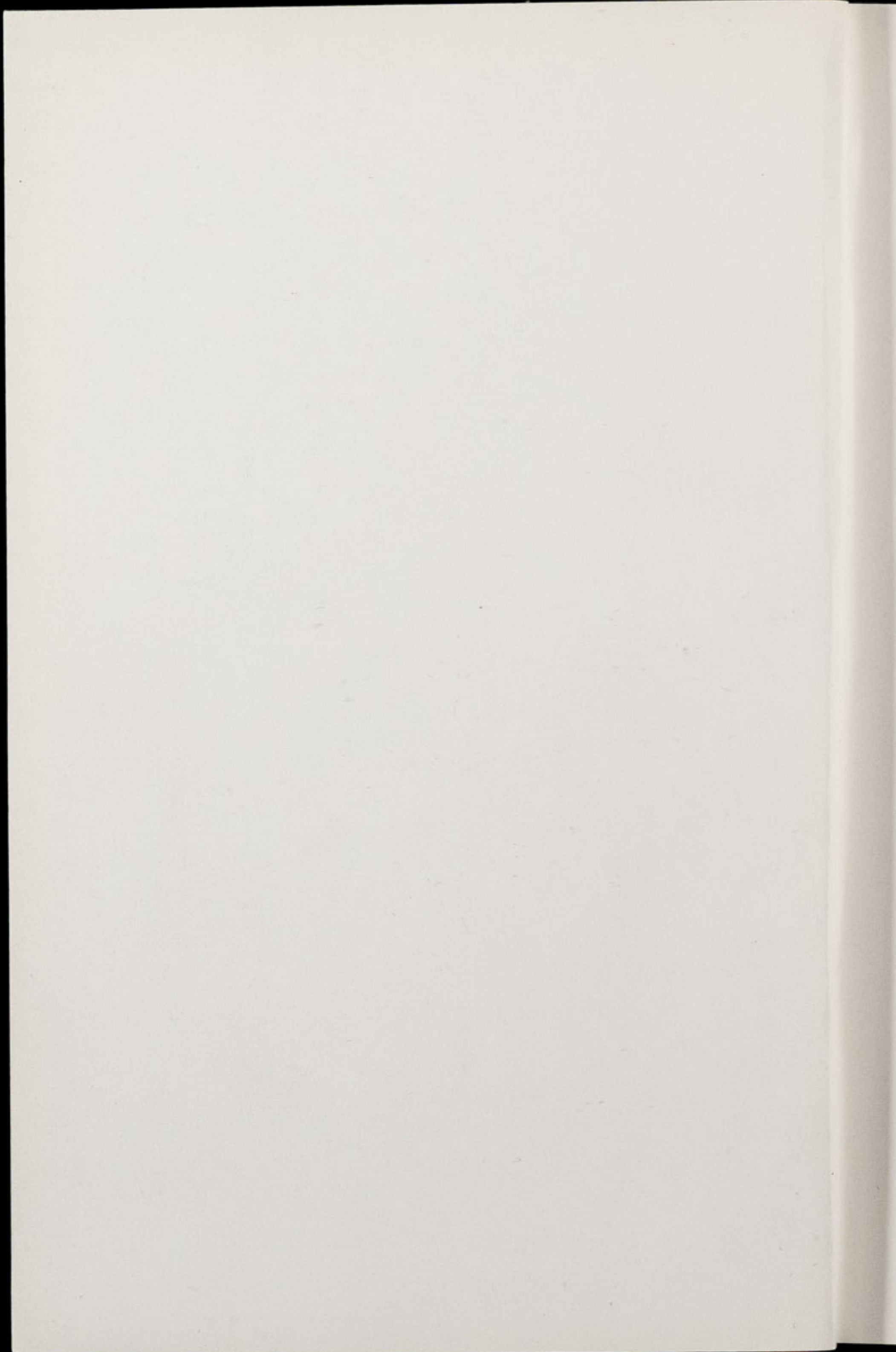




CHESTER ZOO NEWS *AND GUIDE*

January 1976

Price 10p



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

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COVER

"Jamie", one of our young Chimpanzees during the period when he was being hand-reared

By courtesy of J. Walker of the Daily Mirror

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GENERAL NEWS

Plague of the Common Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Since October last, migratory starlings have been coming into the zoo, and in December the numbers became uncontrollable. There was, in fact, an appalling plague of them. These migratory birds invaded in their hundreds of thousands, occupying the trees in and around the Oakfield Restaurant, and the willow trees on the side of the canal. As a result they were polluting the water in the lake, and there was a strong odour which came from the starlings themselves, which was most unpleasant. It was at this point that it was decided the starlings must be dispersed, if at all possible. Their whistling and chattering was deafening, continuing all through the night. Their droppings had left the trees as with hoar frost, and only the recent heavy rains have dispelled the whiteness. Branches gave way and were broken by the weight of the birds.

