OUR

ZOO

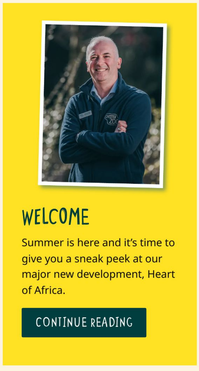
CHESTER ZOO

Exclusive member news, videos, games and behind the scenes from our global conservation work.

START EXPLORING ›

Highlights

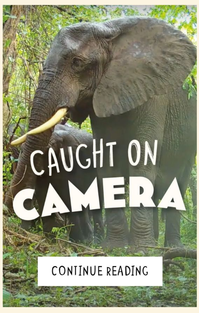
Summer is officially here and we have plenty of **exciting updates for you!** We're also excited to share an incredible sneak peek as momentum builds for the **opening of the groundbreaking Heart of Africa**, with behind the scenes **exclusive stories and videos for you**, our valued members.



WELCOME

Summer is here and it's time to give you a sneak peek at our major new development, Heart of Africa.

CONTINUE READING



SUMMER is here and it's *TIME* to *GIVE YOU* a SNEAK PEEK at our *MAJOR* NEW development: HEART OF AFRICA.

Heart of Africa will be a phenomenal experience due to open in spring next year. It will cement Chester Zoo's standing as one of the world's very best conservation zoos. Featuring state-of-the-art conservation breeding facilities for a host of species, it will yet again see the zoo push the boundaries of world-class animal care.

FOREFRONT *of* GLOBAL CONSERVATION

In this issue, you can discover more about **Heart of Africa's showpiece:** a large savannah filled with East African species mixing as they would in the wild, including giraffe, zebra, roan antelope, blesbok antelope and ostrich.

You'll also be able to discover more about our fieldwork across East Africa and how we collaborate with partners to help protect some of the world's most threatened species. We're out there in the thick of it, working to protect grasslands, forests and wetlands in many parts of Africa through our conservation work – including empowering local people to protect the wildlife & habitats around them.

As well as the major developments ahead, the zoo has some exciting additions and events already here for you to enjoy this summer, including **Manu, our new giant otter**, and the arrival of a new pair of **southern cassowaries in Islands**.

SUPPORTING species that are under THREAT

EXCLUSIVE STORIES

We're also sharing some news about the **future of our historic aquarium** and we catch up with some of our **incredible volunteers as part of Volunteers' Week**.

We may not be able to guarantee the sunshine, but there is so much to do here at the zoo this summer season. Afterglow is our summer evening event where you, our members, get free access! There's also **The Great Zoo Games** to discover on your next visit and, in the meantime, you can test your gaming skills right here in Our Zoo with our **addictive Great Zoo Game!**

There really has never been a better time to be a member, and your support is vital to our charity as we continue to respond to the challenges facing our planet!

"Heart of Africa will be a phenomenal experience and will cement Chester Zoo's standing as one of the world's very best conservation zoos. Visitors will leave with an understanding of the different ways our zoo is working to protect and conserve species in Africa – keeping it forever flourishing and teeming with life."

Jamie Christon DL, CEO

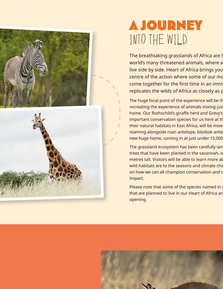
START EXPLORING ›

CHESTER ZOO

TAKING YOU to the HEART of AFRICA

EXCLUSIVE MEMBER UPDATE

After six years of meticulous planning and construction, we're so excited to give you an exclusive insider look at one of the most ambitious developments the zoo has seen in its 93-year history! We're bringing you with us behind the scenes to find out what it takes to bring a huge African savannah to life, ready for the grand opening of Heart of Africa in spring 2025.



A JOURNEY INTO THE WILD

The breathtaking grasslands of Africa are home to some of the world's many threatened animals, where a wide variety of species live side by side. Heart of Africa brings you, the visitor, to the centre of the action where some of our most iconic animals will come together for the first time in an immersive experience that replicates the wilds of Africa as closely as possible.

The huge focal point of the experience will be the African savannah, recreating the experience of animals roving just like they do in their native home. Our Rothschild's giraffe herd and Grevy's zebra, both of which are important conservation species for us here at the zoo and threatened in their natural habitats in East Africa, will be mixed together. They'll be roaming alongside roan antelope, bleobok antelope and ostriches in their new huge home, coming in at just under 15,000 square metres!

The grassland ecosystem has been carefully landscaped, with 35 huge trees that have been planted in the savannah, with the biggest being 10 metres tall. Visitors will be able to learn more about how vulnerable these wild habitats are to the seasons and climate change, with empowering help and knowledge on art champion conservation and reduce our individual impact.

Please note that some of the species named in this article and in the video that are planned to live in our Heart of Africa area may change by time of opening.

BAT-EARED FOX

- Named for their large ears, which can grow up to 5 inches long.
- These ears serve multiple functions, including thermoregulation and enhancing their sense of hearing to detect their favourite food - termites.
- They are highly social animals, engaging in grooming and playing behaviours to reinforce social bonds within the group.

RED SPITTING COBRA

- Earns its name from its striking red colour, often with darker markings along its body.
- The Cobra displays its hood as a warning to potential predators.
- Can accurately spit venom over distances of 2 metres.

SECRETARY BIRD

- Secretary birds are instantly recognizable by their tall, crane-like stature, long legs, and crest of feathers on their heads.
- These birds are formidable hunters, primarily preying on small mammals like rodents and reptiles such as snakes and lizards. They employ a unique hunting technique, using their powerful legs to stamp on prey.
- They are most often found in East African grasslands and savannahs of sub-Saharan Africa. They prefer habitats with short grass, which allows them to spot their prey more easily.

CAPE PORCUPINE

- Prickly quills are one of their most well-known features, serving as a defence mechanism. They're made of strengthened keratin with covered ends that will grow back.
- They have hollow quills in their tail, which they shake to make a rattling sound to warn predators that they're dangerous.
- Strong claws help them unearth bulbs, tubers and roots. They also eat fruits and grow on bark.

THE HIDDEN SAVANNAH

Visitors will be able to move from the towering heights of the giraffes to the smaller animals often hidden from sight in Africa's grasslands. Insects such as locusts and dung beetles will make the Hidden Savannah house their home, along with some smaller mammals such as naked mole-rats and elephant shrews. There'll also be a host of exciting reptiles, including the venomous red spitting cobra, Ethiopian mountain viper and lizards such as the Egyptian spiny-tailed lizard and the Critically Endangered pancake tortoise.

FIELD WORK

A huge part of the work we do here at the zoo is linked to protecting native habitats out in the field and working with local communities on the ground. The Heart of Africa journey will run alongside some of our key projects in Africa and invite visitors to discover more about our wider conservation work out in the wild.

MAASAI OLYMPICS

The Maasai Olympics is a way for Maasai warriors to display bravery by taking part in a sporting competition based on traditional Maasai skills such as high jump and rungu throwing. Historically, Maasai warriors would hunt lions to show bravery - a practice that carries significant cultural importance. However, in 2006, Maasai cultural fathers proposed the change to the Maasai Olympics, wanting to preserve these important cultural practices but without the environmental impact.

Conservation organisations like Chester Zoo supported the development of the Maasai Olympics - sharing educational resources and researching the environmental impact of the games. In 2016, 84% of Maasai warriors expressed their positivity towards the Maasai Olympics as an alternative to lion hunting.

PLAY OUR GREAT ZOO GAMES >

GIANT PANGOLIN PROJECT

Four species of pangolins inhabit the African continent, with two species listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List. The trade of the pangolin's scaly armour is centuries old, used as an ingredient in alternative medicines, as well as for decoration and fashion. They are also hunted for bushmeat and are dealing with the destruction of their habitat too.

The Giant Pangolin Project involves a 5-year partnership with the Uganda Wildlife Authority. Using camera traps and pioneering AI software to monitor giant pangolins at Zoo Rhino Sanctuary and Murchison Falls National Park, has allowed us to document the lives of individual pangolins as they roam and breed.

DISCOVER MORE >

BLACK RHINO CONSERVATION

Our work with the black rhino is a perfect example of our highly collaborative 'One Plan' approach to conservation science. Our team of keepers and scientists work with scholars and practitioners around the world to protect both zoo and wild populations.

The reproduction rates of the critically endangered black rhino had been declining for some time, so we worked alongside a number of other zoos and the Kenyan Wildlife Service to unlock the solutions that would reverse this decline. This resulted in the creation of our 'conservation physiology toolbox', the culmination of a five-year research project.

This work in zoos has also resulted in the founding of a lab, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy Kenya, where we are working with the Kenyan Wildlife Service to consider how our work can be applied with wild populations.

DISCOVER MORE >

51 LUXURY LODGES

Our unique overnight stays project, which is being developed adjacent to Heart of Africa, is also underway.

Set to open to our first guests in 2029, this project will see the development of 51 savannah-inspired luxury lodges, offering visitors a hotel stay unlike any other.

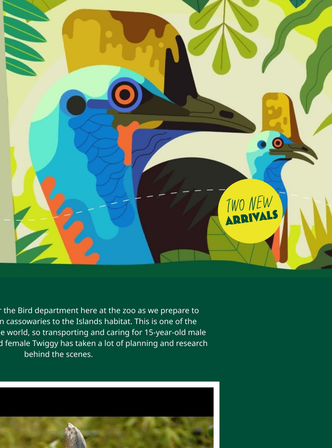
EXPERIENCE UNLIKE ANY OTHER

Each of the lodges will be able to accommodate up to six people and will either overlook the savannah or have their own plunge pool. Designed to immerse guests, it'll also be home to a restaurant and welcome area, and those staying with us will also be able to access exclusive experiences which will help to further connect them with the wildlife that their stay will be helping to support.

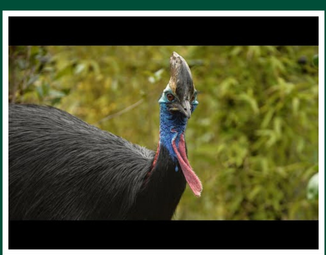
This ambitious new development is a key part of our long-term plans for how the zoo will look and will help play part in supporting our even more ambitious conservation plans.

We can't wait to **WELCOME** you to Heart of Africa in 2025 and we'll be sharing more **MEMBER EXCLUSIVES**, STORIES AND DEVELOPMENTS over the coming months as we begin the **FINAL COUNTDOWN** on this **IMMERSIVE AND PIONEERING PROJECT!**

Uncovering the MYSTERIOUS WORLD of CASSOWARIES



It's an exciting time for the Bird department here at the zoo as we prepare to welcome two southern cassowaries to the Islands habitat. This is one of the largest bird species in the world, so transporting and caring for 15-year-old male Frankfurt and 12-year-old female Twiggy has taken a lot of planning and research behind the scenes.



