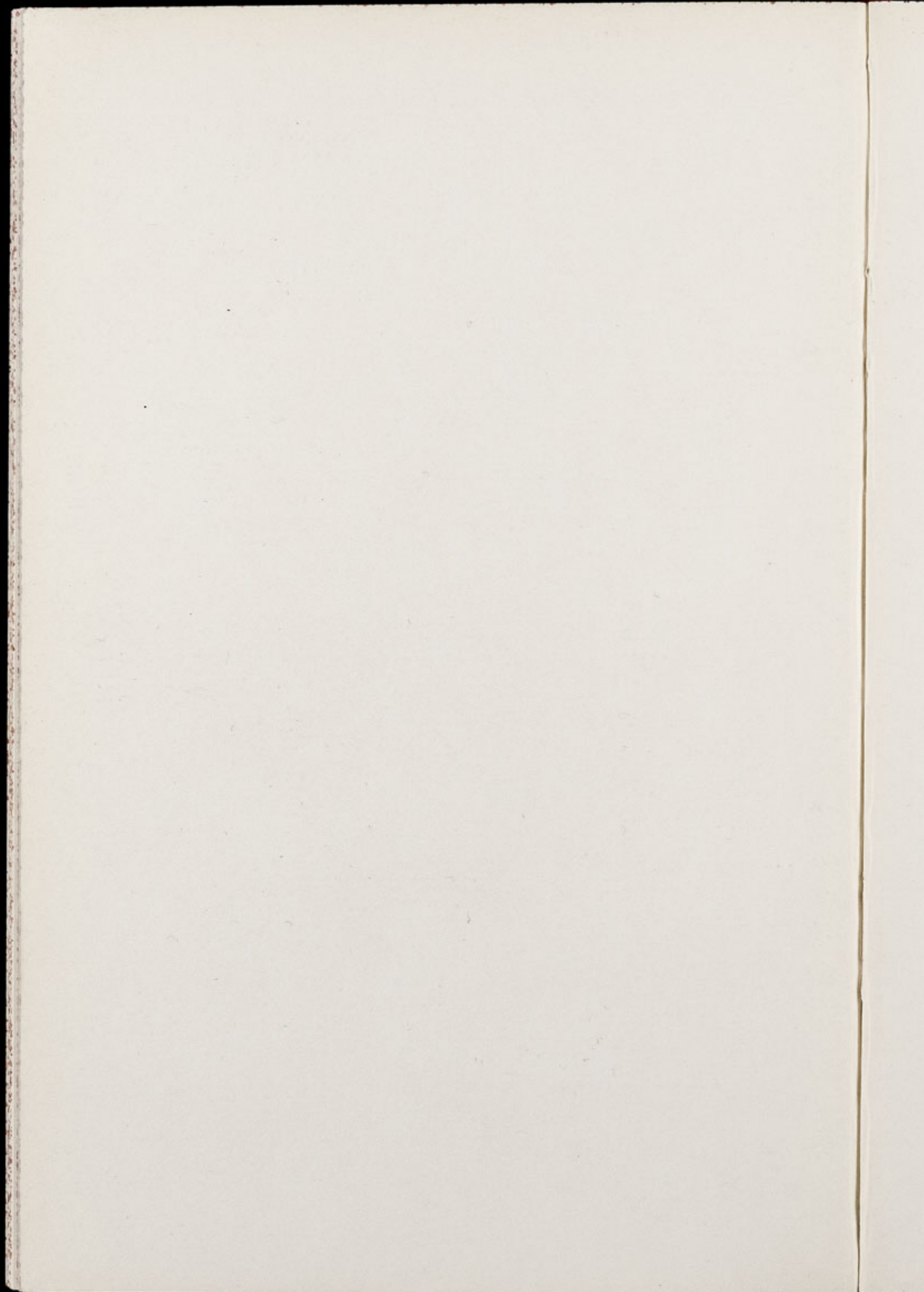


CHESTER ZOO NEWS

AND GUIDE

December 1969

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The North of England Zoological Society

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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COVER: Polar Bear in the Icy Water.

