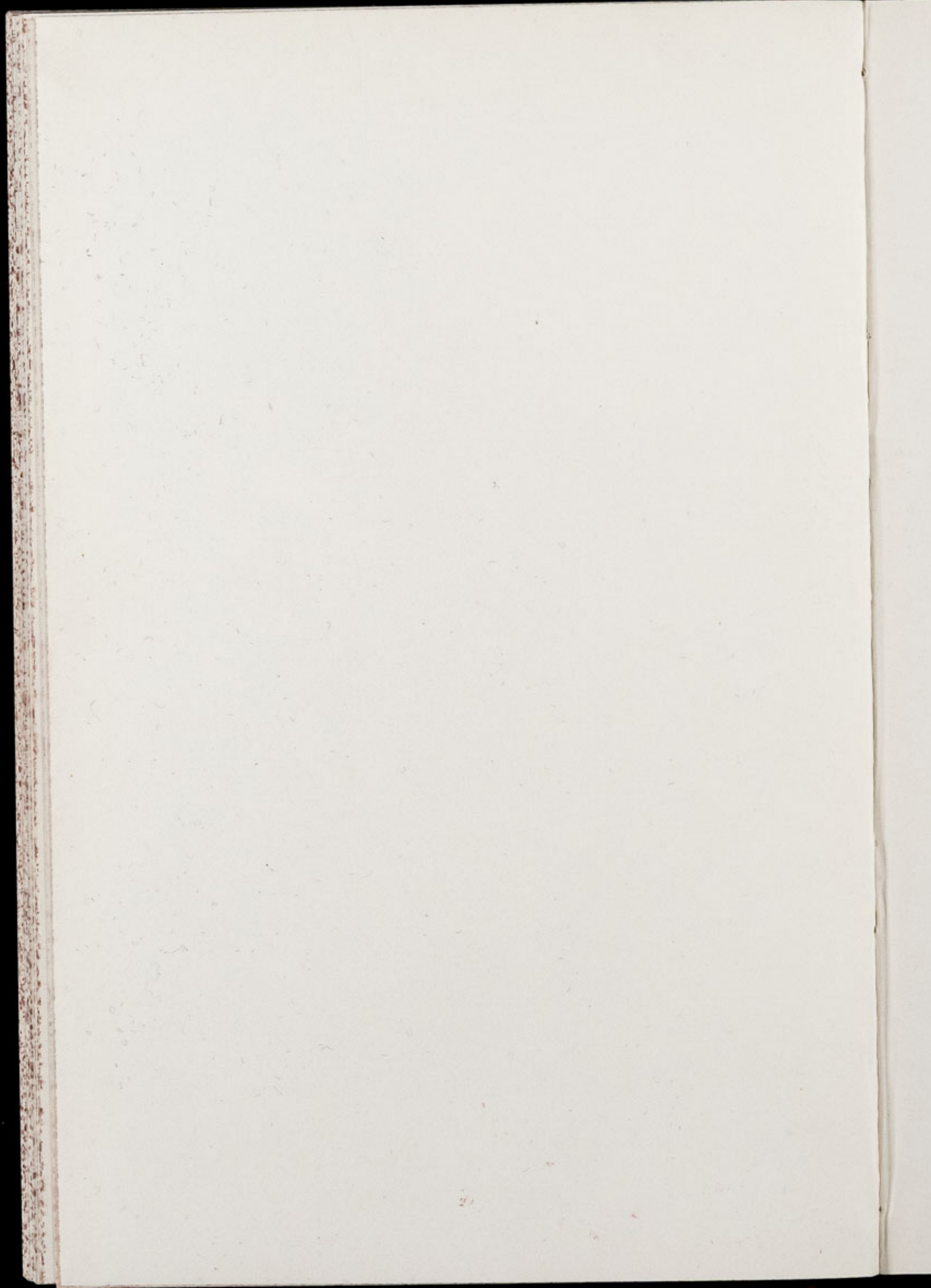




CHESTER ZOO NEWS
AND GUIDE

June 1971

Price 5p



The North of England Zoological Society
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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COVER: *James's Flamingo*; see page fourteen.