THE SOUTHERN CASSOWARY

With a top speed of up to 31mph, an eye-catching horned head, and dagger-like claws of up to 8cm, these normally shy and secretive birds can become aggressive if threatened when protecting chicks.

Mainly found in the tropical rainforests of north-eastern Queensland, Australia, and on the island of New Guinea, the cassowary primarily lives on fallen fruit and fungi, but will also eat bugs and small vertebrates when the opportunity arises. If you keep an ear out you might think you're hearing thunder on the horizon, but it's actually a unique rumbling sound cassowaries make that is yet another surprising characteristic of these prehistoric looking characters!

31
Top speed of up to 31mph.

8
Dagger like claws of up to 8cm.

THE BIG MOVE

Frankfurt and Twiggy have been matched as a breeding pair and are moving to us from Paignton Zoo in Devon. They have been undergoing training in preparation for the big move, learning to enter their crates using positive reinforcement foods such as grapes and mice which are a firm favourite of Twiggy's! Frankfurt has been a bit slower to pick up the training, but the move won't go ahead until both of them are comfortable and ready to make the trip.

Before they arrive, we'll be moving Asmat and Timika, the current pair of cassowaries at the zoo, into a purpose built behind-the-scenes habitat which will help our keepers to more closely monitor them as they get older. Working with cassowaries brings a range of challenges which has meant our keepers are skilled at working closely with the birds, and are able to move them into different areas of the habitat so they can carry out all of their daily tasks and minimise risks.

THE MATING GAME

Frankfurt and Twiggy are part of the EEP (European Endangered Species Programme) which recommends suitable breeding pairs. As wild populations are showing a downwards trend, this makes cassowaries being cared for in conservation zoos like ours all the more important.

Breeding cassowaries is a tricky business as they're a solitary species that can get territorial and aggressive both in the wild and in zoos if brought together at the wrong time. Twiggy in particular has been described as a feisty character! With little research into when these birds might be looking to breed or the best ways to achieve a successful match, it will be a slow process once they arrive here at the zoo to understand this pair's behaviour better so that we can bring them together successfully for breeding season.

DAD DUTIES

Interestingly, females don't hang around long after mating and will have two or three male partners in one breeding season which is unusual in the bird world. Once the eggs are laid, the female will leave the male to incubate the eggs for 50 days and then care for the chicks for nine months after hatching.

Cassowary eggs are usually laid in clutches of three to five and are bright green in colour. This is to camouflage them in tropical forests, making them harder to spot by predators.

GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH

Zoe Sweetman, a Team Manager in the Birds department, is currently researching cassowary behaviour as part of her Masters. Zoe started out monitoring Asmat and Timika's behaviour with cameras around their habitat. Working through 70,000 hours of data and 10,000 hours of audio so far, Zoe is looking at how the behaviour of cassowaries changes based on a variety of factors both here and in other organisations across Europe. She's primarily looking at seasonal behaviour changes in relation to courtship and breeding.

Alongside hormone samples, a key part of Zoe's work is delving into the little-known area of cassowary communication and how their vocalisations change. We know that they can communicate through infrasound, a set of sounds that are too low for the human ear, which makes Zoe's research such an important part in the jigsaw of caring for cassowaries and the vital signs to look for when it comes to breeding the next generation.

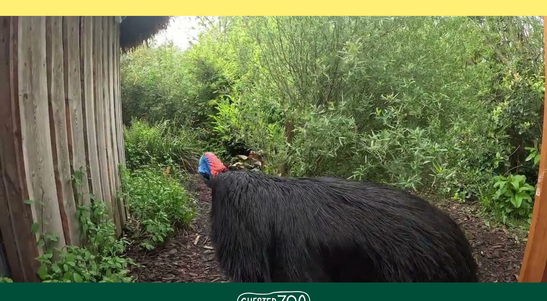
COME and VISIT **FRANKFURT** and **TWIGGY** in their ISLAND HABITAT soon!

ANIMAL EXPERIENCES >

SEE THE CASSOWARIES UP CLOSE

Do you want to come face to face with these amazing birds? We're delighted to announce a BRAND NEW cassowary Experience which will be launching very soon at the zoo. You'll be taken to Asmat and Timika's behind-the-scenes habitat, where you'll get the chance to feed the prehistoric pair some of their favourite snacks. Best of all one of our expert keepers will be on hand to answer any questions you have about this fascinating and at times misunderstood creature.

Make sure you keep an eye on our website to stay up to date with all of the latest animal Experiences on offer!

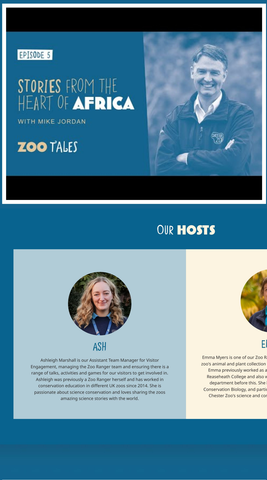


CHESTER ZOO

CHESTER ZOO PRESENTS

ZOO TALES

Discover the science and the stories behind the scenes and meet the incredible people that make Chester Zoo the leading conservation and wildlife charity it is today.



EPISODE 5

Our Director of Animals and Plants, Mike Jordan, joins us for the fifth episode of our Zoo Tales podcast.

Mike trained as a zoologist at the University of London and around 1990 became involved in zoos through work with the IUCN, BIAZA and EAZA. He has a special interest in zoo management and conservation management & planning, specialising in small mammals and invertebrates.

From 2009 - 2015 he was the executive conservation advisor to the South African government in zoos and game reserves, before returning to Chester Zoo in 2015 as the Director of Collections.

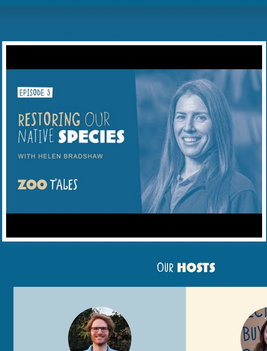
OUR HOSTS

ASH

Ashleigh Marshall is our Assistant Team Manager for Visitor Engagement, managing the Zoo Ranger team and ensuring there is a range of talks, activities and games for our visitors to get involved in. Ashleigh was previously a Zoo Ranger herself and has worked in conservation education in different UK zoos since 2014. She is passionate about science conservation and loves sharing the zoos amazing science stories with the world.

EMMA

Emma Myers is one of our Zoo Rangers, engaging our visitors with the zoo's animal and plant collection through a range of talks and activities. Emma previously worked as a lecturer in animal management at Reaseheath College and also worked in Blackpool Zoo's education department before this. She has recently completed her MSc in Conservation Biology, and particularly enjoys talking to visitors about Chester Zoo's science and conservation work around the world.



EPISODE 4

Our Assistant Team Manager on the Bird Team, Jonathan Beilby, joins us for the fourth episode of our Zoo Tales podcast.

"I spend my days working with the array of wonderful bird species at Chester Zoo, trying to maintain naturalistic environments for these beautiful animals in our captive spaces. I have been fortunate to work for the zoo out in the field in Indonesia, to see some of the conservation we are doing first hand for some of the most threatened birds on the planet"

OUR HOSTS

FRASER

Fraser Montgomerie is a Zoo Ranger at Chester Zoo, spending his days talking to visitors about all things animals and plants! From delivering animal talks and touch-table sessions, and running the bat and lemur walkthroughs, to running educational clubs for toddlers to teenagers. He has an immense love for dinosaurs, and in his spare time he enjoys walking his dog, watching films/TV, and playing video games.

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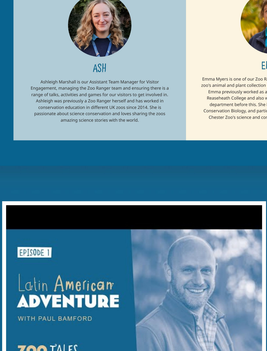

EPISODE 3

Our UK Field Programme Manager, Helen Bradshaw, joins us for the third episode of our Zoo Tales podcast. Helen oversees our zoo estate biodiversity delivery as well as our native species projects with partner organisations.

Combining her experience as a local authority planning ecologist and conservation volunteering work with bats and badgers Helen has been working in the Cheshire region for 20 years. She's a champion for biological recording and showing how monitoring data informs habitat management.

Read more about HELEN ›

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JANE

Jane is a Community Engagement Officer for our Networks for Nature project. Jane is often out chatting to the local community about how to make our outdoor spaces better for wildlife. Prior to this role, Jane was a zoo ranger delivering informal education in the zoo. Jane has a MSc Animal Behaviour degree and a BSc Psychology degree, so working in zoo education suits all of Jane's interests - chatting to people about animals!

EPISODE 2

Lead Conservation Scientist, Dr Leah Williams, joins us for the second episode of the Zoo Tales podcast. We dive behind the scenes at the zoo as we discover all about the fascinating world of **population biology** and the secret soundscapes of bioacoustics.

Leah shares just how closely linked the work of zoos is to wild populations around the world, which we are working to protect for the future. So grab a brew and brush up your knowledge before your next trip to the zoo!

Read more about LEAH ›

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EPISODE 1

Regional Field Programme Manager, Paul Bamford, will be taking us across the world to Latin America and introducing us to the incredible wildlife that calls this region home for our first episode! At just seven years old, Paul's family relocated to Chile and his fascination with wildlife and the impact we have on the natural world was sparked.

Out in the field, our conservation work is a huge part of the work we do and Paul shares with us some of the projects which we've been working on in Latin America and shines a spotlight on our amazing partner organisations that help to make it all happen on the ground.

Read more about PAUL ›

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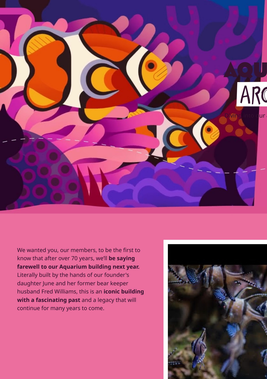
CHRIS

Chris Deputy, our previous Internal Communications Manager, here at Chester Zoo is a science communicator, was a lecturer at the University of Liverpool, a stand-up comedian, an events co-ordinator and PR officer at the BBC, and now a podcast host! He loves everything about the natural world and is the biggest supporter of Chester Zoo's mission of preventing extinction.

CHESTER ZOO



AQUARIUM ARCHIVES

Our aquatic past and future

We wanted you, our members, to be the first to know that after over 70 years, we'll **be saying farewell to our Aquarium building next year.** Literally built by the hands of our founder's daughter June and her former bear keeper husband Fred Williams, this is an **iconic building with a fascinating past** and a legacy that will continue for many years to come.

AN AQUATIC ADVENTURE

The story of our Aquarium started in the 1950s, when an enthusiastic June and Fred Williams were hard at work pouring and shaping concrete by hand as the couple brought their ambitious plans to life. With their work illuminated by two aircraft runway landing lights George Mottershead purchased at an army surplus sale, slowly but surely the Aquarium we know and love today began to take shape.

