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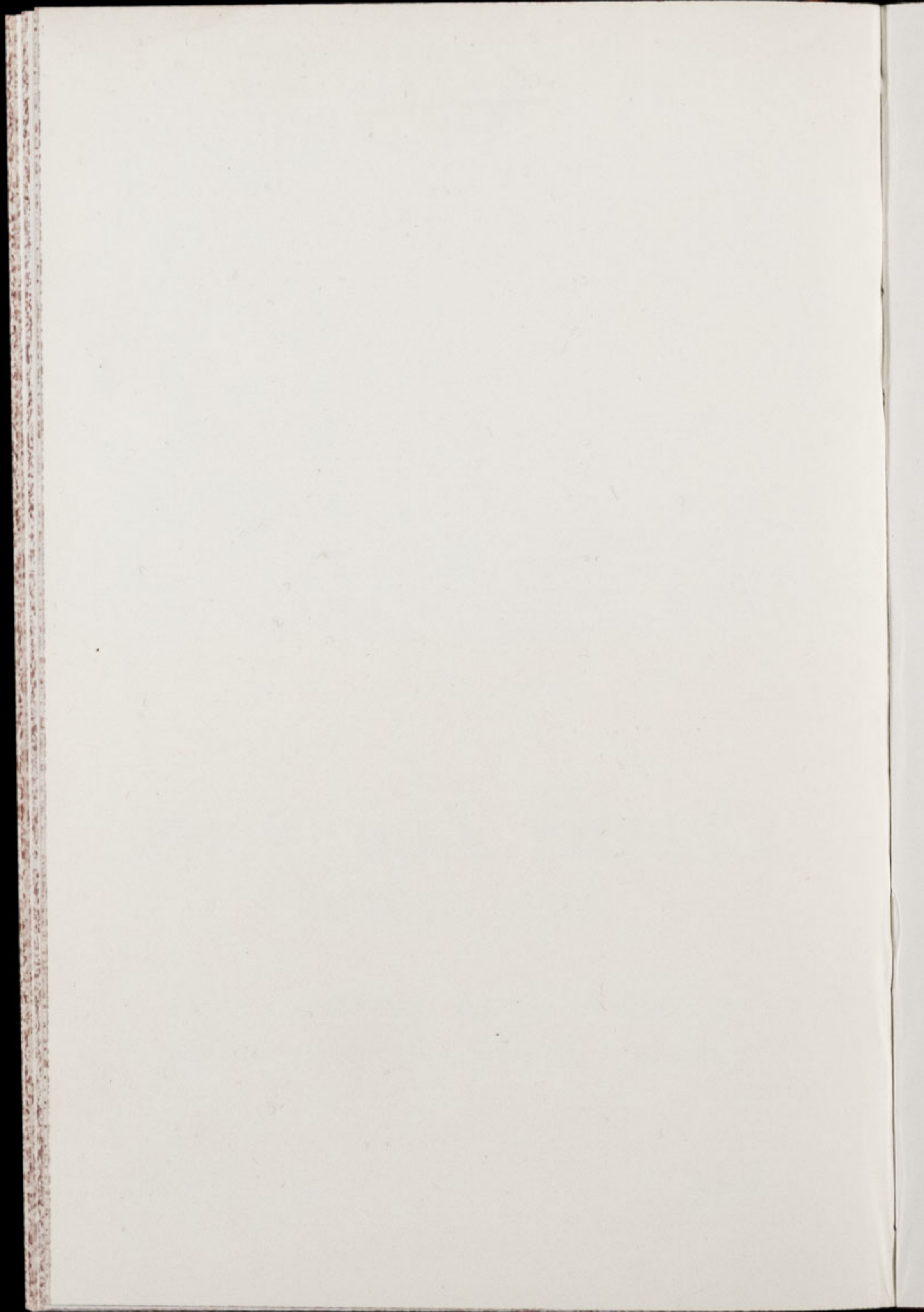
Chester Zoo News

AND GUIDE

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON - BY - CHESTER

August 1973

Price 6p



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

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ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

During the past month the following mammal births have been recorded:

- 2 Leopards (*Panthera pardus*)
- 1 Common Zebra (*Equus burchelli granti*)
- 1 Red Lechwe (*Kobus leche*)
- 2 American Bison (*Bos bison*)
- 1 Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*)

The Common Zebra foal is the first born here for some time and it is pleasing to record that it is a female. The mother is less than three years old herself, having been born at Chester Zoo in September 1970, and this is the first foal she has produced. Both may be seen in enclosure No. 79 and also they are the subject of this month's cover photograph.