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

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION — NINETY FIVE NEW PENCE POSTAGE PAID

TELEPHONE :: CHESTER 20106/7/8

ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

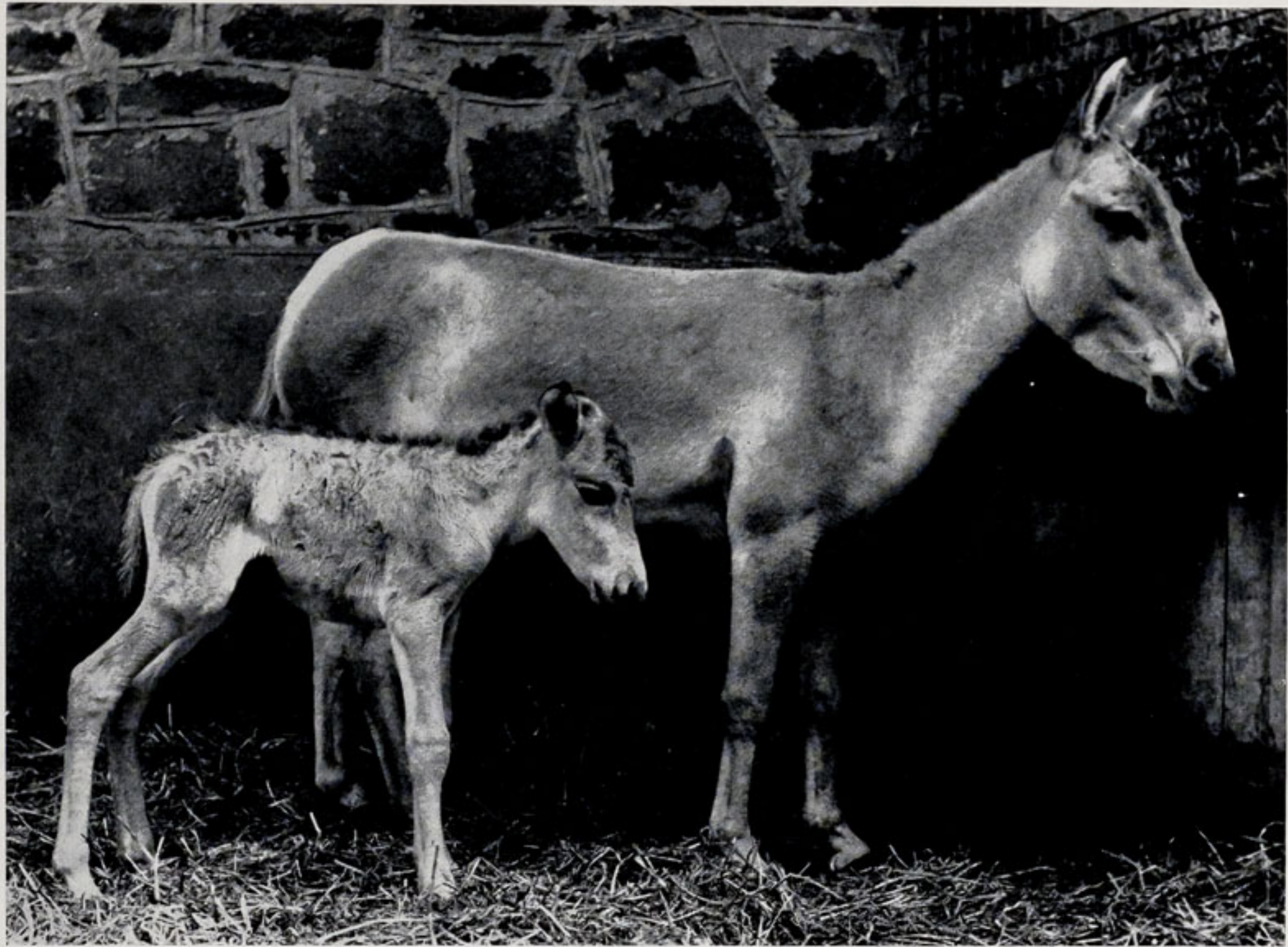
During the past month the following mammals have been bred:

