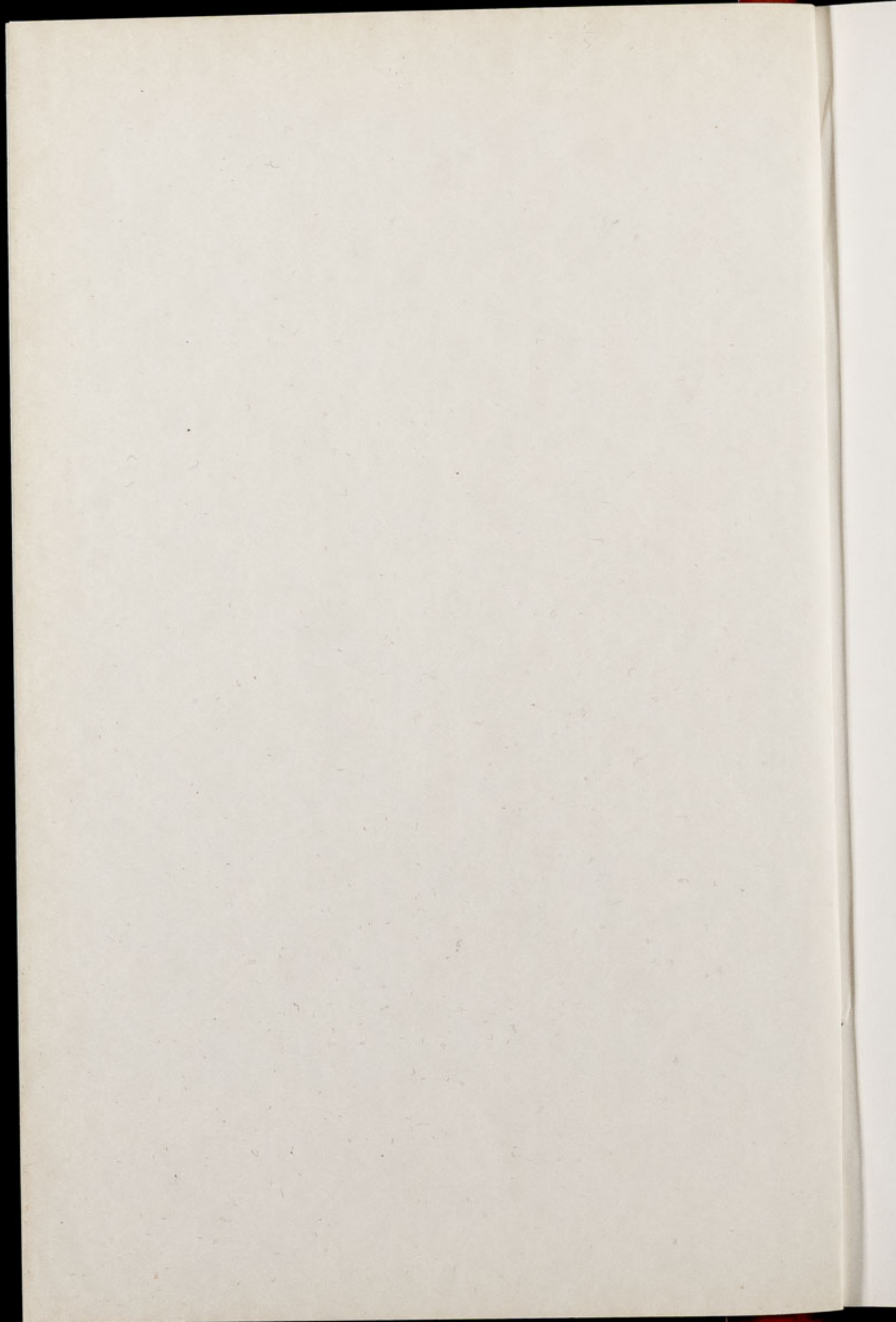




CHESTER ZOO NEWS
AND GUIDE

March 1976

Price 10p



The North of England Zoological Society

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON-BY-CHESTER

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COVER

Orang-utan "Sibu"

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

Annual subscription — Two Pounds, postage paid
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COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Our Cover Photograph this month is that of Orang-utan baby "Sibu", at three weeks old. The youngster, a male, is being hand-reared by the Curator of Mammals and Birds.

