



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

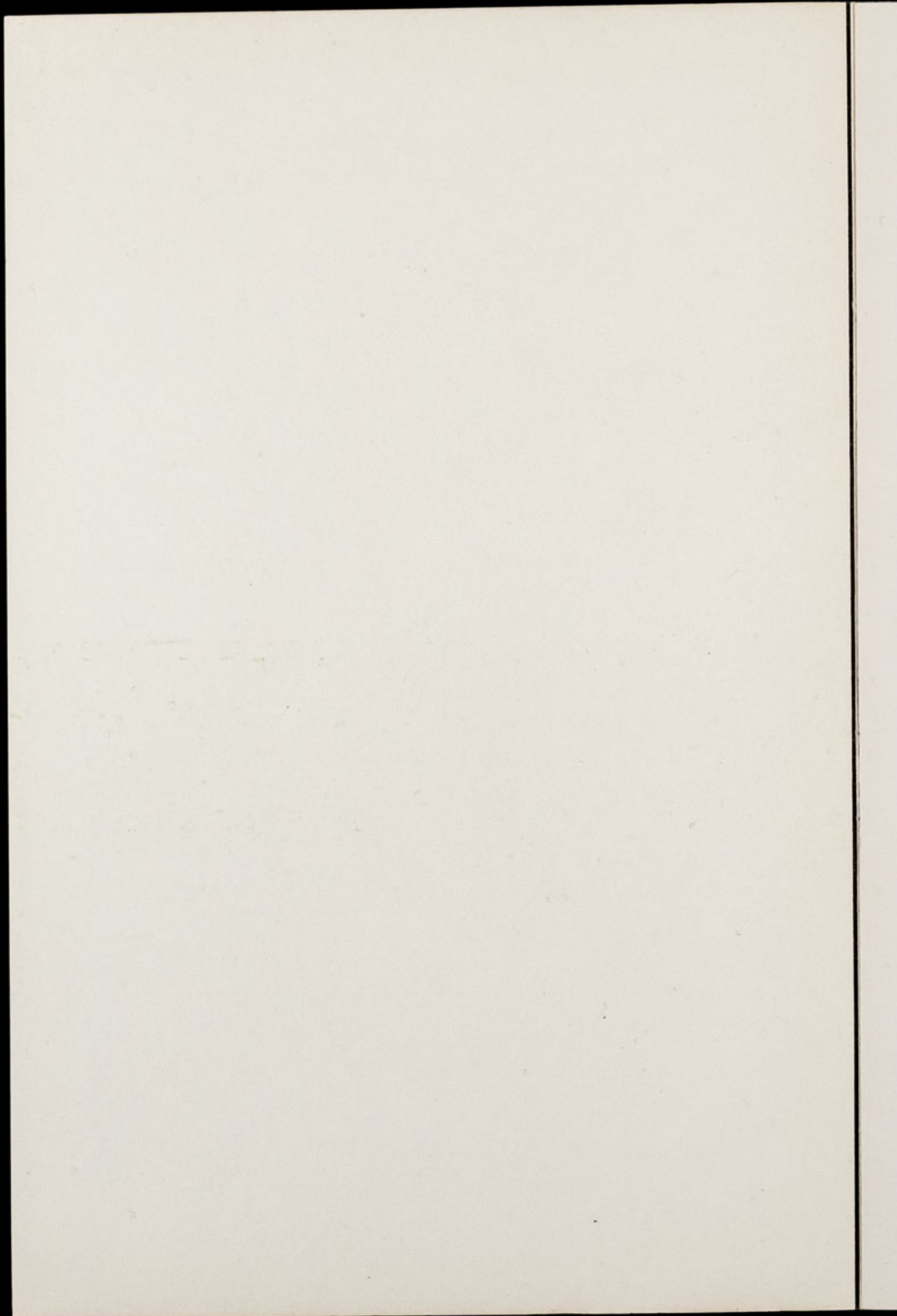
# **Chester Zoo News**

## **AND GUIDE**

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

September 1974

Price 6p



# The North of England Zoological Society

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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*COVER: Baby male Hippopotamus "Hector" and his mother "Myra"; see page two.*