- 1 Asiatic Wild Ass (*Equus hemionus onager* x *Equus hemionus kulan*)
- 1 Père David's Deer (*Elaphurus davidianus*)
- 2 North American Bison (*Bos bison*)
- 1 Highland calf (*Bos taurus*)
- 1 Bagot Goat (*Capra hircus*)
- 1 Wapiti (*Cervus canadensis*)
- 2 Common Leopards (*Panthera pardus*)
- 2 Viscachas (*Lagostomus maximus*)
- 1 Chinchilla (*Chinchilla laniger*)
- Fennec Foxes (*Fennecus zerda*)

As a result of a survey for a studbook organised by East Berlin Zoo, we discovered that our two Asiatic Wild Asses belong to different subspecies. The female, which was acquired from Whipsnade in December 1968, belongs to the race *Equus hemionus kulan* with a distribution in Turkmenistan. The male was bred in Hamburg in June 1963 from parents captured in southern Persia and belongs to the race *Equus hemionus onager*. There are only slight differences between the races and both are seriously endangered in the wild.

The mare was pregnant on her arrival at Chester in 1968 but the foal she produced was weak and did not live long. The photograph on the right shows the latest foal, a male, when just a few days old with its mother in their indoor quarters at the Zebra House. It is much larger than the previous youngster and is progressing well. The gestation period for Asiatic Wild Asses is from 11 to 12 months and they become mature at 2 to 3 years.

The birth of the Père David's calf brings our stock to 14 specimens, which may be seen in enclosure No. 103.



ASIATIC WILD ASS (*Equus hemionus kulan*) AND FOAL

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

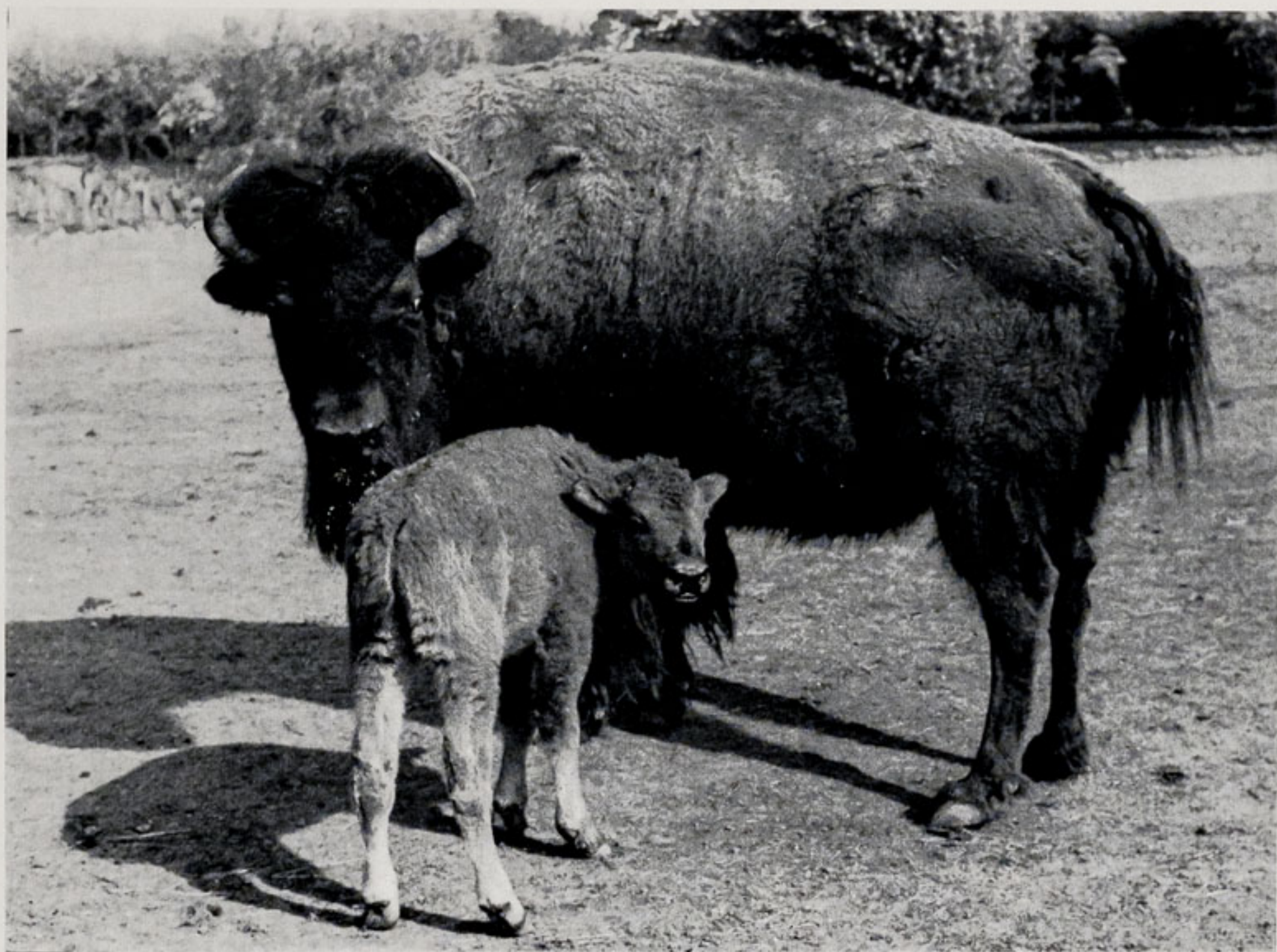
With the birth of two more American Bison there are now three calves on show in enclosure No. 102. One of the Bison cows, named Pauline, has produced this year for the first time and as she herself was born here in April 1967, her calf is a second generation zoo breeding.