The Fallow Deer share the same enclosure as the Common Zebras and it is here that the five fawns born so far this year are accommodated. Including the latest birth, the Fallow Deer herd contains nineteen animals.

The two American Bison calves came into the world on the same day and are the second and third produced in the herd in enclosure No. 102. The eldest calf, senior by almost two months, is already losing the light brown coat of immaturity and assuming the dark brown colouration of the adult.

Worth special mention are the three recent arrivals shown in the photograph on the right, a male and two female Blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*). These three animals are young specimens which were bred in Dublin Zoo. There they had been confined to the Blackbuck's indoor quarters as, being skittish, delicate creatures, once they had been liberated into a paddock, it would have been



MALE AND TWO FEMALE BLACKBUCK (*Antilope cervicapra*)

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

virtually impossible to catch them without causing injury. Their voyage across the Irish Sea was accomplished without incident and after spending a brief period indoors to enable them to adjust from the excitement of the journey, the three Blackbuck were released into their new paddock. This is the first of several enclosures to be completed on sites No. 100 and 101 and a more detailed account of the construction work which has been taking place in this area will be included in a future issue of the Zoo News. The paddock for the Blackbuck comprises an area of grass and one of concrete and adjoins spacious indoor quarters. The young animals have settled quickly and have proved most friendly, coming right up to the perimeter fence to investigate the visitors.

The range of the Blackbuck is Pakistan and India where in recent years its numbers have suffered a decline owing to hunting and habitat destruction. The Blackbuck is a comparatively small antelope, measuring some three and a half feet long and just two and a half feet high at the shoulder. In fact it is regarded as a gazelle and is related, amongst others, to the Arabian Gazelle, a herd of which may be seen at Chester Zoo.

In stature and general appearance the Blackbuck is very similar to a gazelle. However the male and female differ considerably in colouration. The adult buck is rich dark brown above, on his sides and the outsides of his legs, while his underparts, insides of legs and circles around the eyes are white. Where the buck is dark brown, the doe is yellowish brown. The young male at Chester has not yet attained this deep brown colour and in fact his coat is not very much darker than that of the females. At the moment his horns are little more than a foot long but they can be expected to grow to two feet at least. These horns are straight and grooved spirally, and are borne only by the male. Scent glands are present on the face of the Blackbuck and the secretion from these is rubbed onto twigs and branches to indicate territory and also is evident during male disputes. Startled Blackbuck move away swiftly from danger, bounding high into the air.

Blackbuck would be encountered normally in small groups on the open plains. Females and young are attended by a single dominant male while young bucks driven from these groups form batchelor parties. One or two young are born after a gestation period lasting 180 days and these animals have been known to live for fifteen years.

The Blackbuck were escorted from Eire by a member of the Chester Zoo staff who had gone to Dublin Zoo to deliver a fifteen year old male Chimpanzee named Kongola. Since they had lost their adult male, Dublin Zoo had had only four female Chimpanzees and we were pleased to be able to furnish them with a replacement. Kongola travelled well on the ferry to Eire and on arrival at the zoo was transferred to the Chimpanzee House where he will have to undergo a period in quarantine. Though he was not permitted into their enclosure, he could see the four female Chimpanzees and they exchanged excited greetings.

Three Nile Rats (*Arvicanthis niloticus*) and three Siberian Ground Squirrels (*Eutamias sibiricus*) were other additions to the collection.

