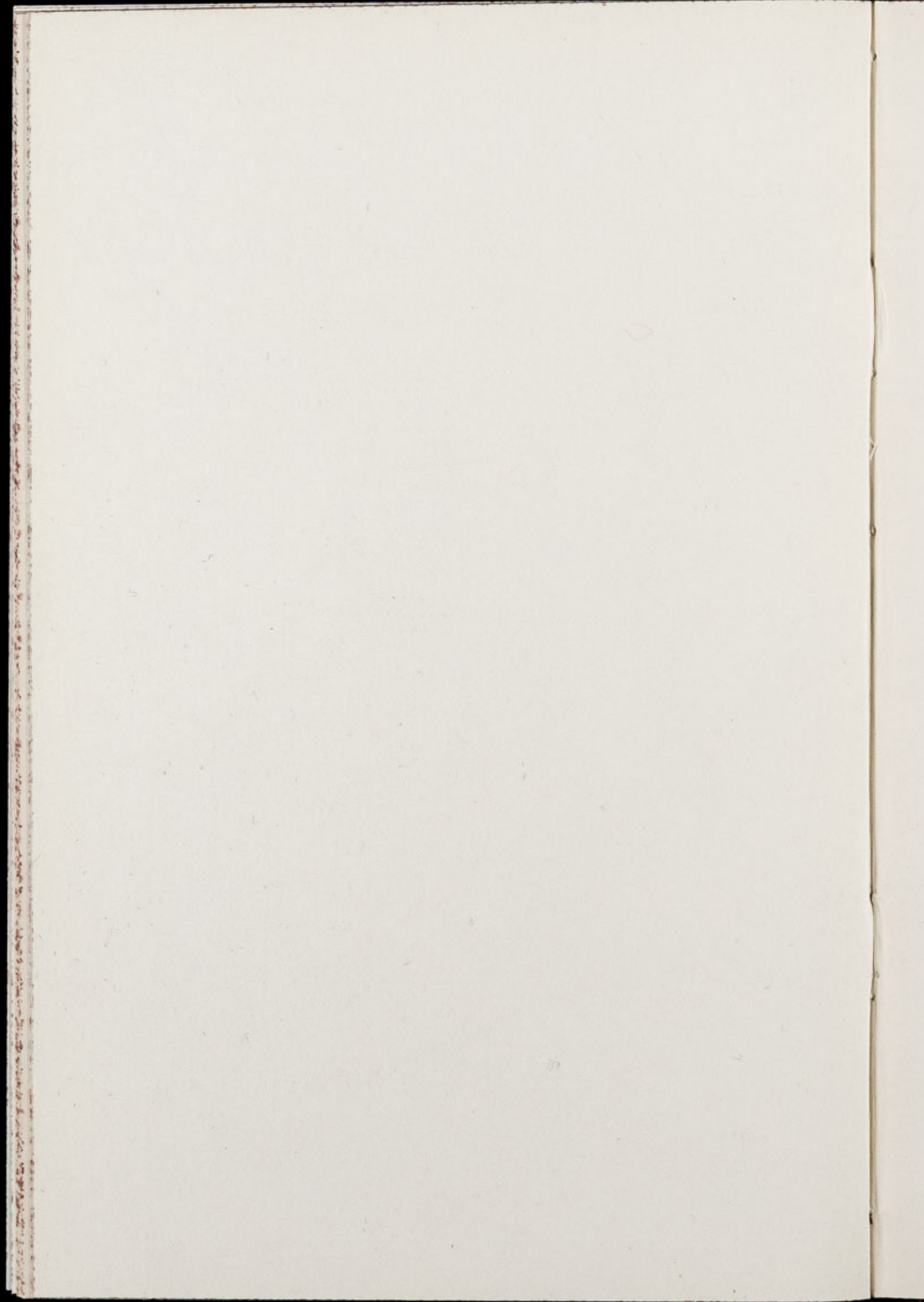


**CHESTER ZOO NEWS**  
**AND GUIDE**

May 1969

Price 1/-



# The North of England Zoological Society

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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*COVER: This month's cover is of a Puma — cubs have been born at our Cat House.*

*By Courtesy of E. Kirkland, F.R.P.S.*

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### ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

Latest arrivals in the Zoo are a pair of young Tigers sent to us by the Edinburgh Zoo. These animals were bred at Edinburgh on the 17th August, 1968, and are very fine specimens. As a temporary measure, they have been found accommodation at our Cat House where they occupy an adjoining enclosure to that which houses Kim, our male Lion. As the Tigers become older, they will require stronger accommodation than can be provided at the Cat House, which was designed for Leopards and the smaller members of the Cat family. We also have an adult pair of Tigers; they have not bred for a few years now but are a fine show in the large open air enclosure close to our main Souvenir Shop.