The two Leopard cubs are also second generation, being the first litter of a female named Twink bred here in 1967. It is quite normal for a female as young as this to reject her first cubs but Twink is proving an excellent mother. She is nursing the cubs in the Cat House in a den which has been screened off to ensure maximum privacy.

The parents of the Chinchilla born recently were one of two pairs presented to the Zoo during the past month. On arrival both pairs were accommodated in the Small Mammal House and provided with nestboxes. Several days later the young Chinchilla was observed in the enclosure by the keeper.

Probably there are many people who have heard of Chinchilla farms and some who have seen Chinchilla coats, but who, nevertheless, know little of these beautiful animals. Chinchillas are rodents measuring about 10 inches in length with dense, soft, bluish-grey fur and bushy tails. They belong to the same family as the Plains Viscachas, which have also bred here this month, and are found in the Andes Mountains of South America, their luxuriant fur being an adaptation to the extreme conditions encountered at the altitudes at which they live. At one time their range extended throughout most of the Andes chain but, as a result of persecution, is now limited to remote parts of Chile.

Chinchillas are predominantly nocturnal animals and have large eyes, naked ears and exceptionally long whiskers. They associate in colonies and pairs mate for life, the female being the more dominant of the sexes. Their diet is vegetarian and Chinchillas obtain necessary moisture from plants and dew. At the Zoo they are given special



AMERICAN BISON AND CALF (*Bos bison*)

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

Chinchilla pellets supplemented with raisins. Difficulties can arise when keeping Chinchillas as they have a strong tendency to fight if the ratio of males to females is too high.

The gestation period lasts for over $3\frac{1}{2}$ months and young Chinchillas are born at a comparatively advanced stage of development, fully furred and able to run about within hours. Litter size varies from 1 to 6 young and there may be up to 3 litters in a year.

Chinchilla fur was valued by the inhabitants of South America long before the advent of western civilisation but the number of animals they killed made no inroad on the population. European colonists realised the potential of the fur, which is still regarded as some of the finest in the world, and by the end of the last century thousands of Chinchillas were being killed every year. So many skins were taken that the species was virtually eradicated. However, the establishment of fur farms and timely protective measures combined to save the Chinchillas and wild populations are presently on the increase.