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION—ONE POUND AND FIFTEEN PENCE POSTAGE PAID

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### ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS

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

- 1 Capuchin Monkey (*Cebus albifrons*)
- 1 Talapoin Monkey (*Cercopithecus talapoin*)
- 1 Common Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*)
- 1 Alpaca (*Lama pacos*)
- 1 Red Lechwe (*Kobus leche*)
- 1 Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*)

The baby Capuchin and Talapoin Monkeys are both accommodated in the Monkey House, No. 116. The Capuchin Monkey and its mother are separated from the main group of this species because the baby would not be safe with the other adult Capuchins. On the other hand the little Talapoin baby lives quite harmoniously in a family group which comprises its mother, father and one year old brother. The Talapoin's parents, Isaac and Isobel, are an old pair which have been breeding regularly here for a number of years.

The baby male Hippopotamus and his mother are the subjects of this month's cover photograph. This is the fifth Hippopotamus born at Chester Zoo and once again the father was Generino and the mother Myra. Generino came to the zoo in 1963, having been born in Naples Zoo, and Myra was sent from Nairobi in 1961.

For the first few days Myra and her baby remained indoors and were separated from Generino. Before the little Hippo was introduced to the outer enclosure and also his father, we invited members of the press to photograph him. As he had not then been named, a local newspaper ran a naming competition and we offered the prize of a visit to the zoo. There was an excellent response to the competition but "Hector" was selected unanimously as the winning

name. The entrant who claimed the prize was ten year old Timothy Parr from Chester. Timothy and his family chose a beautiful day for their visit and during the afternoon he was photographed for the newspaper in front of the baby Hippopotamus.

By the date of Timothy's visit, Hector had already been allowed outside for two or three weeks and was a very popular attraction for the holiday crowds. Although Generino is permitted to lie near to the baby, the normally docile Myra becomes aggressive very quickly if she feels the father is not behaving properly. At birth Hector was estimated to weigh between 60 and 75 lbs but when fully adult he could reach four tons. The gestation period for the Hippopotamus is approximately eight months and, as in the case of this baby, more often the young are born and suckle in the water.

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The most important of the new additions to the collection is a female South American Tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*). This fairly young specimen has been accommodated in one of the Tapir enclosures in the Pachyderm House.

A female Sooty Mangabey (*Cercocebus torquatus atys*) and a Chinchilla (*Chinchilla laniger*) have been presented to the society.

### BIRD NOTES

Since the last report the following chicks have been recorded:

- 3 Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*)
- 2 Lesser Patagonian Conures (*Cyanoliseus patagonus*)
- 4 Quaker Parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*)
- 1 Blue-eyed Cockatoo (*Kakatoe ophthalmica*)
- 1 Green Avadavat (*Amandava formosa*)
- 3 Java Sparrows (*Padda oryzivora*)
- 1 Paradise Whydah (*Steganura paradisaea*)



PEAFOWL CHICK (*Pavo cristatus*)

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

One of the Peafowl chicks is shown in the illustration on the left. Like the three chicks bred earlier this year, the latest youngsters were hatched in an incubator and are now being reared by keepers in one of the aviaries in group No. 54.

The Lesser Patagonian Conures have bred only once before at Chester Zoo and that was in 1971 when all three chicks in the clutch reached maturity. We were therefore very pleased when the two young Conures emerged from their nestbox just a few days ago. The family is accommodated in one of the Parakeet Aviaries, No. 42, and visitors will be able to recognise the chicks because they have cream coloured bills in comparison with the dark beaks of their parents.

