

# CHESTER ZOO NEWS AND GUIDE

April 1970

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CHESTER 300 NEWS

AND OTHER

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

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*COVER: Flamingoes, for further details see page 14.*

*By Courtesy of J. Whitworth*

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**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION SEVENTEEN SHILLINGS POSTAGE PAID**  
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### ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

We have been presented with a Senegal Bushbaby (*Galago senegalensis*) which can be seen in the Nocturnal House and a White-throated Capuchin Monkey (*Cebus capucina*) from South America which is on show in the Monkey House. A baby Sooty Mangabey (*Cercocebus torquatus*) was born recently in the Monkey House and is progressing well. These are dark grey monkeys found in forested areas in West and Central Africa.

The first of this year's Père David's fawns (*Elaphurus davidianus*), two females, are on show in enclosure No. 95. For the mother of one it was her first fawn and as several more does have reached maturity recently the breeding potential of the herd has almost doubled since last year. The latest additions bring the total number of our herd to 11 and make it probably the third largest in the world. Eleven may seem a very small figure but the latest statistics on the Père David's Deer, for the end of 1968, give a world population of only 542 animals. The majority of these are to be found at Woburn Abbey where, at the beginning of this century, the task of saving the species was undertaken. Since that time small herds have been established in zoos and parks all over the world and to enable a check to be kept on these a special studbook is kept which records all births, deaths and transfers of the Deer.

Other births were of a Soay Sheep, an Ankole calf and a Chimpanzee. The calf is easy to spot as it is predominantly white in colour and stands out very well from the rest of the brown Ankole herd. At birth it was rather weak and there were fears for its survival but the keeper kept it warm and within a few days progress was normal. The Chimpanzee was born to "Judy" but visitors will not be able to see them for some time.

A male Binturong (*Arctictis binturong*) has been acquired for our female and she has greeted him with interest. Binturongs have not been bred very often in captivity so we are hoping that this pair will prove compatible. Both are on show in the Mammal House, No. 84 on the plan.



PERE DAVID'S DEER AND FAWN

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

### BIRD NOTES

Recent presentations to the Society were one Mandarin and five Carolina Ducks.

A pair of White-throated Laughing Thrushes (*Garrulax albogularis*) have been released in the aviary containing the Black-necked Laughing Thrushes in the Tropical House. These are related species and very similar in shape though the latter has a slightly longer beak. White-throated Laughing Thrushes are found in the Himalayas at altitudes between 5,000 and 9,000 feet. Their plumage is predominantly brown apart from a white "bib" and an orange-brown colour on the underparts. They are noisy, gregarious birds which live in flocks in thick-forested areas, feeding on insects, moss and bark.

Other arrivals are a Scarlet Minivet (*Pericrocotus flammeus elegans*), a White-capped Redstart (*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*) and a Blue-winged Siva (*Siva cyanuroptera*), all of which have been released in the soft-bill aviary in the Parrot House.

Scarlet Minivets are brightly coloured birds found in forests in the Himalayas. The male is the more striking of the pair with bright scarlet and black plumage while the female is dark brown and yellow. In the wild their staple diet is insects and these they catch high in the trees.

Blue-winged Sivas and White-capped Redstarts are also found in the Himalayas. The Siva has a blue-grey body with richer blue wings and tail and is found usually below 8,000 feet. The White-capped Redstart is always found near streams and rivers and frequently at very high altitudes—13,000 feet and over. It has a black body with a rich chestnut tail and white crown to the head. The tail is bobbed in typical Redstart fashion.

Three Umbrella or White-crested Cockatoos (*Kakatoe alba*) are on show in the Parrot House. These are white birds with a powder-blue circle around each eye and a crest of long white feathers on the head which can be held either flat or erect.



SOOTY MANGABEY

*E. Kirkland, F.R.P.S.*

In the breeding aviaries, No. 53 on the plan, there are some new Stanley Parrakeets (*Platycercus icterotis*) and Barraband Parrakeets (*Polytelis swainsoni*). Both species are found in Australia.