The invasion of these starlings has happened over several years. During the late autumn they would arrive and stay sometimes for a few weeks only, but this year their numbers kept growing until, in December, it was quite obvious that something had to be done about them. Their noise carried on throughout the night, and this was even loud enough to drown the crowing of the cocks in the early hours.

One night several of the staff decided to go to different areas of the zoo to create as much noise as possible. This seemed to have the desired effect, but increasing numbers did return a little later and it was then that someone had the bright idea of using a megaphone and a very powerful torch. A number of the staff went round the zoo each night shouting through the megaphone and shining the torch into the trees and bushes where the birds were roosting.

After about a week of this treatment most of the starlings dispersed, but even now we still periodically have to go round the zoo in the evenings, as migratory starlings tend to return but not in such large numbers.

Storm Damage

The storm which occurred on the night of January 2nd more or less seemed to reach its height at the zoo at 9 o'clock. We lost several of our trees, the only one of any note being a very large elm at the the front of the Oakfield Restaurant. Fortunately it fell without damaging any property.

The Rainbow Café was blown down, and the Rainbow Shop was made so unsafe that we have had to demolish it. There was also minor damage to several of the roofs in the zoo, and some fences were damaged. Extensive harm was done to the Tapir inside enclosure at the end of the Pachyderm House. We have had to move the Tapirs out of the House, closing that section of it to the public, as the roof is unsafe and will have to be replaced. One side wall of the Pachyderm House has also had to be replaced as a result of the storm.

Visits

In December last, our Curator spent a most interesting week visiting Dutch and Belgian zoos. He first called at Rotterdam Zoo, taking with him a female Wilson's Bird of Paradise from Chester Zoo. This was to join a potential breeding group. Mr. D. Van Dam, the Director of Rotterdam Zoo, recently presented us with a female Red Bird of Paradise and the Wilson's Bird of Paradise was given in exchange.

Rotterdam Zoo, because of Dutch connections with the former Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), has always been able to exhibit many New Guinea species of animals, birds and reptiles, and Mr. Van Dam is endeavouring to display a selection of New Guinea fauna, with particular emphasis on Birds of Paradise. At the time of the visit seven species of Birds of Paradise were being exhibited. These were one pair of Sicklebill Birds of Paradise, an adult male Lawes, a pair of Prince Albert Rifle Birds; three Red Birds of Paradise, an adult male Raggiana and a juvenile male Raggiana; an adult Magnificent Bird of Paradise, and five Wilson's Birds of Paradise.