The fledging of another four Quaker Parakeets brings the total bred successfully this season to six and no doubt there are more young in the nest. We now have a thriving colony of twenty-two Quaker Parakeets and they have built their large communal nest in an upper corner of the aviary (No. 5). These birds are the only members of the Parrot family which construct a nest and they repair and enlarge this untidy mass of twigs continually. It is fascinating to watch a Quaker Parakeet select a twig, chew it to the required length and then weave it painstakingly into his particular area of nest.

The Blue-eyed Cockatoo was another very welcome breeding but regrettably the hen died shortly before her chick left the nest. We were very sorry to lose this female. She had been off colour for a few days and staff suspected that the exertions of rearing a chick were proving a little too much for her. Nevertheless her death came unexpectedly and so did the fact that the cock continued to rear the chick on his own. Admittedly the youngster was fairly well grown but without doubt the male's efforts ensured that it was strong and healthy when it emerged finally from the nestbox.

This is the second time a Blue-eyed Cockatoo has been bred successfully at Chester Zoo. The first chick was reared last summer and we are pleased to report is alive and well. These breedings have been achieved by two different pairs of Cockatoos and the parents of last year's chick have also nested. At present their youngster is tiny but judging by this pair's previous efforts, it seems probable that we will be able to record the fledging of two Blue-eyed Cockatoos in 1974.

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Additions to our stocks of waterfowl have included two pairs of Common Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) and a trio each of Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*) and Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*). These birds will be located in the various waterfowl enclosures throughout the zoo.

Since the last issue a pair of Citron-throated Toucans (*Ramphastos citreolaemus*) have been acquired and at present these birds occupy one of the upper aviaries of the Tropical House. The species is native to northern Colombia.

Amongst the most beautiful of the African passerine birds is the Royal Starling (*Cosmopsarus regius*), which is found in the eastern part of the continent. A pair of these splendid birds was received recently in exchange for a pair of Barraband Parakeets which had been bred at Chester Zoo.

The Royal Starling measures a little over twelve inches in length and has a slim body with a comparatively long, narrow tail. Its beauty lies in its body colouration. The head, neck and upper parts are metallic greenish blue, the upper breast is iridescent violet while the lower breast and rest of the underparts are a brilliant yellow. Another name for this species is Golden-breasted Starling.

Its distribution in Africa encompasses southern Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya and northern Tanzania and within this range Royal Starlings would be encountered in flocks in the dry bush country. Their nest sites are holes lined with leaves and other vegetation in trees and as a rule Royal Starlings lay clutches of between two and four eggs. From the northern part of their range only, occasionally there are reports of as many as six eggs in a clutch.

Chester's new pair of Royal Starlings are extremely tame and will fly to the Curator's hand when he enters the aviary to feed them. They seem to be quite at home in their long planted flight (No. 54) and we hope that next year we may be able to record our first breeding of the Royal Starling.

The photograph on page ten shows another recent arrival, a Giant Coot (*Fulica gigantea*). This bird is one of two which have been released into the longest of the Temperate Bird House flights. However this aviary is intended only as a temporary home for them. In a few weeks we propose moving the Giant Coots to enclosure No. 46 where they will have access to a fairly large pool. At present the enclosure in question is occupied by Arabian Gazelles but shortly these animals will have to be transferred to winter quarters.

Cold weather should present no problems for the Giant Coots because these birds live in the Andes of South America at altitudes above 16,000 feet. Their range is comparatively small, extending only from south western Peru to north western Bolivia and into the extreme north of Chile. In this remote region the Giant Coots are found in a few fresh water lakes, of which the most notable are Lakes Sacaya and Cotacotani in Chile, Lake Titicaca in Bolivia and Lake Junin in Peru.