Most people tend to think of Tigers as strictly tropical animals, but this is far from the truth — in fact they dislike the heat but are completely indifferent to frost and cold weather. Our adult Tigers can often be seen padding around their enclosure when there is thick snow on the ground and even break the ice to go into their pool. Tigers are found from the humid jungles of India and Burma to Java and Sumatra and the cold, rocky forests of China and Siberia. The Siberian Tiger is normally considered the largest member of the Cat Family, measuring up to 13 feet and weighing 650 lbs. Most Tigers however are considerably smaller, being of similar size and weight to a Lion which weighs in the region of 450 lbs.

Several births have been recorded at the Cat House during the past month. Our Black Panthers, Pumas and Common Leopards all have young. The female Puma is relatively quiet but the Panther and Leopard mothers are very vicious. Unfortunately it will be several weeks yet before any of these babies can be viewed by members of the public, as normally it is about 2 months before they



*Royal Zoological Society of Scotland*  
TIGER CUBS WITH THEIR MOTHER AT EDINBURGH ZOO

venture outside. The three young Jaguar Cubs mentioned in last month's Zoo News as being bred in the Cat House are thriving but have not yet been out of doors.

During the past month we have bred two Père David's Fawns and these can be seen in the photograph opposite with their mothers. We now have a total of eleven of these Deer. We are particularly proud of our fine breeding record with this species as their survival can only be assured by the consistent breeding in Zoos.

### REPTILE NOTES

New arrivals in the Reptile House were 3 young Bosc's Monitors. An enclosure has been specially prepared for them and they will be accommodated with our original Bosc's Monitor. Our Monitors came from West Africa but this species is found in other parts of the country and is said to prefer open grasslands and woodland. Bosc's Monitors are very heavily built and a large specimen can attain a length of 5ft. to 6ft. from its nose to the tip of its tail.

Also to arrive from West Africa was a very small Black and White Cobra and an Emerald Snake. The Emerald Snake is a common forest species which feeds mainly on lizards; our specimen at the Zoo is taking small frogs. It is on show to the public and can be seen with our Garden Tree Boas. The Garden Tree Boa mentioned in last month's Zoo News has also been successfully introduced into the vivarium.

The use of Ultra-Violet Ray lamps for certain of our basking lizards has proved very successful. The Iguanas have shown a tremendous improvement in condition and are consuming a much greater quantity of food. The pale blue strip lamps give off a



PERE DAVID'S DEER WITH FAWNS

*Gordon Kerr*

relatively low concentration of Ultra-Violet Rays but have the advantage that they can be left on for long periods without the risk of burning the animal.

### NEWS FROM VARIOUS SECTIONS

The male Sika Deer received from the Moscow Zoo has completed its quarantine period and was brought to the Zoo during the past month. We already had two female Sika Deer in the collection and the male has been accommodated with them in the enclosure close to our Main Entrance.

Sika Deer (*Cervus nippon*) originate from South Asia, Formosa and Japan and several sub-species have been described. During the mid-19th century, a number of these Deer were brought to this country and kept in parks. There were a number of escapes, especially during the two world wars and several feral herds were established. Herds are now known in Essex, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, Kent, Somerset, Surrey, Lancashire, West Yorkshire and Westmorland. In Scotland they are established in Argyll, Caithness, Fife, Inverness-shire, Peebleshire, Rosshire and Sutherland; in Ireland in Co. Dublin, Fermanagh, Kerry, Tyrone and Wicklow.

Building staff, as can be seen in the photograph, are busy on the construction of large aviaries at the rear of the new Ape House. Visitors will be able to look through the plate glass windows of the Ape House walkway and see Anthropoid Apes on one side and birds on the other. Work has also started on the construction of a new Parrot House on an adjoining field, which will enable these birds to have far more space than can be provided in our original building.



Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby

WORK IN PROGRESS ON NEW AVIARY

# GUIDE TO ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

## ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES

LIONS—3 p.m. except Fridays

SEA LIONS—2-40, 3-40, 4-40 p.m.

BEARS—3-15 p.m.

POLAR BEARS—4-0 p.m.