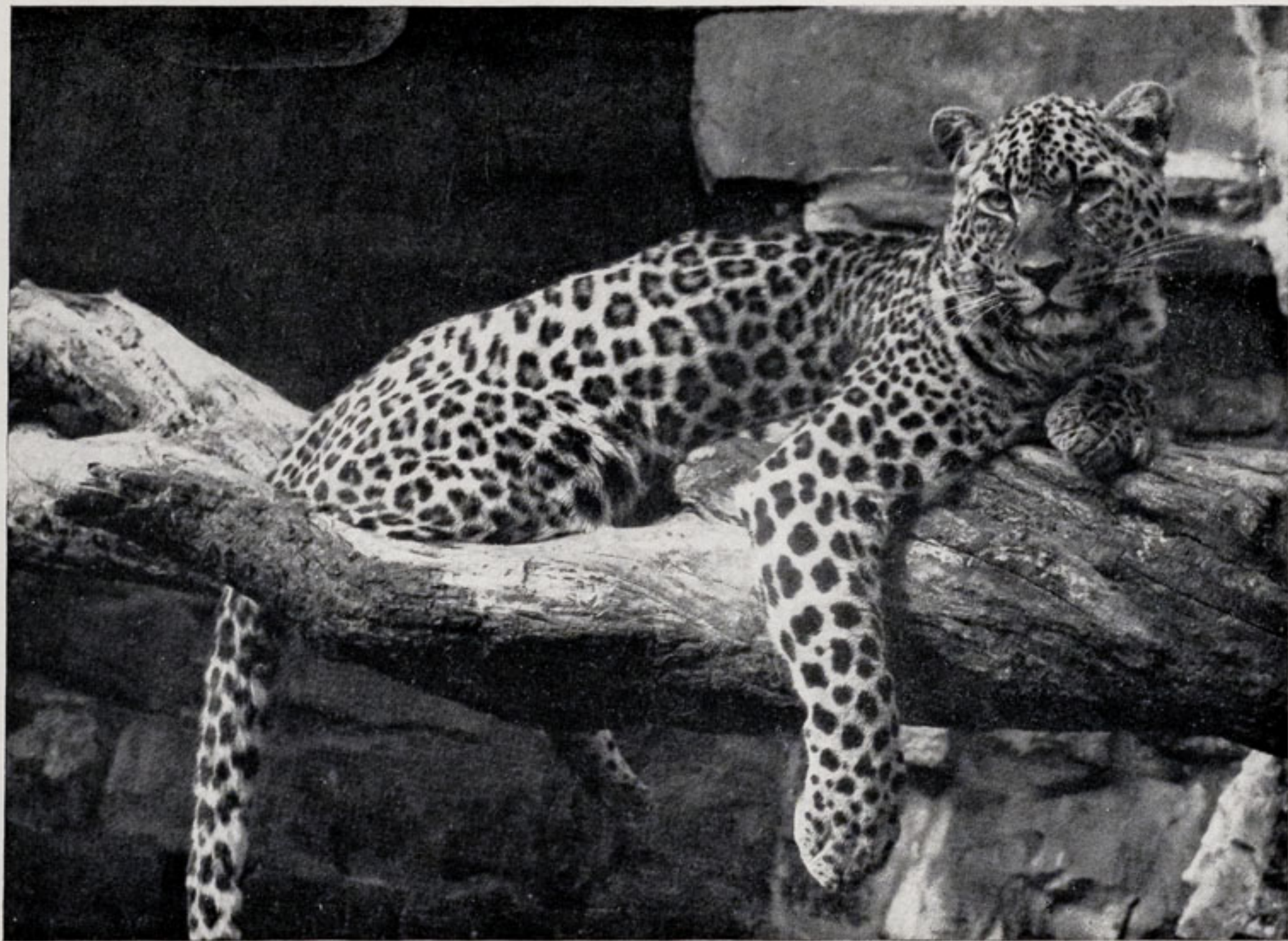
Mr. Van Dam has, over the last few years, been collecting

information on Birds of Paradise from sources all over the world, and we in Chester have been working closely with Rotterdam, having been able to pass on and receive quite a lot of useful information. The female Sicklebill exhibited in Rotterdam Zoo came originally from Chester Zoo.

In Rotterdam's Tropical Bird House Mr. Timmis was able to watch and observe for several hours an adult pair of Dusky Lorries. These birds were feeding young in a nestbox, and the young could be heard calling from it. Two species of Crowned Pigeon were also breeding. Most of our Curator's time in Rotterdam Zoo was spent with Mr. Assink the Curator of Birds and Reptiles. They were able to discuss various aspects of zoological management—such as feeding, breeding, housing, etc. Two full days were spent at the zoo.

One full day was spent in Wassenaar Zoo. Mr. Timmis had been anxious to visit there because during the summer he had corresponded with the Curator, Mr. J. A. Najtegal. He was particularly interested in Vulturine or Pesquet's Parrots and one had been hatched there. However, it unfortunately died at 52 days old. As reported in our December issue we now have two pairs of these birds, and most of our Curator's time at Wassenaar was spent observing the breeding pair of Vulturine Parrots which were accommodated in an inside aviary in the Louise Hall. The aviary was about 18ft. long by 8ft. wide, by 8ft. high. It was built with brick and glass and, surprisingly, planted with Rubber Trees and several other plants. The nestbox was 6ft. high, and the construction consisted of three separate logs placed on top of each other. These had been hollowed out by the zoo staff to form the nesting cavity. The temperature in the aviary was around 70°F. with a high humidity. The aviary was sprayed twice a day. With Wassenaar's information, and our own observations, we hope to have sufficient knowledge on the breeding and behaviour of the Vulturine Parrot in captivity.