For a second year we have bred Louisiade Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematod aberrans*). A single chick has emerged from the nest box and is being fed by the parents. We bred this species we believe for the first time in the British Isles last year and are especially pleased as this is an early chick and the pair may nest again.

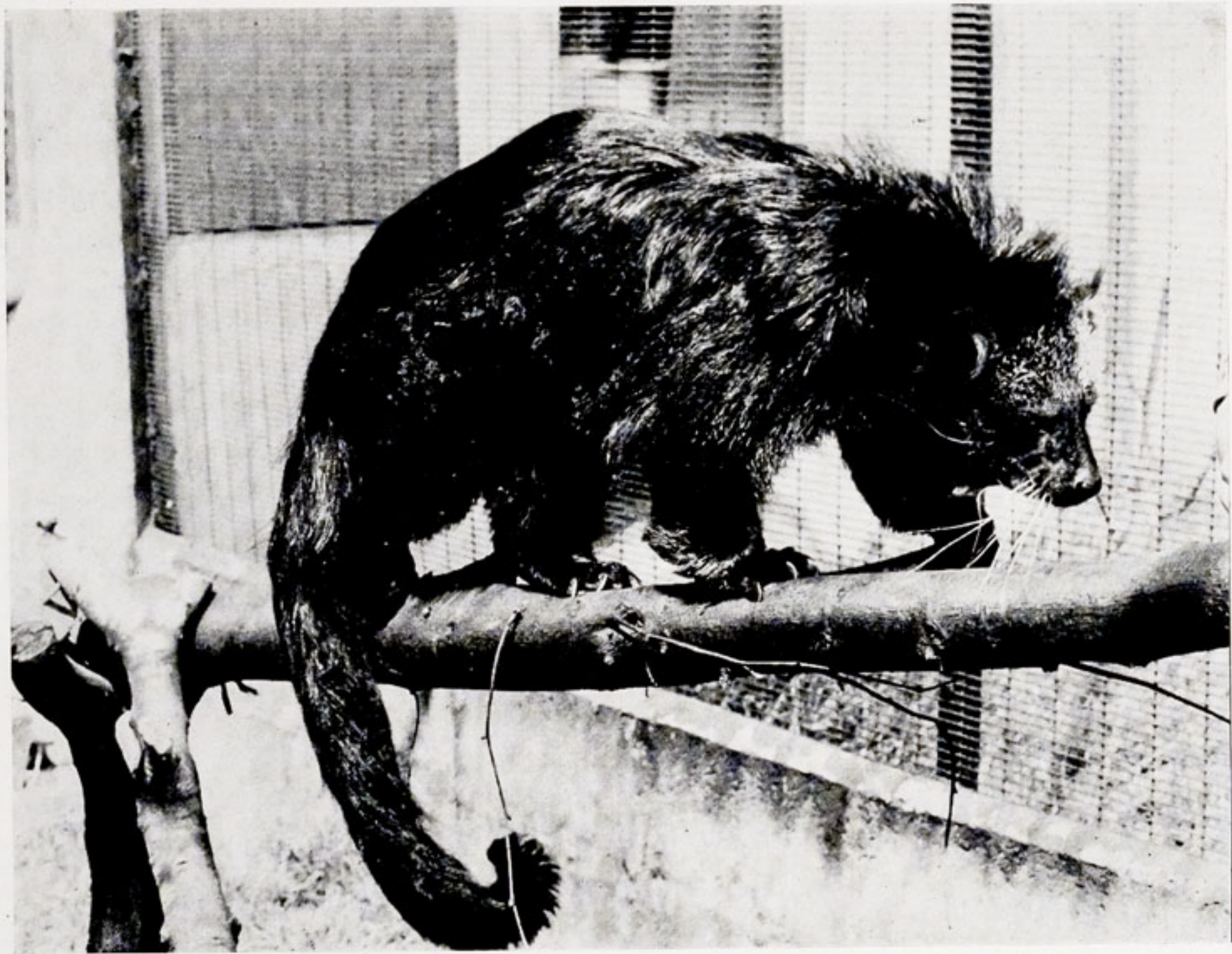
Cattle Egrets, Pond Herons, Grey-winged Trumpeters and Javan Grey-headed Gallinules are now on show in the new flight aviary. The Gallinules were acquired recently and resemble giant Moorhens, a species to which they are related. They have bluish-purple plumage on the body and wings, grey heads and coral pink beaks. A third Pond Heron has also been acquired but as this like the other two is juvenile we will not be able to ascertain to which species it belongs until it attains adult plumage.

