

SUMMER 2013

Z

CHESTER ZOO

*The official magazine for  
Chester Zoo MEMBERS  
and ADOPTERS*

Standing TALL

*meet the* NEW ARRIVALS

# Z MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2013

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28 June 2013 - Friday  
3 November 2013 - Sunday



**CHESTERZOO**

Chester Zoo, Upton-by-Chester Chester, CH2 1LH  
Tel. 01244 380 280 Fax. 01244 371 273  
Email: [info@chesterzoo.org](mailto:info@chesterzoo.org) Web: [www.chesterzoo.org](http://www.chesterzoo.org)  
Director General: Dr. Mark Pilgrim  
Editor: Rachael A. Wheatley  
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### ARE YOU A FRIEND OF THE ENVIRONMENT?

As part of our commitment to the environment, we're giving you the chance to receive **Z** electronically.

Swapping over is easy.

Simply contact the membership office on **01244 650 208** or email [membership@chesterzoo.org](mailto:membership@chesterzoo.org) with an email address you would like us to send the link to – but don't forget to include your membership number or postcode so we can find you on our system. You'll still receive **Z** by post should you not wish to receive it electronically.

#### Please can you update us with news from the zoo?

As ever, our main attractions are the animals and over recent months we have seen an unprecedented number of mammal births. This success continues and we have some more new additions including a banteng, born to mum *Pari*. The banteng can be a tricky species and its early days so we're keeping everything crossed the calf is successfully reared, particularly as the banteng will eventually be making their home in *Islands*.

The Humboldt's penguin chicks have started to hatch and, in keeping with recent years, a theme has been chosen for the names. This year the team opted for Dr Who characters and we already have *Doctor*, *Dalek* and *Davros*. As a nice spin off, Dr Who's own Facebook and its three million followers have also got behind these new arrivals.

I'm really delighted that we have another black rhino due so will be keeping everything crossed for a successful first birth for *Zuri*. To have three black rhinos within 12 months is fantastic and really shows that even with difficult species when we get the conditions right we can breed such species well.

We have also welcomed a new bull, *Meru*, from Leipzig Zoo and he will undoubtedly have a great impact on the giraffe herd.

#### Please can you update us on *Islands*?

*Islands* continues to gather pace and the main package of works which includes grounds work, landscaping, the boat ride and the shell of the Indonesian Jungle building has gone out for tender. In the meantime, we continue some vital preliminary works here with the great crested newts we have on that site.

Over the next few weeks, teams of volunteers will be out early trapping the newts before releasing them into their breeding ponds without the disturbance of the building works, great crested newts are the biggest and rarest of the three native newt species.

#### What is happening in the zoo?

I really enjoy the fact that zoos are a big community that share, not only animals as part of breeding programmes, but also experience, knowledge and skills. Although there may be competition for visitors it's not the case when it comes to animals!

# NEWS FROM THE ZOO

We have recently been helping out Blackpool Zoo, caring for their four Bornean orangutans whilst a new home is built for them. Although not directly on show here, you can catch glimpses of them on top of the poles on the islands of our old orang house.