Apart from the local Indian population, few people have ever seen the Giant Coots in their natural habitat but the one person who

# 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

- 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. Gazelles
- 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. 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

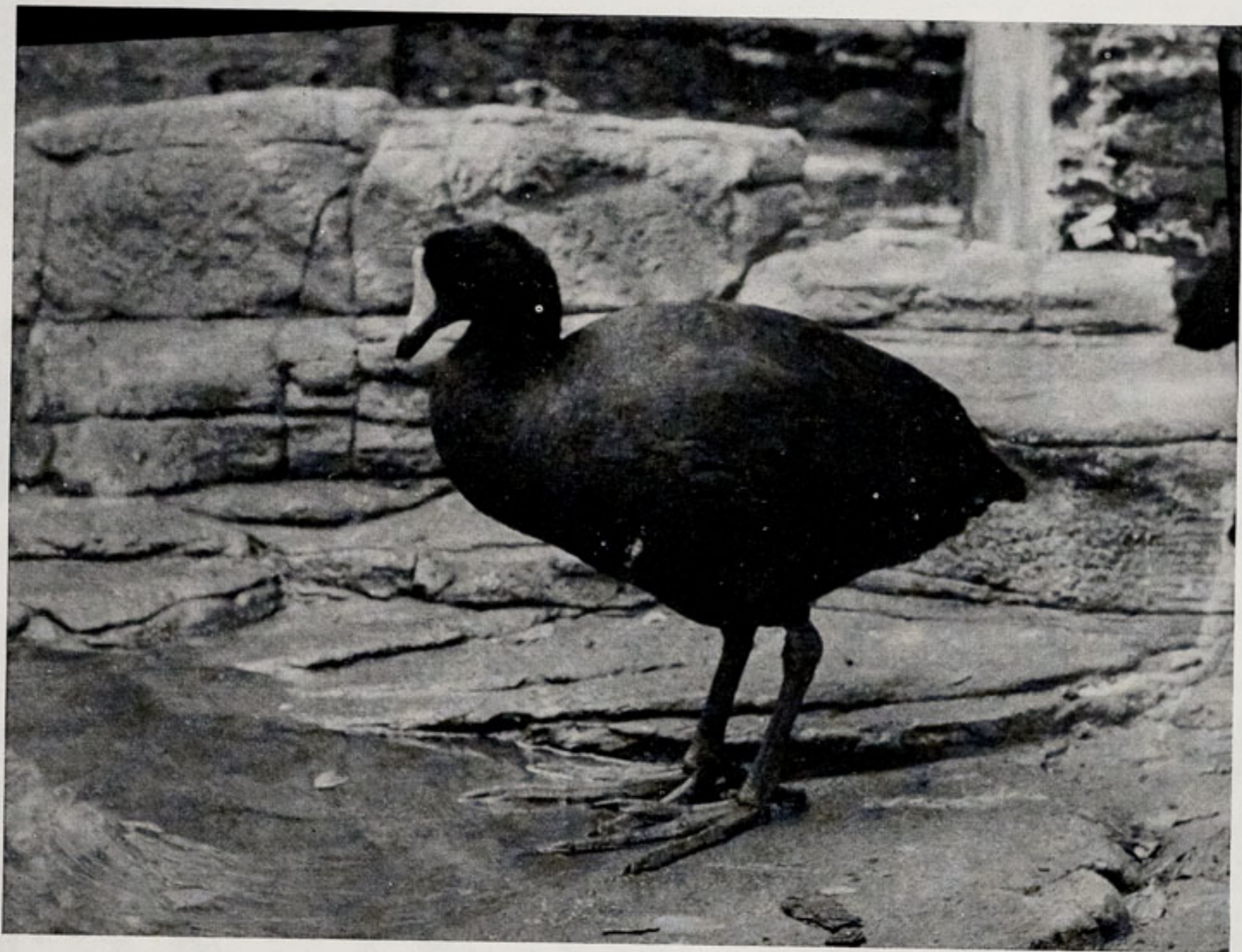
- 92. Antelope and Ostrich
- 93. Antelope Enclosure
- 94. Antelope Enclosure
- 95. Zebras
- 96. Llamas
- 97. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 98. Wallabies and Waterfowl
- 99. Waterfowl Enclosure
- 100. Blackbuck
- 101. Wallabies
- 102. Animal Paddock
- 103. Animal Paddock
- 104. Animal Paddock

- 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.