BIRD NOTES

We are pleased to report that the following chicks left the nest recently:

- 3 Weka Rails (*Gallirallus australis greyi*)
- 3 Nanday Conures (*Nandayus nanday*)
- 4 Red-rumped Parakeets (*Psephotus haematonotus*)
- 4 Fischer's Lovebirds (*Agapornis fischeri*)
- 1 Rothschild's Mynah (*Leucopsar rothschildi*)
- 3 Jungle Mynahs (*Aethiopsar fuscus*)
- 2 Jerdon's Starlings (*Sturnus burmanicus*)
- 4 Bengalese Finches (*Louchura striata*)
- 3 Cut-throat Finches (*Amandina fasciata*)
- 6 Zebra Finches (*Taeniopygia castanotis*)
- 2 Java Sparrows (*Padda oryzivora*)
- 3 Red-eared Waxbills (*Estrilda troglodytes*)
- 1 Orange-cheeked Waxbill (*Estrilda melpoda*)

Initially two Weka Rail chicks emerged from the nesting cave and then a few days later a third was observed. The cave is situated at the rear of the large planted flight aviary, No. 18, which is where all previous Weka Rail breedings have occurred. The chicks, clothed in fluffy brownish black down, are exploring near the entrance to the cave but are guarded closely by their parents and scuttle back to safety if one of the adult birds gives the alarm call.

The parent birds are second generation zoo bred, being the offspring of a pair which arrived at Chester from Auckland Zoo in July 1971. New Zealand is the home of this large, flightless rail, which may reach over twenty inches in length. When the younger pair began nesting this year, they displayed so much aggression towards the other Weka Rails in the aviary, that we were obliged to catch up the other birds and transfer them to alternative accommodation in the zoo.

In their natural range, the Wekas would select a site amongst tree roots or in thick low scrub to build their nests. The nest illustrated in the photograph on the right was constructed last year and building materials employed in this untidy mound include feathers, leaves, twigs, grasses and ferns. The eggs are creamy white with a speckling of brown and light purple blotches. The maximum number of eggs in a clutch is five and incubation lasts from twenty to twenty-seven days.

The Nanday Conures and the Red-rumped Parakeets are housed in the Parakeet Aviaries, No. 42 on the zoo plan. Both species have bred well in the collection and with the recent hatchings we are exhibiting thirteen Nanday Conures and eleven Red-rumps.

Accommodated in the same group of aviaries are the Fischer's Lovebirds, another species which has an excellent breeding record here. In fact since the beginning of 1970 these birds have produced over thirty chicks and it is estimated that the latest youngsters are only the first of several clutches which will leave the nest this year.

