

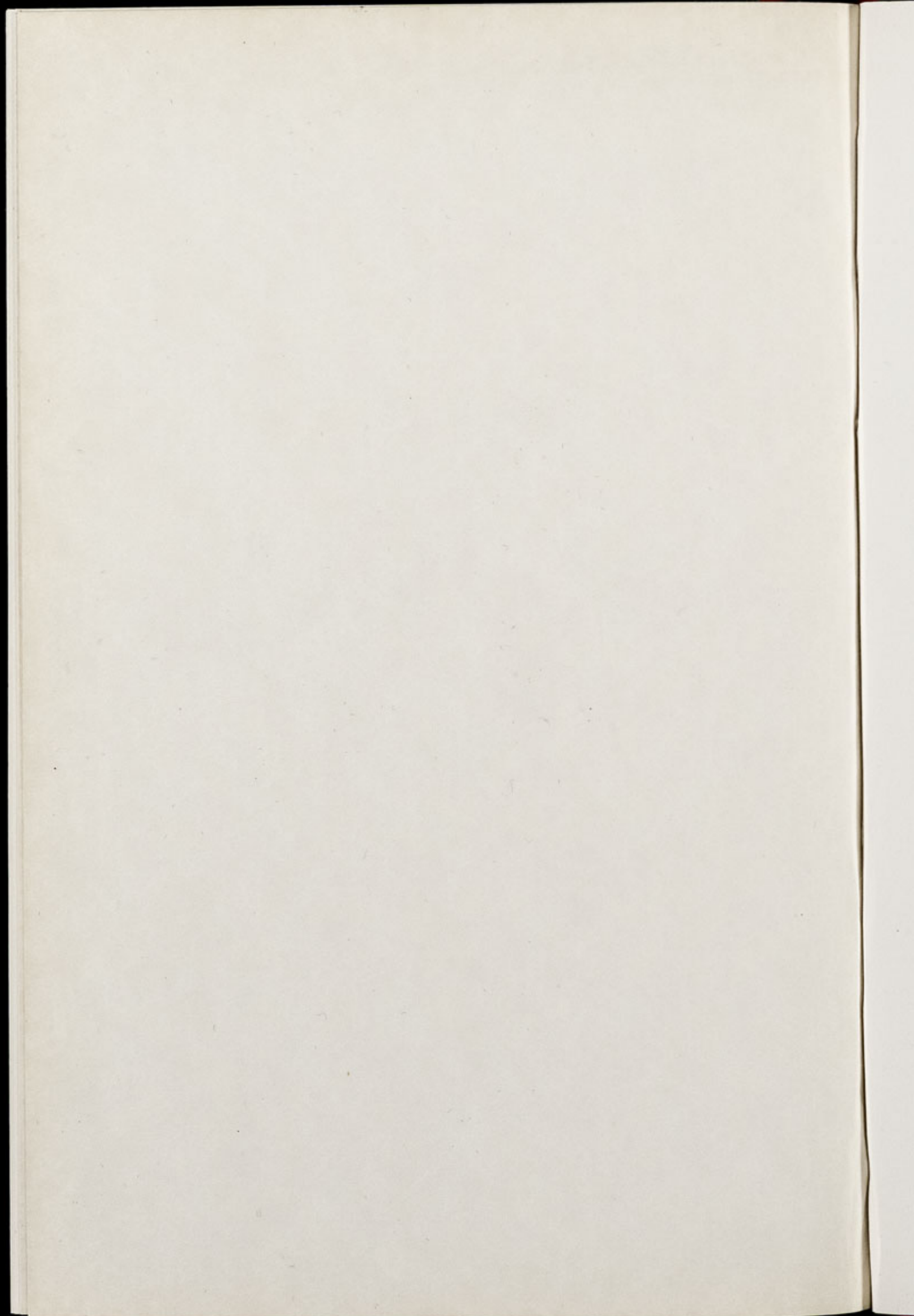


CHESTER ZOO NEWS

AND GUIDE

September 1975

Price 10p



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

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COVER

Common or Grey Herons (Ardea cinerea). Can be seen looking through the new Ape House window in the Big Flight.

By courtesy of J. Walker of the Daily Mirror

Annual subscription — One Pound and Seventy-Five Pence, postage paid
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GENERAL NEWS

Construction Work

When elephants are in "musk", i.e., in season, they can be dangerous, and owing to the fact that we have two bull-elephants we felt it necessary to erect a very strong enclosure so that when the animals are in this condition they can be confined as it is not safe for the keepers to go in with them.