Our pair of Plains Viscachas is also accommodated in the Small Mammal House. When they arrived in November last year the female was reported to be already pregnant but at the end of the estimated gestation period she was showing no signs of breeding and the pair was left together. They were eventually separated about a month ago and two young Viscachas have been seen playing in the enclosure. From our observations the gestation period was about 149 days. Like the Chinchillas, young Viscachas are born at an advanced stage of development. Being nocturnal animals in the wild, the Viscachas at the Zoo are active mainly in the evening and this is the best time for visitors to see the young.

At the time of writing it is thought that there are at least two Fennec Fox cubs. However, these are only a few days old and we will not know the actual number until they leave the nestbox. The usual litter size is from 2 to 5 cubs, born after a gestation period of

50 to 51 days. The parent Fennec Foxes arrived in the collection in November last year and live in the Small Mammal House in a grassy enclosure having access to indoor quarters. On several occasions the male has been observed taking food to the female while she is suckling the cubs. The food has been accepted but it would appear that the male is not allowed inside the nestbox.

A Fruit Bat (*Pteropus spp.*) has been presented and has joined three others already on exhibition in the Tropical House.

Other new arrivals this month include a male Blotched Genet (*Genetta tigrina*), three Capybaras (*Hydrochoerus capybara*), three Cairo Spiny Mice (*Acomys cahirinus*) and two Californian Sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*).

The Blotched Genet has been put into an enclosure in the Small Mammal House with two female Forest Genets. During the next few weeks he will also be introduced to two female Black Genets, a melanistic form of the Blotched, which are being transferred to the same building. If the second introduction is successful it is hoped that eventually he will be mated with all four females.

The Capybaras are rather young specimens and will require special attention for some months. After being confined initially to indoor quarters, they are now spending the day in the large grassy Capybara enclosure. In fact they enjoy this so much that in the mornings the keeper finds them scratching at the door to be allowed out.

The new home in the Nocturnal House for the Cairo Spiny Mice has been made as natural as possible with sand, logs and rock mounds under which they can build nests. This particular species of Spiny Mouse has a distribution in Africa and S.W. Asia as far as India. The name is derived from coarse spines present along the back and tail which have evolved from the fur.