GENERAL NEWS

We have several young animals in the zoo at this time, one being a male Blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*) reported in the January issue of the magazine. We were hoping for a female as all the young so far have been males. The new baby can be seen in Paddock 100.

Another baby is a Moloney's Guenon x Sykes to be seen in the Monkey House. The mother is carrying her youngster about on her arm, but the baby is also leaping about the enclosure quite independently now. There is a charming photograph of mother and baby on page 11.

Three Jaguar cubs (*Panthera onca*) are now on show to the public. They were born to "Sheba" and are in good health. It is too early to sex them as they are only about nine weeks old and still with the mother. These cubs were born to our original pair, the female having been purchased in 1965 and the male in 1969. They can be seen in the Cat House, Enclosure 90.

Jaguars originate from the forests of Central and South America. They are spotted animals, being distinguished from the Leopard (*Panthera pardus*) by the small black marks inside the rosette pattern. They are able to breed at three years and there are usually two to four cubs.

"Cathy" (*Panthera leo*) and her two cubs are now on display in Enclosure 91. These youngsters are four months old. There is a photograph on page 5.

A male Orang-utan (*Pongo pygmaeus*) has been born to "Martha" and is being hand-reared by Mr. Timmis, the Curator of Mammals and Birds. The youngster has been named "Sibu".

This is the seventh orang to be reared by Mr. Timmis, two of these being in Chester Zoo. The other five were reared by him in Taronga Park Zoo, Sydney, Australia where he worked for several years before coming to Chester. One of the five orangs is now in Perth Zoo, in Western Australia, having fathered several youngsters.

The first one that Mr. Timmis hand-reared in Chester Zoo was "Rajang", named after the River Rajang in Borneo. "Sibu", the second baby, is called after the town of that name on the edge of the Rajang River.

Readers of the magazine will no doubt like to know how "Sibu" came to be hand-reared. He was born on the morning of Friday, 30th January, to "Martha", and the first indications were that the mother was going to look after her baby. She has a wonderful temperament, being very placid. It is quite usual for several hours or even a day or two to pass before the infant first suckles. Mother and child were observed all the first day, and the next, but unfortunately on Sunday evening, February 1st, it became quite obvious that the mother had no milk, and the baby was becoming very agitated. "Martha" suddenly placed her baby on the floor walked away, and left it. It was then decided to remove and hand-rear the infant.

Upon removal from the enclosure the baby was weighed and found to be 4 lb. 3 ozs. It was then washed and dried and taken to the Curator's house. Its first feed was of boiled water and glucose, and the second a commercial baby milk. "Sibu" was fed every two hours, night and day. On 4th February the baby was weighed again at 4 lb. 8 ozs., and on 11th February had gained another ten ounces. The next weighing was on 18th February when the baby's weight was recorded at 5 lb. 11 ozs. At three weeks old the youngster was still on a two-hourly feed during the day, but was fed only twice at night, taking some 5 ozs. of milk at each feed. On 25th February its weight was 6 lb. 3 ozs., and on 3rd March 6 lb. 8 ozs. At the time of writing the baby is five weeks old.

Hand-rearing an Orang-utan is exactly the same as having a human baby in the house. It has to be changed in precisely the same way as a human baby. As orangs are very susceptible to chest complaints one should wear a mask if one has a cold, or just not go near the baby.

Orangs are the most lovable and fascinating of animals. Their sad expressions are appealing; they appear reserved. Their wide dark brown eyes and small triangular-shaped noses give them a noticeably human look. The hair on top of the head is sparse and upright, framing the face and ears.

In the baby stage orangs have an immediate attachment to the person who feeds and looks after them. One must be careful in later months that they do not become too humanized.

