



Chester Zoo News

AND GUIDE

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

November 1976

Price 12p



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

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COVER

Rock Hyrax

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

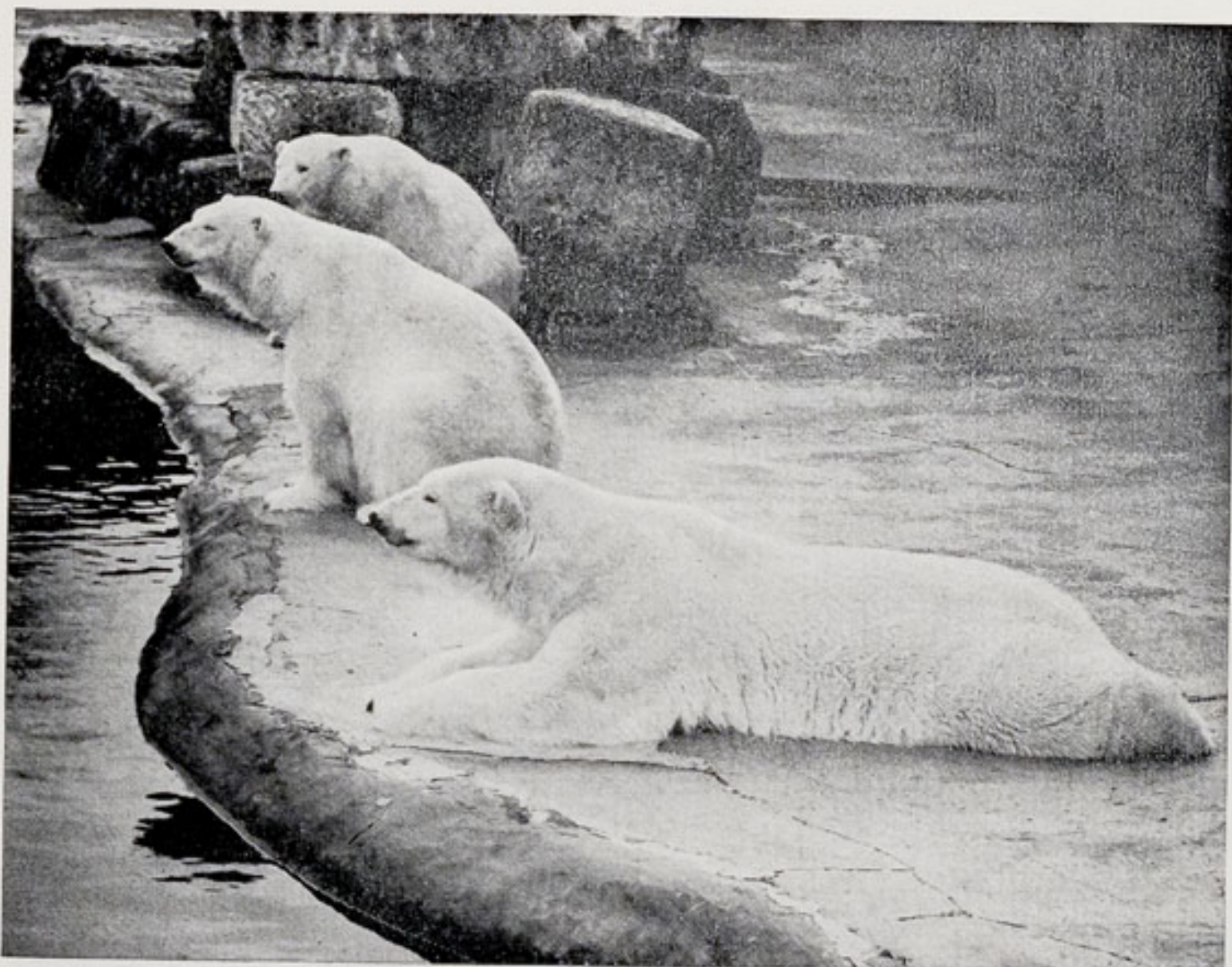
Annual subscription — Two Pounds Twenty-four pence, postage paid
Telephone Chester 20106/7/8

GENERAL NEWS

In October two female Reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*) were purchased for the collection. "Tay," about 1½ years old, and "Rainbow" two years old, are in Enclosure 103 with our male who was about two years old when he came to us in October 1974. The females are wearing the traditional bell collars. The rutting season is in October, and most calves are born in May and June. We are hopeful that we shall be able to breed successfully from them. In parks reindeer find their own basic food, even under snow, and do not require shelter. Our animals however are kept on specially prepared gravel and hardcore paddocks, grassland being too rich for them. Their enclosure contains a substantial shelter and a special diet is fed to the animals twice a day. Willow branches are given to them two or three times a week, but no hay.