June's love for the Aquarium began during her school days, when the zoo's first ever aquatic species were located in tanks in the labyrinth of wine cellars below The Oakfield. She begged Peter Fakwasser, the zoo's first full-time aquarist, to let her help and she began her evening duties as an informal apprentice around her homework.

This passion for the aquatic continued and fuelled the building you see at the zoo today. June and Fred spent the late 1940s and early 1950s visiting as many aquariums as possible, with grand plans to make their innovative scheme here in Chester a reality. When it opened in 1952, the Aquarium featured an innovative flat roof which was flooded with water and populated with fish that could be viewed from below through glass hatches - a spectacular sight before reports came in of fish falling out of the sky as birds began to carry the fish off for supper!

Through the decades

1938

A December 1938 issue of the 'Our Zoo News' magazine updates villagers on the addition of new tanks in the old Oakfield Aquarium.

Now, everything is here ready to put in the new tanks.

In the room there is room to add on again, so I have ordered six tanks to the specification Matthew Hume will be supplying. A total of 12 tanks will be ready for the Christmas season. Photos from here after Christmas.

Some people do not realise that tropic fish require heat to keep them alive. Matthew Hume has to bother this to every consignment he buys, and he has to keep the temperature of the room right, or instead of a delight it keeps the visitors away. Temperature must be kept at 70 degrees Fahr.

So this year provided a very true life of a fish-keeper. Matthew Hume has to get up at 6.30 to see that his fishes is not drowned. Then this one

1948

This zoo map from September 1948 shows the location of the old Oakfield Aquarium, shortly before it closed.

1952

The existing Aquarium in the final stages of construction.

1964

An excerpt from 'Chester Zoo news' about a former resident of the Aquarium, the West African lungfish.

"CHESTER ZOO NEWS" Page Fourteen

DO NOTICE

Perhaps among the more unusual fish on exhibition just differently from the rest is the Lungfish. This is a native of the tropical rivers of Africa (Long Fish, Protopterus annectens).

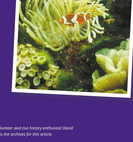
First impressions on encountering these fish are rather mixed. They look like a cross between a snake and a fish, and with their trailing fins, form or rattle tails and dull, scarcely fish-like eyes, they are not the most attractive of creatures to look at on first viewing. This, together with the lack of love for such ugly things, accounts for the fact that they are not kept in the Aquarium in large numbers. I say missing, fish because the record of fish and their off

1978

Information about the Aquarium from the 1978 Chester Zoo Guide. At the time, there were around 2,300 fish in the Aquarium.

1982

The Aquarium in approximately 1982. The Aquarium used to have a separate admission fee - 10p for adults and 5p for children.



1991

In 1991 many of the tanks in the Aquarium were being redeveloped to house a range of tropical marine and freshwater fish.

2001

The 2001 Chester Zoo Guide outlines some of the notable species in the Aquarium, many of which can still be found there today.

2008

Information about the Aquarium from the 2008 Chester Zoo guide, with a mention of our worldwide reputation for the conservation breeding of threatened fish species.

2024

The Aquarium as it looks today.

A FOND FAREWELL

Sadly, the way it was lovingly constructed back in the 50s means that the Aquarium is now coming to the end of its life. With such advancements in building methods, technology and requirements for modern zoos, our expert team of structural engineers agree that from 2026 our aquatic species in the Aquarium will be finding new habitats to flourish in, under the care of our dedicated aquatic team.

For the last 25 years we have been developing other aquatic habitats throughout the zoo, teeming with many different species. You can find these in places like Spirit of the Jaguar, Monsoon Forest, the Chapi House and the Elephant House.

Our conservation work behind the scenes and out in the field will also continue, with a dedication that has seen us **save fish species from the brink of extinction**, such as bringing the golden skiffia back to Mexican waters for the first time since 1990. Our team were also the first in Europe to **successfully breed the critically endangered** scarce yellow sally stonefly, which had been thought extinct for 28 years.

TEAMWORK

Our Aquarium team have been renowned for groundbreaking scientific and conservation work for decades, caring for hundreds of aquatic species at the zoo as well as their work on projects around the world. Our focus is unique in the sense that we predominantly specialise in freshwater environments which are more diverse and threatened than marine environments. Having a zoo like ours working on this is extremely important, with projects around the world from Mexico to Madagascar helping to safely reintroduce fish species to their native home.

It's only through the skills developed working in the Aquarium over the years that our teams have been able to offer their expertise to these vital conservation projects in the wild. An amazing legacy which we're all extremely proud of.

With so many special stories through the ages and a wide breadth of conservation work around the world, our Aquarium won't be leaving us without the send off it deserves. Keep your eyes peeled for more special features over the coming year to celebrate all the conservation successes that this special place has helped to achieve.

We would like to wish a special thanks to Chester Zoo volunteer and zoo history enthusiast David Lomas, who has helped with our research into the archives for this article.

FUN & GAMES

THE GREAT ZOO GAMES >

SCREENSAVERS >

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Test your agility, go head-to-head with a cheetah, and look out for daily prizes. Together we'll celebrate an incredible summer of sport with animal inspired activities and games, where having a competitive edge will bring you an advantage! Who can run the fastest? Lift the most? Jump the furthest? Compete with your friends and family and see who will come out on top.

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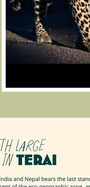
CHESTER ZOO

OVERCOMING CONFLICT

Sharing a HOME with the world's GREATEST PREDATORS

When most of us leave our front door for work, we don't imagine coming face to face with a leopard or having our crops eaten by hungry fruit bats. But this is the daily reality for millions of farmers and communities who go about their lives, living side by side with some of the world's most endangered species. Finding a way forward that supports human needs and protects wildlife is a challenge that our teams and partners on the ground are working tirelessly to solve.



A LEOPARD CONFLICT

DEVELOPING VILLAGE LIFE

THE PROBLEM

Human-wildlife conflicts happen when animals pose a threat to the livelihood or safety of communities which then leads to the persecution of that species by local people.

Understandably, people are afraid of a tiger entering their village or frustrated by elephants trampling their crops, but this has sadly also led to a huge decline in the populations of many species.

Our role as one of the world's leading conservation charities is to bring together a group of great minds to help find clever solutions to complex problems, giving communities the best chance to safely share landscapes with wildlife for years to come.

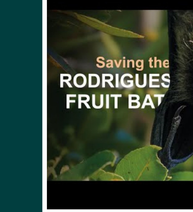
"The long-term goal is to **ADDRESS EACH OF THE ISSUES** that CAUSE CONFLICT in the first place. The **GREATEST BOOM FOR CHANGE** lies in HUMAN BEHAVIOUR."

– Living with Large Carnivores Project and Terai Tiger Project

LIVING WITH LARGE CARNIVORES IN TERAI

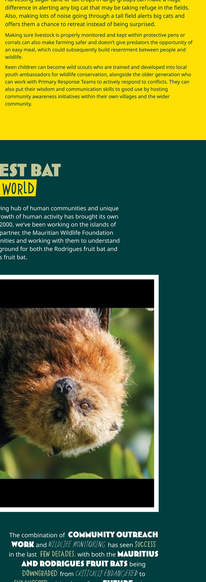
The Terai region across India and Nepal bears the last stands of pristine wildlife habitats reminiscent of the eco-geographic zone, as well as millions of people living in numerous villages and towns. Here, sugarcane fields often stand over 10 feet tall, towering above the farmers who harvest the land to feed their families as their sole livelihood. These farmers may be tending their fields when a flash of orange may catch their eye. Startling one of India's largest predators, the Bengal tiger, or a common leopard, is a very real prospect, and they can never be sure if the animal will flee or defend itself.

Chester Zoo's Terai Tiger Project and Living with Large Carnivores Project were created to help reduce these types of risks that hundreds of people face in areas of farmland that sit between pockets of India's remaining forest. Loss of life is only one part of the picture, with a large amount of conflict between humans and carnivorous species like tigers and leopards, coming from killing livestock. This situation can hugely impact families, most of whom are already living in poverty.



WORKING together on SOLUTIONS

A common theme in human-wildlife conflict scenarios with animals like big cats or elephants, is retaliatory killings. In India for example, the presence of a large carnivore can create a fearful mob who may chase off, or attempt to kill, the animal to protect their families and livestock. This is why listening to communities and working together on solutions is so important.



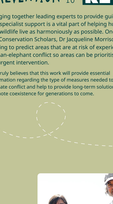
The PROJECT focuses on TWO TYPES of INTERVENTION - RESPONSE and PREVENTION

Response teams of professionals, supported by respected volunteers from within the community, work in tandem to help avoid situations that give rise to conflicts and allow safe passage to animals that come into populated areas. Distress calls are responded to, and animals are monitored and protected from conflict, as quickly as possible.

SINCE 2017

the lives of 28 endangered tigers have been saved thanks to the Terai Tiger Project! This included five Bengal tigers being moved to safe areas of the forests of Dudhwa and Pilibhit, and 23 tigers safely moved away from conflict situations.

PRIMARY response TEAM



PREVENTION

Simple fixes to avoid conflict are key when it comes to prevention. Harvesting sugar cane or tall crops in large groups can make a huge difference in alerting any big cat that may be taking refuge in the fields. Also, making lots of noise going through a tall field alerts big cats and offers them a chance to retreat instead of being surprised.

Making sure livestock is properly monitored and kept within protective pens or corrals can also make farming safer and doesn't give predators the opportunity of an easy meal, which could subsequently build resentment between people and wildlife.

Keen children can become wild scouts who are trained and developed into local youth ambassadors for wildlife conservation, alongside the older generation who can work with Primary Response Teams to actively respond to conflicts. They can also put their wisdom and communication skills to good use by hosting community awareness initiatives within their own villages and the wider community.

THE RAREST BAT IN THE WORLD

The volcanic Mascarene islands are a thriving hub of human communities and unique wildlife living side by side. However, the growth of human activity has brought its own challenges for the islands' wildlife. Since 2000, we've been working on the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues alongside our partner, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF), running projects with local communities and working with them to understand the best ways to tackle the issues on the ground for both the Rodrigues fruit bat and Mauritius fruit bat.

Our work with MWF to restore habitats across Rodrigues is supporting the population of fruit bats that call Rodrigues home. Our continued long term surveys of the species help us to understand the impacts of cyclones on the population.

Mauritius fruit bats are seen as pests by many local people due to their noisy nature and consumption of common food crops. Working together with MWF and the IUCN Human-Wildlife Conflict Task Force, we've been researching and growing our knowledge of fruit bat ecology on the islands. This includes quantifying the bats damage to crops, and bringing together key groups of people to look for non-lethal answers to the conflict.

The combination of **COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORK** and *WILDLIFE MONITORING* has seen SUCCESS in the last FEW DECADES, with both the **MAURITIUS AND RODRIGUES FRUIT BATS** being DOWNGRADED from *CRITICALLY ENDANGERED* to ENDANGERED, giving hope for a **FUTURE** where both HUMANS and WILDLIFE can **COEXIST** for *DECADES TO COME*.