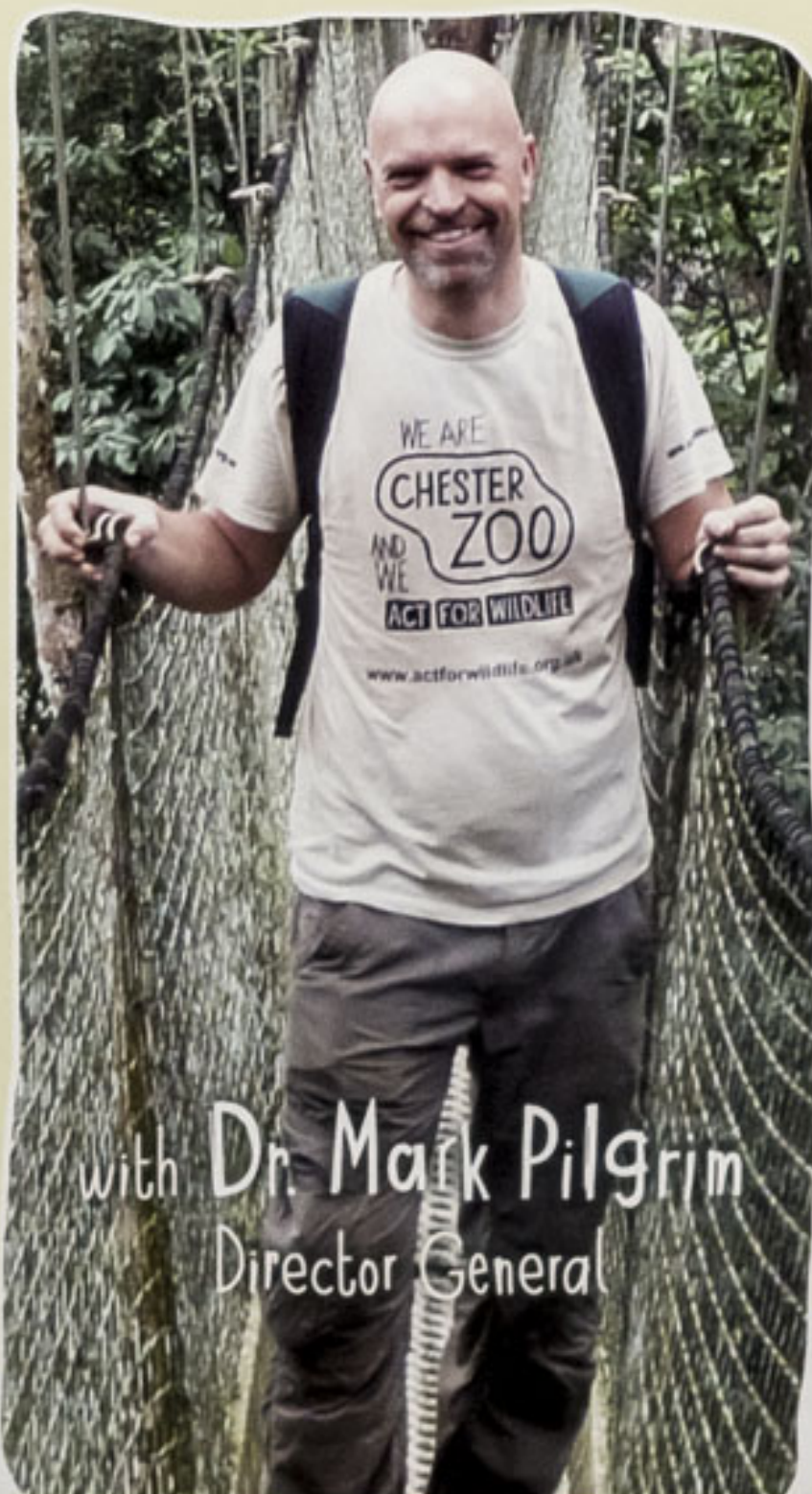
Orangutans will also be the key species for some very special fundraising this year. *Orange October* will be the time when we'll be asking schools, businesses and even you to don some orange clothing and donate a £1 to our appeal, which will help fund orangutan conservation projects in the wild. We'll have more details nearer the time but it's sure to be a fun way of raising awareness and funds for these great apes.

Our mind-bogglingly big *Bugs!* are just a couple of months away from making an appearance and we're sure they will be a great crowd-pleaser.

A small team of staff and I will also be attending the BIAZA parliamentary reception at the Houses of Parliament at the beginning June. This is a valuable opportunity to impress upon MPs the valuable work being done by zoos in the field of conservation but also to trumpet the contribution they make to the tourism sector and the UK economy.

#### And finally...

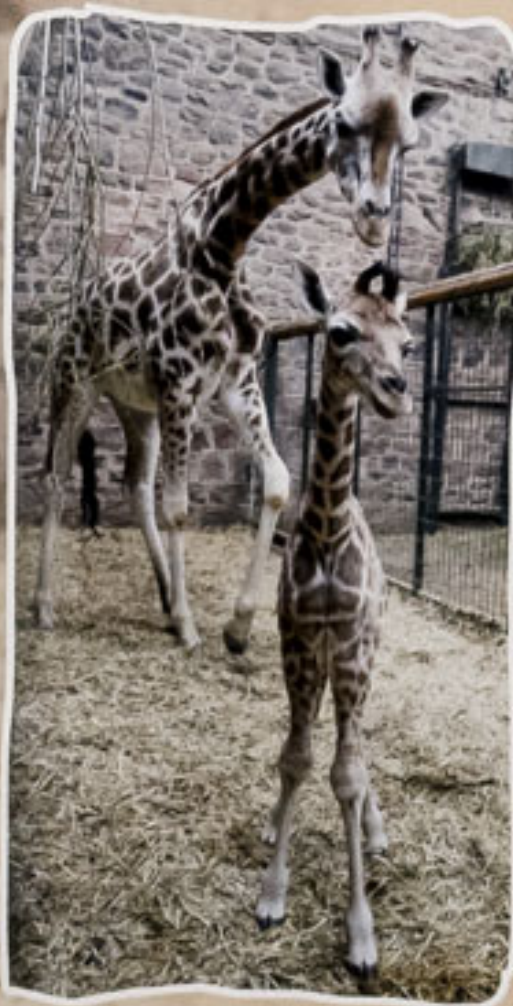
Our AGM takes place on Tuesday June 11 where I and the directors' team will be sharing highlights of the previous 12 months' events with members. 2012 was a packed year and 2013 looks set to follow suit – we look forward to seeing you there.