To carry out this work it was necessary that the elephants should be restricted to an area to keep them from interfering with the workmen, and to prevent this we have erected a low-powered electric fence. Care had to be taken that the current was always on otherwise the elephants of course would soon destroy the fence. It is remarkable how sensitive the elephants are to these electric shocks, but this applies to practically all animals. This method of fencing is used universally for cattle, but with the elephants we have to make sure that the current is not only a little stronger but that the contact cannot easily be broken. When the electric fence was erected the elephants tested it with their trunks and, feeling a slight electric shock, one of them lifted up a foot trying the cord on its toe-nails. Fortunately, because this was something about which the animals knew nothing, they respected it and kept away from the fence, thus enabling work to continue with safety.

In the early days we used this electric fence to assist in confining the apes and orang-utans, but after a time we found that the orang-utans and the chimpanzees soon began to reason things out and would find some material to earth the live wire, making it quite safe to handle. One orang-utan in particular sat by the fence constantly bringing his hand on to the wire, pressing it to the ground and then tearing it away. We then tried a stainless steel wire in place of the cord and again the same thing happened, but because the orang-utan could not keep it down on the ground he shook it until it broke. Fortunately, we were able to use a stronger and thicker wire, and this has been successful ever since.

In our August issue we reported that two of our tigers had been drugged. One of the tigers was in a deep coma for several days and has now to all intents recovered, but it is not known what the long-term results will be. One of our leopards has subsequently been drugged, and has now recovered. Enquiries have



By courtesy of M. Grundy, N.U.J.

“NOBBY” EXPLORING THE ELECTRIC FENCE DESCRIBED ON PAGE TWO

not yet revealed the identity of the person or persons administering the drugs, and both incidents are being investigated thoroughly.

Visitors will be interested to know that the two young brown bears which were in Enclosure No. 67 near the south entrance and were photographed for our June 1975 issue, are now in the large den with the two older bears. The young ones have grown enormously since they were born in June.

ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

We have been presented with a male and female Dwarf Mongoose (*Helogale parvula*). This species has a wide distribution in Africa. At a distance it appears that the colour of the Dwarf Mongoose is dark brown, even blackish brown, but in effect it is speckled brown, the hairs dark buff, the longer hairs annulated brown and white, dark brown at the roots, but exhibiting a wide variety of shades and some colour phases. The snout is pink, the feet and tail darker than the body, the underparts slightly lighter; the soles of the feet are naked to the heel and it has a slit upper lip. The Dwarf Mongoose has five claws to each foot, which are long and sharp. Its hair is coarse. The overall measurement of this little animal is 1ft. 6in., its tail being 9in.; it has a height of about 3in. at the shoulder, and its weight is approximately 8oz.

The habitat of the *Helogale parvula* is the savannah, especially associated with anthills, fallen tree trunks, piles of boulders and rocky places. It is gregarious in habits, moving in compact parties of up to a dozen or more, feeding and moving during the day, taking cover when disturbed in termite or other holes in the ground, amongst rocks or in hollow trees, where they lie up at night. They are capable of entering surprisingly small spaces. These animals are unsuspecting and bold, very active and ceaselessly on the move in search of food, probing here and there with their muzzles whilst uttering bird-like "prips" or "pirrups". Their alarm call is a very high pitched "peep-peep", repeated as individuals poke their heads out of hiding places to survey the disturbance, or a "chuwee" or "chuchwee".

The diet of the Dwarf Mongoose consists of insects, scorpions, spiders, centipedes, myrio-pads, worms, reptiles, eggs, wild fruit and berries; they scratch in piles of debris, fallen leaves, etc., for

their food. Breeding is from October to December, and there are usually up to three at a birth which takes place in fallen logs, thick underbush or in holes. (Can be seen in the Small Mammal House.)

The following mammals have been bred in the zoo:

- 1 Chinchilla (*Chinchilla laniger*)
- 1 Blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*)
- 1 Red Lechwe (*Kobus leche*)

We have recently bred a female Blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*). Adult Blackbuck are smaller than the fallow deer, being only 4ft. long and about 3ft. tall at the shoulder. Their distribution is India from the Punjab, Kathiawar and Sind, eastwards to Bengal and southwards to Cape Comorin. They are to be found on plateaux in West India with the exception of the area close to the Himalayan mountains, hiding in bushes or among rocks. Forty to sixty are the more usual herds, but they do form herds of 8,000 to 10,000 animals during periods of drought and hunger.