PREVENTION IS KEY

Bringing together leading experts to provide guidance and specialist support is a vital part of helping humans and wildlife live as harmoniously as possible. One of our Conservation Scholars, Dr Jacqueline Morrison, is looking to predict areas that are at risk of experiencing human-elephant conflict so areas can be prioritised for urgent intervention.

She truly believes that this work will provide essential information regarding the type of measures needed to mitigate conflict and help to provide long-term solutions and promote coexistence for generations to come.

Risk of EXPERIENCING human-elephant CONFLICT

BECOME a conservation CHAMPION

TOGETHER we can ACT FOR WILDLIFE

Find out how you can become a conservation champion and play your part in the bigger picture!

FIND OUT MORE! >

CHESTER ZOO

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Introducing a collection of exciting zoo stories you may have missed over the last few months!

Get up to date on the latest zoo news and impress all your friends with your new found zoo expertise!

CHESTER ZOO

ARRIVAL OF EDIE, THE BABY GIRAFFE

On Tuesday 12 March a new female baby giraffe was born to new mum Orla. The giraffe calf has now been named Edie (pronounced e-dee) and is named after Lake Edward in Uganda, one of the African Great Lakes, her moniker is inspired by the zoo's conservation efforts in the country.

At two days old, Edie already weighed more than 70kg and stood 6 foot tall, and by the time of her first outing in April, had gained 30kg and had grown even taller. The calf will continue to grow to be more than 18 foot tall and weigh about 900kg!

After spending some weeks bonding with mum Orla, and getting used to her long legs, Edie enjoyed her first outdoor adventure in April and could be seen excitedly running and playfully chasing about outside in the sunshine.

Rothschild's giraffes have an IUCN Red List Status of 'Vulnerable'. Edie is an important addition to the international conservation breeding programme, which is working to secure the future of the species.

GUILLERMO'S TRIP TO THE VET

Guillermo, or 'Gilly' for short, is our 14 year-old male southern tamandua (*Tamandua tetradactyla*), a tree-climbing anteater species from South America.

When he's not curled up in a ball and sleeping inside our Tamandua House, he's quite the character: interacting with staff, slurping his food (anteaters don't have any teeth) and exploring his indoor and outdoor habitats.

Earlier this year, our keepers noticed that Gilly was losing weight, so our veterinary team were called and investigations revealed something quite unusual: his right ureter (the tube linking his right kidney to his urinary bladder) was ruptured and this was causing urine to slowly leak and accumulate inside his abdomen.

It wasn't possible to fix the damaged ureter so the only solution was for our vets to surgically remove the affected kidney and prevent more urine from being produced.

We don't know how and why this issue first occurred but such urine accumulations (known as 'urinoma') have been recorded in humans. That said, this is the first case we know of in a tamandua... or any similar creature!

Gilly was returned to the Tamandua House and was eating and climbing around within hours of his surgery. Several weeks have since passed, and Gilly appears back to full health and fitness. He's put on weight and body condition and he's back to waiting impatiently for his breakfast in the mornings!

Following his 'nephrectomy' procedure, our keepers and our veterinary team will continue to monitor Gilly closely to check that his remaining left kidney is working well and able to cope with the burden of working twice as hard.

AUNG-BO GETS WEIGHED

In our Autumn edition last year, we announced Aung-Bo's big move and the time has now nearly come for us to finally wave the 22 year-old male elephant off to his new home. Bull elephants in the wild naturally move between herds to breed - we're a part of the European Endangered Species Programme (EEP) and Aung-Bo's move will replicate this movement to a new herd. This is part of the EAZA breeding programme and helps support conservation of the species.

In preparation for his move, we need to know his weight. Aung-Bo was last weighed in 2017, aged 15, weighing 4410kg. In March this year, aged 22, he weighed 4934kg!

Male elephants will keep growing well into their late thirties so this weight will only increase. We weren't sure Aung-Bo would fit on the weigh scales due to his size, but he came into the training area calmly and managed to position himself correctly within just a couple of attempts.

We hadn't weighed Aung-Bo since 2017 because the weigh scales for the elephants are located in the training area, which is primarily used by Maya and the Hi Way family. This training area has not been designed for adult bulls, as Aung-Bo has his own separate training area (without scales!).

Aung-Bo was very calm and appeared quite content in the training area, before having a wander around Maya and the Hi Way's indoor area. Our team is working closely with Aung-Bo on a daily basis to continue with his transport training, ensuring he is comfortable and ready for his move.

BLUE MONITOR TREE LIZARD

Have you spotted our blue tree monitor, located in Realm of the Red Ape yet?

A recent addition to our zoo, this endangered species is only found on Batanta Island and the surrounding islets off the coast of Irian Jaya, in Indonesian New Guinea. Batanta island is just 455 km2 meaning this species has one of the smallest distributions of any monitor lizard.

Blue tree monitors are sought after for the international illegal pet trade which has caused decline in the wild population and is likely a threat to the long-term survival of this species in the wild. It's now a protected species in Indonesia, and there's no legal collection of the species from the wild. Blue tree monitors are exclusively arboreal with a prehensile tail for grasping and balance when in the canopy of the lowland tropical forest.

We're pleased to now be home to a young male and more may arrive from other zoos in the future. He's settling well into his habitat, though he's still a little shy and likes to sit on his elevated hide.

ELEVEN PENGUIN CHICKS HATCH!

Humboldt penguins are becoming increasingly rare and are now listed as **Vulnerable** to extinction by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

We're delighted to have welcomed eleven new Humboldt penguin chicks, the most to hatch in one season at the zoo for more than 10 years! The new chicks are being weighed regularly and our expert keepers are keeping a close eye on their growth and development.

To keep track of new chicks keepers choose a different theme to inspire their names each season, with previous topics being NHS heroes, brands of crisps, chocolate bars and British Olympic athletes. In keeping with this tradition, **Nettle**, **Thistle**, **Dandelion**, **Tulip and Daffodil** have been confirmed as some of the names amongst the new arrivals!

TIBIRI meets MANU

Endangered giant otter joins us at the zoo

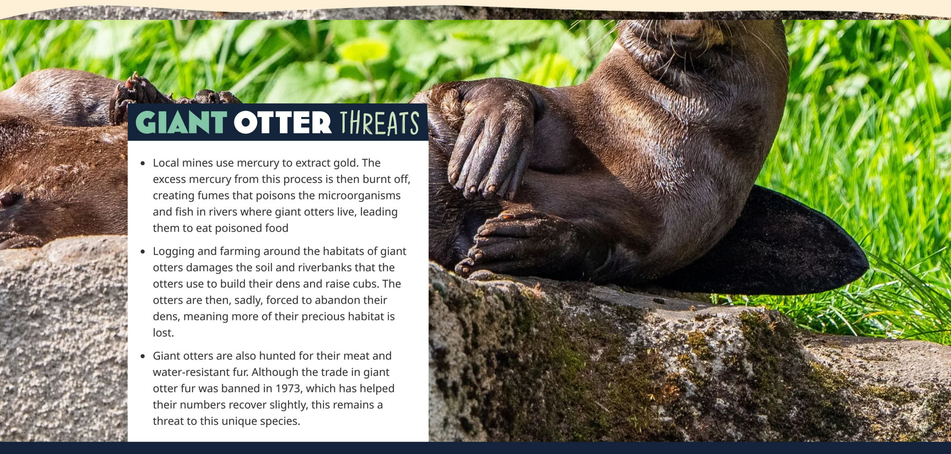
We are VERY EXCITED to welcome **MANU** to the zoo after our male giant otter, **TARUBU**, sadly passed away last year. GIANT OTTERS are a social species who thrive with others, so **TIBIRI** is very happy to have a NEW PLAYMATE to spend the summer swimming and splashing around with! The pair are already becoming more confident in each other's company and can often be spotted enjoying a **SWIM TOGETHER** in their outdoor pool.

THE 'RIVER WOLF'

Earning the nickname, 'river wolves' in their Amazon home, the giant otters have large razor-sharp teeth and a strong muscular body, making them extra agile and streamlined in the water. The largest of the otter species in the world, they can be up to one metre tall when standing and weigh up to 30kg. Their sensitive, webbed paws are perfect for feeling out and catching fish, frogs and molluscs along the riverbed.

LOVING AND SOCIABLE, the **GIANT OTTERS** live in **family groups,** with monogamous PARENTS AND CUBS forming a close **FAMILY UNIT.**

Manu's arrival from Budapest Zoo is an important part of our plan to protect this endangered species from extinction, with hopes that the newly matched pair may be the key to eight-year-old Tibiri welcoming her first cubs. Listed as Endangered on The International Union for Conservation's (IUCN) Red List, giant otters are threatened by human expansion, mining and hunting in their native habitats of the Amazon, Orinoco and La Plata river systems, which is why successfully breeding in zoos like ours is key to their protection.



GIANT OTTER THREATS

- Local mines use mercury to extract gold. The excess mercury from this process is then burnt off, creating fumes that poisons the microorganisms and fish in rivers where giant otters live, leading them to eat poisoned food
- Logging and farming around the habitats of giant otters damages the soil and riverbanks that the otters use to build their dens and raise cubs. The otters are then, sadly, forced to abandon their dens, meaning more of their precious habitat is lost.
- Giant otters are also hunted for their meat and water-resistant fur. Although the trade in giant otter fur was banned in 1973, which has helped their numbers recover slightly, this remains a threat to this unique species.

Pay a visit to **MANU** and **TIBIRI** when you NEXT VISIT THE ZOO and look out for some of the **SPECIAL FEATURES** we've included in their HABITAT.

- With a large outdoor and indoor pool, you check out the underwater viewing windows to see if you can spot the 'river wolves' taking a dip.
- There's bamboo feeders and floats that hide the giant otters' food. These help to keep Manu and Tibiri physically and mentally stimulated as they search for their next meal.
- If you're lucky you might spot the giant otters digging in their large sandpit, which helps to keep their all-important webbed paws healthy.

You can find the giant otters behind the penguin habitat!

CHESTER ZOO

Take a sneak peek at some incredible wild animals spotted by our camera traps from Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda. This unique footage offers a glimpse into the wild, with African elephants, aardvarks and even a giant pangolin spotted!

AFRICAN ELEPHANT

A herd of stunning African elephants making their way through the vibrant rainforest within Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda. Did you know they can communicate with each other up to 10 km away using infrasound? Lots of species use these low frequency vibrations to communicate, and our scientists are studying this with the species under our care.

SERVAL

Peek-a-boo! This curious serval is checking out our camera trap in Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda. These cats are incredible jumpers, able to leap up to 3 meters to catch their prey! Conservation programs are helping to ensure these agile hunters continue to thrive.

SAVANNAH CANE RAT

Tiny explorer! Meet the Savannah cane rat, a small but mighty Ugandan resident. These rodents play important roles in ecosystems, helping with things like seed dispersal and soil aeration. They are also known for their adaptability and are able to thrive in various habitats: from forests to grasslands.