CHESTER ZOO

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

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

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

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

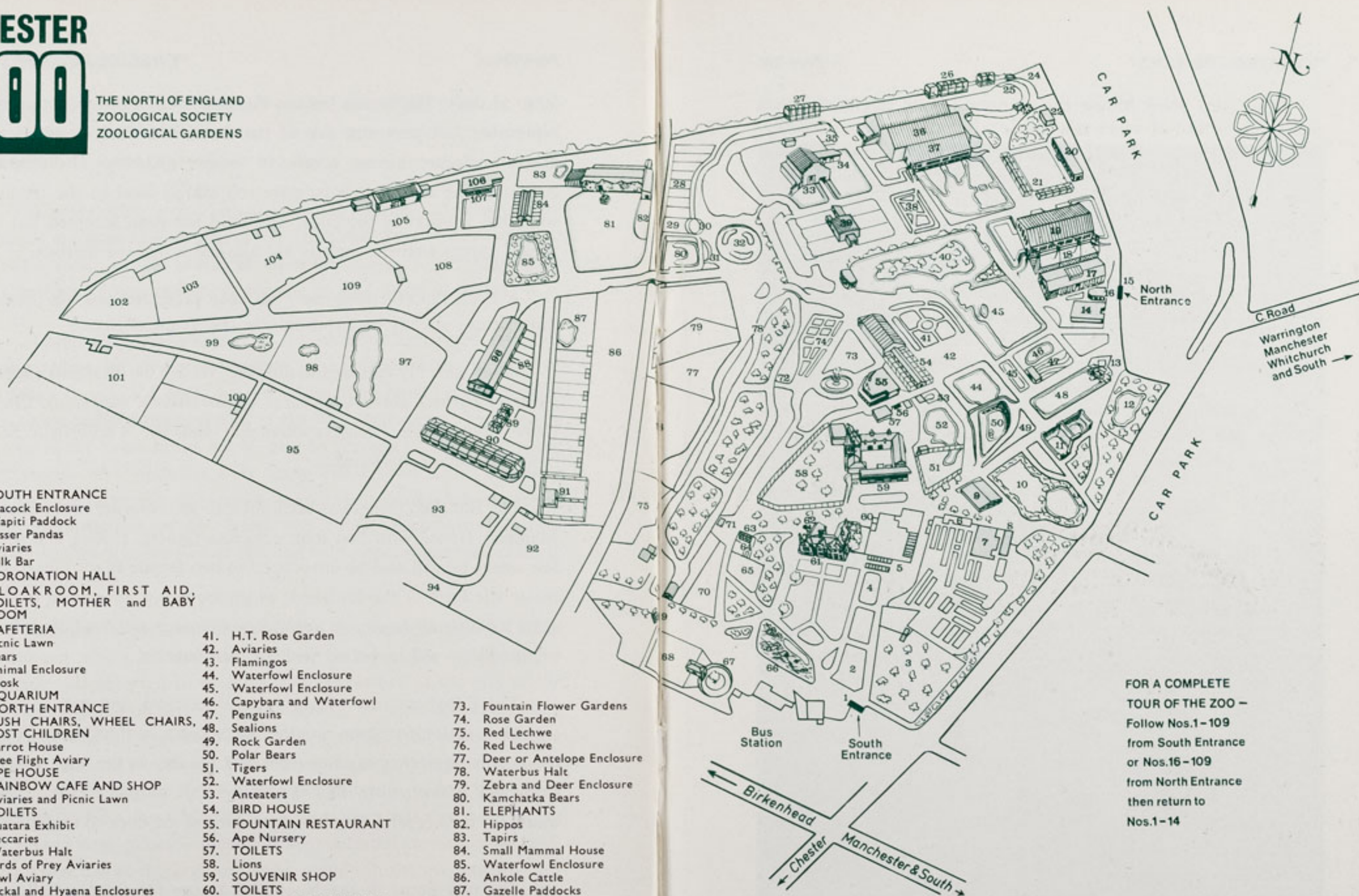
101. Zebroids
102. Bison Paddock
103. Pere David's Deer Paddock
104. Eland and Marmots
105. RHINO HOUSE
106. TOILETS
107. Mpila Snack-bar and Kiosk
108. Antelope Enclosure
109. Antelope Enclosure

Animals may be moved from time to time.

ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES:

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

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



The Cairo Spiny Mouse has an overall body length of 7 to 8 inches, about half of which is a brittle tail that is broken off easily. Spiny Mice live in a variety of habitats including rocky country, woodlands, deserts and in some areas near human habitation. Their diet is mainly vegetarian and they are most active in the early morning and the evening.

Young Cairo Spiny Mice, from 2 to 3 born after a gestation period of 38 days, are advanced at birth in comparison with other members of this family, having fur and with their eyes open. Because they adapt to captivity well and breed rapidly, Spiny Mice are being used more and more in laboratory experiments.

Even though the two new Sea lions arrived as a pair, we were very pleased when they both proved to be females — our three young male Sea Lions were pleased too!

OTTER EXHIBIT

The photograph on the right shows three newly-arrived European Otters in the fountain near the Fountain Restaurant. Strangely enough, these beautiful animals are not alive but were cast in bronze and nickel for the zoo by Miss Edna Rose, a sculptress from Hoylake.

GENERAL NEWS

The Andean Condors are settling down very well in their large aviary near to the Tropical House but there were some rather amusing incidents when they first arrived. Probably more through inquisitiveness than aggression, the Condors would make straight for the keeper as soon as he entered the aviary. On one occasion the female pecked a hole in the knee of his jeans and on another she picked up a bucket of meat in her beak and strode around the aviary with it. The mower is still a great source of fascination and the female especially follows the keeper up and down the aviary each time he cuts the grass.