We have been most disturbed to find that several young wallabies have been savaged and killed by dogs which have entered the zoo at night. For the time being the young have been put in an inside enclosure near the reindeer (Enclosure 103). The dogs do not seem to attack adult wallabies.

Regular visitors to the zoo will be sorry to hear that Polar Bear "Rubble" died a few weeks ago. He was born in June 1950, and came to us from the Zoo Centre, Brussels in December of that year. He was therefore rather elderly when he died. In the late summer it was observed that "Rubble" had quite suddenly lost a lot of weight. He was then examined by the vet. who discovered that a large tooth was in bad condition and had made the animal's mouth sore so that he could not eat. The tooth was extracted, but "Rubble" must have been at the end of his time and died on the 29th September. He has sired many cubs and has been a great asset to the zoo.



By courtesy of E. Kirkland, F.R.P.S.

POLAR BEARS "RACK", "RUIN" AND "RUBBLE"

Orang-utan "Sibu" and Chimp "Digby" can be seen almost daily in the nursery in the Monkey House. They continue to grow in strength and ingenuity, and are most entertaining to watch.

Twin Lemurs (*Lemur catta*), born in May this year, are in separate enclosures in the Monkey House along with their parents, "Coata" and "Abi." We named the twins "Dandelion" and "Burdock." They have become extremely agile and are interesting to see.

A Common Leopard Cub (*Panthera pardus*), is being hand-reared by the wife of Mr. W. H. Timmis, the Curator of Mammals and Birds. Its mother is apparently in the habit of killing off all her young, but the keepers were able to rescue this one, and it will be interesting to see how the animal progresses. At this time the youngster has started to eat solids in the form of meat and chicken and is gaining weight all the time.

ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

Recent breedings which have occurred in the zoo are as follows:

- 2 Formosan Sika Deer (*Cervus nippon taiouanus*)
- 3 Puma Cubs (*Felis concolor*)
- 1 Jaguar (*Panthera onca*)
- 1 Alpaca (*Lama pacos*)
- 1 Arabian Gazelle (*Gazella arabica*)

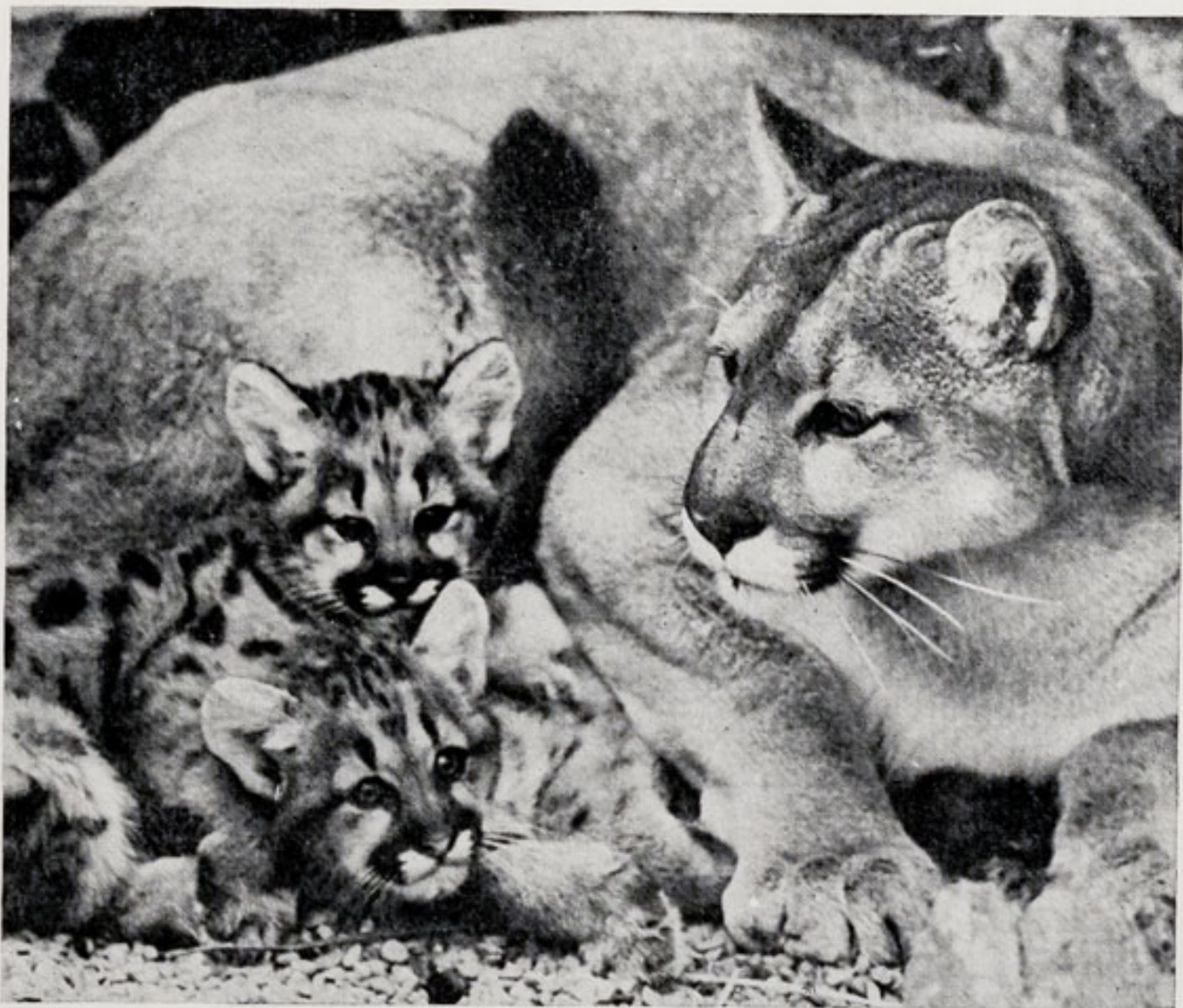
The two Formosan Sika Deer are from two females which were already pregnant when they arrived at the zoo in April this year. They have not yet been sexed, but we are hoping for a pair. Formosan Sika Deer are endangered in the wild, but many herds have been established in zoos and private collections. Our animals can be seen in Paddock 77 next to the Red Lechwe. These deer originally existed on the Island of Formosa in the high range of mountains interwoven with forest and covered in snow all the year round. There may be a few which still inhabit the mountainous southern part of the Island. Some, however, are reared on Green Island and are kept mainly for the medicinal properties of their antlers.