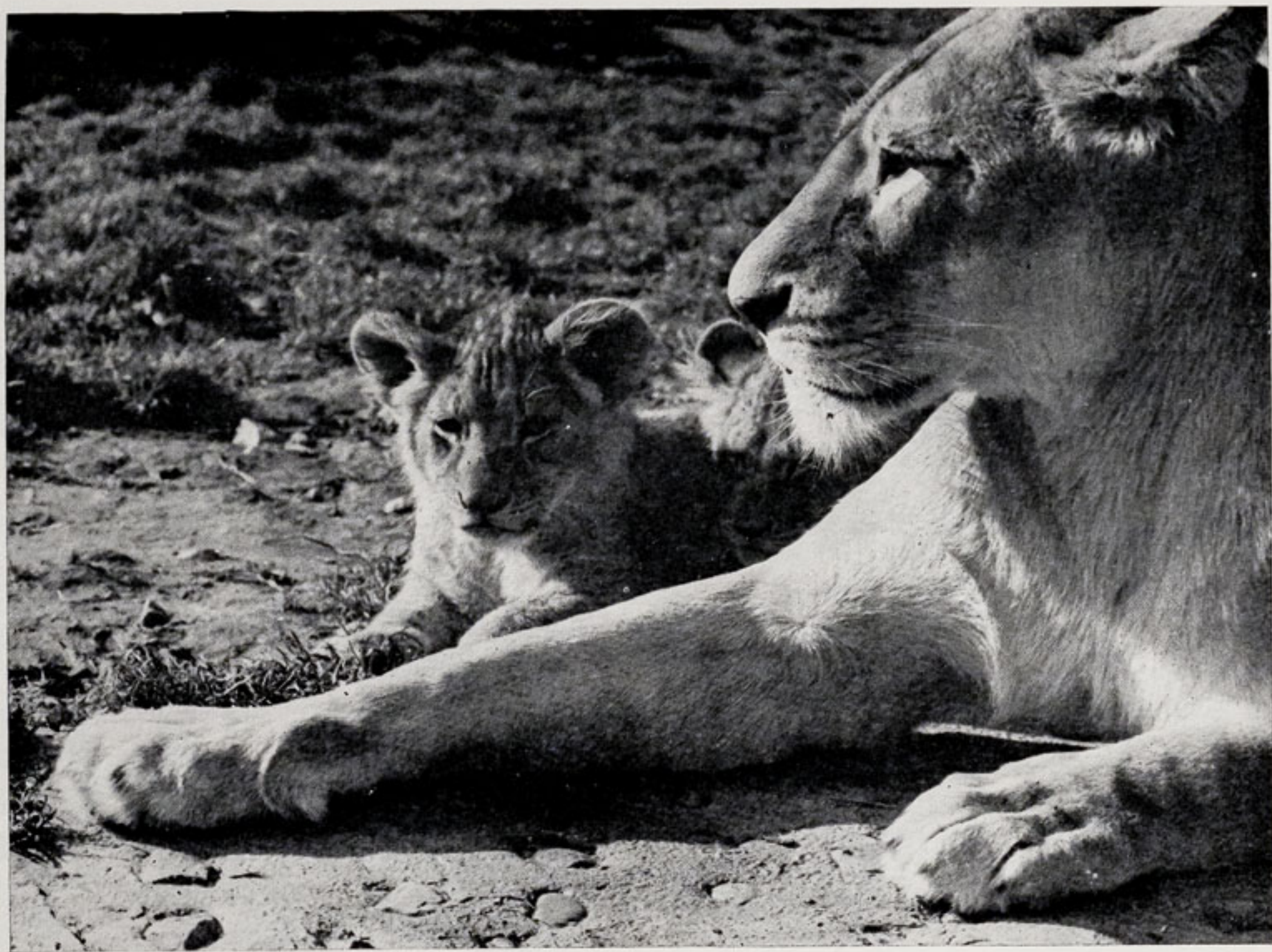
In January 1962, Mr. Timmis, the Curator, spent ten days on the upper reaches of the River Rajang, and on two of the days looked for wild orangs with the local Dyaks. However, they did not find the orangs but only the nests which had been occupied by them the previous night. Native gardens had been raided several hours before they arrived.