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

EUROPEAN OTTER SCULPTURE BY MISS EDNA ROSE

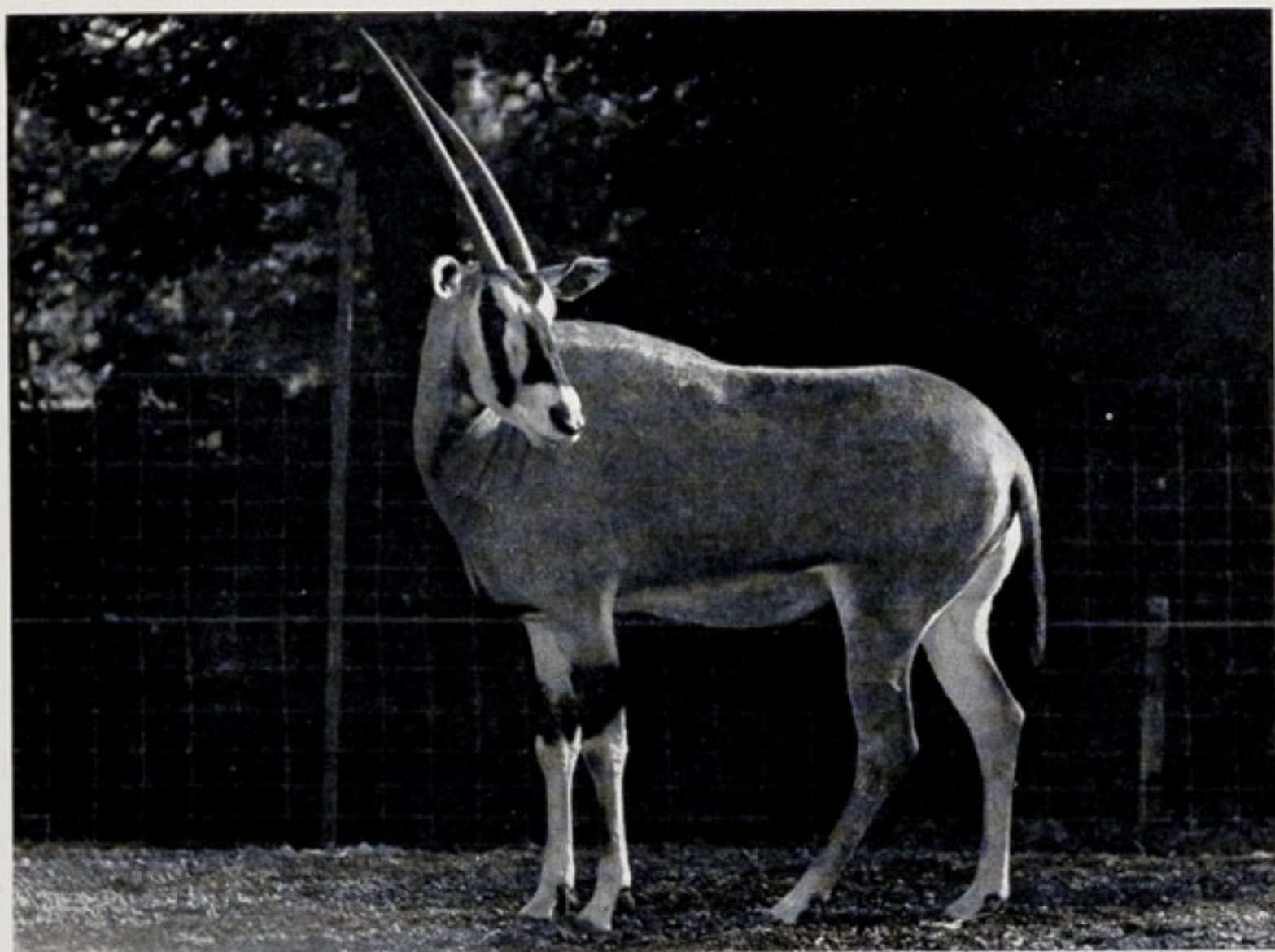
The photograph on the right shows a Beisa Oryx (*Oryx gazella beisa*) shortly after it had been released in one of the new enclosures completed last year, No. 94. We now have an unrelated pair of this species, a female bred here in 1963 and a male acquired in an exchange with Bristol Zoo last year. Since its arrival the male had been kept off show in quarters near to the female but the pair had never been introduced. The female was moved first and, apart from some reluctance to leave the crate, she was transported with little protest. The male was far more belligerent and it took some time and effort before zoo staff were able to lock the gate of the enclosure behind him. Fortunately the introduction went smoothly and both animals are settling down in their new surroundings.