AARDVARK

The elusive aardvark is on the prowl. These nocturnal animals have powerful claws for digging out ants and termites. Aardvarks have an excellent sense of smell to locate their food and can consume up to 50,000 insects in one night!

GIANT PANGOLIN AND PORCUPINE

An incredibly rare sighting! This Endangered giant pangolin met a prickly friend on its walk: a crested porcupine! Pangolins are the only mammals covered in scales and are the most trafficked species in the world. Our team have been studying them for several years across different sites in Uganda to help inform plans to protect them.

OLIVE BABOONS

Baboon buddies! These young olive baboons are enjoying a playful moment by the stream. Did you know baboons have complex social structures and communicate with over 30 different vocalisations? Like most primates, olive baboons are highly adaptable, living in various habitats from savannahs to forests, and they play a crucial role in their ecosystems by dispersing seeds and controlling insect populations.

LEOPARD

Spotted beauty! This magnificent leopard prowls through the underbrush in Uganda. Leopards are known for their incredible strength and can haul prey twice their weight up into trees! Conservationists are working hard to reduce their conflicts with people over livestock, which can be easy meals for a hungry leopard!

SPOTTED HYENA

Laughing hunter! The spotted hyena is more than its famous giggle. These animals have one of the strongest bites in the animal kingdom and play a crucial role in their ecosystem as scavengers. Through dedicated conservation actions, their populations are seeing positive changes.

Camera trap fact

Despite the name, there's no trapping involved! The cameras are simply left in a secret spot and sense when there's some movement or animal action in the surrounding area, helping us capture magic little moments like these.

Conservation CHAMPIONS

Why volunteering is powering our mission forward

Volunteers' Week is happening from the **3-9 June this year**, celebrating the amazing contributions that volunteers make to communities across the UK. It wouldn't be possible to do the amazing conservation work here at the zoo and in our communities without the **250 volunteers** who support us in our mission to prevent extinction every year. Who better to ask for some insider **zoo tips and special facts** than the volunteers you'll often meet as you **explore the zoo** and everything there is to do!

"If you see us (IN BRIGHT BLUE UNIFORM) please **ask us anything! It really MAKES OUR DAY** and just a FEW QUESTIONS answered **can change a person's** WHOLE VIEW on a **SUBJECT!"**

Finn Holmes-Kellett, Volunteer

HEATHER FLEMING-WILLIAMS

How long have you been a volunteer for?

This will be my 9th year volunteering at the zoo.

What's your top tip for members visiting the zoo?

Be patient. Sometimes just staying by a habitat for a few minutes will get you a wonderful sighting that walking past would miss.

Which area of the zoo do you most enjoy spending time in as a volunteer?

I have a soft spot for Monsoon Forest. I like to champion the less well-known species so I love pointing out all the birds, frogs and critters in the habitat that people might otherwise miss.

FINN HOLMES-KELLETT

How long have you been a volunteer for?

I have been a volunteer at Chester Zoo for 6 years.

What's your top tip for members visiting the zoo?

Arrive early, there is so much to see – you might even need two days! As a charity, the money raised by public admission and purchases goes towards both the running of the zoo and its programmes and the conservation projects it supports in the field. Every visit makes a difference for nature!

Be aware that animals, like ourselves are individuals with personalities and a mind of their own. This means they may not be immediately visible upon first look, so it is worth a few passes during a visit. During each look, I advise spending a few minutes observing or searching before moving on.

MARCO TREBBI

How long have you been a volunteer for?

4 Years.

Why did you decide to volunteer?

I have been coming to Chester Zoo since I was a child and always been enthralled by the zoo's ethos and mission. My family are all members now, so I wanted to give back to Chester Zoo, what I could, for the years of excitement and pleasure I had as a child visiting our wonderful zoo. I want to do my bit towards our zoo's conservation mission and the preventing extinction journey.

What do you love about Chester Zoo?

I had to really think about this question, but it is actually a theme I discuss with our guests quite regularly. The very much unsung work that our zoo does both out in the field, spreading its mission statement, and both here at home. It's an amazing zoo, with amazing staff, fantastic leadership and then there's our animals!

VANESSA GREATOREX ROSKILLY

How long have you been a volunteer for?

Just over four years.

What do you do in your role as a volunteer?

I love the variety. Mostly it's archiving, visitor engagement, Hedgehog Watch and helping out at events such as the Wildlife Connections Festival and Lanterns and Light , but I've also done race marshalling, provided written transcripts of keeper talks for online videos, appeared in a musical conservation video and participated in security training exercises. On top of this I really enjoy all the opportunities to develop my skills and knowledge through the zoo's online training and volunteer engagement sessions.

Do you have any special facts about the zoo you'd like to share with visitors?

Female giant walking leaves were unknown to scientists until 1984, and it was another 10 years before male giant walking leaves were spotted. Until then, it was believed that every giant walking leaf was a clone of its mother via a process known as parthenogenesis.

DAVID LOMAS

How long have you been a volunteer for?

I have been a volunteer at Chester Zoo for nine years.

What do you do in your role as a volunteer?

Initially, my role was to engage visitors on Islands, but gradually the role expanded and new opportunities arose. In my case, I'd mentioned an interest in the zoo's history and several small projects came my way, I'm also a member of the Archive Team where we're bringing together papers and photographs and cataloguing them.

What's your top tip for members visiting the zoo?

Our mega/fauna is amazing, but take time to seek out and observe our smaller animals, their natural histories can be just as interesting.

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS

A big thank you to all our wonderful corporate volunteers helping us to make a difference!

Our corporate volunteering scheme offers a unique opportunity for our valued corporate members to help make a difference. By partnering with dedicated zoo teams, corporate volunteers not only make a meaningful contribution to wildlife conservation, but also gain unique insights into the inner workings of a global conservation charity. Whether it's supporting animal welfare, aiding our field teams in wildlife and biodiversity efforts, or participating in conservation education work, corporate teams leave with a profound sense of accomplishment and a deeper connection to the incredible animals and conservation projects here at Chester Zoo.

Thank You, Volunteers

#volunteersweek

VOLUNTEERS' WEEK

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

We have a range of volunteer opportunities including roles in the zoo, in the community and volunteering from home.

We recruit and train in-zoo volunteers on a regular basis, our next intake will be in the Autumn. Keep your eye on Cheshire West Voluntary Action where all future roles will be advertised.

If you want to hear more about volunteering and our work in our communities surrounding Chester and Ellesmere Port, you'll find it on our Networks for Nature project page. Networks for Nature - What you can do (chesterzoo.org)

Become a Champion in Conservation! Check out our self-led award scheme for ways in which you can impact nature where you are.

Champions Awards - What you can do (chesterzoo.org)

FIND OUT MORE >

CHESTER ZOO

ENABLING CONSERVATION through AMAZING ANIMAL EXPERIENCES

Our popular Keeper For A Day experiences give you the unique opportunity to work closely with incredible wildlife here at the zoo. But did you know every penny raised through this scheme directly supports our wide range of conservation work around the world? Right now, we have projects running in **over 100 countries** which means your day as a keeper will make a difference to worldwide conservation too!

Some of our team, who used money raised through **Keeper For A Day** to visit our conservation projects, have shared stories about their incredible trips and how they directly contributed to protecting endangered wildlife.

SHANE WHITTAKER

Facilities Manager

In June 2023 I was lucky enough to receive funding to spend three weeks with Free The Bears at Luang Prabang in Laos. Free the Bears are on the front line of the illegal wildlife trade in Southeast Asia, specialising in rescuing Bears. The zoo's resident sun bears, Milli and Toni, were rescued by the Free The Bears team in Cambodia.

I was asked to support the team on various projects, such as installing and training their team in the latest electric fence technologies, as well as showing them how to build fences and gates. I also designed and managed the building of an area where small cubs could acclimatise to being outside, walk on grass, have exposure to water and small climbing elements while under supervision of the Free The Bears team. This enabled me to make a direct contribution towards the zoo's Conservation Masterplan, which wouldn't have been possible without the Keeper For A Day fund.

"I am so **GRATEFUL** to have had this FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY to LEARN more about the **PHILIPPINE SPOTTED DEER** in the WILD."

– Rachel Cartwright

NEGROS FOREST PARK

We visited Talarak Foundation Inc. a conservation project based on Negros Island, Philippines, whose primary aim is to conserve and restore native endemic wildlife. The project focuses on five key species; Philippine spotted deer, Visayan warty pig, rufous-headed hornbill, Visayan tarictic hornbill and Negros bleeding-heart dove.

We spent some time at Negros Forest Park, where they showcase their endemic species, breed animals for release and run education programmes for local schools. We then visited Bayawan Nature Reserve, where we got involved in lots of fieldwork activities such as camera trapping, habitat assessments and day and night tracking of species.

RACHEL CARTWRIGHT

Rhino Keeper

I am so grateful to have had this fantastic opportunity to learn more about Philippine spotted deer in the wild; a species I am really passionate about. I made connections with like-minded people and exchanged ideas about husbandry and welfare of the 'West Visayan Big 5'. It was really motivating to see how conservation projects like Talarak are working so hard to ensure the survival of their endemic wildlife.

JAMIE STOCK

Bird Keeper

I had an amazing opportunity to visit Talarak to see how one of our conservation partners work and the challenges they face in preventing extinction. I was lucky enough to see the Visayan tarictic hornbill in the wild, a species that I work with on a daily basis, and see on cameras a female in her nest with eggs. I also learned more about mammal species we have here at the zoo which enhanced my knowledge and gave me a greater appreciation for their native biodiversity.

DAVID WHITE

Twilight Team Manager

Embarking on a journey to experience the Chester Zoo-led Giant Pangolin Project was an extraordinary adventure and one I will never forget. The vibrant colours, friendly people, breathtaking scenery and a rich diversity of flora and fauna was incredible.

I acquired valuable skills such as camera trapping and GPS navigation techniques, allowing me to actively contribute to conservation efforts in the field. Camera trapping unveiled a mesmerising world of wildlife, capturing elusive creatures and recording significant behaviours which all contribute to significant research. Experiencing the habitat and seeing the giant pangolins on camera trap footage gave me a real insight into the species, providing me with a much deeper understanding of this elusive animal and the importance of raising awareness.

This Keeper For A Day trip not only broadened my appreciation for Uganda's rich biodiversity, but also equipped me with practical skills crucial for wildlife conservation efforts.

"This **KEEPER FOR A DAY** trip not only BROADENED my APPRECIATION for Uganda's RICH BIODIVERSITY, but also equipped me with PRACTICAL SKILLS crucial for **WILDLIFE CONSERVATION** EFFORTS."

– David White

LOWLAND TAPIR

CHRIS GRINDLE

Conservation Scientist

As a long-term employee of Chester Zoo, it has long been a personal mission of mine to assist with our field work wherever possible. Last year I embarked on my first overseas trip to gain experience working with one of our longest established conservation partners – the Lowland Tapir Conservation Initiative (LTCI).