Blackbuck are very fertile animals, maturing quickly and giving birth to a single calf. They are fierce, aggressive animals, even in captivity. In the mating period they are most aggressive, during which time there is a strong-smelling substance secreted from the glands under their eyes. The *Antilope cervicapra* have the shortest horns with the most open spiral in the cervicapra species. Only the males have horns.

Our stock consists of one male and two females from Dublin Zoo born in July 1973, and three males bred in the zoo, their dates of birth being July 15th, 1974, September 20th, 1974 and August 12th, 1975 respectively. As we reported in our August issue, the adult male Blackbuck has killed several of the females born in the zoo, i.e., one born in January 1974, one in February 1974 and one in June this year. The latest addition to the herd has been kept from the male parent but is now with the herd and appears to be thriving satisfactorily. The herd of Blackbuck can be seen in Enclosure No. 100.

The adult male has black, cream and light brown markings on its face, the upper surfaces of its body being black to dark brown. Its undersides are white, and its legs are brown and white. The white on its flanks continues to its undersides, the rump also being white in a distinct pattern. The top of its head, ears and back of



OUR MALE BLACKBUCK (*Antilope cervicapra*) *By courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.*

the neck are a light golden-brown. The eyes are brown, the mouth and chin white, and there is some white around the eyes; the throat is black. The young are a light golden-brown, with white undersides.

BIRD NOTES

The following birds have recently been bred in the zoo:

- 2 Lesser Snow Geese (*Anser coerulescens coerulescens*)
- 1.0 Red-sided Eclectus Parrot (*Lorius pectoralis*)
- 2 Sun Conures (*Aratinga solstitialis*)
- 1 Orange Weaver or Red Bishop (*Euplectes orix*)
- 2 Nanday or Black-headed Conures (*Nandayus nanday*)

The Red-sided Eclectus Parrot (*Lorius pectoralis*) originates from New Guinea and Australia. Its distribution is throughout the Kai and western Papual Islands, New Guinea and offshore islands, Trobriand Islands and D'Entrecasteaux and Louisiade Archipelagos; these parrots were introduced to the Goram Islands, Indonesia and Palau Islands in the Pacific.

This species inhabits lowland forests and, to some extent, savannah. They are conspicuous by their loud raucous cries and can occasionally be seen singly or in pairs resting in tall eucalyptus trees in open country.

Large flocks sometimes feed in fruit-laden trees. In flight the males precede the females; they are strong fliers—their flight is rather slow with full deliberate wing-beats and some brief periods of gliding. They are easily recognisable as the wings are not raised above the body level.

The *Lorius pectoralis* feed on fruits, nuts, seeds, berries and leaf-buds. Whilst feeding they emit a disyllabic, wailing cry or a mellow, flute-like "chu-wee . . . chu-wee", the latter being sometimes given in flight. In flight their call is, however, a harsh, screeching "krraach-krraak" repeated three or four times. They sometimes give a bell-like "chee-ong . . . chee-ong".

These birds nest in holes in the trunks of tall trees standing near the edge of the forest, or in a forest clearing. The nest is always built in a high inaccessible position. Wood chips line the bottom of the hole where the eggs are laid, the normal clutch being two.

The general plumage of the Red-sided Eclectus male parrot is

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. 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 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. 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
- } under construction

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.

yellow tinged with green; the central tail feathers are green tipped with pale yellow, the lateral ones blue tipped with pale yellow suffused on the outer webs with green; there is a little green on the outermost tail feathers. The plumage of the female is red, being brighter on the head and upper breast, but duller and more brownish on the back and wings. There is a narrow blue ring around the eyes. The abdomen, lower breast and band across the upper mantle is blue; there is more purple on the breast in some birds. The under-tail coverts are entirely red, the tail being red tipped with orange.

The distribution of the Sun Conure (*Aratinga solstitialis*) is The Guyanas, extreme south-eastern Venezuela and north-eastern Brazil in Roraima; northern Amazons and Para; probably north-western Amapa. The Sun Conure is recorded south of the Amazon River.

These birds frequent open forests, savannahs and palm groves, and are generally seen in large flocks when they feed on the ripening fruits of trees. They are noisy birds, their call-notes betraying their presence and their flight is swift and direct.

We reported in our last issue that we had bred a Sun Conure in the zoo, and we have since hatched two more, making a total of three. The Sun Conures feed on seeds, fruits, nuts, and berries. In captivity their call is a shrill, disyllabic screech repeated a number of times in rapid succession. Little is known of their nesting habits, but the hen does however incubate day and night, only leaving the nest briefly for periods of feeding; both parents feed the chicks. Young birds leave the nest about eight weeks after hatching.