Formosan Sika Deer closely resemble the common Sika, except that the coat of the latter is unspotted in the winter, and the coat of the Formosan Sika distinctly spotted. Adult animals measure about 2ft. 11in. at the shoulder. The general colour of this deer in the summer is light chestnut with large white spots, the hind part of the neck having a deep red tinge.

* * *

The following mammals have been presented to us during the last month:

- 4.4 African Tree or Thicket Rats (*Grammomys surdaster*)
- 1.0 Rock Hyrax (*Procavia capensis*)
- 4.4 Spiny Mice (*Acomys cahirinus*)



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

PUMA CUBS (*Felis concolor*) WITH THEIR MOTHER

The habitat of the African Tree or Thicket Rat is the forests of the Congo Basin. Young can be seen most frequently between April and September and litters consist of two, three or four. The gestation period is about 24 days. *Grammomys surdaster* litter constantly.

* * *

Rock Hyraxes have a wide distribution throughout Africa, ranging from equatorial regions to the Cape, and through Sinai, Israel, Syria and Arabia. They inhabit rocky outcrops and mountain slopes from sea level to 15,000ft.

In general appearance this species is similar to the Guinea Pig; it also has been likened to the Elephant because of the large bulge of the anterior maxillary skull, the posterior position of the bones of

the cheek, the character and the position of the teeth (the molars being heavy and hypsodont), and the closeness of the four toes. The species has however been classified into a separate group, *i.e.*, near the ungulates.

Rock Hyraxes are extremely agile, being able to climb high and steep ledges without difficulty. This is made possible by the fact that these animals can contract the centres of their built-up paws thus creating a vacuum; their paws are always clammy, and the resulting suction enables them to cling to rock faces.

Procavia are recognised by the rounder head and short muzzle. In their natural habitat the weight of the males is about 8lbs., but in captivity approximately 3/5lbs., *i.e.*, about the size of a large rabbit. The females are slightly smaller in size and weight.

The fur of the Rock Hyrax is quite coarse and a small, elongated glandular patch can be seen in the centre of its back. This is surrounded by a fringe of longer hairs, and when the animal becomes agitated the hairs stand on end and the gland is exposed. Its muzzle is pointed and delicately split; the ears are small and round-standing.

Living in colonies varying from six to several dozen individuals Rock Hyraxes are preyed upon by Leopards, Caracals, mongooses and eagles. Fortunately however the males have a savage bite and can be extremely fierce when facing an enemy. They do not live in isolated holes, holes facing the prevailing wind or those large enough to allow a predator to enter. When coming out of their holes a large old animal leads them out, often in single file.

Procavia capensis have a shrill call, unlike that of any other animal, which can be heard in the early part of the morning and in the late evening. Their main feeding periods are also at these times. Nervous, quick and darting in action, they are also sharp-sighted and keen of hearing. Their quick apprehension extends to anything unusual. They are not often to be found far from shelter.