with Dr. Mark Pilgrim  
Director General



# THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE



Our baby boom shows no signs of letting up as endangered Rothschild giraffe *Millie* follows two Asian elephants, two black rhinos, two Sumatran orangutans, two giant otter pups, an okapi and more in being born in the last six months.

The Rothschild giraffe calf - the world's most endangered sub-species of giraffe - was born to first-time mum *Orla* after a 14 ½ month pregnancy.

Our curator of mammals, Tim Rowlands, said:

"For a first time mum *Orla* is doing a superb job so far. She really does seem to be taking motherhood all in her rather long stride.

"Rothschild giraffes are very, very rare indeed and so careful, managed breeding programmes in zoos and wildlife parks are vital for their long-term future. We're therefore obviously delighted with our newcomer."

According to conservationists there are now less than 670 Rothschild giraffes left in the wild, following the loss of their traditional habitat in their native Kenya and Uganda and their poaching for their meat. The species is the most endangered of the nine sub-species of giraffe.

As well as its breeding successes, we have also supported important projects in the wild, including the first ever scientific review of the Rothschild giraffe with the aim of developing a long-term conservation strategy for the species in Africa.



## BLACK RHINO *facts*

Baby: A girl. Born on March 7 2013. Named Dakima.

The number of black rhinos in Africa is plummeting as a result of a dramatic surge in illegal poaching. A global increase in demand for rhino horn to supply the traditional Asian medicine market, where it is wrongly believed to be a cure for everything from nightmares to dysentery, has intensified the situation in recent times. Emerging markets in Vietnam and an upsurge in the supply of arms used to hunt rhino, have further added to the problem. This attrition is being driven by the astonishing street value for rhino horn, which fetches £40,000 a kilo - more than gold. The black rhino is under serious threat.

The number of black rhinos in Kenya plummeted from about 20,000 in 1970 to 597 (as at December 2010)

We have long supported conservation efforts in the wild to try and protect black rhinos and continues to pump money, and provide expertise, to numerous sanctuaries in Africa.

Helping to ensure an insurance population exists in the event that black rhino become extinct in the wild, we have been successful in breeding a number of critically endangered black rhinos and plays a vital part in the international breeding programme.



Keepers and conservation staff are celebrating the birth of a rare baby rhino.

The Eastern black rhino - a species which is classed by conservationists as critically endangered - Dakima is the second calf to be born at the zoo in just six months. Her arrival is another step towards sustaining a black rhino population which, in the wild, has been devastated by poachers.

Mum Malindi is seven years old. Dakima's her first calf and she is quickly learning the art of good parenting.

Curator of mammals Tim Rowlands said:

"Malindi is so far doing a great job. Being a mum for the first time she's naturally protective but she's doing really well and both her and her calf seem very happy."

The birth brings the number of black rhinos at the zoo to nine.

Mr Rowlands said:

"This species is faced with an uncertain future and sadly, a very real threat of extinction. Every birth is therefore vital to their survival.

"The zoo puts a vast amount of time, money and effort into trying to protect the species in the wild and supports a number of important reserves across Africa. However, as demand for rhino horn intensifies, the poaching crisis is escalating out of control.

"That's why we need to ensure we have an insurance population in Europe and that's why this arrival is such great news."

There are thought to be less than 650 Eastern black rhinos remaining in the wild, placing the species perilously close to extinction.

Numbers in Africa are plummeting as a result of a dramatic surge in illegal poaching. A global increase in demand for rhino horn to supply the traditional Asian medicine market, where it is wrongly believed to be a cure for everything from nightmares to dysentery, has intensified the situation in recent times. The attrition is being driven by the astonishing street value of rhino horn, which is currently worth more per gram than gold and cocaine.

Back at the zoo, Dakima will eventually join the international breeding programme, which has already seen some black rhinos returned to Africa to help boost numbers.