GIANT COOT (*Fulica gigantea*)

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

probably knows more about them than anyone else alive is Mr. Alfred W. Johnson of Santiago, Chile. In 1943, following several expeditions over a number of years to their isolated home, Mr. Johnson managed at last to locate a pair of Giant Coots on a small lake some 14,000 feet above sea level. Subsequently he was taken by an Indian guide to the higher and much larger Lake Cotacotani where most of his observations were made. Today Mr. Johnson's descriptions of the Giant Coots' habitat and nesting sites remain the major source of reference for these rare birds. It is our aim at Chester Zoo to breed as many species in the collection as possible and with this in mind the Curator wrote to Mr. Johnson to seek his advice about a suitable breeding environment. The following information was extracted from his reply.

The Giant Coots were first discovered in 1836 by a French expedition but were not seen again until 1886. Owing to their limited distribution, the world population of Giant Coots is small but nevertheless thriving, as Mr. Johnson discovered. With its slaty black plumage and whitish frontal shield, the Giant Coot looks very like a huge version of the European Coot. Apart from its size, it differs from its smaller cousin in having dark red legs and feet and dark crimson at the tip of the bill. With an adult length of twenty-six inches, *Fulica gigantea* is the largest of the Coots. The second largest species, at twenty-four inches, is the Horned Coot (*Fulica cornuta*) which comes from a similar habitat but more southerly range than the Giant Coot.

Lake Cotacotani owes its existence to the melting snows from the twin volcanic peaks beneath which it lies. The climatic conditions in this lofty region are severe, with frequent storms and blizzards, but the weather and extreme cold do not seem to affect the birds. When Mr. Johnson and his guide reached the lake they saw large numbers of dark objects floating on the water, which they recognised as nesting rafts, and between thirty and fifty of the large black Coots.