Hyraxes feed on sedges, herbs and tree leaves, but mostly on grasses. They appear to run in communities and squat or lie together in groups on open rocky places. These animals are inclined to be quarrelsome amongst themselves, but are not aggressive towards other mammals. Full-grown adults sometimes inflict fatal injuries upon the young ones.

Prominent hairs can be seen about the eyes and the rump, and there is a mere suggestion of a tail. The feet have pads, and these extend to the toes; there is a distinct elephant indication in the broad short nails of all the digits except the inner one on the hind foot which has a long curved claw. On the forefoot the fifth toe is present but the first is embryonic while on the hindfoot the fifth is embryonic and the first absent.

Owing to its rather poor anatomical constitution which does not allow it to live long in captivity, the Rock Hyrax is not often included in zoological collections. See front cover for photograph.

* * *

Cairo Spiny Mice, although perhaps quite common, are worth a mention. The species has a distribution in southern Asia and Africa.

These tiny mammals were first named from those found in the Cairo district at the beginning of the 19th Century. They have however since been found to have a wide range which extends from India through southwest Asia and to much of Africa. Spiny Mice live in woodland and undergrowth, being terrestrial and nocturnal. They are protected by their soft hairs which have sharp prickles. There is a charming photograph of the Spiny Mice on page 11.

BIRD NOTES

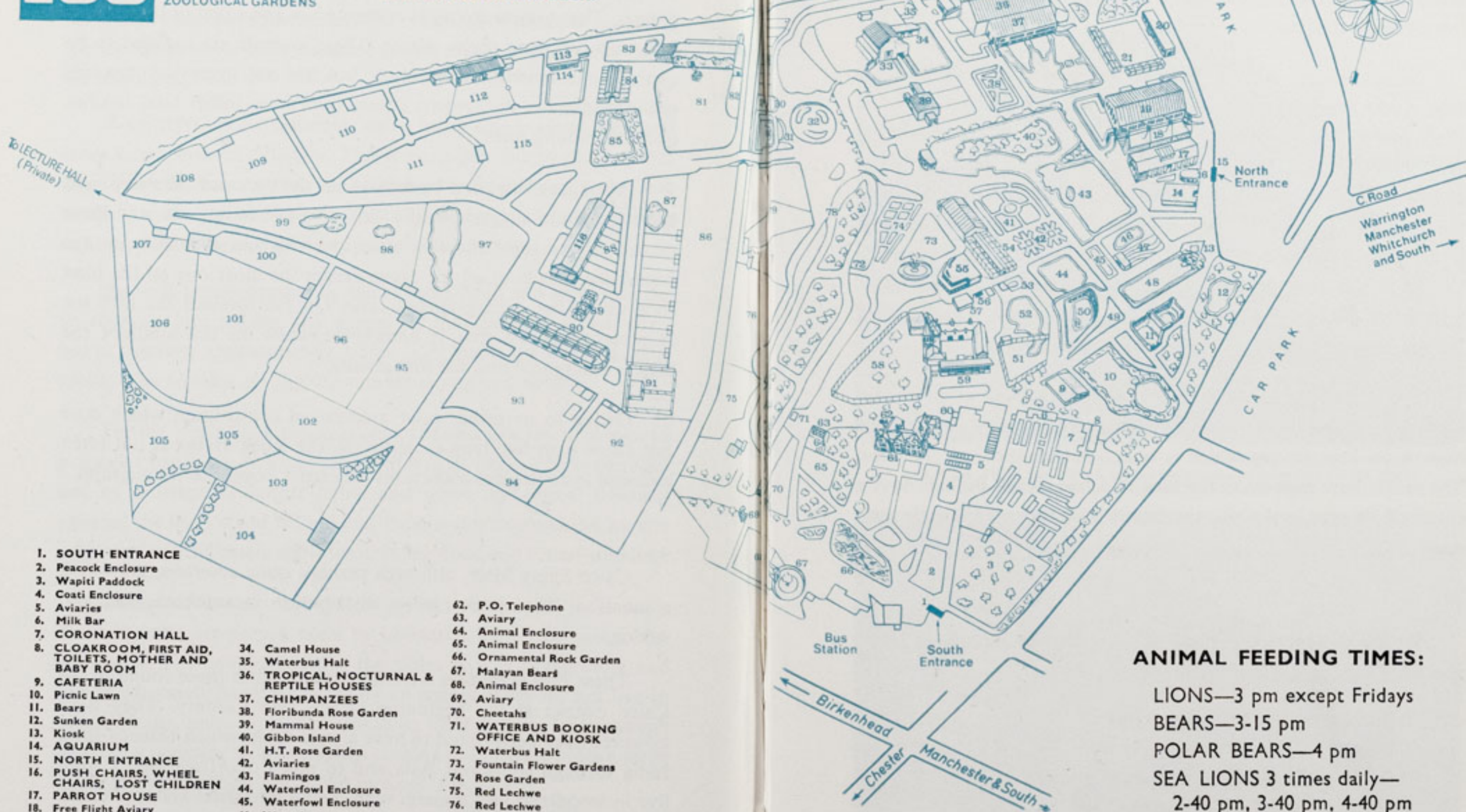
In our last issue of the magazine we reported the breeding of a

CHESTER ZOO

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

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.