A full day was spent at Amsterdam Zoo, where our Curator was able to discuss diets, and general management, with the biologist Mr. Dekker, and the Zoo Director, Dr. Lensink.



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

AMUR LEOPARD (*Panthera pardus orientalis*) TO BE SEEN IN THE CAT HOUSE (ENCLOSURE 90)

Amsterdam has a very good general zoological collection. Animals exhibited which impressed our Curator were a pair of Manatee, and a breeding pair of Common Seals. In the Bird Section two Flamingo chicks had bred during 1975. These birds had started breeding since the introduction of a high-protein diet of trout pellets and expanded wheat. There was a single female Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise which has been in the Amsterdam collection for many years. Several *Picathartes gymnoceph* were flying at liberty in the main Bird House, and these were an impressive sight.

Amsterdam were exhibiting one male and two female Spiny Ant-eaters or Echidnas. One of the problems of the maintenance of these animals in captivity is created by the liquid diet of minced meat, milk and various other ingredients. They tend to get the food on their chest and legs. In Chester we have devised a metal disc with several holes drilled into it, which enables the anteater to tuck its tongue through the hole into a shallow stainless steel dish, thus allowing it to feed without getting covered in a liquid diet.

Mr. Timmis also visited a very impressive covered waterfowl collection in the north of Holland. Over one hundred species were breeding. The waterfowl farm was very well planned, and he saw several species of ducks and geese that he had not seen before. Again he was able to collect information on rearing techniques, artificial incubation, etc., and some interesting information on waterfowl diets.

A further day was spent at Antwerp Zoo where our Curator met the Director, Mr. Walter Van den Bergh, who arranged for him to meet the Curator of Mammals, Mr. B. Van Puijenbroeck. The greater part of the day was spent looking at the Antwerp collection, and he was able to examine their animal record system which he found to be very practical. He was most impressed with the Nocturnal House which he thought was magnificent. He was taken to see a pair of Indian Rhinoceros, the female having been born in Basle and the male wild-caught in Assam. These animals were extremely docile. In the Reptile Section there was a young Komodo Dragon. This specimen had arrived recently from Indonesia and it reminded Mr. Timmis of his trip to Komodo when he filmed and studied this particular lizard.

Antwerp Zoo is exhibiting three Phillipine Monkey-eating Eagles. An adult male was exhibited in the zoo, and an adult male and female were accommodated in the Antwerp Country Zoo which is some distance from the City.

It was most interesting to see the breeding area for the Congo Peacock, and it was very much to the credit of zoos that they were engaged in this type of conservation programme. Congo Peacocks have been sent from Antwerp Zoo to various other zoos in order to continue the propagation of this species of bird.

MAMMAL BIRTHS

A Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodyte*) was born in December last to "Jeannie". It is at present being hand-reared by one of the keepers and it will be some weeks before the youngster is on view to the public.

A Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) was also born quite recently.