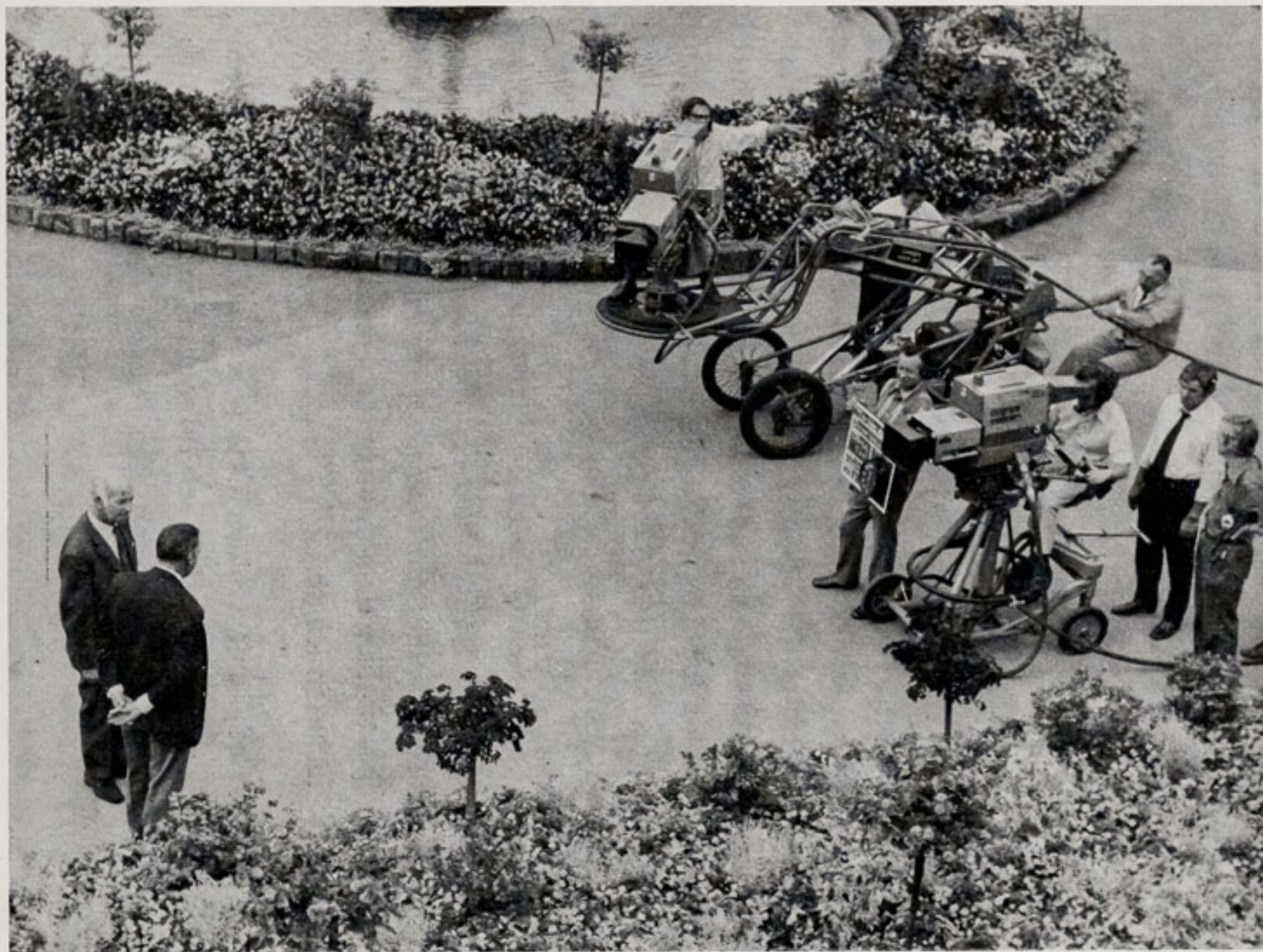
Paddling out onto the lake in a flimsy vessel made from two corrugated iron tubs which the guide had uncovered triumphantly, the men were able to examine the nesting platforms closely. All were built from fibres of the same aquatic plant, *Ruppia filifolia*, which also forms part of the Coots' diet and each platform was anchored beneath the surface. The largest measured ten by six feet and supported the weight of a man. It appeared that the owners added to their rafts with each successive nesting, so that the platforms grew slowly in size.

Of thirty-six nesting rafts which he examined, Mr. Johnson found eggs in only two and incidentally he was probably the first white man ever to see the eggs of the Giant Coot. A little later, at the further end of the lake, the men came upon a group of twenty immature Coots swimming about by themselves. The month was November and the discovery of these young birds seemed to support the guide's assertion that the Giant Coots nested twice a year, in August and again in November and December. Mr. Johnson assumed that he had arrived during the interval between the two peak nesting periods.

Clearly the creation of suitable nesting conditions for this species is a very difficult task and this is borne out by the fact that, to the best of our knowledge, the Giant Coot has not yet been bred in captivity. However we shall certainly do all in our power to surmount the obstacles and achieve a breeding of this rare and fascinating bird.

#### "GARDENERS' WORLD" FROM CHESTER ZOO

At the beginning of August we were delighted to be hosts to Mr. Percy Thrower and the B.B.C. "Gardeners' World" team. Two programmes were made in Chester Zoo's gardens and the photograph on the right shows Mr. Thrower and our Head Gardener, Mr. Philip Gallup, in front of the cameras discussing various aspects of



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

FILMING CHESTER ZOO'S GARDENS FOR THE B.B.C. PROGRAMME "GARDENERS' WORLD"

the summer bedding. As well as the formal bedding in the Fountain Restaurant gardens, the programmes featured the South Entrance Rock Gardens and the Fuchsia Border where 110 varieties are exhibited. Judging from the number of letters sent to us and the comments of visitors, the programmes were very well received.