**Chester Zoo is Open Daily
from 9.00 a.m. until dusk.**



1. SOUTH ENTRANCE

2. Peacock Enclosure
3. Wapiti Paddock
4. Coati Enclosure
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. Picnic Lawn
21. Aviaries
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 & 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. Aviary
64. Animal Enclosure
65. Animal Enclosure
66. Ornamental Rock Garden
67. Malayan Bears
68. Animal Enclosure
69. Aviary
70. Cheetahs
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. Big Cat Enclosures

92. Antelope and Cattle
93. Antelope Enclosure
94. Antelope Enclosure
95. Zebras
96. Zebras
97. Waterfowl Enclosure
98. Waterfowl Enclosure
99. Waterfowl Enclosure
100. Blackbuck
101. Wallabies
102. Animal Enclosure
103. Wallabies
104. Pere David's Deer Paddock.

105. Llamas
- 105a. Llamas
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

Black Bulbul (*Hypsipetes madagascariensis*), and we now include a few notes on this species.

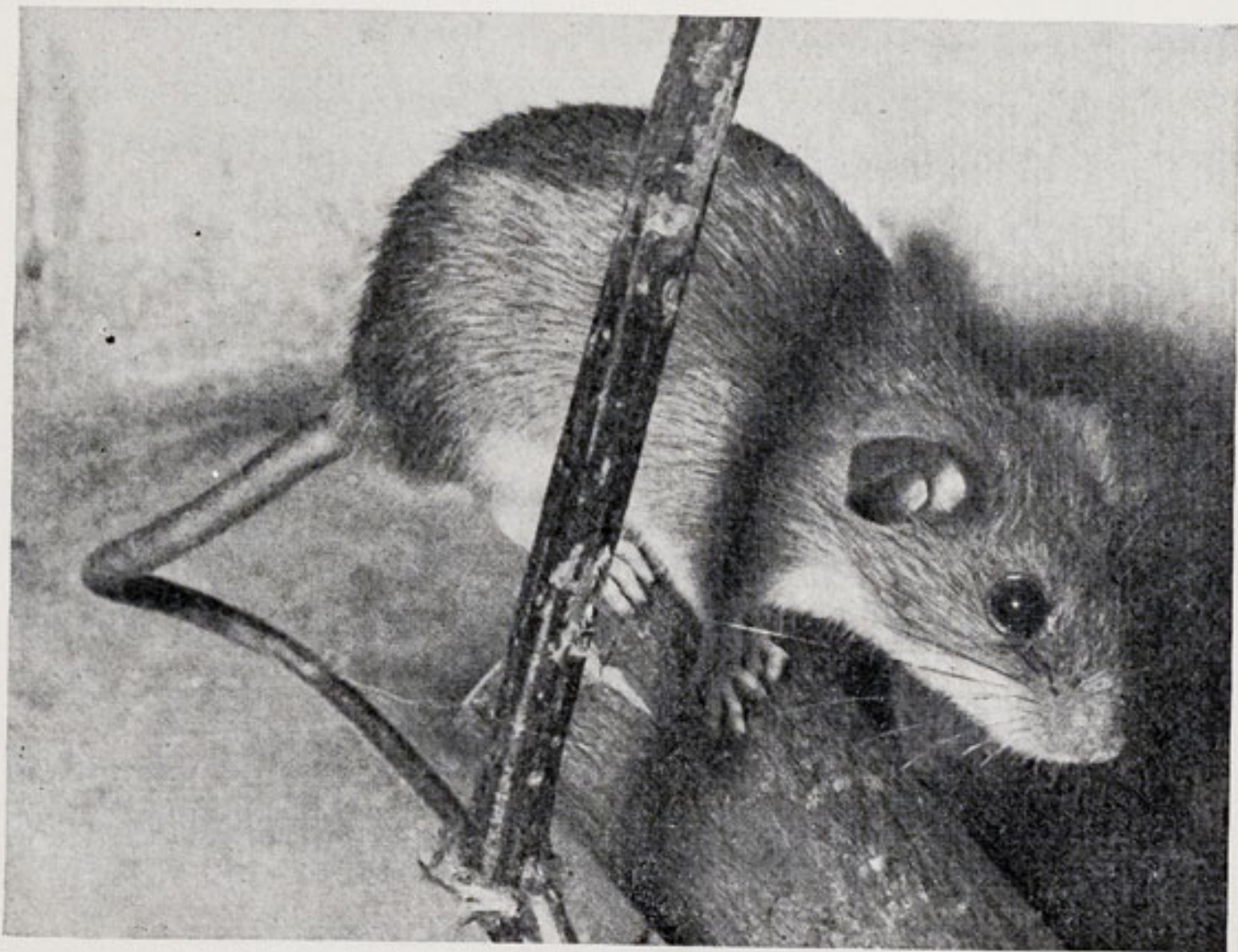
Its distribution is from India to Japan, and its habitat is the high forest trees. April to June is the breeding season, when the Black Bulbul is to be found in parties, and in large flocks of as many as 100 individuals. This bulbul however, has weak feet and is not able to climb or hop about from branch to branch, keeping mostly to the tree tops. The parties' whereabouts are easily revealed as these birds are very noisy and bold. Their call is a long, nasal sounding "weenk," and they have an attractive whistle-like "whew-whe." This latter is often preceded by a "squeaky-squeaky" call. Black Bubluls feed on berries of various shrubs and trees.