The Great Eagle Owl chicks have hatched but it will be a few weeks before the public are able to see them. At the moment the mother is feeding them behind a log in the aviary while the male bird sits on guard, allowing not even the keepers to approach the nest.

### REPTILE NEWS

The most interesting news from the Reptile House is that two of the three Gaboon Vipers (*Bitis gabonica rhinoceros*) we acquired in December have produced young.

Six of the young have been exchanged for a Boomslang or Tree Snake (*Dispholidus typus*) which originates from Africa and belongs to the group of snakes classed as "rear-fanged". These have poisonous fangs positioned towards the back of the upper jaw and though most of the snakes in this group are not considered dangerous to man there are exceptions, of which the Boomslang is one.



BINTURONG

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

# GUIDE TO ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

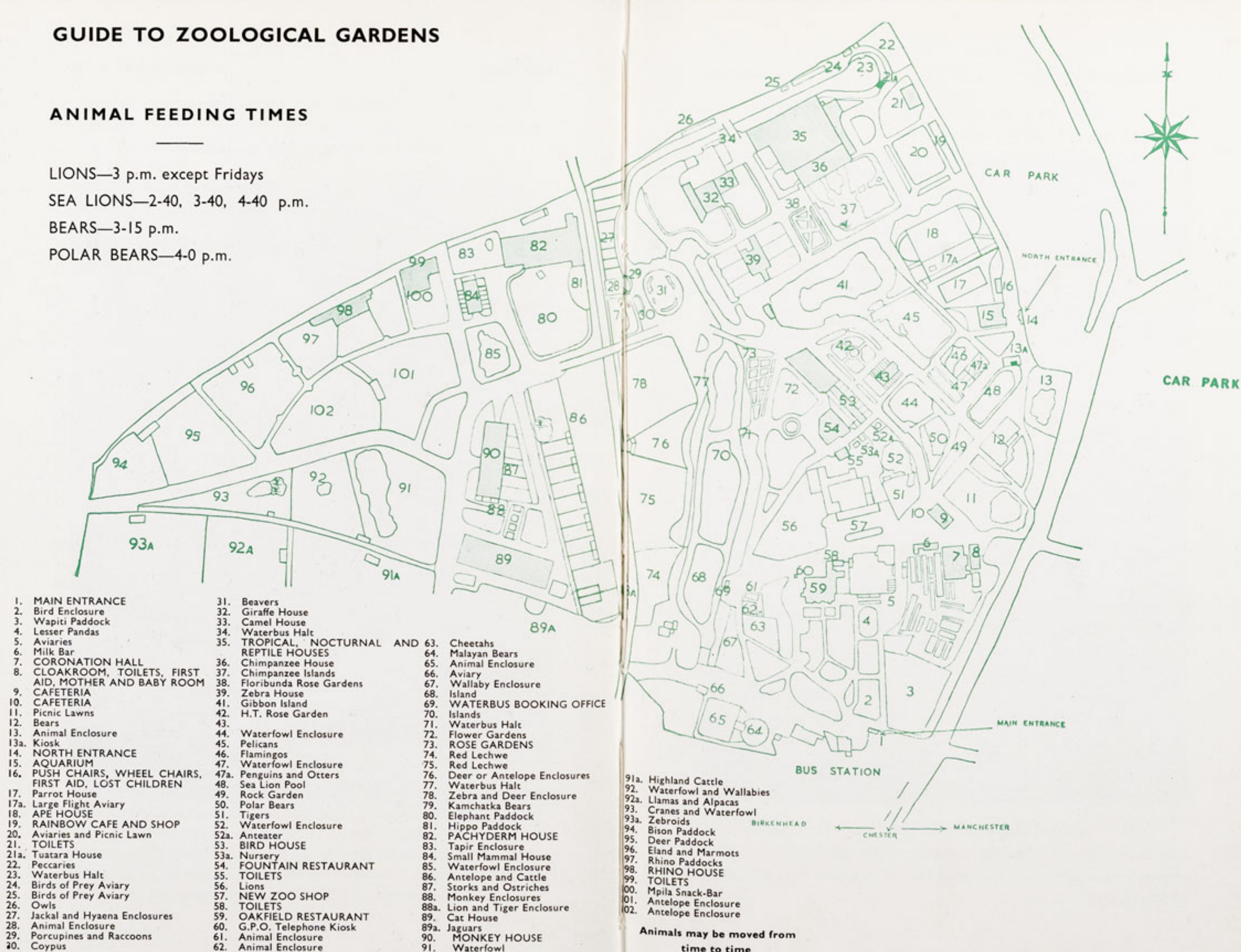
## ANIMAL FEEDING TIMES

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, MOTHER AND BABY ROOM
9. CAFETERIA
10. CAFETERIA
11. Picnic Lawns
12. Bears
13. Animal Enclosure
- 13a. Kiosk
14. NORTH ENTRANCE