Mr Rowlands added:

"The new calf is only taking tiny steps at the moment, but eventually we hope she'll have a big role to play as part of a co-ordinated breeding programme."

The baby rhino and mum are currently off-show to visitors while the pair is given privacy and time to get to know one another but it hopefully shouldn't be too long until they're out and about together.

# CALF LEADS THE CHARGE



Cheshire Zoo's latest baby rhino stands by the legs of her mum Malindi

**It's a task that would daunt even Batman but zookeepers have been checking over 400 bats in their bi-annual bat catch.**

Twice a year the zoo's Seba's short-tailed, Rodrigues and Livingstone's fruit bats are caught and counted and their genders determined to make sure that the ratios of males to females are equal. It also gives keepers a chance to check on any new babies.

Rodrigues fruit bats are a particularly threatened species and are classed as critically endangered in the wild, so knowing their exact number is vital in terms of breeding of a viable insurance population in zoos.

**Team Manager David White said:**

**"It's vitally important that we know the ratios of males to females. That's because sometimes individuals have to be moved to other zoos to breed in order to make sure we keep the gene pool diverse and conserve a healthy, viable population of critically endangered Rodrigues fruit bats."**

In the 1970s the species almost went extinct as numbers dropped to just 70 bats. However on-going conservation work and habitat protection in Mauritius - which we have helped support for a number of years - together with an effective breeding programme in zoos, research and education has since seen the population steadily increase.

**Mr White added:**

**"It's really pleasing to know that there's a thriving breeding programme now established in zoos, safeguarding the species' future should disaster ever strike again in the wild."**

**"We must, however, marry the good work here with more work in the bats' homeland and keep striving to protect and restore habitat and educate local people about this brilliant species."**

Keepers also took the opportunity to give each and every one of the bats - over 400 live in the zoo's bat cave, which is the largest free-flying bat house in Europe - a general health check, weighing them and measuring their wing spans in the process.

# GOING BATTY



Zeyar, the UK's only baby brow antlered deer, tucks into a breakfast bottle provided by keeper Helen Massey. The tiny arrival, who weighed just 3.7kg when she was born, is going from strength-to-strength thanks to Helen's care and dedication. Zeyar was rejected by her mum leaving Helen to ensure she gets her four bottles a day. Brow antlered deers are classed by conservationists as endangered meaning Zeyar's arrival is great news for the future of her species.



# ZEYAR

*has a lot  
of bottle*



# RAISING ALUNA

She stands just a few centimetres tall but this tiny new arrival has made a big impression. *Aluna*, the tiny Kirk's dik-dik antelope, was not much taller than a TV remote when she arrived.

To help her on her way, she was bottle-fed milk five times a day by our dedicated curator of mammals Tim Rowlands after she failed to bond with her mother.

Native to Kenya, Tanzania and Namibia, the dik-dik gets its name from the noise it makes when running for cover. They can live for up to 10 years and reach a maximum size of just 40cm tall, making it one of the smallest antelope species in the world.



© Peter Byrne/PA



Two of the world's rarest pigs and a pair of 'feisty' baby otters have had their first ever health check-ups.

The pint-sized piglets and tiny pups were checked over by our vets who weighed them, listened to their hearts beat and gave them full physical examinations.

All were sexed with one of the babirusa piglets discovered to be male and the other female, as were the pair of Asian short-clawed otters. Keepers have named the pigs Salem and Yale and the otters Wallace and Dill.

Vet Steve Unwin said:

"We're thrilled to report that our pigs and our pups are in great shape.

"Babirusa pigs are one of the rarest pig species on the planet and we're delighted that Salem and Yale are fit and healthy. They're highly threatened in the wild and so our new duo adds significantly to the world's population, which is positive news for the future of the species.

"Little otter Wallace weighed in at 730 grams and Dill was a little lighter at 680. Both proved to be fairly feisty characters but they are extremely healthy indeed and so we are very happy with them.

"As they continue to grow and become even more confident, we're looking forward to seeing them take to the water.

"Zoos provide the last insurance policy against extinction and all of these new arrivals will hopefully now continue to develop and become a vital part of the international breeding programme to safeguard the species."

The two piglets were born to mum Majene and dad Sausu.

In the wild, the species has seen numbers plummet largely because of habitat loss through logging and hunting for their meat.

The young otters were born to mum Daisy and dad Robbie.

Asian short-clawed otters - the world's smallest otter species - are classed by conservation organisations as vulnerable to extinction. The new pups will therefore eventually become part of European-wide breeding programme, providing an important safety-net to populations in the wild.