By Courtesy of Jack Smith

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ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

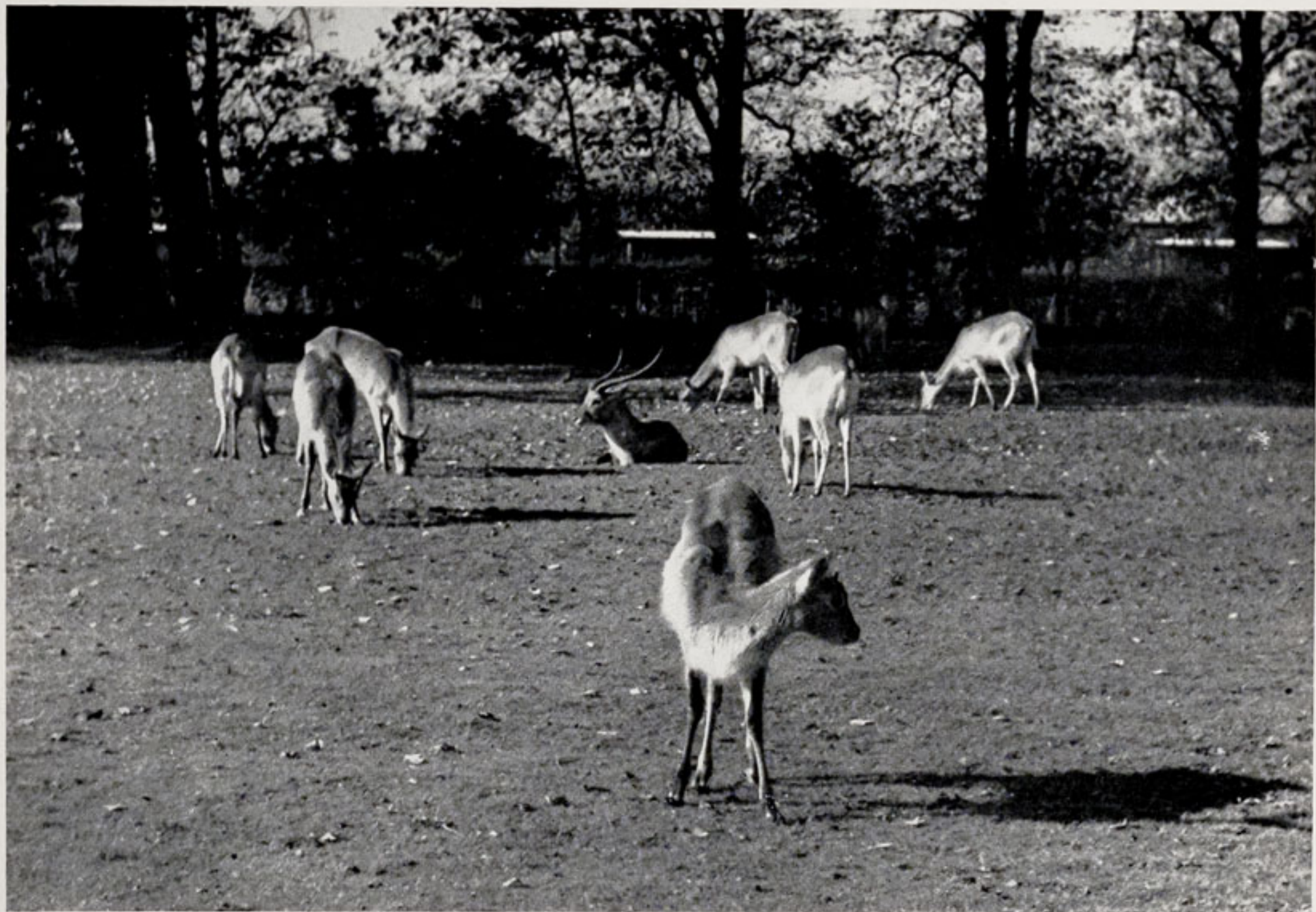
Among the December arrivals were two pairs of Zebra Finches, thirty mixed Weavers and a pair of Bartlett's Bleeding-Heart Pigeons from the Phillipines and adjacent islands; the latter are to be found in the Tropical House.

Of the two species of Bleeding-Heart Pigeons, the Bartlett's (*Gallicolumba criniger*) is much rarer in captivity and in the wild state is a rather shy bird spending most of its time in the seclusion of the forest. In colouration it is brown on the back, green on the top of the head and back of the neck, white on the throat and on the breast there is a dark red spot which gives rise to its name.