The LTCI's focus is safeguarding the survival of tapirs and their habitats in Brazil. The long-term tapir population monitoring project focuses on this vitally important species in some of the most biodiverse regions on Earth. The work includes population monitoring through humane capture of individuals for radio-collaring, biological data collection, spatial ecology, genetic analysis, and epidemiology.

"The lowland tapir is a **FANTASTIC SPECIES** and to see them in the WILD and contribute to their **CONSERVATION** has made me INCREDIBLY PROUD."

– Chris Grindle

The LTCI runs several expeditions each year. In June 2023 the project returned to the Pantanal, the largest tropical wetland on Earth and one of the planet's most biodiverse habitats, to continue its survey and research work with the tapirs there. I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to assist with this expedition and spent 16 days working in this incredible habitat and studying wild tapirs – a species I have a long-established connection with having worked with them for nearly 20 years.

The lowland tapir is a fantastic species and to see them in the wild and contribute to their conservation has made me incredibly proud. Witnessing first-hand the professionalism and expertise of the LTCI team was hugely impressive and a fantastic experience. The passion of Patricia and her team for, not only the lowland tapir, but also its habitats and the other species that share it was infectious and inspiring. The LTCI is a great example of how a long established in situ conservation programme can collaborate with local people and landowners to promote sustainable and responsible land use, working and living alongside the native wildlife.

ASHLEIGH MARSHALL

Assistant Team Manager, Conservation Education and Engagement

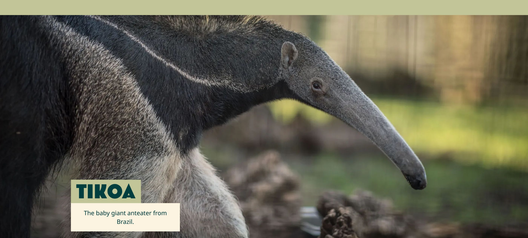
In June 2023 I was fortunate enough to travel to Brazil and work with ICAS, who have collaborated with Chester Zoo for over a decade. ICAS' main goal is conserving and protecting giant anteaters and giant armadillos in the wild. This trip was made possible by the zoo's Keeper For A Day scheme, and provided me with excellent experience, valuable connections and the trip of a lifetime.

With my role at the zoo being in education, whilst in Brazil I presented Chester Zoo's education work to professionals and students. I also learnt more about all the amazing work the project does, to help us better communicate that to our visitors in the zoo. Sharing information and skills around the world is such an important contribution to conservation, and really unites the approach of the work with breeding programmes in the zoo and protecting animals from their threats in the wild.

As an added bonus during my visit, some of the children in Brazil named Tikoa, the baby giant anteater that was born at the zoo last year, and now receive regular updates about her!

"Sharing information and **SKILLS** AROUND THE WORLD is such an IMPORTANT contribution to **CONSERVATION.**"

– Ashleigh Marshall



TIKOA

The baby giant anteater from Brazil.

CHESTER ZOO

Junior Programme

Discover, explore, share and learn

We've got a huge programme of events for 2024. With activities for ages 0-17, there's something for every future conservationist.

BOOK YOUR PLACE >

Places are limited and often get snapped up fast, so make sure you book soon to avoid disappointment!

As a holiday childcare provider, **Chester Zoo is registered with Ofsted**, so adults can use **tax-free childcare to pay for holiday** activities with us. Check out our event pages for more information.

HOLIDAY **CLUBS**

Calling conservationists of the future! Explore and learn at the zoo while surrounded by amazing wildlife.

Age 5 - 8 (Year 1 -3)

Calling conservationists of the future! Explore and learn at the zoo while surrounded by amazing wildlife.

Age 8 - 11 (Year 4 - 6)

We still have places for Junior Rangers and you can book via tax-free payment.

Age 11 - 14 (Year 7 -9)

A 3-day summer programme for young people who want to explore a career in conservation.

WEEKEND CLUB

Age 5 - 8 (Year 1 -3)

Brand new for 2024! A weekend activity club, perfect for any animal lover.

Age 8 - 11 (Year 4 - 6)

Join our Zoo Rangers for a jam packed 90 minutes every Sunday morning over 3 weeks.

CAREER DAYS

Thinking of a career in conservation?

Age 14 - 17

SOLD OUT for May and August but dates are still available for November.

Conservation Tots Mornings – under 5's

Join us on Wednesday mornings for sessions designed to encourage the development of your child and encourage the bond between you and your little one.

Tiny Tots (up to 1 year old) >

Toddler Tots (1-5 years old) >

Conservation Tots

CHESTER ZOO

Members can now **book FREE tickets** to AFTERGLOW, for an unforgettable evening at the zoo this summer.

Booking is essential and spaces are limited, so don't miss out - book your tickets today!

BOOK NOW

Join us between **Tuesday 13 - Sunday 25 August** for an evening of summer fun for the whole family. Experience a range of new and delicious food & drinks, a whole host of entertainment from acrobats to dinosaurs, and embrace the true festival feeling as you GLOW into the evening, all for FREE.

Enjoy plenty of exciting games and activities, large puppets, performers, a helter-skelter & MORE on top of your usual action-packed visit to the zoo.

AFTERGLOW EXTRAS

Glow up your evening and add an extra special touch by treating yourselves to festival facepainting, unlimited refillable drinks, and bubble wands.

CHESTER ZOO

MEMBERS UPDATES

For our 2024 Members' Days, each date will have its own theme coinciding with wildlife awareness days, and there will be some extra surprises waiting for you and your guests! Our next Members' Day is:

Snake theme

FREE FOR MEMBERS and bring up to FOUR NON MEMBERS for **50% OFF**

Keep an eye on your inbox for a sign up link soon.

THE GREAT ZOO GAMES!

20 JULY – 1 SEPTEMBER

JOIN US FOR THE GREAT ZOO GAMES THIS SUMMER!

Test your agility, go head-to-head with a cheetah, and look out for daily prizes.

Together we'll celebrate an incredible summer of sport with animal inspired activities and games, where having a competitive edge will bring you an advantage! Who can run the fastest? Lift the most? Jump the furthest? Compete with your friends and family and see who will come out on top.

WILD WANDER APP

Have you checked out our new app, Wild Wander? Wild Wander is designed to connect people with nature through the digital world and encourage them to explore and protect the great outdoors. The app lets you explore four trails in the zoo's Nature Recovery Corridor like never before: thriving with beautifully animated local species in augmented reality.

DOWNLOAD FROM APP STORE ›

DOWNLOAD FROM GOOGLE PLAY ›

CHESTER ZOO MEMORY CAFÉ

The Chester Zoo Memory Café is a place for people with dementia, their families, friends and carers to come together and enjoy a cuppa in the unique setting of the zoo

Where: Bembe Coffee Shop at our main entrance
When: Second and fourth Monday of each month, 10:30am – 12pm

You HEARD it here **FIRST!**

To ensure that ALL members stay as up to date as possible, share this link with other members in your household and they won't miss a thing at Chester Zoo.

GET MEMBER UPDATES ›

experiences at CHESTER ZOO

Make 2024 a YEAR to REMEMBER with one of our FANTASTIC EXPERIENCES!

As a member, you get **up to 15% off** our amazing experiences when you book over the phone or with the team in Experiences HQ.

TORTOISE EXPERIENCE

A **BRAND NEW** two-person experience offering a chance to get closer than ever to our herd of critically endangered radiated tortoises. Join one of our expert keepers on their morning routine as they head into the tortoise habitat to deliver breakfast. Learn all about these gentle creatures and identify individuals as they munch on their greens!

Buy as a gift to give an experience to remember and to contribute to our vital conservation work here and around the world to help save wildlife from extinction.

This experience is suitable for ages of 8+.

If you'd like to book this experience pop into Experiences HQ next time you visit the zoo or call us on 01244 380280 to get up to 15% off.

Book now >

PENGUIN BREAKFAST

Begin your day with a guided tour to our much-loved Humboldt penguins for an exclusive talk from our rangers, followed by a delicious breakfast at The Oakfield, right in the heart of the zoo. Includes zoo admission. The perfect experience for large groups! Maximum of 40 people. £65 per adult (aged 16+), £55 per child (aged 3-15). Infant (aged 1-2) = £5, babies under 12 months = free.

If you'd like to book this experience pop into Experiences HQ next time you visit the zoo or call us on 01244 380280 to get up to 15% off.

Book now >

RHINO BREAKFAST

A truly unique dining experience, our BRAND-NEW Rhino Breakfast offers up to 40 guests early morning access to our black rhino viewing area, an exclusive Q&A session with one of our expert rhino keepers and fantastic zoo rangers, followed by a delicious breakfast buffet in the newly renovated Bembe kitchen. The perfect experience for large groups!

£65 per adult (aged 16+), £55 per child (aged 3-15). Infant (aged 1-2) = £5, babies under 12 months = free. Admission to the zoo included.

For any further information please call us on 01244 380 280

Vegetarian and **Vegan** options are available.

Book now >

PENGUIN COVE EXPERIENCE

Feed the penguins from our purpose-built feeding hut! Watch as they dart and dive through the water to grab the fish you throw to them. One of our expert keepers will guide you and be on hand to answer all your Humboldt penguin questions.

Maximum of 2 people and suitable for ages 5+. If you'd like to book this experience or would like more information, please call us on 01244 380 280.

Book now >

BUS TOURS

Join us for an **exclusive** tour! Capture the WONDER of Chester Zoo through a camera lens with our Early Bird photography tour, discover the PREDATORS of the animal kingdom and their prey on 'THE PREDATOR TOUR', or even join our expert elephant keepers and gain unique insight into the life of an Asian elephant on a guided tour of the elephant house! If you loved watching 'The Secret Life of The Zoo', you'll love our Secret Life of The Zoo bus tour, where you'll take a guided trip around our 128-acre site as our keepers an animals get ready for another exciting day at the zoo!

Maximum numbers and prices vary. Please call us on 01244 380 280 to book a tour.

Book now >

GIRAFFE EXPERIENCE

The chance to get closer than ever to the TALLEST land animals and create memories that will last a lifetime! From our purpose-built viewing platform, you'll have the opportunity to meet and feed the giraffes at head-height and ask our expert keepers all your questions about this incredible species. Zoo admission included.

If you'd like to book this experience or would like more information, please call us on 01244 380 280.