The plumage of the adults in general is yellow. Some individuals are tinged with orange on the forehead, sides of the head, lower abdomen, rump and lower back; under-tail coverts are green tinged with yellow, the mantle, lesser and median, upper wing-coverts and under wing-coverts yellow—in some there are green markings. The secondary coverts are green, the outer web and primary coverts blue; primaries and secondaries green, the former becoming blue towards the tips; upper side of the tail is olive tipped blue, the undersides tipped with blue. The undersides of tail and flight feathers are olive-grey; the bill is grey, the iris dark brown, and the legs grey.



By courtesy of K. W. Creen, A.R.P.S.
SUN CONURES (*Aratinga solstitialis*) Adult in the foreground

Immature birds are marked with green on the crown, the upper back and scapulars green, slightly edged with yellow. The rump and lower back are tinged with red; upper tail coverts green with a yellow tinge. The throat is greenish, the breast and abdomen orange. The under-tail coverts are green margined with paler green. Lesser and median upper wing coverts are green edged with yellow. The bill is a paler grey.

The Red Bishop (*Euplectes orix*) originates from West Africa and, although it nests in the rank vegetation of swamps, it lives in relatively dry country. The *Euplectes orix* is one of a group of Quelas, being one of the brightest coloured of all the weavers.

In general these birds nest in reed beds and wet marshes. The nest, which the males build, is an oval shell woven from strips of grass suspended between upright reeds. There is an entrance at one side near the top of the nest. Breeding is generally precipitated by the rainy season; as soon as the nest is finished the birds are mated and the eggs are laid within the next few days. The males and females incubate during the day, but the females always incubate at night. The young are hatched in thirteen days, and they leave the nest in about another twelve days. Red Bishops are termite eaters, but large flocks often do harm to ripening grain, causing the farmer considerable expense in trying to keep them away from his crops.

Two Nanday Conures (*Nandayus nanday*) have been bred in the zoo. The distribution of these birds is south east Bolivia, southern Mato Grosso, Brazil, Paraguay, and northern Argentine in the provinces of Formosa, Chaco, and occasionally Sante Fe. They frequent savannahs and palmgroves, sometimes appearing in very large flocks. Their call is a raucous screeching "kree . . . ah . . ." in flight, but when perched they emit a shrill chatter.

The general plumage of the adult birds is green, paler and more yellowish on the underparts; the head is black, the throat and upper breast washed blue. The thighs are red, the rump, lower back and under wing-coverts yellowish-green. The outer webs of flight feathers are blue, the upper side of the tail olive-green tipped with blue; the undersides of flight and tail feathers are grey. The bill is black, the iris dark brown, and the legs a brownish-pink.

Immature birds are smaller than adults but generally less blue on the throat and upper breast. They have a shorter tail.

* * *

We have been presented with a pair of Moustached Parrakeets (*Psittacula alexandri fasciata*).

AQUARIUM NEWS

We have acquired the following fishes which are now in the tank with the Puffer Fish.

Powder-blue Tang or Surgeon Fish (*Acanthurus leucosternon*)

These fishes are named for their scalpel-like blade, actually a moveable spine at the base of the tail. This spine is directed forward so that a flip of the tail will bring it into play against an enemy. The "blade" appears at an early stage, even in the very young. Its colouration is variable being silver and transparent to the juvenile colour pattern in a short time. These fishes can be found over a wide geographical range.

Queen Trigger Fish (*Balistes vetula*)

The caudal fin of trigger fishes in general is used as a rudder. These fishes live on crustations, molluscs and echinoderms. They do well in the aquarium. Their colour is a bright yellow with bands of blue and black, but they have a wide colour variation and can change very quickly.

Rock Beauty (*Holocanthus tricolor*)

The young have variable colouration. The one in our aquarium is juvenile going to an adult colour phase, being at this time yellow with black flanks. These fishes grow to about 4in. in length.

Rose Creole (*Paranthias furcifer*)

This is an attractive rose-coloured fish with faint blue spots and stripes. It has a deeply forked tail.

Blue-spotted Grouper (*Cephalopholis argus*)

The background colour of these fishes changes from a muddy-brown to a deep purplish-black. The eyes have a brownish-red iris.

* * *

Clown Fish (*Amphiprion sebae*)

We have two new Clown Fishes for the Clown Tank, the colour sequence being orange and turquoise, with black stripes. We now have four species of the Clown Fishes in the Aquarium.