A pair of Tambourine Doves (*Tympanistria t. fraseri*) have also been accommodated in the Tropical House. Another attractive member of the Pigeon family, this species ranges over an extensive area of Africa, from Southern Abyssinia to the Zambesi Valley and from Sierra Leone to Angola. The males are white on the forehead, throat and underparts, mid-brown on the top of the head and rich brown on the back; the females are slightly duller in colouration. Though reputed sometimes to visit gardens on the outskirts of towns, they are primarily birds of forested regions, feeding mainly on berries, but adapting readily to a diet of grain in captivity.

Other arrivals in the Bird Department are a pair of Green Jays from Mexico and a pair of Blue-Grey Tanagers from South America including Trinidad and Tobago. These latter birds live on fruits and insects and, as their name implies, are silver-blue and grey in colouration.

Our small herd of Red Lechwe was augmented recently by the birth of a fawn. This occurred at the beginning of a period of snowfall



RED LECHWE

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

and the fact that the fawn was completely unaffected by the severe cold demonstrates the surprising hardiness of this Central African species in a climate so alien to its own. In the wild state Red Lechwe are found in very marshy areas, where they feed mainly on aquatic vegetation, often almost submerged in the water. At the Zoo they thrive on a diet of best quality hay with the addition of certain concentrates and since the arrival of the original Red Lechwe in 1959 their breeding record has been very encouraging; more births are imminent.

NEWS FROM THE REPTILE HOUSE

Four Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnakes which were bred at the Zoo during January 1969 have been presented to the Ibadan University in Nigeria.

Additional sandstone rockwork has been incorporated into the vivarium to accommodate the latest arrivals at the Reptile House — three Gaboon Vipers (*Bitis gabonica rhinoceros*) from West Africa. These highly venomous snakes, though quite brightly coloured, blend with the undergrowth on the forest floor and the floor of the vivarium has been covered with peat and leaf-mould to simulate their natural surroundings. The Gaboon Viper can attain a length of almost 6 feet and weigh up to 18lbs., a specimen of this size possessing venomous fangs about two inches in length.

Other arrivals in the Reptile House are a Rat Snake from India and a Lord Derby's Lizard or Giant Zonure (*Cordylus giganteus*) from South Africa which has joined others of this species already in the collection. This is the largest of the Zonures and has powerful spines on the horny scales of the neck, back and tail. Generally found in dry rocky places in remote parts, it feeds chiefly on grasshoppers and occasionally smaller lizards.