The nest of the Black Bulbul is a neat cup built up of coarse-bladed grass, dry leaves and moss. Grass stems or pine needles, and moss roots line the cup which is bound outside with spiders' webs. The nest is built high up in the fork of a tree. Black Bubluls have a clutch of 3/4 eggs, and whilst the female is on the nest the male stays near.

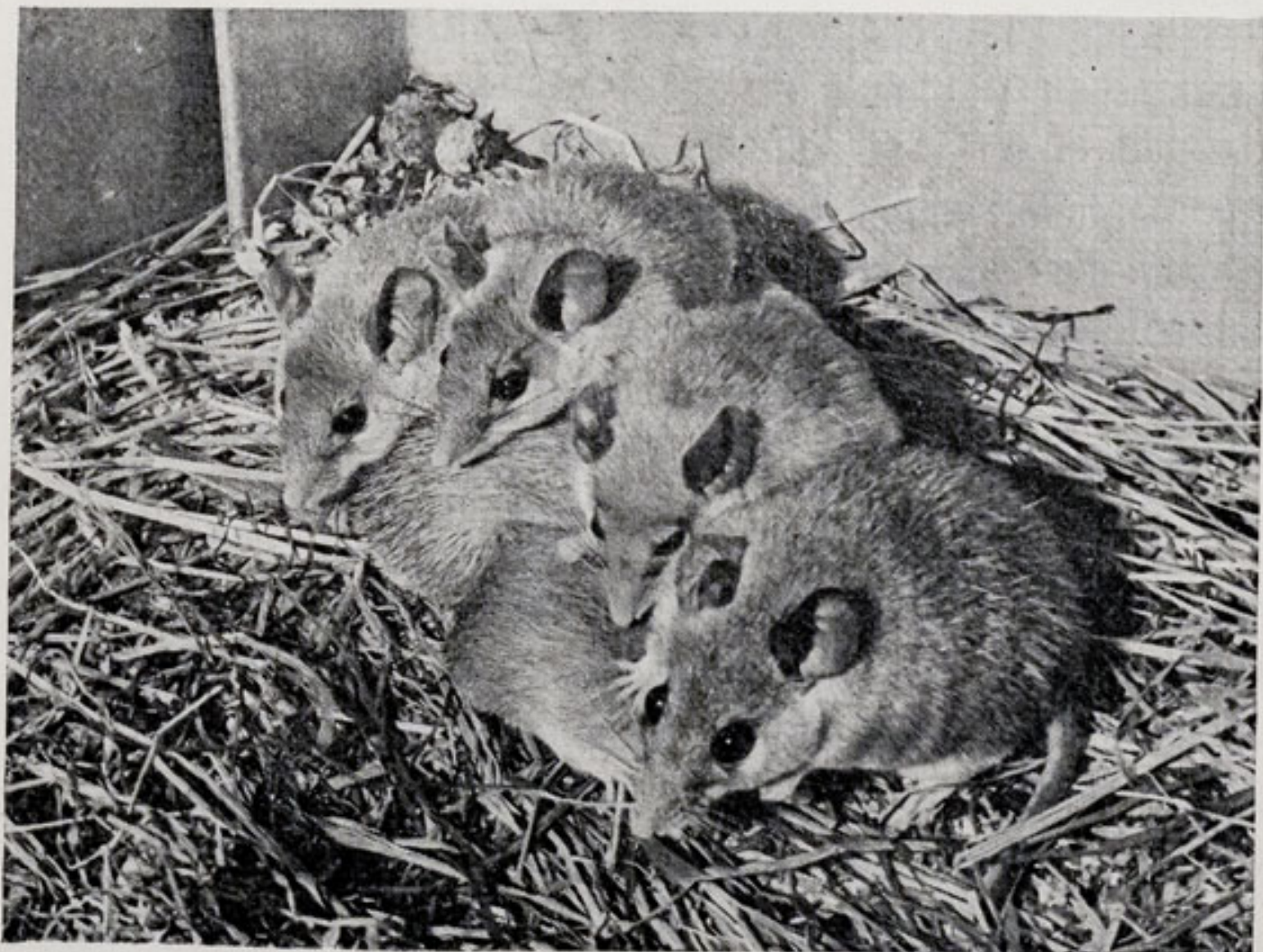
* * *

We are pleased to report the following list of birds bred in the zoo since our last issue of the magazine:

- 2 Red Jungle Fowl (*Gallus gallus*)
- 3 Peacocks (*Pavo cristatus*)
- 10 Common Guinea Fowl (*Numida meleagris*)
- 1 Gadwall Duck (*Anas strepera*)
- 3 Common (or Chinese) Ring-necked Pheasants (*Phasianus*
- 2 Jungle Mynahs (*Aethiopsar fuscus*) *colchicus*
- 4 Jerdon's Starlings (*Sturnus burmanicus*)
- 1 Black-throated Laughing Thrush (*Garrulax chinensis*)
- 5 Guinea Parrotlets (*Forpus p. passerinus*) *lochmius*
- 1 Crimson-bellied Conure (*Pyrrhura rhodogaster*)



By courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.
AFRICAN TREE OR THICKET RAT (*Grammomys surdaster*) TO BE SEEN
IN ENCLOSURE 36 (NOCTURNAL HOUSE)



By courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.
CAIRO SPINY MICE (*Acomys cahirinus*) ENCLOSURE 36 (NOCTURNAL HOUSE)

BIRD NOTES --cont'd.

- 1 Orange Weaver (or Red Bishop) (*Euplectes orix*)
- 3 Java Sparrows (*Padda oryzivora*)
- 1 Bank Mynah (*Acridotheres ginginianus*)
- 1 Saffron Finch (*Sicalis flaveola*)
- 1 Grand Eclectus Parrot (*Eclectus roratus*)
- 1 Black-headed Sibia (*Leioptila capistrata*)

Red Jungle Fowl are widespread in Oriental Regions, and are resident in forests up to 6,000ft. in Himalayan foothills. After the rains however they move to nearby bamboo and scrub jungles, to paddyfields, and various cultivated lands. The male runs in a crouching position, with neck and tail outstretched. These fowl feed in the open in the early morning and in the evening, usually in parties of four or five, but when feeding on stubbles on cultivated land they are in parties of up to fifty.