The party were in an area on the outskirts of Sibu, and at that time the Indonesians were at war with Malaysia so that it was difficult to travel inland because of guerilla forces with Indonesian regulars. The Curator did, however, see several babies on the Dyak long-houses. They had been taken from the mothers who had been shot.

* * *

Our Thailand Water Dragons (*Physignathus cocincinus*) have laid another thirteen eggs, and these are being artificially incubated in the Reptile House. Thirteen eggs were laid five weeks ago, and we are anxiously awaiting the hatchings, the incubation period being approximately 62 days.

Since reporting the breeding of a Tockay Gecko (*Gecko gecko*) last month (the second of this species to be bred at Chester Zoo),



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

LIONESSE "CATHY" (*Panthera leo*) WITH HER TWO CUBS

the Curator of Reptiles has found two more eggs and these are being artificially incubated.

BIRD NOTES

Five pairs and two male Mandarin Ducks (*Aix galericulata*) have been received in exchange. The distribution of this bird is north-eastern Asia, ranging from the breeding areas in Japan, Sakhalin, Manchuria, north-east China and the Assuri-Amur region, and wintering south to the Riu-Kiu Islands, Formosa and Kwangtoug, west to Nanking. These birds are seen occasionally in Assam and there is a small stock in England. In temperate weather in the winter the Mandarin Duck does, however, remain on its breeding ground. The survival of the Mandarin Duck in the wild is threatened, partly due to forest destruction, but in some parts of its range it is protected. Mandarins favour waterways such as streams, lakes and ponds, and they nest in a hollow tree in forests.

The Mandarin drake has a most elegant appearance, having light brownish-coloured wing fans which are unusual in males. Its beautiful ornamental feathers are white, black, light brown, glossy-green to purple, with some coppery red and green. At the start of the breeding season the male comes into its full colour, and this is maintained throughout its breeding period. At the end of the breeding season the male goes into an eclipse plumage, and it is then that the male and female resemble each other.

Three male and six female Greater Bahama Pintails (*Anas. b. rubrirostris*) have also been received in exchange. The distribution of these birds is South America south of the Equator, and their range is Brazil, Paraguay, Argentine, Uruguay, Bolivia and Chile. They migrate to the south of their range.

These birds live on small pools surrounded by vegetation; they also frequent coastal areas and some low inland districts, and are often to be found congregating at the mouth of rivers near salt lakes.

In the wild Bahama Pintails are difficult to approach as they are shy and hide quickly in thick vegetation. They can be successfully

kept in captivity and are quite handsome and tame. They are hardy, and breed well, sometimes crossing with other species. The dark cap which they have makes a sharp contrast to the white face and throat. The bill is partly crimson with a black line along the culmen, the basal half crimson and the remainder bluish-grey. The iris is dark brown and the legs and feet grey. The male is brighter than the female in colour, and has a longer tail and a more brightly coloured bill. Immature specimens are similar but not so colourful. *Anas bahamensis rubrirostris* is that most often kept in captivity and is easily reared.

One male and two female Chiloë Wigeons have recently been received into the collection. We have not had Wigeons for some time and it will be interesting to have them again. The Chiloë or South American Wigeon (*Anas sibilatrix*) has a distribution in South America, and its range is southern Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, northern Argentina, and central Chile to Tierra del Fuego and the Falkland Islands. Its breeding area is the southern part of the province of Buenos Aires southwards. During the winter Chiloë Wigeons extend their range north of their breeding area.

These birds are to be found on freshwater lakes and in marshes. They are tame when left alone, but are extremely wary when harassed. They nest between August and January. Their eggs are laid on the ground, the male sharing in the care of the offspring.

The plumage of the Chiloë Wigeon is very similar in both male and female. They call and display in the same manner, are noisy and fussy, and spend much time in pairs calling, displaying and challenging one another.