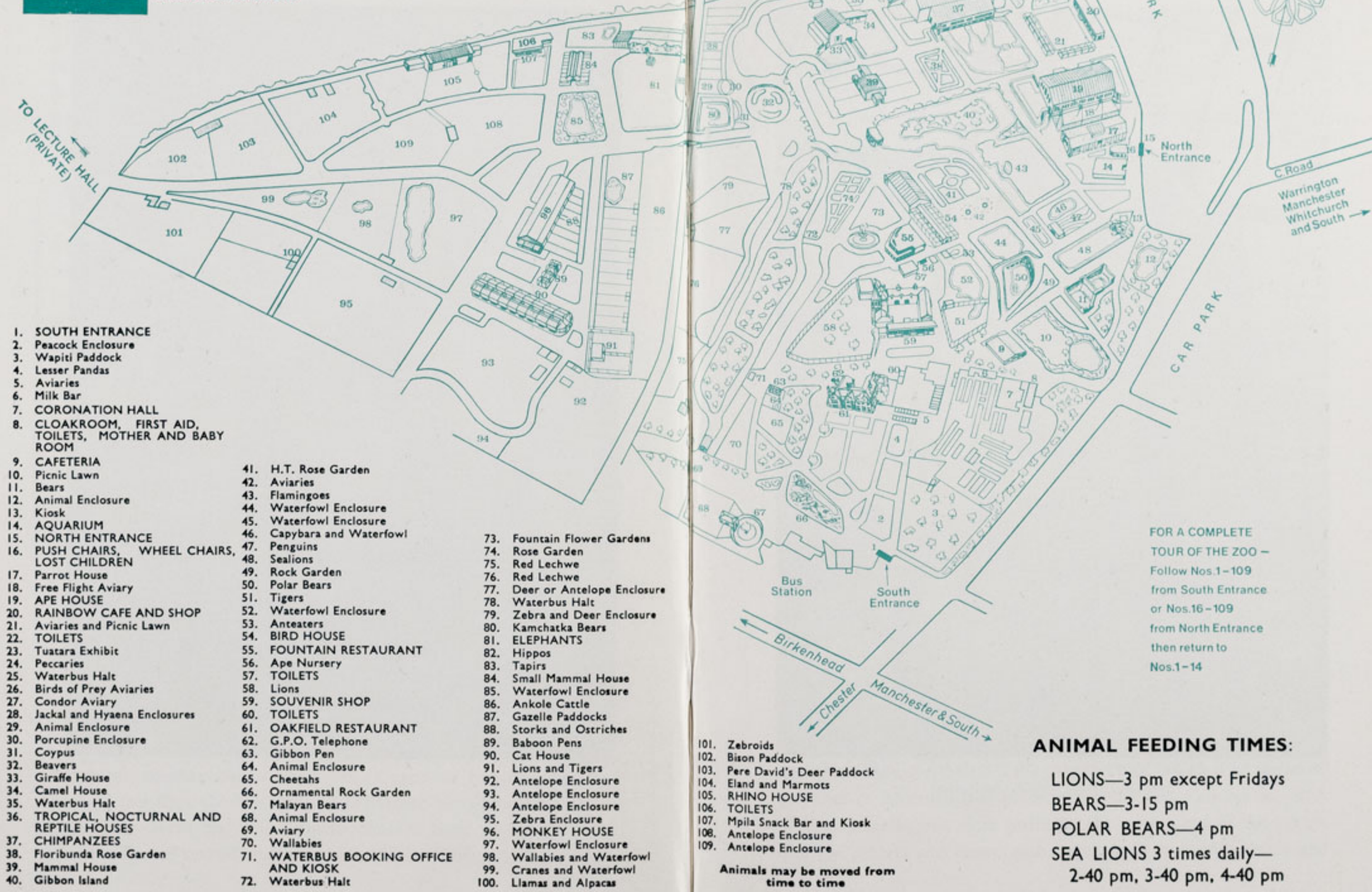


K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

NEST AND EGGS OF WEKA RAIL (*Gallirallus australis greyi*)

CHESTER ZOO

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS



- 1. SOUTH ENTRANCE
- 2. Peacock Enclosure
- 3. Wapiti Paddock
- 4. Lesser Pandas
- 5. Aviaries
- 6. Milk Bar
- 7. CORONATION HALL
- 8. CLOAKROOM, FIRST AID, TOILETS, MOTHER AND BABY ROOM
- 9. CAFETERIA
- 10. Picnic Lawn
- 11. Bears
- 12. Animal Enclosure
- 13. Kiosk
- 14. AQUARIUM
- 15. NORTH ENTRANCE
- 16. PUSH CHAIRS, WHEEL CHAIRS, LOST CHILDREN
- 17. Parrot House
- 18. Free Flight Aviary
- 19. APE HOUSE
- 20. RAINBOW CAFE AND SHOP
- 21. Aviaries and Picnic Lawn
- 22. TOILETS
- 23. Tuatara Exhibit
- 24. Peccaries
- 25. Waterbus Halt
- 26. Birds of Prey Aviaries
- 27. 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. Flamingoes
- 44. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 45. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 46. Capybara and Waterfowl
- 47. Penguins
- 48. Sealions
- 49. Rock Garden
- 50. Polar Bears
- 51. Tigers
- 52. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 53. Anteaters
- 54. BIRD HOUSE
- 55. FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT
- 56. Ape Nursery
- 57. TOILETS
- 58. Lions
- 59. SOUVENIR SHOP
- 60. TOILETS
- 61. OAKFIELD RESTAURANT
- 62. G.P.O. Telephone
- 63. Gibbon Pen
- 64. Animal Enclosure
- 65. Cheetahs
- 66. Ornamental Rock Garden
- 67. Malayan Bears
- 68. Animal Enclosure
- 69. Aviary
- 70. Wallabies
- 71. WATERBUS BOOKING OFFICE AND KIOSK
- 72. Waterbus Halt

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

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

Animals may be moved from time to time

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

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



WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE (*Aquila audax*)

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

The Rothschild's Mynah chick, the second reared this season, is being fed by its parents in their long planted flight (No. 54). In a few weeks the parents will reject the chick and once more, we hope, go to nest. The young bird will then join the other two Rothschild's Mynahs, both of which were reared by the same parents.