1. MAIN ENTRANCE
2. Bird Enclosure
3. Wapiti Paddock
4. Lesser Pandas
5. Aviaries
6. Milk Bar
7. CORONATION HALL
8. CLOAKROOM, TOILETS, FIRST AID AND LOST CHILDREN
9. CAFETERIA
10. CAFETERIA
11. Picnic Lawn
12. Bears
13. Animal Enclosure
- 13a. Kiosk
14. NORTH ENTRANCE
15. AQUARIUM
16. Push Chairs and Wheel Chairs
- 17.† Parrot House
18. APE HOUSE No. 2
19. RAINBOW CAFE AND SHOP
20. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn
21. TOILETS
- 21a. Tuatara House
22. Peccaries
23. Waterbus Halt
24. Birds of Prey Aviary
25. Birds of Prey Aviary
26. Owls
27. Jackal and Hyaena Enclosures
28. Wolverines
29. Porcupines and Raccoons
30. Coypus
31. Beavers
32. Giraffe House

33. Camel House
34. Waterbus Halt
35. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL AND REPTILE HOUSES
36. APE HOUSE No. 1
37. Chimpanzee Islands
38. Floribunda Rose Gardens
39. Zebra House
- 40.
41. Gibbon Island
42. H.T. Rose Garden
43. Parrot House
44. Waterfowl Enclosure
45. Pelicans
46. Flamingos
47. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 47a. Penguins and Otters
48. Sea Lion Pool
49. Rock Garden
50. Polar Bears
51. Tigers
52. Anteaters
- 52a. Penguin Pool
53. BIRD HOUSE
54. FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT
55. TOILETS
56. Lions
57. NEW ZOO SHOP
58. TOILETS
59. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT
60. G.P.O. Telephone Kiosk
61. Animal Enclosure
62. Animal Enclosure
63. Cheetahs

64. Malayan Bears
65. Animal Enclosure
66. Aviary
67. Wallaby Enclosure
68. Island
69. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE
70. Islands
71. Waterbus Halt
72. Flower Gardens
73. ROSE GARDENS
74. Deer or Antelope Enclosures
75. Deer or Antelope Enclosures
76. Deer or Antelope Enclosures
77. Waterbus Halt
78. Zebra and Deer Enclosure
79. Kamchatka Bears
80. Elephant Paddock
81. Hippo Paddock
82. PACHYDERM HOUSE
83. Tapir Enclosure
84. Small Mammal House
85. Waterfowl Enclosure
86. Antelope and Cattle
87. Stork Enclosures
88. Monkey Enclosures
89. Cat House
- 89a. Jaguars
90. MONKEY HOUSE
91. Cranes and Waterfowl
- 91a. Highland Cattle

92. Waterfowl and Wallabies
- 92a. Llamas and Alpacas
93. Cranes and Waterfowl
- 93a. Cattle
94. Bison Paddock
95. Deer Paddock
96. Eland and Marmots
97. Rhino Paddocks
98. RHINO HOUSE
99. TOILETS
00. Mpila Snack-Bar
01. Antelope Enclosure
02. Antelope Enclosure

Animals may be moved from time to time

†—Under construction.

For as long as staff can remember, our male Wapiti has always cast his antlers at the beginning of March. This year he was 3 weeks later than usual for no apparent reason. Other seasons have been equally cold and it is much colder in his native Canada, so obviously the weather is not responsible.

A female Coati and her five young babies have been transferred from the Mammal House to an enclosure near the Cat House. This enclosure is surrounded by a low wall with an inward overhang to prevent the animals from escaping. Within the confines are large trees and some thick hawthorn bushes which the Coatis obviously enjoy. Despite the provision of warm sleeping dens these animals prefer to sleep outside, huddled together, where they are somewhat protected by the hawthorn bush.

Sammy, the Gibbon who is housed in a large wire mesh enclosure opposite our Oakfield Restaurant is a born exhibitionist and is much happier now that the Zoo has become busier. He enjoys the visitors and loves to make his loud call whenever anyone is about. When there are no spectators he lounges in his sleeping quarters but like any good showman, he responds to his audience; the larger the crowd the better the performance.

### **BLESBOK**

In past editions of *Chester Zoo News* we have mentioned our Blesbok, but have been unable to include any photographs until now, due to the shy nature of these animals. Two Blesbok have so far been brought to the Zoo and another three remain at our Quarantine Station. The large size of the paddock does not make photography any easier but with food inducements they come close to the edge, only bounding away when a visitor makes a noise.