In captivity these birds do well on ornamental waters. Both sexes are most attractive in their plumage colouration of white, metallic green, black-brown and rusty-chestnut. The iris is brown, the bill slaty-blue with a black tip, and the legs are grey. The female is smaller, and only a little less colourful. Immature specimens resemble the adults but are much less colourful.

Also received into the collection were two pairs of Laysan Teal (*Anas platyrhynchos laysanensis*). The distribution of these

birds is Laysan Island in the Pacific Ocean. This island is only three miles long, and usually the birds are to be found in pairs around a pond, or in groups of twelve or more. The numbers of these birds on the island were greatly reduced at the beginning of the 20th century, but by 1923 had increased somewhat and the Laysan Teal continues to survive there.

This is an inbred sub-species originating from the Mallard of the Northern Hemisphere. The female is more boldly marked than the male. Last year we successfully bred a Laysan Teal in the zoo.

Tufted Ducks (*Aythya fuligula*) were received in exchange, comprising two pairs and two males. These are freshwater birds and their distribution is Europe and Asia. Their nests are on lake islands, or on the banks of small pools. They hide their nest in undergrowth, usually close to the water. The nest consists of a hollow, lined with grass and down.

These ducks are migratory except that in moderate winters they merely congregate and remain where they are. They consume large quantities of insects and molluscs, small mammals and vegetable matter.

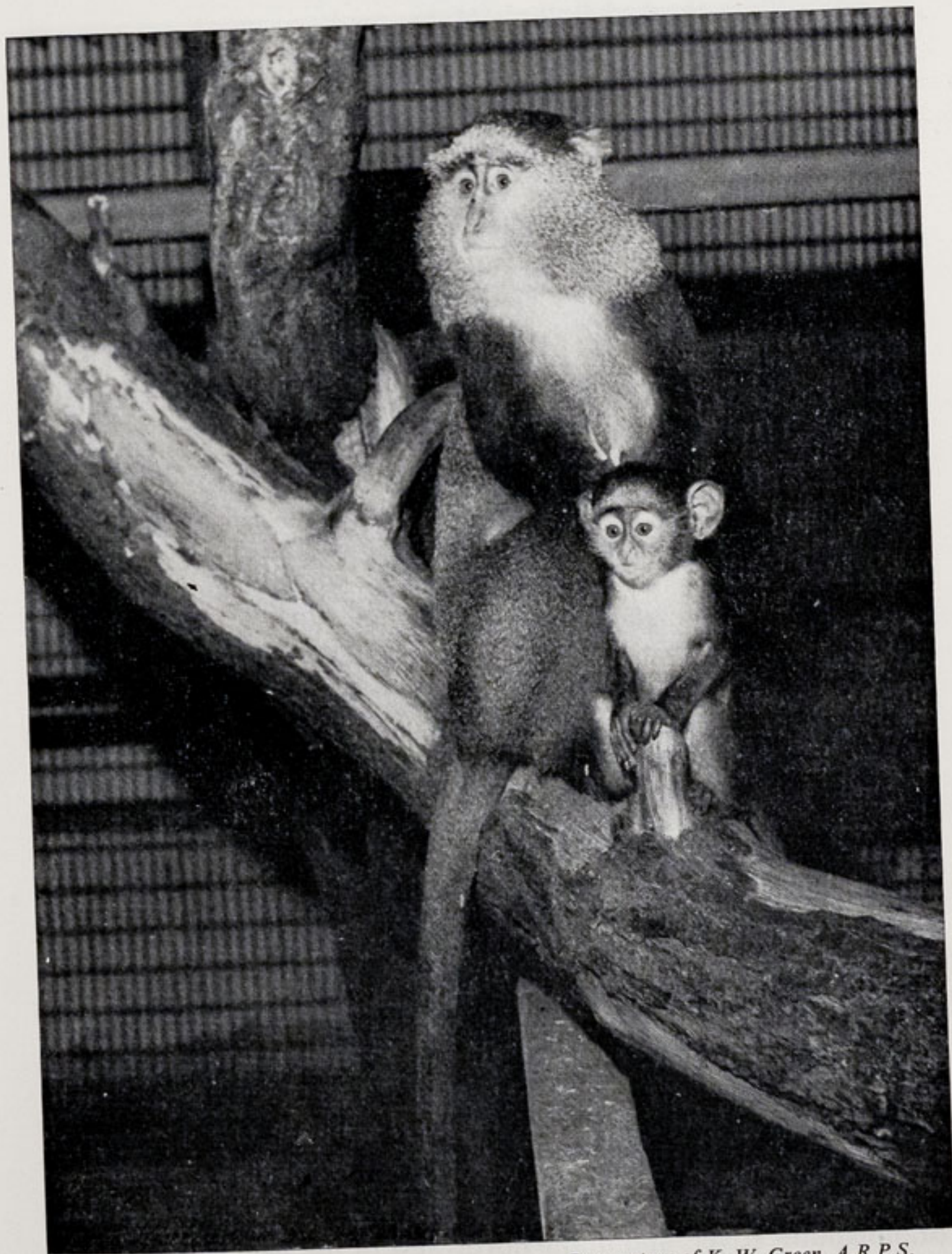
Aythya fuligula are very handsome birds, especially the male which has black and white, purple to dark green plumage. The bill is blue, the eyes bright yellow, and it has a remarkable crest. The legs are a bluish-grey. The adult female has a shorter crest, and in general is not so attractive as the male, being more of a palish-brown colour.