# OTTER MAGIC

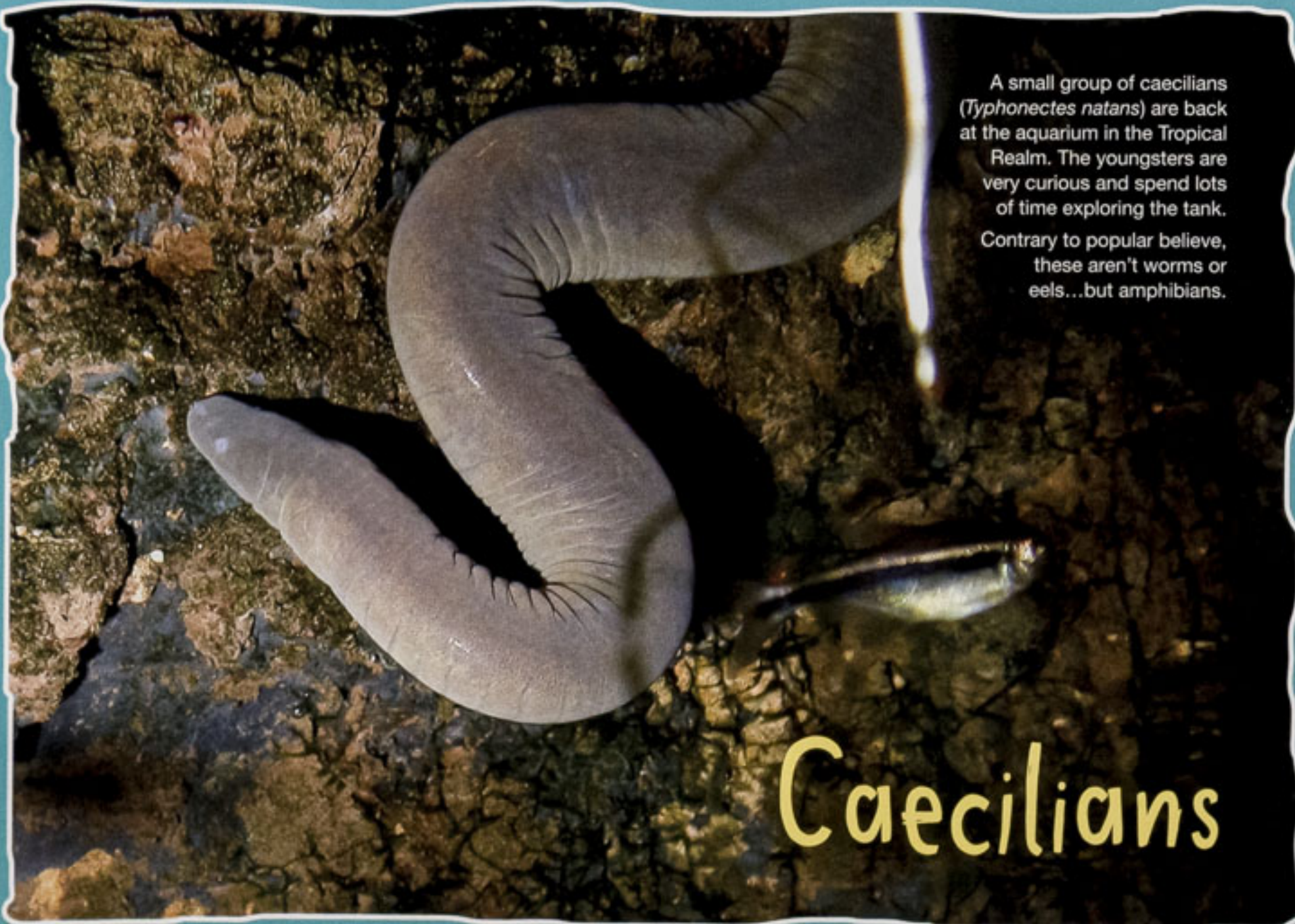


Vet Steve Unwin (far left) tends to one of the otters aided by other keeping and veterinary staff



# NIMA

Say hello to new red panda *Nima* who has arrived from Dublin. *Nima* is Tibetan for sun and her arrival has certainly left everyone beaming!



A small group of caecilians (*Typhlonectes natans*) are back at the aquarium in the Tropical Realm. The youngsters are very curious and spend lots of time exploring the tank. Contrary to popular believe, these aren't worms or eels...but amphibians.