The pair of Greater Kudu in the adjacent enclosure, No. 92, has been joined by our two Ostriches. In the wild state Ostriches associate quite harmoniously with a variety of ungulates including Zebras and Antelope. The birds at the Zoo arrived as well-grown chicks in September 1969 and are now approaching maturity. They are over 6 feet tall and are a wonderful spectacle as they run around the large grassy enclosure. As their adult plumage becomes more marked it appears that the Ostriches are both males.

WILD BIRDS

Apart from the numerous broods of Mallard and Moorhen chicks present as usual in most of the wildfowl enclosures and canals, this year two other species of wild birds have bred in the zoo grounds, which deserve special mention. In the moat which surrounds the Chimpanzee islands, seven Coots (*Fulica atra*) have been hatched and, even more pleasing, in the same area a pair of Kingfishers (*Alcedo atthis*) has nested and reared three young.

In the past month members of the zoo staff have seen the adult Kingfishers fishing in the canal and occasionally perched on the 'No



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

BEISA ORYX (*Oryx gazella beisa*)

Feeding' notice in the Chimpanzee moat. One evening during the Whitsun weekend three immature Kingfishers were observed in a willow tree on Gibbon Island where the parent birds were feeding them. The young were fledged but as they could fly for only short distances, we felt certain that they had been bred in the immediate vicinity, probably on Gibbon Island itself.

GERMAN NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

In March, an article concerning Chester Zoo appeared in a German newspaper, the *Stuttgarter Zeitung*. The article, entitled 'Apes in the Open Air', discussed ditch and moat divisions and the benefits of confining apes by this method. It mentioned that apes were as at home at Chester Zoo as they are in the wild state. The article was illustrated with two photographs of Chester Zoo's Lowland Gorillas and our adult Orang utan, Paul.

BIRD NOTES

Some exciting new arrivals in the Bird Section are seven James's Flamingoes (*Phoenicoparrus jamesi*) and three Andean Flamingoes (*Phoenicoparrus andinus*). We now have representatives of all six species of Flamingo, which may be seen in enclosure No. 43.

The two new species are the rarest of all the Flamingoes. They are very similar in appearance, the Andean tending to be taller and having more black on the wings, and the James's having more yellow on the beak. Both live in isolated regions of the Andes Mountains at heights of about 14,000 feet, where the weather conditions are often very bleak. The winter temperatures drop to several degrees below freezing and even in the summer there are frequent storms. The breeding colonies are established on salt lakes and were not discovered until comparatively recently.

In the Oakfield Aviaries, No. 5, the first clutches of Cockatiels are leaving the nest. The parent birds will probably lay again this year and it seems likely that the final number will equal the 1970 total of 27 Cockatiels reared.

Two Mute Swan cygnets (*Cygnus olor*) may be seen in enclosure No. 44. Three young were hatched but one vanished after a few days.

Presentations include two Amazon Parrots (*Amazona sp.*) and a Gold Coast Orange-crowned Parrot (*Poicephalus gulielini fantiensis*).

The latter bird is not on show at present but may be seen in the photograph on the right. It measures about 10 inches in length and has green plumage on the head, breast, and underparts, black feathers edged with green on the wings and tail, and patches of orange on the crown, wings and thighs. This particular race is known only from the Gold Coast forests though probably occurs also in the forests of the Ivory Coast. As it is a rare bird throughout



GOLD COAST ORANGE-CROWNED PARROT (*Poicephalus gulielini fantiensis*)

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



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

ANDEAN FLAMINGOES (*Phoenicoparrus andinus*)

its range, little is known of its habits and there are few specimens in collections. The bird we have acquired came from the Gold Coast. It was collected about three years ago as a nestling and has been hand reared.

SUBSCRIPTION FORMS

New readers of the '*Chester Zoo News*' who would like to receive the magazine regularly may like to know that subscription forms are on display in the souvenir shops. An annual subscription (12 issues) costs 95p, postage paid, which can be either handed over the counter 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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