### AQUARIUM NEWS

Two pairs of Celebes Rainbow Fishes (*Telmatherina ladigesi*) were among recent additions to the Aquarium. These fishes have transparent bodies and one might easily be misled into thinking that they were members of the Glassfish rather than the Rainbow Fish family. In fact their nearest relatives in this collection are the three species of Australian Rainbows belonging to the genus *Melanotaenia*. It is accepted generally that the Celebes form is more difficult to spawn than the Australian species but we hope we will be successful in breeding these two pairs.

Both sexes of Celebes Rainbow Fish bear attractive yellow and blue sheens to their bodies but the fins of the male are longer and have darker edges to them than those of the female. Adult specimens average three inches in length.

A number of young Golden Orfe (*Idus idus*) have also been acquired. These will be reared for several months in one of our large cold water community tanks and then released into the Tropical House pools.

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Into another community tank we have released many hundreds of young *Tilapia maria*, *Tilapia zilli* and Convict Cichlids (*Cichlasoma nigrofasciatum*). All these fishes were bred in our Aquarium and they make an excellent show in this large tank.

Breedings since the last Aquarium report include some twenty-five Half-beaks (*Dermogenys pusillus*) which at present are being reared off show in a nursery tank. The Half-beaks are now into their second generation at Chester Zoo.

About twenty young Angelfish have been obtained from two spawnings of a female Marbled and a male Common Angelfish (*Pterophyllum sp.*). At the time of writing the fry are two weeks old and growing strongly in another nursery tank.

For some time we have been endeavouring to breed a pair of Dwarf Rainbow Cichlids (*Pelmatochromis kribensis*), a colourful little species from the Niger Delta in West Africa. The pair spawned on several occasions, depositing the eggs beneath a plant pot which had been provided in their tank. At first the eggs failed to hatch so the Aquarium Keeper decided to remove them as soon as they were laid and transfer them to a smaller tank. There they were placed near to an aerator which acted as a substitute for the parents by causing water to circulate over the eggs. The fry hatched three days later and now at seven weeks they measure almost an inch in length. Mature male Dwarf Rainbow Cichlids grow to four inches long, the females to three inches. The bodies of both sexes display very attractive red, blue and purplish hues and the male fish bears a number of dark spots on his caudal fin.

From another spawning, one hundred and fifty Red Devil Cichlids (*Cichlasoma erythraeum*) have been obtained. The parent fishes have particularly bright orange bodies and it is hoped that the offspring will be as colourful. The eggs were laid on the bottom of the tank and were siphoned out almost immediately. Fortunately very few developed fungus and the resulting fry appear healthy.

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Additions to the tropical marine section include two Tomato Clownfish (*Amphiprion ephiprion*) and two new Scorpionfish. One

Scorpionfish is a specimen of the more commonly seen *Pterois volitans*, which has brown and white stripes and long poisonous spines. The other fish is a smaller variety, a member of the genus *Dendrochirus*. Although smaller than *Pterois volitans*, it is a stockier fish in relation to its length. Its spines bear short filaments and it has bluish eyes. This smaller Scorpionfish has light brown stripes but it seems able to lighten or darken its body colour slightly according to its surroundings.

Another arrival in the marine section is a Pantherfish (*Cromi-leptes altivelis*), a member of the Grouper family. This is a most striking fish which has a white body with a covering of black spots. Not surprisingly it is also known by the name of Polka Dot Grouper. It is a widely distributed species and a popular Grouper with aquarists.

Finally we have acquired another Triggerfish. The new specimen is small as yet but as it is dark blue and displays the characteristic lyre-shaped tail, we believe it is a Red-toothed Triggerfish (*Odonus niger*).

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### 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 £1.15, 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.

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.**