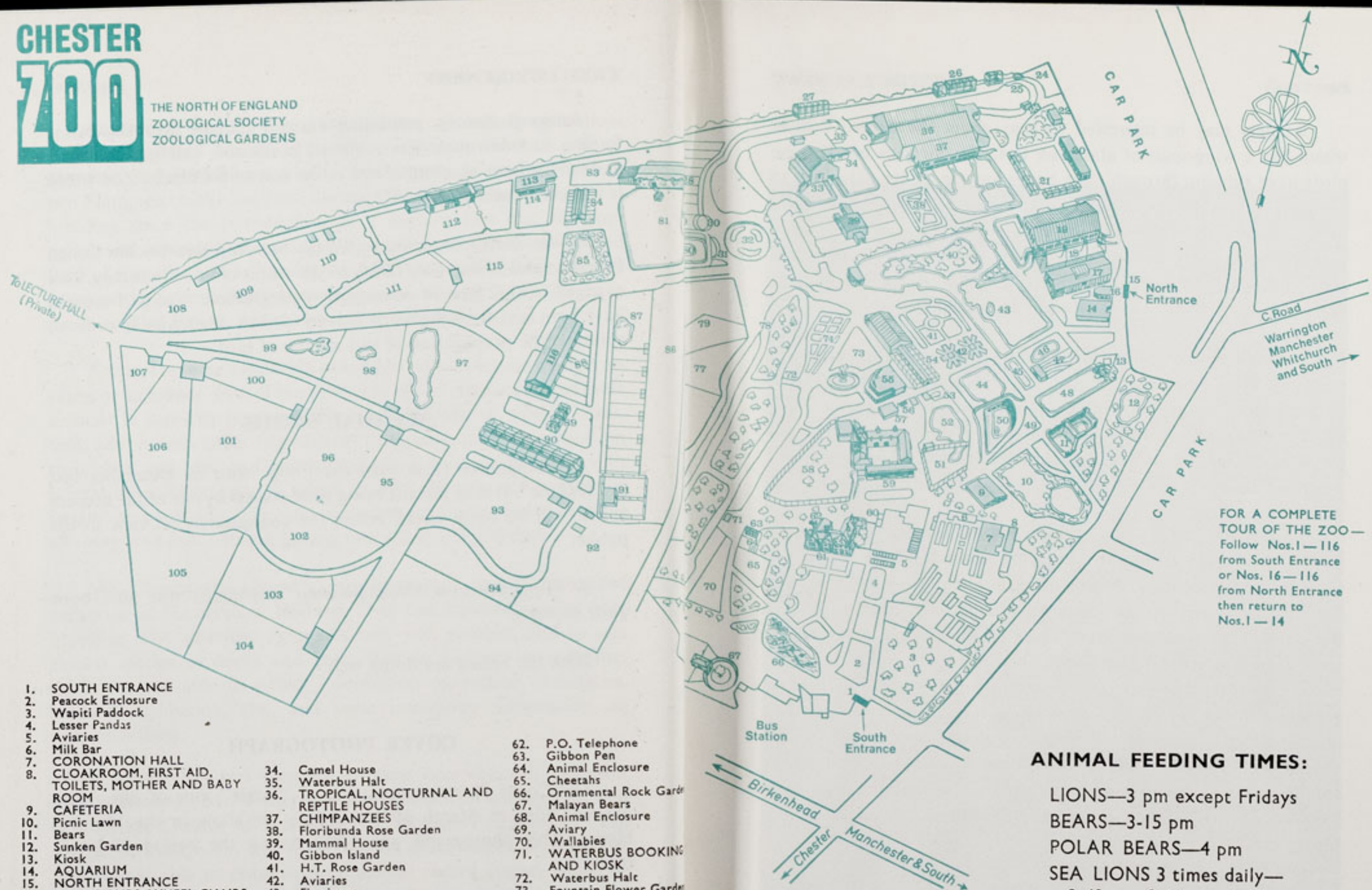
Both the babies are doing well.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH

The Cover Photograph is that of "Jamie", one of our chimpanzees born in March 1974 and now on show in the Monkey House. This photograph was taken during the period of hand-rearing.

BROWN PELICAN

The Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) mentioned in our December issue is still in the Temperate Bird House. As it requires warmth it will remain there until the summer months when it will be put outside in one of the open-air enclosures. It would not mix with the other pelicans.



FOR A COMPLETE
TOUR OF THE ZOO—
Follow Nos.1—116
from South Entrance
or Nos. 16—116
from North Entrance
then return to
Nos.1—14

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. Sunken Garden
- 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. Condor 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. Mammal House
- 40. Gibbon Island
- 41. H.T. Rose Garden
- 42. Aviaries
- 43. Flamingos
- 44. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 45. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 46. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 47. Penguins
- 48. Sealions
- 49. Rock Garden
- 50. Polar Bears
- 51. Cat Enclosure
- 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. 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 AND KIOSK
- 72. Waterbus Halt
- 73. Fountain Flower Garden
- 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. Emus and Cranes
- 88. Stork Enclosures
- 89. Baboon Pens
- 90. Cat House
- 91. Lions and Tigers

- 92. Antelope and Ostrich
- 93. Antelope Enclosure
- 94. Antelope Enclosure
- 95. Zebras
- 96. Llamas
- 97. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 98. Wallabies and Waterfowl
- 99. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 100. Blackbuck
- 101. Wallabies
- 102. Animal Paddock
- 103. Animal Paddock
- 104. Animal Paddock

- 105. Proposed New Bear Enclosures
- 106. Arabian Gazelles
- 107. Animal Paddock
- 108. Bison
- 109. Pere David's Deer Paddock
- 110. Prairie Marmots, Alpacas
- 111. Antelope Enclosure
- 112. RHINOS
- 113. TOILETS
- 114. Mpila Snack Bar
- 115. Antelope Enclosure
- 116. MONKEY HOUSE

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

Animals may be moved from
time to time.