15. AQUARIUM
16. PUSH CHAIRS, WHEEL CHAIRS, FIRST AID, LOST CHILDREN
17. Parrot House
- 17a. Large Flight Aviary
18. APE HOUSE
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 Hyena Enclosures
28. Animal Enclosure
29. Porcupines and Raccoons
30. Coypus

31. Beavers
32. Giraffe House
33. Camel House
34. Waterbus Halt
35. TROPICAL, NOCTURNAL AND REPTILE HOUSES
36. Chimpanzee House
37. Chimpanzee Islands
38. Floribunda Rose Gardens
39. Zebra House
41. Gibbon Island
42. H.T. Rose Garden
- 43.
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. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 52a. Anteater
53. BIRD HOUSE
- 53a. Nursery
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. Red Lechwe
75. Red Lechwe
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. Storks and Ostriches
88. Monkey Enclosures
- 88a. Lion and Tiger Enclosure
89. Cat House
- 89a. Jaguars
90. MONKEY HOUSE
91. Waterfowl

- 91a. Highland Cattle
92. Waterfowl and Wallabies
- 92a. Llamas and Alpacas
93. Cranes and Waterfowl
- 93a. Zebroids
94. Bison Paddock
95. Deer Paddock
96. Eland and Marmots
97. Rhino Paddocks
98. RHINO HOUSE
99. TOILETS
100. Mpila Snack-Bar
101. Antelope Enclosure
102. Antelope Enclosure