When courting, the male fluffs his feathers, and runs round the female with the nearer wing trailing and with lowered head. He then repeats the performance in reverse direction. Red Jungle Fowl feed on grain of all kinds, bamboo, insects and their larvae; they also feed on small reptiles. Breeding is from March to May, and the female lines the scrape with leaves under cover of bamboos or bush. The clutch is 5/6 eggs and the incubation period 20/21 days.

* * *

A Black-throated Laughing Thrush (*Garrulax chinensis*) has been bred in the zoo, and this is possibly a first breeding in this country.

* * *

A Maned Goose, or Australian Wood Duck (*Chenonetta jubata*) has been presented to us. The distribution of the Maned Goose is Australia and Tasmania. These ducks exist almost always on

woodland pools and streams, and are to be found in pairs or small parties. Their food consists of water plants and grass. They can be seen grazing from the banks, rarely leaving the water to feed. They do however sometimes leave the water to raid cornfields, causing much damage.

These geese build their nests in a hollow or hole in a tree, often high up, sometimes choosing a locality a distance from water. The nest is lined with feathers and down, the clutch is 6/12 eggs, and the incubation period is 28 days. In captivity these geese are hardy and live quite well with other species of waterfowl.

In August this year we received in exchange from Australia the following cockatoos. These birds have now been released from quarantine and are on show in the Parrot House.

2.2 Roseate Cockatoos (*Eolophus roseicapilla*)

1.1 White-tailed Black Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus funereus
baudinii*)

1.1 Western Slender-billed Cockatoos (*Kakatoe tenuirostris
pastinator*)

The plumage of the Roseate Cockatoo is a beautiful deep rose colour on the face, neck and breast. The head is a delicate pale rose hue. Its wing-coverts and its back are grey, with the tail shading to dark grey. The feet are also grey, and the beak is ivory. Roseate Cockatoos have a distribution mainly in the interior of Australia, and are accidental to Tasmania.