GABOON VIPER DEMONSTRATING ITS EXCELLENT CAMOUFLAGE

Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby

NEW LION AND TIGER ENCLOSURES

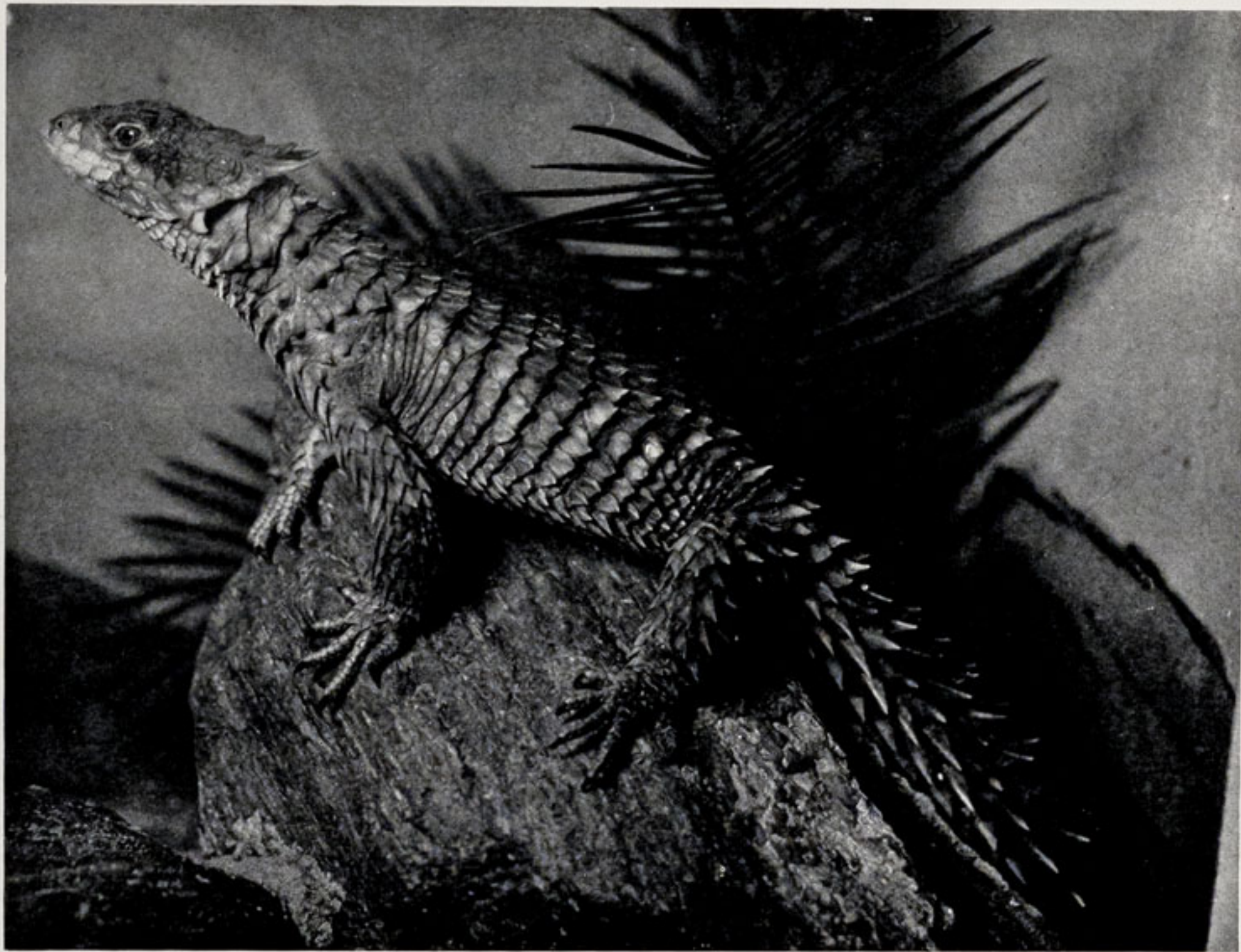
The new Lion and Tiger Enclosures opposite the Cat House have now been completed and cover a total area of 1,040 square yards. They were constructed in record time and incorporate the familiar features of the big Cat Enclosures at Chester Zoo — a high link mesh fence with an inward overhang, surrounded by a protective barrier of prickly shrubs. A new innovation is the provision of interior sleeping dens equipped with large picture windows which enable visitors to observe the Lions and Tigers whilst they are indoors.

Kim, the young male Lion which arrived at the Zoo on the 24th October, 1968, was transferred recently to this enclosure from his quarantine accommodation in the Cat House. He seems to have settled down quite well but took an immediate dislike to the information label newly-affixed to the outside of his fence and made every attempt to dislodge it by hurling himself against the wire. Eventually the Curator was obliged to move it to a higher position well out of Kim's reach.

The two Bengal Tigers which arrived at the Zoo on the 23rd April, 1969, have also been transferred to the new enclosure. They were born at the Edinburgh Zoo on the 17th August, 1968, and as our original pair are becoming rather elderly we decided to purchase this pair. Although still retaining the pale colouration characteristic of Tiger cubs, they are approximately half-grown and obviously enjoy the increased freedom afforded by their large new enclosure.

WINTER VISITORS

During the winter a wide variety of wild birds come to join our captive stock. The water in the Polar Bear Pool comes from a very deep artesian well and is therefore comparatively warm in winter



LORD DERBY'S LIZARD

J. Whitworth

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
100. Mpila Snack-Bar
101. Antelope Enclosure
102. Antelope Enclosure

Animals may be moved from time to time
†--Under construction.

attracting a number of birds, in particular Grey Wagtails. Usually a few pairs of Yellow Wagtails can be seen in the vicinity of the Bison and Waterfowl Enclosures near the Monkey House and at least one pair are known to have nested. Recently a pair of Pintails spent a few days resting and feeding on one of the Waterfowl Ponds before resuming their journey and each evening huge flocks of Mallard wend their way towards the Zoo for relative safety from foxes.

STOCKTAKING

Within the next few days the annual stocktaking will commence at the Zoo. This entails not only the stocktaking of the various stores, but also the counting of all the mammals, birds, reptiles and even fish that we have in the collection. With the larger animals counting is undertaken only as a matter of course, but the number of smaller animals may have increased without our knowledge.

The Tropical House is probably the most difficult place to take stock. The vastness of this building means that birds "disappear" for short periods and it is necessary to keep a check on those seen every day for a week, by which time a fairly accurate assessment of the numbers is obtained.