# Caecilians



PRIZE  
TO BE WON!  
*with our*  
WORD SEARCH

# Kidz zoo

Summer 2013



*Inside...* KIDS' PROGRAMME OF EVENTS



# Junior Members' PROGRAMME of EVENTS



## LAKE PADARN – SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK

**SATURDAY 22 JUNE 2013**

Don't worry, we will not be traipsing the juniors up Mount Snowdon, but we will have this famous mountain in our sight at times while we are walking around the huge Lake Padarn, one of the water bodies at the base of the Electric Mountain. We will not be rushing – just enjoying the stroll and if we manage to be quiet enough we will see some of the wild mountain goats which live in this beautiful area.

We will leave the staff car park at 9.00 am and return at 5.30pm. Bring a picnic lunch and all eights and over are invited to come along for a lovely day out.

## HOW TO BE A GOOD ZOOKEEPER!

**WEDNESDAY 24 JULY 2013**

This is a unique opportunity offered to junior members to spend a day working alongside a zoo keeper. The work can be tough and demanding so we strictly limit this event to those juniors of 12 years old or over. We try to match juniors to their favourite section, but places are limited so this cannot be guaranteed. Please arrive prepared to work hard, with clean wellies and an additional completely clean set of clothes to work in.

**Owing to the zoo's biosecurity measures, it is important that the clothes you wear to work on the sections have not been in contact with any farm animals, or even your pets at home, since they were last washed.**

We will meet outside the Oakfield at 10.30 am, and the day will finish at 4.00pm. Please bring a packed lunch. Also please note that bookings for this event will not be taken before 9.00 am on Wednesday 10 July 2013, (01244 650215) and will be strictly on a first-come, first-served basis.

## JUNIORS' SUMMER BARBEQUE

**THURSDAY 1 AUGUST 2013**

Our summer barbeque has become a regular feature for the juniors' diary as it has proved immensely popular. Perhaps this because it is our chance to be in the zoo when there are no other visitor noises to distract you and the animals, so it is a different zoo experience. We usually aim to have a speaker to chat to you or to engage in

### Please Note:

Bookings must be made for all events. Please ring **Penny Rudd** at the zoo on **01244 650 215**, not more than two weeks before the event you would like to attend. Places are offered on a first-come, first-served basis and may be limited. This list is provisional and in exceptional circumstances we may have to alter dates and venues. You will be informed of any such changes in Z Magazine and not by individual letter, so please keep up-to-date by reading the Kidz Zoo pages in each issue. A charge will be made to cover the cost of those events which involve transport, entry fees, materials or the provision of food and you will be advised of this at the time of booking.



craft activities or zoo tours during the evening, but you can be sure to find it relaxing.

We would like to invite eights and over to join us for a 7.00pm start, when you should arrive at the main entrance. Parents are asked to collect juniors from the main entrance at 9.45pm please.

## THE JUNIOR MEMBERS' SUMMER SCHOOL

**FROM 5 – 9 AUGUST 2013 INC.**

**Please note that the two week booking rule does NOT apply to this event and EARLY BOOKING IS ADVISED**

The Summer School is open to juniors aged 12 and above (although preference will be given to those aged 13 and above). Participants must be able to attend all five (full) days and the cost will be £185 for the week.

A full programme of events for this action-packed, but informal week, will be issued in the March edition of this magazine, but essentially the Summer School will encompass a wide variety of theoretical and practical training including a mid-week field trip, live mammal trapping, tours of the zoo, and talks from a variety of zoo staff about all aspects of the zoo's work. It is ideally suited to those hoping to follow a career in zoos, conservation or veterinary science but is also a lot of fun for those just interested in finding out more about how our wonderful zoo works!

## TRENTHAM MONKEY FOREST, STAFFORDSHIRE

**SATURDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2013**

You will love this visit which offers the chance to walk amongst free-roaming barbary macaques at Trentham Gardens. There are around 150 macaques there and you will be able to watch their natural behaviour with no cage barriers. The forest offers a safe place for the monkeys to live and provides areas of space for them to develop and live in freedom.

The bus will leave the staff car park at 10.00 am and return at 5.00pm. Eights and over are invited to join us for a relaxing day. Bring a picnic.

## BLACKPOOL ZOO

**SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER 2013**

It is a few years since the juniors last visited Blackpool Zoo but it is always great to visit other zoos and to see how they do things.

We plan to have a guided walk so that we do not miss any of the highlights and juniors should have an excellent day.

Over eights are invited to come along and enjoy the day, and we will leave the staff car park at 9.30 am and return there for 5.15pm. You will need a picnic lunch and to dress up warmly.