Readers may be interested to hear about the Brown Pelican which has a wing-span of about six feet. The air sacs which these birds have running through their bones and under the skin help to cushion them when they hit water. They sometimes have difficulty in becoming airborne if there is little wind, and they then move forward with short quick steps before they are in flight. These birds are strong fliers, and are very graceful. When the wind is behind them they can fly to a height of 50/100 feet.

Brown Pelicans fish by diving on their prey in an awkward manner. They commence diving by cruising at anything from 10/30ft. above water, plunging down with wings half-spread. They hit the water with a fearful splash, but seldom submerge completely, as nature has provided them with the subcutaneous air sacs described above.

In the wild, pelicans nest in colonies, usually remaining in flocks when away from their breeding grounds. They search for food and rest together, following each other in what they do. Pelicans' nests are usually found on islands or in marshes on the mainland. They almost invariably nest on the ground, and they lay their eggs in a ground-hole which they line with sticks and vegetation. However, they do sometimes nest off the ground, building a loose platform of sticks and reeds in low trees or bushes. The normal clutch consists of one to four eggs and both sexes incubate alternately for four to five weeks. When hatched young pelicans are unattractive, being quite reptile-like in appearance, but very soon tufts of white down appear and they begin to look more like birds.

Brown Pelicans originate from south United States, and Central to South America. They are also to be found in the southern coastal regions of Canada.

AQUARIUM NEWS

The latest news from the Aquarium is that we have acquired a Black 'Shark' (*Molulus chrysophekadion*) and this has been housed



COMMON ANGELFISH (*Pterophyllum scalare*) TO BE SEEN IN OUR AQUARIUM

in the tank with the larger Cichlids. It is approximately 10 inches long and will grow to about 18 inches. We have not had this size of Black 'Shark' for some time. It is an unvarying black to blue colour, each of the scales on the flanks having a yellow to reddish spot. This is a hardy species, and will eat any kind of food, the plants and tank-sides usually being sucked clean of algae. It is a lovely fish, and when fully grown will give a nice display.

BIRD NOTES

We have bred Scaly-breasted Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*) in the past, and have had two breedings this year. The two birds which were bred in October last are now off the nest and are being fed by both parents three times a day. They will grow to a length of about 9 inches. Their general plumage is green, the neck, throat and breast being yellow with green markings giving a scalloped appearance, which is very pretty. Their under-tail coverts, thighs and lower flanks are green, with distinct yellow markings. Underwing coverts and the undersides of flight feathers have a band of orange-red; the bill is a lovely coral colour, and the iris orange-yellow. Their legs are a greyish-brown. Immature birds are very similar in colouring. The bill, however, is darker being a dusky-brown with yellow markings; the iris is pale-brown.

Scaly-breasted Lorikeets are from North-eastern Australia from about Cooktown, north Queensland, south to the Illawarra district of New South Wales. They are lowland birds frequenting most types of country wherever flowering or fruiting trees exist. Very large flocks may be observed in the north east of Australia. These lorikeets are noisy and gregarious, climbing along twigs to get at flowers or fruit, often in an upside-down position to reach their favourite foods which are pollen, nectar, flowers, fruits, berries and seeds. They are a threat to some crops in certain areas.

In the wild, breeding of the *Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus* takes place at any time between May and February, being largely dependent on rainfall in the north. The nest is a hollow limb or hole in a tree, generally chosen for its considerable height. The clutch is 2/3 eggs, but mostly two. These eggs are laid on a layer



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

ORANG-UTAN "LOLA" WITH HER FEMALE OFFSPRING "JUDI"

of decayed wood dust. Incubation lasts approximately 25 days, and it would appear that only the female broods. The young leave the nest six to seven weeks after hatching. In captivity here at the Zoo the incubation period is 25 days, and the young leave the nest six weeks after hatching. Both parents feed the young four or five times a day.