BLESBOK

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

The Blesbok (*Damaliscus dorcas*) is closely related to the much rarer Bontebok and modern Zoologists consider these animals as two races of a single species. Blesbok were once fairly common in South Africa but have become much restricted in range due to hunting. They are animals of the plains and hills of the Karoo and High Veldt, being able to survive on the very scant vegetation found in this area. At the present time they are found only in nature reserves of the Orange Free State and Transvaal, also on private farms where they are bred for food. In certain areas farmers have found that the indigenous antelopes are far less susceptible to disease than are cattle and therefore the rearing of antelope for food can be accomplished on a competitive basis. Blesbok are extremely agile antelope and use their speed to escape their enemies which include Lions, Leopards and Hunting Dogs. Normally they live in small herds of eight to fifteen and the young are born from August to October after a gestation period of 230 days. Blesbok weigh in the region of 180 lbs. and are just over three feet high at the shoulders; the record length for the horns, which are found in both sexes, is 20 inches.

#### GARDEN NOTES

Spring has been very late with us at Chester, as it has been generally, and we have had to wait longer for the Spring flowers. The Daffodils which are naturalized throughout the Zoo are at least a month late in flowering; at the present time (end of April) they are at their best. Polyanthus and Pansies which have wintered well are also coming into full flower. Different varieties of Orchids have been in flower in the Tropical House since the beginning of the year and some forty Cymbidiums are still in flower there. As usual this is a busy time in the greenhouses, with summer bedding plants occupying so much space and needing so much attention with watering, potting, etc.



STAGS HORN FERN

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

There are many interesting plants in our Tropical House but the Stags Horn Ferns attract a great deal of attention. As can be seen in the photograph, the fronds resemble the antlers of a stag. This fern, which has the latin name of *Platycerium bifurcatum*, is a native of Australia but similar forms are found in Africa and Malaya. They are epiphytic, living on trees and deriving their nourishment from the falling leaves which are caught on the fronds. At the Zoo we grow our Stags Horn Ferns in sphagnum moss and osmunda fibre and they thrive under these conditions.

### BIRD NOTES

The Sclater's Crested Curassows have again hatched a youngster for the fourth year running. Our Curassows are very good parents, taking great care with their offspring; however as soon as they go to nest the previous year's young are attacked and consequently have to be transferred to fresh quarters.

A Golden-fronted Conure (*Aratinga auricapillus aurifrons*) a recent arrival has been accommodated in one of the aviaries at our Tropical House. This attractive species is native to S.E. Brazil.

The Oyster-catchers, Spur-winged Plover and Black-headed Gull have been transferred from one of the Oakfield Aviaries to the Flamingo Island. This enclosure is much more suitable and the Oyster-catchers especially, look very happy searching for food in the muddy surround of the pool.

Two Great Horned Owls have been paired off in our Owl aviaries in the hope that they will breed — if not this year, perhaps in 1970. Previously these Owls occupied a large flight aviary with other species of Eagle Owls but the male became very aggressive towards his keeper and had to be moved. We decided to move a

female and the male in the hope that they would breed. We have been very successful with Owl breeding over the past few years, with broods of Great Eagle and Spotted Eagle Owls reared regularly.