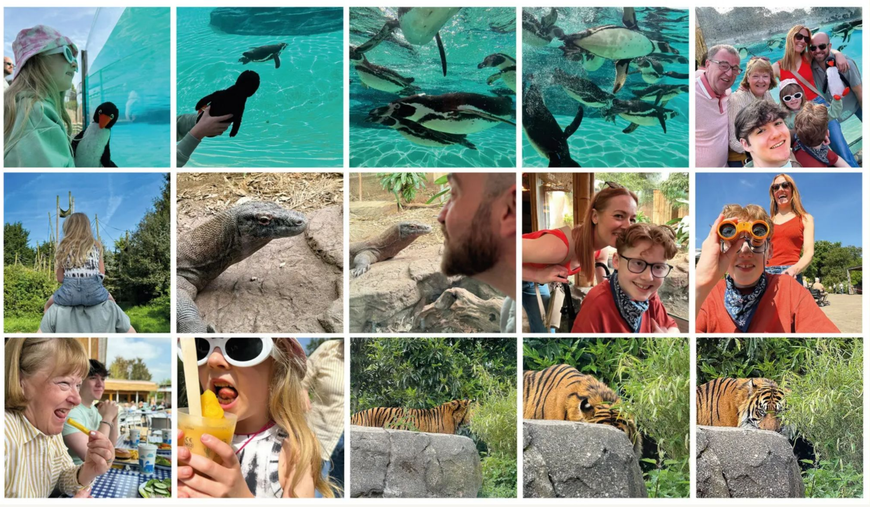
Maximum of 3 people.
Suitable for ages 11+

Book now >

experiences at CHESTER ZOO

Fancy a different experience? Find your next adventure here.

CHESTER ZOO



One zoo. Endless adventures.

This summer we're celebrating everything that makes Chester Zoo the best zoo in the UK, and how there's something here for everyone.

As members, you know better than anyone that no two visits to Chester Zoo are the same. With 128 acres to explore and over 37,000 animals, there's always something new to discover!

We welcome 2 million people to the zoo each year, all who experience endless magical moments at the zoo - from coming face to face with some of the world's most endangered animals, to spending quality time with family and friends and making memories that will last a lifetime. Each visit makes a big difference too, enabling us to continue our vital conservation work around the world.

We wanted to give you a sneak peek at the two adverts we've created to showcase those unique experiences that you can only have at Chester Zoo. You might have even spotted us out and about in the zoo filming them. We wanted you to be the first to see them! But keep a look out for these films as we start to share them online, TV and in cinemas across the North West and Wales.

We hope you'll agree that they capture a small snapshot of the wonder of Chester Zoo and the endless adventures you can have here.

One zoo. Endless adventures.

CHESTER ZOO
Amazing by Nature

RUN TO SAVE RHINOS

Run For Nature is BACK for 2024 on Sunday 22 September, and this time you'll be running to help save rhinos from extinction. With a 10k and Kids Mile, the whole family can get involved!

ENTER NOW ›

"It was a really **GREAT RUN!** I'm already LOOKING FORWARD to next year."

"We travelled **OVER 3 HOURS** to run with you and it was WORTH IT!

GET SPONSORED TO HELP SAVE RHINOS

Join us on World Rhino Day and help save this amazing animal. The two species of rhino that we are working to protect (Eastern black and greater one-horned) are both at risk of extinction due to habitat loss and poaching. Your fundraising helps support our vital work at the zoo and around the world.

RUN A ROUTE WITH A DIFFERENCE

The Chester Zoo 10k and Kids Mile both have flat and fast routes through our zoo estate. Starting in the zoo itself, you'll then pass fascinating sights like our Conservation Breeding Management Area and where our giraffes' food is grown.

AMAZING EXTRA

Every runner gets FREE entry to the zoo on the day of your event, and anyone coming to watch you will get discounted zoo entry. When you reach the finish line there will be a bespoke sustainable finishers medal waiting for you. Plus as an added bonus, if you raise over £65 you'll get a rhino cuddly toy!

Entries are selling quickly, so get your place now and start fundraising!

ENTER NOW ›

Are you looking for a corporate challenge for your team? Rally your colleagues and join forces as a team to Run For Nature together to make a positive impact for wildlife. To find out more, contact our fundraising team on fundraising@chesterzoo.org.

Thank you to all our corporate and philanthropic partners, including

ASDA · Chester Bluecoat Charity · Chester Racecourse · Co-op · darwin escapes · Ferrero · M&S Bank · mbna · Mowgli Street Food · Made possible with Heritage Fund · proximo Property Group · Saputo Dairy UK · Sykes Holiday Cottages · Toyota Manufacturing UK · urenco The Energy to Succeed · Westminster Foundation

Only by working together as one big community can we make positive changes, and we're excited to see what the future brings as we work to prevent extinction all over the world.

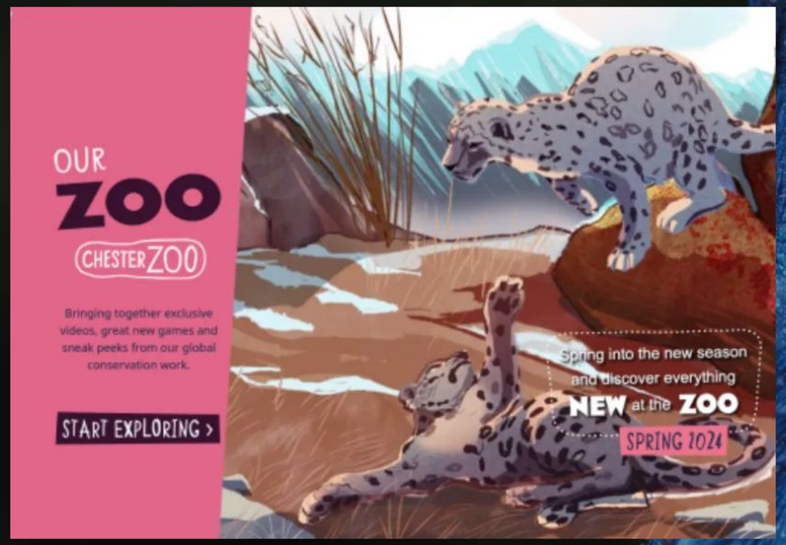
CHESTER ZOO

THANKS TO YOU

It’s thanks to your support that we’re able to work ALL over the world to protect endangered wildlife and we’re delighted to share more of the great work we do through Our Zoo. We’re always looking for ways to improve how we deliver you exciting behind the scenes content and stories. If there is anything you would like to see featured in Our Zoo or for general membership and adoption enquiries we’d love to hear from you.

GET IN TOUCH

PREVIOUS ISSUES



AQUARIUM

THE main focus is aquatic conservation. We have 22 display tanks (mainly 1,000 – 7,000 litres of recirculating volume). Of these, 13 are tropical freshwater, six are tropical marine, which were refitted in 2000, and three which house amphibians. These tanks contain around 3,000 fishes which represent over 130 species from 35 families. There is also a diverse collection of invertebrates, mainly from the coral seas.

Off-show there are 60 tanks (20 – 500 litres) used for quarantine, breeding and special conservation projects. Altogether, the aquarium holds more than 40 tonnes of water!

The displays are maintained with a precise water chemistry and are checked regularly. There are sophisticated systems to keep the water pure and fresh, including aeration, filtration, recirculation, ozonisation and protein skimming.

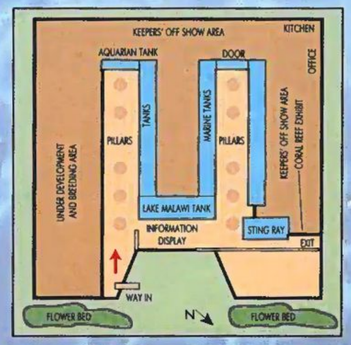
Custom-built heating and lighting systems make the environment as natural as possible, so we have very bright lights over the coral reef invertebrate tank. The nutritional requirements of the livestock vary enormously and, to keep them healthy and vigorous, we use more than 20 different kinds of food.

Of the fish species that we keep, 33 are officially listed in the IUCN Red Data Book as threatened.

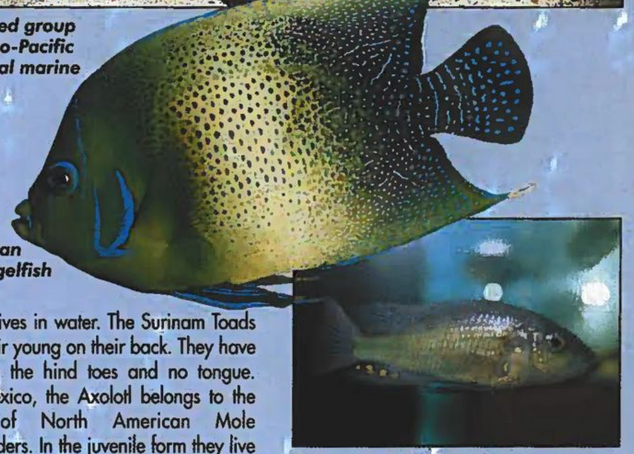
Amphibians

The aquarium has several kinds of amphibian – others are kept in the *Tropical Realm* display. The Fire-Bellied Newt is one of a group of 53 species of newts and salamanders. They have an unusual form of courtship. Special secretions from the male serve to stimulate the female. The male then passes a small packet of sperm (spermatophore) to fertilise the female.

The Clawed and Surinam Toads come from Africa and South America, spending all their lives in water. The Surinam Toads carry their young on their back. They have claws on the hind toes and no tongue. From Mexico, the Axolotl belongs to the group of North American Mole Salamanders. In the juvenile form they live underwater and have prominent, feathery gills on each side of the head. If their pools dry out, they transform into newt-like salamanders. Remarkably, breeding can take place in both juvenile and adult stages of these amazing creatures!



◆ *A mixed group of Indo-Pacific tropical marine fishes*



◆ *Koran Angelfish*

◆ *Lake Victoria Cichlid*

◆ *Behind the scenes*

Tropical freshwater fishes

Freshwaters constitute far less than 1% of the water in the world, yet they support a remarkable 40% of all fishes. Look out for: Arowana, Elephant Fish, Tetras, Blind Cavefish, Barbs, Loaches, Electric Eels, New Guinea Rainbow Fish, Catfish, Archerfish, Lungfish, Stingray and Cichlids from Lake Victoria and Lake Malawi. We have bred three of the six species from Lake Barombi Mbo, an environmentally threatened crater lake, working closely with Bolton Aquarium.

Tropical marine fishes

Among sea fishes, about 8,000 species (or 40%) live on the shallow continental shelves of the tropics and many of these have dazzling colours. Typical highly coloured coral reef fishes on display include: Clownfish, Tangs, Shrimp Fish, Banggai Cardinal Fish, Seahorses and the highly venomous Lionfish.

Coral reef invertebrates

Tropical reefs support a huge array of invertebrate life. On display are Coral, Stony Coral, Sea Anemone, Coral Shrimp, Starfish, Urchins,and various molluscs.

Ask in the shops for our special book about the Aquarium and aquatic conservation. This has been made possible through invaluable sponsorship from the Aquarian Division of Pedigree Petfoods.