The birds described above can be seen on the ornamental ponds of the zoo.

* * *

The following birds have been presented to us this month:

1.1 Common Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*)



By courtesy of K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.
MOTHER AND DAUGHTER, MOLONEY'S GUENON X SYKES

and the following have been received in exchange:

2.2 Yellow-browed Bulbul (*Iole icterica*)

1.1 White-cheeked Bulbul (*Molpastes leucogenys*)

1.1 Black Bulbul (*Microscelis psaroides*)

Both sexes of the Yellow-browed Bulbul are alike in colour, bright olive above and bright yellow below. There is a yellow line over the eye.

The distribution of these birds is the Western Ghats from Khandala to Travancore, and inland to the Nilgiris and Palnis at all heights from the foot of the hills to 6,500 ft. but mostly at about 3,500 ft. They are also found in Ceylon.

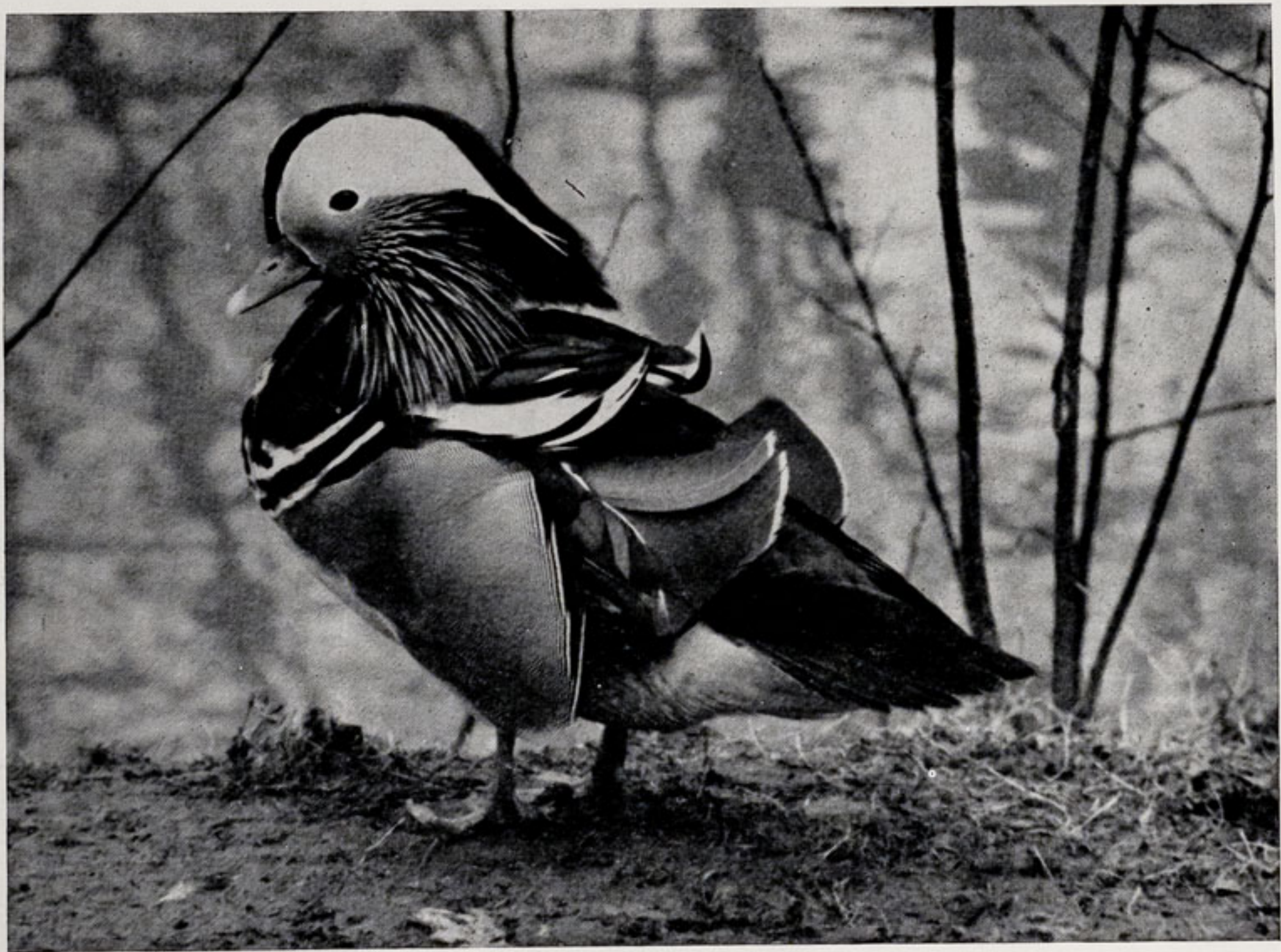
The habitat of the *Iole icterica* is heavy evergreen forest on the hillsides where it keeps mostly to the undergrowth but can be found on the edge of the forest, occasionally venturing into gardens near forests.

Its call is a sweet mellow sound, something like "cty eye", "te white up", "te whit-up" repeated continuously; its alarm note is contrastingly harsh. In India this bird feeds on forest berries and fruits and on domesticated fruits such as peaches, pears, etc. In Ceylon it also feeds on insects.

Yellow-browed bulbuls breed from February to May. They build their nest in dense forest in small saplings or evergreen shrubs. This is a shallow cup made almost entirely of green moss or fine grasses, bound with cobwebs and lined with black rootlets or fine grass. It is usually slung between two twigs in a horizontal fork. The usual clutch is two eggs, but there are sometimes three.

The White-cheeked Bulbul is to be found in gardens and open country in most of its range. Its distribution extends throughout the Himalayas from Afghanistan to the hills of Assam, north of the Brahmaputra River, and in the north-west of the Peninsula down as far as Central India; it then extends west to Mesopotamia. It inhabits open country, dwelling amongst bushes.

The colour of the *Molpastes leucogenys* is a dull brown, but



MANDARIN DRAKE (*Aix galericulata*)

it has an unusual crest following a curve forwards over its beak. Markings on the head are black and it has a large patch on the face, and a yellow patch under the tail. It is 8 inches in length and both sexes are alike. Its call is cheerful and melodious and these birds are to be found in pairs, or small parties of five or six individuals. Continually bowing and posturing they make a lively scene. The White-cheeked Bulbul feeds chiefly on insects, fruits and berries. It can be observed collecting ants, grubs and beetles from the ground. Garden crops, such as green peas, are sometimes raided.