Thick-lipped Gouramis (*Colisa labiosa*)

We have recently bred a number of Thick-lipped Gouramis (*Colisa labiosa*). These fishes are natives of Burma, especially in the south. This species has much thicker lips than any of the other species of Gourami. Their eggs are cared for by the male in a typical bubble-nest, often not more than a thin layer among the floating vegetation.

Sea Horses (*Hippocampus species*)

We reported in our August issue that we had bred quite a number of Sea Horses and all these have now died. The Keeper of the Aquarium had noticed however, that in the show tank he had approximately six Sea Horses judged to be about six weeks old. They survived another two weeks when unfortunately they developed an eye disease and they too died. A week is usually the longest time Sea Horses live when bred in captivity. We are quite pleased that these youngsters lived so long.

REPTILE NEWS

Leopard Geckos (*Eublepharis macularis*)

In our August issue we reported that we had bred seven Leopard Geckos, having had seven hatchings out of eight eggs. We have had another five eggs and these have all hatched. At this time we have twelve young Geckos, and we are expecting another four from stock already bred.

* * *

Oklahoma Zoo have presented us with the following snakes:

- 3 Pigmy Rattlesnakes (*Sistrurus miliarius miliarius*)
- 2 Pigmy Rattlesnakes (*Sistrurus miliarius barbouri*)
- 2 Hatchling Corn Snakes (*Elaphe guttata guttata*)
- 2 Hatchling King Snakes (*Lampropeltis getulus floridana x brookside*)
- 1 Large Black Ratsnake (*Elaphe obsoleta obsoleta*)
- 1 Australian Children's Python (*Liasis childreni childreni*)

We have had an Australian Children's Python for two years, and the recent addition to the Vivarium will make up the pair.

* * *

We have received an African Soft-shelled Turtle (*Trionyx niloticus*). This is rather large, being 2½ft. long, weighing between 30 and 35 lbs. It is the largest Turtle we have ever had, and it is being housed with the False Gavials (*Tomistoma schlegeli*); it has settled in with them.

GARDENING NEWS

We have experienced the hottest and driest summer that one can remember. While we have all enjoyed the sunshine it has created problems for gardeners. It has meant almost continual watering of the beds and borders. How fortunate we are to have our own water supply. The biggest problem has been to keep our spring bedding plants growing which, during the summer months, are in our nursery. In spite of regular watering the heat has meant evaporation as fast as we could put the water on the flats. The results may well be rather smaller plants than we usually have. We are hoping for a soaking yet on our nursery. Writing this on 1st September, we can still have a good growing month in front of us.

With the dry weather and with regular watering our beds and borders have been exceptionally good, the colour has never been better. To mention a few of the plants that have really enjoyed the hot dry summer I will first refer to the Lantanas. Our border of this plant by the Elephant House has never been better both in growth and flower, and the standards used in various borders are like young trees. This plant is not often seen in gardens in this country, but it always creates a lot of interest from our visitors. It is a member of the Verbenaceae family and it is a native of South America. We have it in three colours, pink, red and yellow, and our method of growing is from cuttings taken during late August, over-wintered at a temperature of 45 degrees F. and planted out in June.

Our Canna Lilies have grown and flowered well. These plants really enjoy plenty of water. We have given it to them and the results have made it all worthwhile. All the Begonias used for

bedding purposes are excellent, having masses of flowers. Always rewarding these, which do well whatever the weather. Here again the combined hot days and copious supplies of water have paid dividends.

The Geraniums have also flowered well, without making too much growth which they are apt to do during a wet summer when they make a lot of foliage and not so much flower.

Gazanias and Mesembryanthemums are natives of South Africa, where they experience very dry hot conditions such as they have had with us this year. Their flowers close at night and how brilliant they are during the day with their flowers open. They are mostly grown in our rock gardens to give colour during the summer months. We grow them mostly from cuttings. The variety *splendens aurea* always attracts attention, it having variegated foliage with orange, black and white flowers.

Our Tropical House has really been tropical this year, and we have had an abundance of flowers on the Bougainvillaeas, Allamandas, Clerodendrons, Hibiscus, etc. The Hedychiums are in full flower now, and what a wonderful show they make with their large spikes of scented orangy-yellow flowers. This plant is commonly known as the Ginger Lilly as it belongs to the ginger family.

* * *

OBITUARY

It is with much regret that we record the death of Mr. Albert Edward Smith on 29th August, 1975. Mr. Smith became a Patron of the Society in 1951 and was subsequently elected to the Council. He was very generous and gave substantially to our Elephant Fund after the outbreak of anthrax, contributing also to our Library. We extend our deepest sympathy to his family.

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 £1.75, 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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