## BURTON MERE WETLANDS – THE RSPB RESERVE ON THE DEE ESTUARY

**SATURDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2013**

Burton Mere Wetlands is a magnificent mosaic of wetlands and beautiful woodlands and is perfect if you are new to birdwatching, as the entire reserve has been designed to get you closer to nature. Vast panoramas and a fascinating history are just some of the highlights from Burton Mere Wetlands. Straddling the border between England and Wales, this is a unique landscape. Many years of hard work have restored reedbeds, fenland and farmland.

This is a relatively new reserve to the RSPB and we felt we would love to go along to take a closer look. Many scarce migrant birds have been seen in previous years including little stints, green, curlew and wood sandpipers. Little egret numbers are at their highest in October/November as the chicks have fledged and large roosts have built up. Also, small numbers of wild geese begin to arrive. We will have a guided walk which should be excellent!

The bus will leave the staff car park at 11.00 am and return for 4.00pm. You will need to dress warmly and bring a picnic lunch. If you have binoculars bring them along, but we will have some you can borrow too. Juniors of eight and over are more than welcome to join us.

## THE JUNIORS' CHRISTMAS PARTY

**FRIDAY 6 DECEMBER 2013**

Our annual 'bash' welcomes juniors of eight and over to enjoy an evening of games, disco music, and a great hot-dog and beef-burger supper. You will need to bring along a cushion to sit on – and a torch to find us!

The venue will be Café Bembe. Access can be gained through the main entrance. You should arrive at 7.00pm, with your cushion and a torch, and we will guide you to the venue. Parents should arrange to collect you from the main entrance at 9.45pm.

# CAN YOU FIND THE NAMES OF 12 NATIVE UK SPECIES IN THE GRID, USING THE CLUES PROVIDED?

1. A small mammal that spends a lot of time asleep
2. The smallest rodent, that has been brought back to Cheshire
3. The largest of its kind in Britain with impressive antlers
4. When in danger this spikey animal curls up into a ball
5. The UK's only venomous reptile
6. Britain's rarest amphibian
7. The most commonly seen duck
8. This small bird spends the winter in Africa and nests here in roof spaces
9. This common plant has bright yellow flowers and is a good source of food for many animals
10. This tree with drooping branches is very popular as food for animals in the zoo!
11. A very spotty insect!
12. This large insect uses 'antlers' to fight.



D	A	S	H	D	K	A	X	J	T	A	S	D	O	X	T	A
A	L	I	A	A	R	L	E	M	I	S	R	E	A	B	J	S
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J	T	F	E	H	W	O	L	L	A	W	S	L	D	A	S	P
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A	N	O	I	L	E	D	N	A	D	I	H	E	D	O	J	R
D	S	D	K	A	D	J	A	R	T	X	A	J	S	L	U	A



For your chance to win a £10 voucher to spend in the zoo shops, send your entry together with your name, address and phone number by **Friday July 26** to:

**Z Magazine, Marketing Department, Chester Zoo, Upton-by-Chester, Chester CH2 1LH**

Congratulations to our previous winner Elizabeth Jones of Connah's Quay.



The perfect day out for budding photographers and wildlife lovers!



# Become a National Geographic Kids Photographer!

Take part in a *National Geographic Kids Photography Course at Chester Zoo* and you'll learn all about becoming a wildlife photographer!

Don't know what to do in the summer holidays? Why not practise your photography skills at Chester Zoo with NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS?! On 21 August we will be running two courses for budding photographers aged ten to 16, from 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm.

Award-winning wildlife photographer Sue Flood will guide you around Chester Zoo, helping you take awesome pictures of the zoo's wildest characters. You'll learn the secrets of wildlife photography, get loads of top tips, and you'll be sent a free album of your favourite photographs, too!



The introductory price of just £50 includes:

- A three-hour photography masterclass with award-winning wildlife photographer Sue Flood
- Free entry to Chester Zoo for one adult and one child for the entire day!
- Refreshments
- A personalised certificate
- A free album of your best photos from Snapfish
- Your choice of photo to be made into your very own NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS cover!
- A free copy of NG Kids magazine



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

To find out more or to book, visit [chesterzoo.org](http://chesterzoo.org) — limited availability, so book today!

Our latest arrival is out of this world – and has a name to match. Weighing just 66g, the baby chick *Doctor* is one of the first Humboldt penguins to hatch at the zoo this year.

Given that the baby was already doing well the only real poser for keepers was what to call their new charge – and the others due to hatch after him.