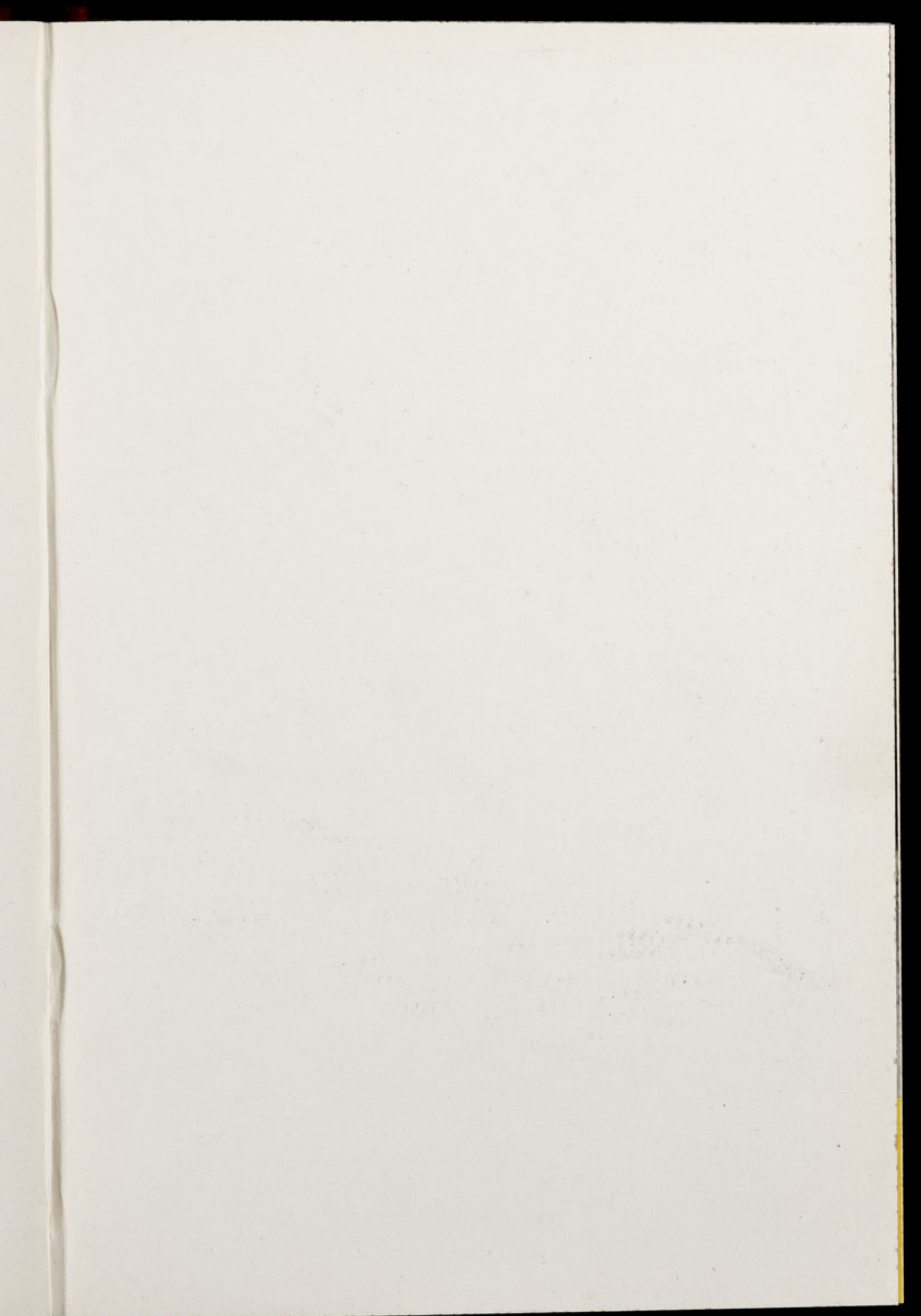
A recent consignment consisted of four new species:—White-breasted Waterhens, Black-billed Rollers, Columbian Blue-headed Jays and Red-thighed Falconets. The Waterhens (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*) are found in many areas of South East Asia and seem to have similar habits to our native Waterhens. They are at home in marshy areas, paddy fields and swamps, especially where these conditions are combined with a thick tangle of shrubbery. The Rollers are found from Persia to India and China, normally living in dry open country. Due to the brilliant blue colouration on their wings and forehead they have often been mis-named Blue Jays. These birds are frequently to be seen sitting on a post or tree from where they swoop down and catch insects, lizards and small mammals. The Blue Jays are very beautiful birds with dark blue faces, pale blue backs and tails with creamy white underparts. All these three species are accommodated in aviaries within the confines of the Tropical House. At the time of writing, the Falconets are still at our Bird Hospital but in the near future will be transferred to one of the Bird House aviaries.

Falconets are extremely interesting birds, being true Falcons but only a little larger than a sparrow. There are five species found in Asia and the Rufous-thighed (*Microhierax caerulescens*) is distributed from the Himalayas to Indo-China. They are found up to 9,000 feet in the Himalayas but migrate to lower levels during the winter. In fact they do not like cold weather at all and in captivity are very susceptible to damp and low temperatures. Falconets prefer open lowlands and hill country where they can be seen sitting on exposed branches from which they swoop down on their prey. For

the most part this consists of insects but they are also able to capture birds much larger than themselves. Falconets nest in holes in trees and often take over the deserted nest holes of Woodpeckers or Barbets, where they lay 3 to 4 white coloured eggs.

Latest arrivals in the Bird Section are pairs of Ornate Lorikeets, Jobi Black-capped Lories and Lesser Sulphur-crested Cockatoos. The Lorikeets come from the Celebes, Buton and Togian Islands and have been placed in an aviary within the confines of the free flight area of our Bird House. The Jobi Lories, a local race of the Black-capped lories have been accommodated in one of our breeding aviaries at the Bird House. For the time being the Cockatoos are housed at our Bird Hospital but will be transferred to permanent quarters at a later date.





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