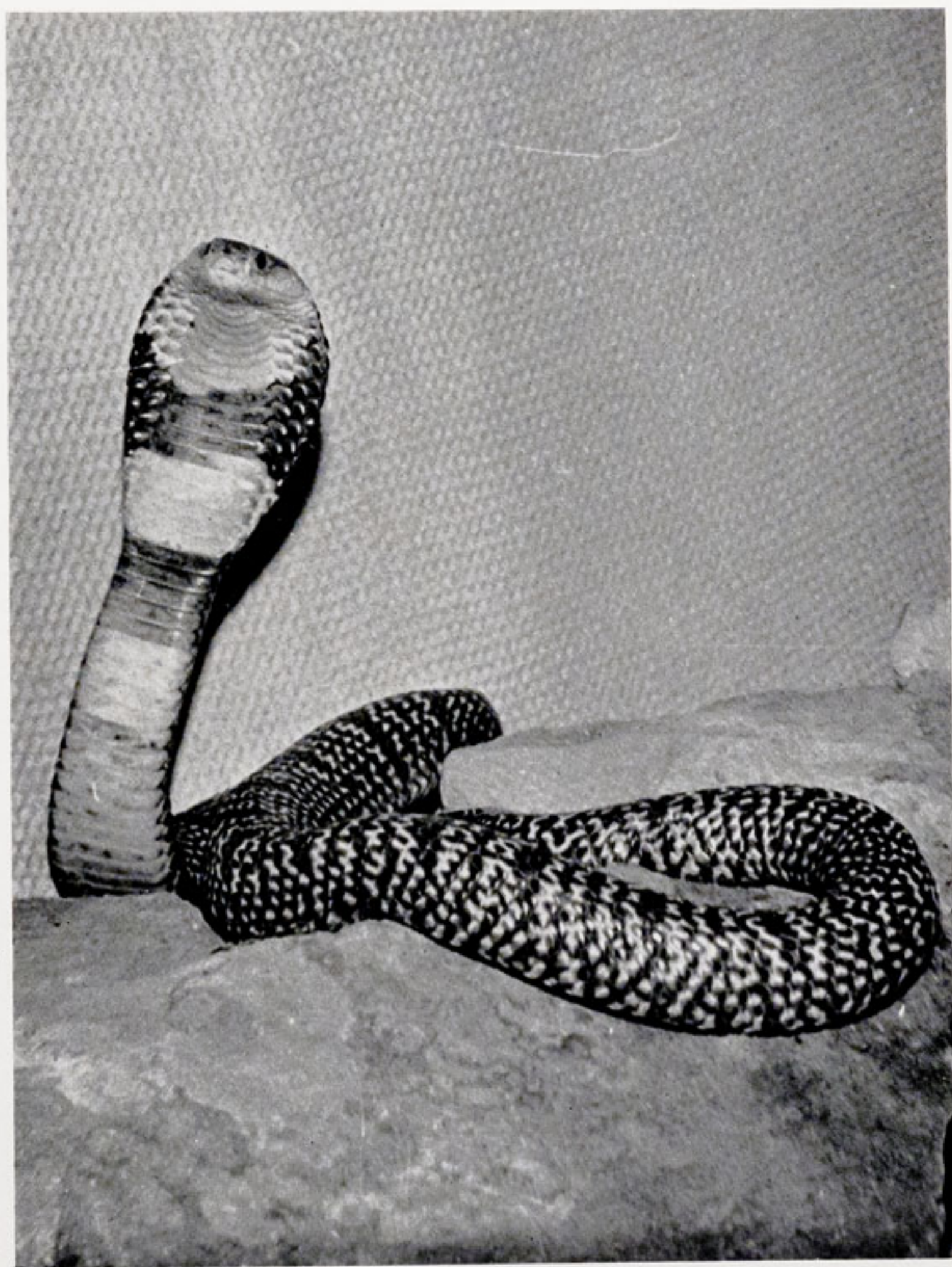
Animals may be moved from time to time

A few years ago it was widely believed that the venom from this snake was not highly poisonous. Then in 1957 a herpetologist named Karl Schmidt was bitten by a Boomslang. As the snake was a juvenile and only one fang had penetrated deeply he did not consider the bite to be serious and commenced to write a first-hand account of the symptoms. However, his condition worsened progressively and he died the following day on the way to hospital, just 24 hours after being bitten. Boomslang venom is now recognised as being extremely toxic, possibly more so than that of Cobras and Mambas and it is fortunate that the snake is usually fairly placid.

It has a slender body and can attain a length of 6 feet though average specimens measure about 4½ feet. The head is small with comparatively large eyes and when angry the snake is able to inflate its neck. In colour Boomslangs range from bright green to dark brown, the female usually being brown. The snake we have acquired is brownish-yellow in colour and can be seen in the Mamba vivarium.

More young Gaboon Vipers will be exchanged for a Black-necked or "Spitting" Cobra (*Naja nigricollis*), so named for its ability to spit venom at its enemies. The venom emerges as a fine spray which is harmless if it falls on unbroken skin. However, the Cobra usually aims for the face of its opponent and if the venom enters the eyes it causes temporary blindness. This is a defensive action which allows the snake to escape while its antagonist is incapacitated. On the other hand the venom is as deadly as that of all Cobras and if it penetrates an open wound and enters the bloodstream, it can be fatal. The Spitting Cobra is found in Africa, where it is primarily a nocturnal snake.