June to November is the mating period for these cockatoos. During courtship the crest of the male is raised and, moving his head from side to side, he walks affectedly along a branch towards the female of his choice weaving his head slightly from side to side. As he approaches the female he utters mild chattering noises. Pursued by the male the female leaves the branch, darting through the trees, calling out in an excited manner. Finally, the pair alight in another

tree, and the display is repeated by the preening of both the male and the female. Young leave the nest five to six weeks after hatching, and the parents feed them for a few more weeks.

* * *

White-tailed Black Cockatoos are restricted to south-western Australia south of the Murchison River. They are well distributed throughout eucalyptus forests, savannah woodland and dry scrubland. These cockatoos are wary and difficult to approach. One or two birds stay on the alert and when they sense danger they screech loudly signalling for the group to fly off. Nesting takes place away from coastal forests.

The plumage of these birds is a brownish-black to yellow. There is a white flash behind the eye, and two white tail feathers amongst the black.

REPTILE NEWS

The following reptiles have been received in exchange from Australia, and are now on show in the Reptile House:

- 4 Blue-tongued Skinks (*Tiliqua occipitalis multifasciata*)
- 6 Shingleback Lizards (*Trachydosaurus rugosus rugosus*)
- 4 Eastern Water Dragons (*Physignathus lesuerii lesuerii*)
- 1 Leopard Tortoise (*Geochelone pardalis*)
- 1 Royal Python (*Python regius*)
- 2 Knight Anolis (*Anolis e. equestris*)

Blue-tongued Skinks have a distribution in Central Australia and adjacent districts of all States to the northern part of Western Australia. Adults attain a length of about 16ins., and there are mid-body scales in 38 to 45 rows. The basic colour of the head, body and tail is a pale grey. There are orange-red crossbands, and blackish markings on the dorsal surfaces of the limbs.

These skinks are large lizards of robust build and the legs are absurdly small in comparison with the size of the animal. They are however able to move amazingly quickly over the ground for short distances. Common Blue-tongued Skinks give birth to live young numbering up to twenty at a time. When alarmed these skinks thrust out their bright blue tongues and inflate their bodies. These actions are accompanied by a hissing sound. Although quite harmless, the display behaviour of the skinks can be most alarming when directed at humans.

* * *

The distribution of the Shingleback Lizard is in the inland areas of all States except Tasmania. This lizard is recognized easily by its "pine-cone" scalation, and "bob-tail." There are 22 to 30 rows of body scales, and adults attain a length of 18ins. The colour of the Shingleback Lizard varies according to the district in which it is found. Food consists of herbage, fruit, blossoms, snails and insects. Its brood is two living young.

GARDENING NOTES

At the beginning of October we started to take out the summer plants from the flower beds, replacing them with the hardy plants to flower next Spring. Some of the beds contain pansies and these will continue to provide us with plenty of colour as long as the weather remains mild. We hope to finish the spring plantings by the end of October, when approximately 10,000 tulips will also be planted. Slugs are very hard on tulips so that on the first mild night after planting we shall go round and put down slug bait.

Some 4,000 crocuses will be planted in the flower beds. We always put these with the Polyanthus as the two make an excellent display. Polyanthus are "cottoned," and as the crocuses also need to be supported in this way we need to do this only once.

We have about 700 daffodils to put down, and some of these will be planted in troughs in front of the cafes, along with beds of pansies. We grow the pansies from seed in our own nursery.

In the greenhouses rooted cuttings for next year's displays have been potted in 3½ in. pots. These include Fuchsia, Calceolaria, Heliotrope, Verbena, Lantana and *Aster capense*.

On the Rockery near the Polar Bears there is a good shrub of *Cotoneaster Hybrida* now covered with scarlet berries. We have quite a number of *Cotoneaster* species—some evergreen and some deciduous. They are grown for their scarlet berries in the winter. One species growing on the side of the Monkey House, near the entrance, has yellow berries. This is *Cotoneaster Exburyensis*. *Cotoneaster Horizontalis* is a good one to grow on the walls because of its flat fishbone-like growth. In the zoo it can be seen growing on the side of the bridge by the Tropical House entrance.

At the time of writing *Hibiscus* and *Bougainvillea* are still in flower in the Tropical House, and there are many other plants with colourful foliage to be seen. Here we try to keep two or three labels to each species of plant, so that one doesn't have to look too far to find its name. In one group we stage a display of winter-flowering *Begonias*.

Since the rain started again on the 8th September, after the driest summer for years, the shrubs and trees started to revive and it now appears that we have lost only the odd shrub.

The picnic lawns were completely brown, and there were doubts about the grass growing. However, after the second week the lawns were green and now, four weeks later, we are hoping for a few dry days so that we can give them the last mowing of the season.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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 £2.24, 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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