The Jungle Mynahs and Jerdon's Starlings have their nests in the Tropical House. As last year's breeding of three Jungle Mynahs was probably the first of this species in the British Isles, we are especially pleased that they have repeated their success and hope that hence forward the colony will increase steadily.

The Tawny Eagle accommodated in one of the Bird of Prey Aviaries, No. 26, has been joined by the male Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*) featured in the photograph on the left. This magnificent bird was presented to us by Perth Zoo. At one time it had been flown to hand but latterly Perth had had difficulty in accommodating the eagle. It could not be introduced into a community aviary, as inevitably fighting would result and so we were pleased to accept it.

The Wedge-tailed Eagle is the largest bird of prey in Australia and in its vast range, which extends across mainland Australia and into Tasmania, it soars above various types of terrain. The wing span of the male is about seven feet and he is three feet in length; the female is a little larger. Though it cannot be seen clearly in the photograph, of course the tail is wedge-shaped.

In colouration, the Wedge-tailed Eagle is mainly dark brownish and black but nevertheless it is a majestic bird, which is all the more pity that in Australia it is persecuted ruthlessly. Farmers accuse it of seizing lambs but more probably the main items of the eagle's diet are rabbits and hares, with other small mammals, birds and

some reptiles taken to a lesser degree. Before the introduction of rabbits to Australia, wallabies would have appeared prominently on its menu. Though naturalists argue that in most instances the lambs eaten are already dead when the eagles locate them, still many thousands of these birds are killed each year. Our Curator of Mammals and Birds relates that during his period of residence in Australia, about seven years ago, he made many excursions into the bush and often observed numerous Wedge-tailed Eagle corpses hanging from wire fences.

By far the most exciting new arrivals in this section have been a male and female Wilson's Birds of Paradise (*Diphyllodes respublica*) which were obtained from Rotterdam Zoo. Visitors can see this pair in one of the group of aviaries marked No. 54, which is where our other Birds of Paradise are also housed. A more detailed description of the Wilson's Birds of Paradise will be featured in next month's issue.



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

A TRIO OF VERY BEAUTIFUL BLUE DISCUS—
one of the many fascinating exhibits in our Aquarium

AQUARIUM NEWS

Amongst the latest additions to the Aquarium tanks is a young specimen of a particularly dangerous fish, the Electric Eel (*Electrophorus electricus*). Situated along either side of its long body, the eel has organs capable of discharging fairly powerful electric currents through the water. Lines of what appear to be studs in the skin indicate the position of the organs and the strength of the currents emitted increases with the size of the eel. A shock from a large specimen could be fatal to a small animal and even to humans it would be most unpleasant. The Aquarium Keeper treats his Electric Eels with great respect, as he knows that even a mild shock is an experience to be avoided.

The electricity is generated mainly when the eel is moving. The current stuns smaller fish in the surrounding water and these are then snapped up by the eel. The species lives in many parts of the Amazon and Orinoco rivers in South America, where it is credited with lengths of over seven feet. Captive specimens would rarely attain these lengths—an adult Electric Eel which has been in our Aquarium for a number of years measures about four feet long. The new specimen has a body length of some eighteen inches. It will not be possible to introduce the younger fish into the adult eel's tank, as fighting would result, and at the present time the former is not on show to visitors.

The Electric Catfish (*Malapterurus electricus*), another example of a fish which produces electricity, can also be studied in our Aquarium. Like those of the Electric Eel, the organs of this species are situated along the sides of its body. The Electric Catfish is a native of western and central African rivers.

Two adult pairs of *Pelmatochromis kribensis* were other new arrivals this month. This is a very beautiful little fish which has a bluish violet body with a bright red patch on the belly. The male

displays five spots on his caudal fin and grows to four inches in length. The female lacks the spots and reaches only three inches long. The delta of the Niger River in West Africa is the home of this species. A number of *Pelmatochromis kribensis* are already on exhibition and the purpose of acquiring new specimens was to introduce fresh blood into the resident group.

The new Knife Fish (*Notopterus chitala*) occurs naturally in Burma, Thailand and Malaysia. Currently it is on exhibition in a tank by itself as when introduced to other fishes it proved too aggressive. The maximum length of this species of Knife Fish is a little over two feet and it frequents quiet reaches of rivers and flood plains. It is a nocturnal hunter whose diet includes insect larvae, worms and small fishes.