Twelve young Rainbow Boas have been exchanged for a Rhinoceros Iguana (*Cyclura cornuta*) which has joined the three already in the collection. It is possible that we now have two pairs of this species.



SPITTING COBRA

*J. Whitworth*

### AQUARIUM NEWS

We have not included any Aquarium News in the magazine for some time and although we have acquired no new species since the last report we have restocked the following fish:

- Sea Horses
- Scorpion Fish
- Discus
- Metynnis
- Scats
- Monodactyls
- Kissing Gouramis
- Tomato Clown
- Common Clown
- Various Damsel Fish

In addition we were presented with 3 Marbled Cichlids, a species from South America, and are awaiting the arrival of 6 young Arowanas (*Osteoglossum bicirrhosum*). This rather ferocious species also from South America was first exhibited at the Zoo in 1964 and our present stock is one adult.

A Marine Turtle which had been at the Aquarium for some years and had grown to a length of almost four feet, too large for any of our tanks, was sent to Torquay where they have suitable accommodation. We now have 6 baby Marine Turtles which will be on show fairly soon. At present they are so small and light, barely 4in. long, that they float and can only paddle about on the surface of their tank.

The Axolotls have produced over 500 young which are in a large nursery tank and not on show to the public. Spawning is expected to take place again very shortly.



PELICANS

*S. L. Hobden*

### GENERAL NEWS

After the rather bleak beginning to the spring, a few warm days brought the trees into leaf almost overnight and in all parts of the Zoo the flowers and blossom are a blaze of colour. The annual broods of Mallard and Moorhen chicks can be seen paddling about in the ponds and scuttling across the paths and gardens. The first House Martins have started to build their plastered mud nests under the eaves and can be seen circling the buildings in their familiar dipping twisting flight. Other birds to look out for in and around the grounds are Yellowhammer, Wheatear, Spotted Flycatcher, Swallow, Pied and Yellow Wagtail, Tree Creeper, Lapwing, Skylark, Goldfinch, Kestrel and possibly Grasshopper Warbler, one of which was observed in a nearby garden.

The lake surrounding Gibbon Island is to be stocked with wildfowl and to prevent the birds from swimming off into other parts of the Zoo, we have placed a wire barrier across one end of the lake. In addition a low sandstone wall has been built along the stretch of bank near to the Temperate Bird House and on the opposite side of the lake we have erected a fence. The first birds to be moved there are four Chinese Geese and the Pelicans which were formerly in enclosure No. 45 on the plan. The Flamingoes will be transferred shortly from their present enclosure to the one which the Pelicans have vacated.

The Arabian Gazelles have been brought out from their winter quarters and now occupy enclosures No. 86 near to the Monkey House.

Two big attractions this summer will no doubt be the Bear and Jaguar cubs. The female Jaguar and her two cubs, which at the time of writing are about ten weeks old, can be seen in enclosure 89a. The Bear cubs are a little older and at a highly playful and adventurous age which results in some very amusing antics. They can be seen with their mother in the Kamchatka Bear enclosure, No. 79, where they are allowed outside on days when the other Bears are in the dens.



ARABIAN GAZELLE

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

The young male Lion we acquired from Sweden has been successfully introduced to the four females in the main Lion Enclosure near the Oakfield Restaurant. The manoeuvre was not so difficult as Zoo staff had feared and after the first inevitable scuffles they seem to have settled down very well. The females were introduced into his enclosure singly at intervals of one or two days, the one which had appeared most aggressive towards him being kept until last.

We are sorry to report the death of one of the oldest inhabitants of the Zoo — a Grant's Zebra named "Lucy". Lucy had been at the Zoo for 20 years and was believed to be about 4 years old when she arrived. 28 years is the recorded longevity for a Zebra so Lucy certainly lived to a ripe old age.





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