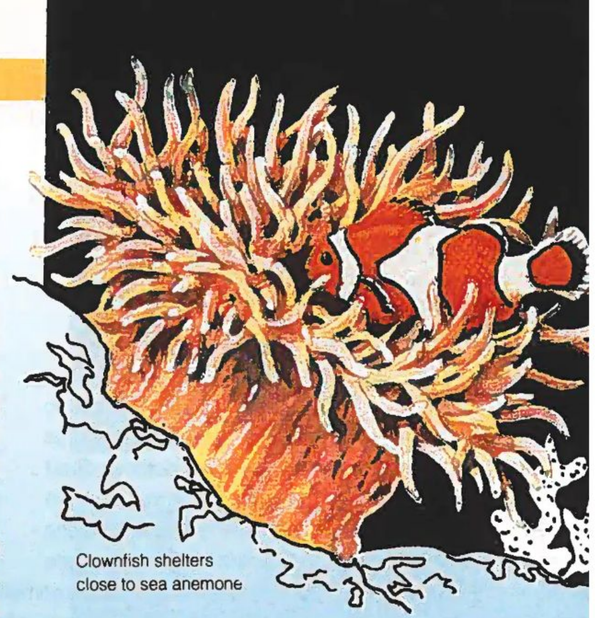
AQUARIUM
ADMISSION
ADULTS 10p
CHILDREN 5p
14
SPECIAL EXHIBITS

AQUARIUM

Our aquarium is being redeveloped with new large exhibition tanks displaying fish communities from tropical marine and freshwater habitats.

The first phase of development includes the colourful tropical marine clown fish *(right)* which lives in harmony with sea anemones whose stinging tentacles are deadly to most other species of small fish, and the bizarre scorpion fish with its poisonous dorsal spines. See the various tangs, angelfish and the unusual spiny puffer fish which can inflate itself with water to twice its natural size and resembles a pin cushion.

The invertebrate tank houses various species of soft corals, sea anemones, clams, sea urchins, starfish, shrimps and crabs. Most corals and anemones come from very sunny areas so we use special high intensity lighting to imitate their natural surroundings on the reef.



Clownfish shelters close to sea anemone

Tomato clownfish

Unusual fish include the elephar trunk-nosed fish, the electric ee freshwater stingrays and, mos spectacular of all, the rare paddlefish Paddlefish originate in the Mississipp basin and can be thought of as 'livin fossils' in that they have remaine unchanged for the last 80 millio years; they are also the larges freshwater filter feeders in the worl using their large gill raker to sieve tin planktonic food from the water.

Fish from tropical freshwater habitats include cichlids from lakes in the African rift valley. Each has adapted to its particular unique feeding niche. Most are mouth brooders, the female keeping the eggs in her mouth until the babies are big enough to fend for themselves.

The Malawi tank usually has quite a few brooding females. See if you can see the baby fish in their mother's mouth. The South American discus fish is another member of this popular family of fishes.

Turquoise discus fish

Chester Chronicle

THE AQUARIUM IN THE LAST STAGES OF CONSTRUCTION

Several exchanges with other Zoos are being contemplated, and we hope will be executed before Easter. Among the new specimens we are expecting are, Wallabies, Ocelot Tigercat, and Rhea, unfortunately we have not been able to get the Tiger in time for Easter.

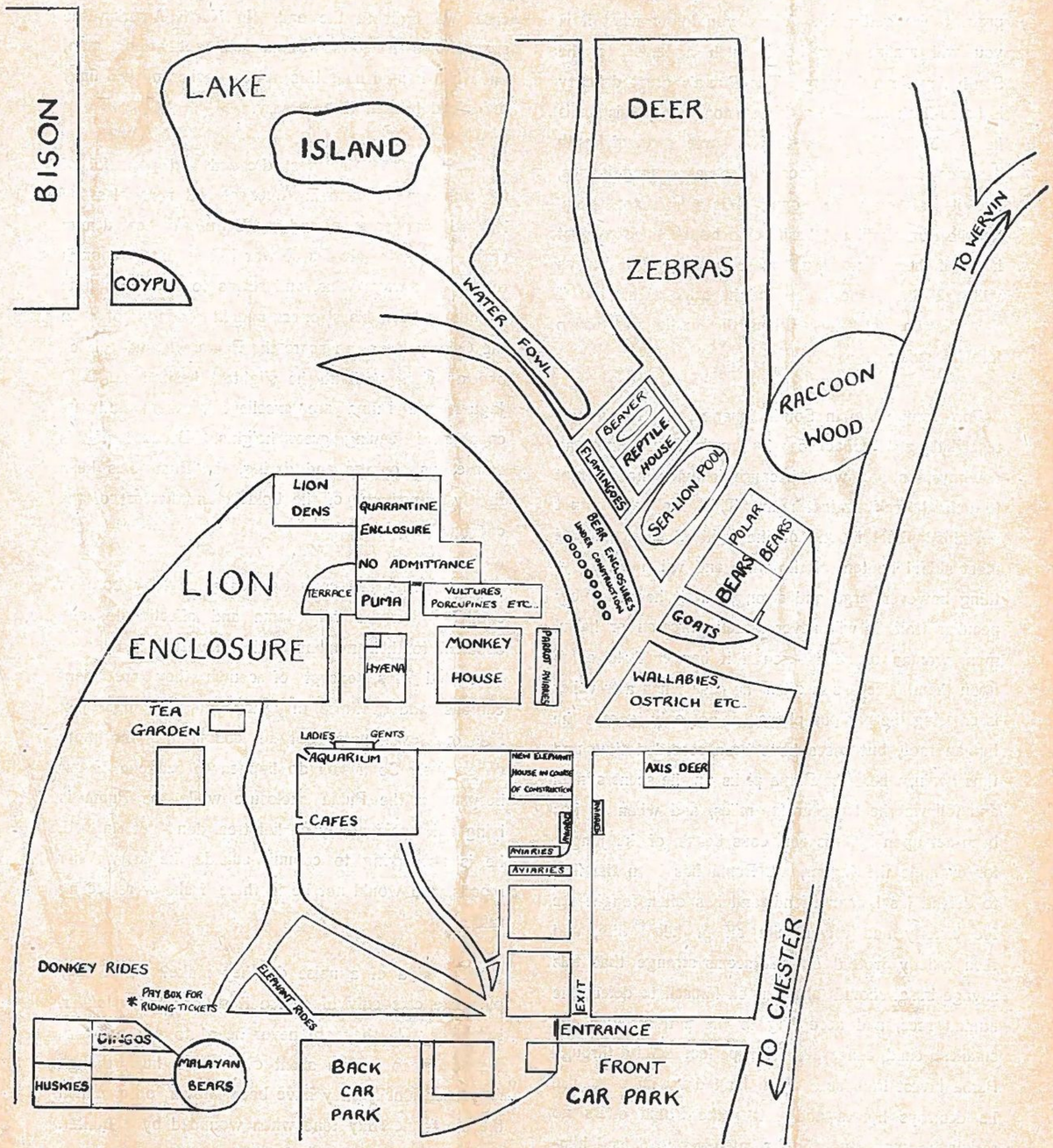
In our last issue we said we hoped to add at least another six tanks to the Aquarium before Easter. It now appears likely that twelve or thirteen tanks will be completed, if not stocked with fish they will be matured sufficiently to receive fish soon after Easter.

Most people do not realise that tropical fish cannot be put into new or fresh water. The water has to become what is known as mature or aged, and the balance of both animal and plant life must be kept right, or instead of a thing of beauty the Aquarium would become very unsightly, and also suffer from loss of fish.

We have just received a very kind gift of a quantity of plate glass which will no doubt enable us to add many more tanks to our Aquarium during the next few months, and we feel sure that before long visitors will be able to spend quite a considerable time admiring the varied collection of tropical beauties.

As we mentioned before we are working very hard to be ready for Easter, and we hope that members will do their share by talking about the Zoo to all their friends, and doing all in their power to make it more popular.

Map of The Zoological Gardens, Chester



JOHNSON & SON, PRINTERS, NANTWICH.

is the wide variety of
Bananas, Hibiscus,
fruits.

watch the Birds flying at

Jewel Cichlid

Aquarium

Our present Aquarium was built in 1952 and is situated opposite the North Entrance Gate.

It is so designed that after passing through the turn-stile, one moves around continually, whilst viewing the exhibits, which consist mainly of tropical fish in approximately eighty tanks.

The Aquarium is very popular with our visitors and there have been many breeding successes.

At the present time there are approximately 2,300 fish on view, incorporating 140 to 150 different species.

It is hoped, when times are better, to re-build the Aquarium and to exhibit many of the larger specimens.

LUNGFISH

Perhaps among the most unusual fish on exhibition and definitely one of the few remaining relics of a past age are our two specimens of African Lung Fish, *Protopterus annectens*.

First impressions on encountering these fish are rather mixed. They have a long cylindrical body, apparently walk on four weak looking legs, have no visible scales and skulk around the bottom of the tank under cover of clumps of water plants, looking decidedly menacing. This, together with the lack of true fins and their lithe, snake-like appearance all add up to the fact that they are living fossils — the missing link between the world of fish and that of amphibians.

Light grey in colour and capable of astonishing speed when frightened, these strange fish show a very macabre streak at feeding times. Comparatively large fish and pieces of meat are sucked into what at first appears to be a small harmless mouth, but which in fact becomes a veritable cavern, engulfing food in enormous quantities.

Although food is snapped up with an audible gulp, one has only to wait for a few moments to see a particularly gruesome spectacle. The hapless 'meal' is slowly reduced to paste, by the powerful teeth of the Lungfish, as if it had been passed through a mincing machine. In fact the morsel is spat out and 'inhaled' several times before it is finally swallowed and the cracking of the larger bones of the prey is clearly heard when the Aquarium is quiet. This process makes surprisingly little mess in the tank as the entire morsel is bound together by a thick, viscid spittle, produced by the Lungfish and not one scrap of food is missed whilst it is being chewed over.

As its name conveys, this fish possesses lungs as well as gills, the latter being somewhat reduced. These lungs arise from and are connected with the oesophagus. Consequently it is quite common to see the fish slowly weave its way to the surface, where it protrudes the tip of its snout above the water and breathes in a large quantity of air — which may last it anything up to an hour.

With a worldwide reputation for the conservation breeding of numerous threatened fish species, our aquarium is home to over 2,500 animals of 90 species. Some of the species we work with are now so rare that they have disappeared completely from the wild. Were it not for the vitally important breeding programmes here at the Zoo, they may well be lost forever.

The Project Room area provides a window into this conservation breeding work we do behind the scenes. Baby fish - including hundreds of young seahorses - are all reared outside our main display tanks, so that we are able to keep an expert close eye on them during their first weeks of life.

Our display tanks host a huge variety of freshwater and marine life; from the wonderfully bizarre, to the breathtakingly beautiful. Among the bizarre: the seahorses, shrimpfishes, lungfishes, elephant trunkfish, the axolotls and blind cave fish. Among the beautiful: the reef fishes, the rainbow fishes, the Asian barbs and the Malawi Cichlids.

Small images clockwise from top left: Malawi Cichlid tank; Fumanchu Lionfish (*Dendrochirus biocellatus*); Banggai Cardinal Fish (*Pterapogon kaudemi*); Longsnout Seahorse (*Hippocampus reidi*)

EXIT ONLY
AQUARIUM
Entrance
this way

LOADING: 100%