Breeding commences at the end of March until August. The nest is a well-constructed cup composed of fine dry stems of herbaceous plants mixed with dry grass stalks and shreds of vegetable fibres. Dry grass stems or grass roots line the nest. This is usually built in thick bush at a height of about 4/6 feet from the ground, but sometimes in higher trees.

The colour of the Black Bulbul is mostly ash-grey, darker above to white below the abdomen. It has a black crest, and black marks at the base of the beak and around the ear-coverts. The bill and legs are a bright coral-red, and the iris dark brown. The tail is bluntly forked, the outer feathers being slightly curved outwards.

The distribution of the Black Bulbul is from India to Japan and its habitat is in high forest trees except when breeding. It is then found in small groups, and large flocks of as many as 100 individuals. It keeps to the tops of trees, flying from one tree to another. Its flight is swift, but owing to its weak feet it does not climb or hop about from branch to branch. This bird is very noisy and bold, and its noise would immediately reveal its whereabouts. It has a long-drawn nasal "weenk", and a pretty whistle which is rather like "whew-whe" or "whee-whe", often preceded by a "squeaky-squeaky" call. The food of the *Microscelis psaroides* consists of berries of various shrubs and trees; insects are also eaten by them.

The breeding season is from April to the end of June when these birds can be seen feeding together in pairs. The male remains near whilst the female is on the nest.

The nest of the Black Bulbul is a neat cup built of coarse-bladed grass, dry leaves and moss. It is lined with grass stems or pine needles, and moss roots, and is bound outside with spiders' webs. The nest is built high up in the fork of a tree. Three or four eggs comprise the clutch in the Himalayas, and two in the Nilgiris.

GARDENING NOTES

To complete the notes on our collection of shrubs, a very important group, of which no mention has yet been made, are the Viburnums. These are all excellent, varying in sizes and time of flowering. All have attractive foliage.

To mention a few, the variety *bodnantensis* is winter-flowering and has large deep pink flowers; *fragrans* is also winter-flowering with pink and white flowers, and both varieties are fragrant. *Carlecephalum* has large clusters of white, deliciously scented flowers in the spring. *Rhytidophyllum* is taller-growing and is a favourite with us; several fine specimens can be seen planted throughout the zoo. This has large, leathery wrinkled leaves with rusty hairs underneath. These in themselves make this shrub worth growing; it also bears large heads of white flowers. *Davidii* has shiny deep green leaves, and is moderate in growth. The female form produces blue berries when planted with a male bush. *Tinus*, usually known as *laurestinus*, is a dark green shrub which is covered with large pink flowers from autumn to spring.

We have two varieties of Weigela planted in the gardens—Bristol Ruby has crimson flowers and Florida has pink ones. These are a most showy flowering shrub. They flower on wood made after flowering, and should be pruned at that time.

Clematis are climbing plants with lovely flowers of all shades. These do best in full sun but with their roots shaded. They require trellis or wire support to which their tendrils can cling. They are a diverse group of climbers in their flowering time and pruning requirements. We have the varieties *Jackmanii*, *Lanuginosa*, and *Montana*.

There are a few shrubs in the gardens which are "extra choice". One is the Hibiscus. The tropical varieties are in profusion in our Tropical House. The hardy variety *syriacus* is a very lovely late-flowering shrub. Some good specimens of these can be seen in the shrubbery at the east end of the Tropical House.

Choisya ternata is the Mexican Orange shrub. It is evergreen, with lovely light green foliage and masses of white flowers. It is not quite hardy, and will only succeed with us against a south-facing wall.

Ceratostigma willmottianum is a deciduous shrub for a sheltered position. It is dwarf with slender habit, and has trusses of plumbago blue flowers from July to September.

Caryopteris clandonensis (the blue spirea) has violet-blue flowers in late summer and autumn. It is dwarf and does best in a sunny position.

* * *

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 £2.00, 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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W. H. Evans & Sons Ltd.
Sealand Road Trading Estate
Chester