In another tank visitors can see several new Rainbow Characins (*Exodon paradoxus*), natives of South America. The new fishes are almost four inches long, which is fully grown for this species. More brightly coloured than the adult, the young Rainbow Characin has a silvery body with a yellowish sheen on its sides and two large spots on either flank, one behind the gills and the other at the base of the caudal fin. The fins are reddish in colour.

Young Severum Cichlids (*Cichlasoma severum*) have been dubbed with the nickname, Poor Man's Discus, because at the juvenile stage they display eight or nine bars on their sides and bear a strong resemblance to the species *Symphysodon discus*. Visitors will be able to observe this likeness for themselves, as there are now two young Severum Cichlids on exhibition. The adult length of these fishes is about eight inches and they are found in the northern Amazon basin and in Guiana. Individuals vary in colour, some being pale grey and others olive green, brown, dark grey or black. The specimens we have on show are dark greyish.

Into the same tank as the Severum Cichlids, we have introduced two young Giant Gouramies (*Osphronemus goramy*). As these gouramies may measure two feet long when adult, they are not really suitable exhibits for anywhere except zoological gardens and large aquariums. Distribution is in the East Indies where they are a valuable source of food for the local human population. The two young Giant Gouramies acquired are no more than three inches long at present but a more mature individual, measuring over a foot, can be seen in one of the larger community tanks.

The Red-finned Shark (*Labeo erythrura*) is a fish which has not been exhibited here for some years. Six specimens have been acquired since our last report and these may be seen in a tank with Red-eyed Tetra. Like the closely related Red-tailed Shark (*Labeo bicolor*) which is also represented in the Aquarium, the Red-finned is not a true shark but a member of the Cyprinid family. Its maximum length is four and a half inches and it has a brownish black body with blood red fins.

Other arrivals this month include a pair of Orange Chromides (*Etroplus maculatus*), a Clown Knife Fish and Calico, Fantail and Lionhead varieties of Goldfish. The Lionhead Goldfish are immature and have not yet developed the characteristic growths on their heads.

With regard to breedings, at the time of writing between two and three dozen fry of the species *Barbus arulius* are being reared in a nursery tank. Attaining a length of five inches, this is one of the larger barbs and is found in Malaya.

As they were beginning to fight, males from the batches of Siamese Fighting Fish (*Betta splendens*) bred a few weeks ago were removed from their nursery tank and placed separately in exhibition tanks. With maturity their colours are evolving and it is apparent that several handsome individuals have been obtained.

In the tropical marine section the seven resident Seahorses have been joined by three new females. Two of the new Seahorses belong to a different species from the rest, as their bodies and tails bear lighter coloured bands. All are settling down well.

In the same section, a very attractive Bicolour Angelfish (*Centropyge bicolor*) may be seen in a tank with Fingerfish and Butterfly Fishes. This is a representative of one of the smaller species of Angelfishes which does not grow to more than four inches long. Most Bicolour Angelfish are yellow and black but in the specimen we have obtained the colours appear to be yellow and dark blue. Its markings are most striking. The front half of its body and its caudal fin are bright yellow, while the rear part of the body (up to the base of the caudal fin) is dark blue. There is also a dark blue band which runs over the top of the head, extending as far as the eye on either side. The range of the Bicolour Angelfish is in the seas of the East Indies.

In an adjacent tank we have introduced another marine fish, a Cleaner Wrasse (*Labroides dimidiatus*). This small slim fish has a silvery body basically with a faint black stripe running horizontally along either side which deepens into a black caudal fin. Above the blackish stripe is a silvery blue stripe. In its natural habitat it earns its living by picking parasites from the bodies of other fishes and in the Aquarium tank the Wrasse has already busied itself cleaning one of its companions, a small Bannerfish.

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 95p, postage paid, which can either be handed over the counter at the shop or posted with the completed form to the Director-Secretary, Chester Zoo, Chester.

ADVANCE NOTICE TO MEMBERS: The next Members' Meeting will be held at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday, 10th November, 1973, when Mrs. E. W. Ratcliffe will talk about "Conservation and Wildlife of Britain". Official notice of this meeting will be sent to Members nearer the time.

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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