The final figures are checked against stock record cards and ledger systems and any discrepancies are investigated.

GENERAL NEWS

Earlier in the year the Capybara was introduced to the Anteaters and as they appeared compatible the three animals were given the run of two enclosures opposite the Bird House. However, just recently the two species became so aggressive towards each other



CAPYBARA

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

that it was necessary to remove the Capybara altogether. He is housed temporarily in one of the small pens in the Camel House and we will endeavour to reintroduce him to the Anteaters in the summer.

Two Prairie Marmots which escaped over the wall of their enclosure and were spotted sitting on the pathway, were quickly recaptured by Zoo Keepers and have since been sent to Bristol Zoo.

When eight of these animals were released on the Eland Paddock in August, 1966, it was feared that they might be killed off by local predators such as foxes or stoats, but this has not been the case and the present population is almost one hundred. Once established they breed very readily though individuals isolated from the colony will soon pine away; their burrows can be seen over most of the Eland Paddock. The clever design of the crater-like entrances to these burrows prevents them from becoming flooded (see illustration on page thirteen.) The Prairie Marmots' alternative name of Prairie Dog has arisen from the dog-like yelp they give when alarmed, which is a warning signal to the rest of the colony.

Barbar, the largest of the Elephants, discovered recently that she could reach a display of plants just inside the entrance to the Elephant House and maintenance staff rapidly constructed a natural sandstone wall at the side of the display to prevent her causing more damage.

The male Blesbok has been separated from his companions as he was becoming very aggressive and it was feared that he might injure the females. He will be re-introduced to them in the spring when the warmer weather will enable the herd to spend more time in the paddock and he should be more placid.

Blesbok are found in small herds of 8 to 15 individuals in the Karroo region of South Africa, where they feed on coarse herbage.



PRAIRIE MARMOT

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

Although their numbers have declined considerably in recent years, they are not in immediate danger of extinction and small numbers still exist, especially in nature reserves.

Our Blesbok, which arrived at the Zoo last year after undergoing a twelve months' quarantine period at the Birkenhead Quarantine Station, occupy a large paddock opposite to the Mpila Snack Bar and after some initial unease they have accepted the presence of visitors on the pathways surrounding their enclosure.

PROGRESS REPORT

The new pair of Sun-Bitterns (*Eurypyga helias*) mentioned in last months' *Zoo News* have settled down quite well in their aviary in the Tropical House, though they always stay close together when moving about. Considerable time was spent in planting vegetation and constructing a pool in this aviary so that it would resemble the birds' natural surroundings in Central and South America.

Sun-Bitterns are elegant birds with attractive markings of brown, grey and yellow and have long, thin, yellowish beaks. Their plumage is seen to best advantage during the courtship dance when the tail is fanned and the wings spread to display the beautiful reddish-orange patterning from which the bird derives its name. Our Sun-Bitterns have displayed several times.

EFFECTS OF COLD WEATHER

One question often asked by visitors is how the very cold weather affects the tropical animals at the Zoo.

Once acclimatised, most tropical animals are remarkably hardy, but of course they need warm quarters in which to rest and shelter during the worst of the weather. Even the Gorillas and Chimpanzees

will venture outside on bright winter days but as they are confined only by a moat, there is an obvious need to keep them inside when the moat freezes over!!

Freezing weather brings many hazards. Rhinos and Elephants seem unperturbed by the cold, but dangers arise when their outside enclosures become icy as they can slip very easily and be seriously injured. For this reason they are allowed outside only if the snow is soft and slushy.

Many birds are subject to frostbite in their legs and are confined to winter quarters. The Flamingos do not have special winter quarters but are confined in their shelter during the very cold weather as they could break their long delicate legs in an icy enclosure.

There will be a Meeting for Members of the North of England Zoological Society on Saturday afternoon, 21st March.

Seventeen Rainbow Boas have been born in the Reptile House and all appear to be in good health. This is the fourth year that the Rainbow Boas have bred and the number of offspring has increased from 8 in the first year to 9 the second, then to 12 last year and now to 17.

An African Python, which mated with an Indian Python, has laid a number of eggs and at present is incubating them.



MEMORIAL PLAQUE

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

We thought readers might be interested to see a photograph of the plaque erected by the Council of the North of England Zoological Society in memory of Mrs. E. Mottershead. The plaque can be seen in the Rock Garden situated near the main entrance gate.

We regret the lateness of this issue which was due to illness amongst our employees.

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