The four Peach-faced Lovebirds (*Agapornis roseicollis*) which were bred in November last year have now left the nest. We keep our Lovebirds in large open flights with plenty of space. Natural branches are used for perching. The main items of diet for these birds are canary seed and millet, and they tend to eat rather more sunflower seed than other seeds. Hemp should be rationed so that only about a teaspoonful to each bird is available daily, although the amount can be increased ad lib when young are being reared. Apple, pear and plenty of green foods are given throughout the year, and branches from fruit trees, willow and poplar when in season.

According to the British Museum Catalogue the Peach-faced Lovebird was first discovered in 1793, but was then assumed to be synonymous with the Red-faced Lovebird, and it was not until 1817 that it was officially recognised as a separate species.

In the wild state the Peach-faced Lovebird is found in southern Angola, south to the banks of the Orange River. It is usually encountered in small flocks of up to ten or so in number in dry country of deciduous woodland character, but is seldom seen far from water and has been recommended to travellers as a good water guide. Its territory extends below the tropic of Capricorn and it is the only Lovebird which can claim this distinction. It lives at varying altitudes from sea level up to 5,000ft. and is therefore more accustomed to temperature variations than other Lovebirds.

On account of its very attractive and neat appearance, and its readiness to breed, the Peach-faced Lovebird has earned a well-deserved popularity with bird keepers. Its drawbacks however, lie in its penetrating high-pitched grating call, and spiteful nature. To be fair over both these allegations, this call is very trying indoors but not really bad when out in the open. Practically all writers

mention the "Peach-faced" as being spiteful and rather cunning in hiding this defect. Sometimes a number of Peach-faced Lovebirds will live quite amicably together in a fairly confined space for a reasonably long time, but only for a time. Without warning one day some tough character will start a "rough house" with catastrophic results, a number of mutilated bodies being found afterwards.

GARDENING NOTES

To continue with comments on our collection of shrubs we must now mention the Rhododendrons and Azaleas. Whilst we have quite a large number of these planted throughout the Zoo they are chiefly centred in front of the Oakfield Restaurant, in the sunken garden, and at the south end of the Monkey House. We have purposely restricted the planting of these lovely shrubs as they are all spring flowering, when they make a magnificent show. After their period of glory they can look drab and uninteresting for the rest of the year, although one does get good autumn colour from the azaleas. These shrubs will not tolerate lime, and as our soil is lime-free we have been able to grow them successfully. They like plenty of leaf-mould or peat added to the soil before planting.

We will not mention all the varieties that we have, but in addition to the large-growing hybrid rhododendrons we have alpine and other dwarf-growing ones planted in our rock gardens.

Azaleas come in three groups. The Mollis varieties are deciduous, are mostly strongly scented and have lovely autumn foliage. The Ghent variety is similar to the Mollis, but flowering later. The Japanese varieties are really lovely little shrubs, being one mass of flowers tight on the plants. Being dwarf-growing they are ideal for the rock gardens. They come in a variety of colours, red, mauves, with contrasting colours of pink and orange, and white. These are evergreen.

Cotoneasters consist of a large group of shrubs varying in height and habit. Some, such as *adpressus* and *congestus*, are dwarf-growing and suitable for rock garden planting. The variety *horizontalis* is flat-growing suitable for trailing over walls where

it will droop over, or if planted at the bottom of a wall will grow upwards and make a really fine display. It can be seen planted in this way outside the Tropical House. *Dammeri* is a vigorous and prostrate grower suitable for banks and ground cover. Varieties which are good in the shrubberies include *franchettii*, *hybridus pendulus*, *moupinensis*, *salicifolius*, *simonsii*, *cornubia* and many more. One which is larger growing and makes a small tree is *frigida* and its varieties. All cotoneasters have attractive berries and some are evergreen.

Camelias are amongst the choicest of shrubs. Like the rhododendron and the azalea they will not tolerate lime and require the same soil structure with plenty of leaf-mould or peat. They are in all colour shades of red and pink, and white, and are evergreen having lovely glossy leaves. The flowers are very attractive in either single or double form. These shrubs are hardy, but the flowers can be spoiled by late frosts. It is therefore advisable to give them some protection if possible at this time. The camelias which are situated at the back of both rock gardens were all grown from cuttings given to us several years ago.

SUBSCRIPTION FORMS

New readers of the CHESTER ZOO NEWS who would like to receive the magazine regularly may be interested to know that subscription forms can be obtained from the souvenir shops. An annual subscription (12 issues) costs £2.00, postage paid, which can either be handed over the counter at the shops 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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