Last year's clutch got their names from British Olympic stars – this year they are named after icons from the hit TV show *Dr Who*, which celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

*Doctor* has already been joined by *Tardis*, *Davros* and *Dalek*.

Keeper Karen Neech said:

"Just as *Dr Who* has his companion we're very much the companions for the baby chicks at the moment – we're weighing them daily to make sure they're developing properly and feeding from their parents.

"With extra mouths to feed a lot more food is required, so it's a busy time for both us and the adult penguins.

"We provide the parents with fish and they then regurgitate to feed to the chicks. So it's a real combined effort – but without a sonic screwdriver in sight!"

The penguins are an endangered South American species, which come from the coastal areas of Peru and Chile. The new arrivals mean the zoo now has a colony of more than 40.

Each pair lays two eggs and will incubate them for 40 days up to hatching. Both parents are then involved in incubating and rearing the young.

# DOCTOR in the HOUSE



Chester Zoo keeper Karen Neech checks on penguin chicks *Davros* and *Dalek*



# Get Out and

## ACT FOR WILDLIFE

In the last 200 years, England has lost around 12% of its mammal species and a quarter of our native butterflies. Our UK wildlife conservation programme is working alongside various local partners in the North West of England and North Wales to secure habitats and species on our doorstep. Through these projects, we're achieving successes in areas such as habitat improvement; native species breeding and reintroduction; recording and monitoring wildlife; and training the conservation professionals of the future.

### You too can Act for Wildlife

It's that time of year the wildlife is buzzing and blooming around us and there are lots of opportunities to get out and 'Act For Wildlife'. You can get involved at the zoo and with projects in Cheshire and North Wales. Here are some suggestions:

### Wildlife recording at the site of the Zoo Nature Reserve

We are planning a wildlife recording event at our new nature reserve site on 15th June, before the main opening in spring 2014. This will help us to understand what wildlife is already there, so that we can monitor changes as nature takes over on the reserve. This is the first opportunity to see the reserve and where tree planting, and work on the pathways and grass amphitheatre started in April. More information will be provided on the Act for Wildlife website but for more on the nature reserve see page 22.



### Have you heard about the invasion?

Following on from the success of the annual Big Dee Day river clean-up, a new event this year will tackle the problem of invasive non-native plants and animals on the river Dee. Big Dee Day - The Invasion, is on 28th and 29th June. It's the first ever coordinated event to control these alien invaders across the whole of the river Dee, from its source in Snowdonia right through North Wales and Cheshire to the estuary. Activities are taking place at lots of locations - to find an event in your area please contact:

Area	Contact	Email
Cheshire	Lyn Byrne	lbyrne@cheshirewt.org.uk
Denbighshire	Lizzy Webster	elizabeth.webster@denbighshire.gov.uk
Flintshire	Amy Green	amy.e.green@flintshire.gov.uk
Snowdonia National Park	Gethin Davies	g.davies@eryri-npa.gov.uk
Wrexham	Emma Broad	emma.broad@wrexham.gov.uk



We are helping out with an event at Farndon in Cheshire on Saturday 29th June. Volunteers will be able to help with eradication of invasive non-native plants, or take part in the recording of invasive non-native species such as Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, and Chinese Mitten Crabs. The alien species the event focuses on cause real problems for native wildlife, and some also damage river banks resulting in erosion and flooding.

Supported by  
The National Lottery\*  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



### Fancy a day on the Beach?

Everyone is welcome to come along to the Living Seas Shore Search event on August 4th at Leasowe on the Wirral coast. The event will be run by our Biodiversity Trainees and colleagues at Cheshire Wildlife Trust as part of the 'Living Seas' campaign. There will be guided walks looking at seashore habitats and wildlife, your chance to find and identify plants and animals on the shore, information about sustainable fishing, a BBQ and sand sculpture activities.

For information on all these events, and more ways you can Act for Wildlife please visit [www.actforwildlife.org.uk](http://www.actforwildlife.org.uk) or contact: [actnow@actforwildlife.org.uk](mailto:actnow@actforwildlife.org.uk)



WE ARE  
**CHESTER ZOO**  
AND WE  
**ACT FOR WILDLIFE**



# EYE SPY

Luke O'Connor and Dr. Patrick Pomeroy

Sea Mammal Research Unit, University of St. Andrews

Female grey seals (*Halichoerus grypus*) have unique pelage patterns - much like a fingerprint - and at the Sea Mammal Research Unit, we've developed techniques to identify individuals by taking photographs and comparing images. This non-invasive method of research has highlighted that many individuals return to the same areas of the UK to breed. One of the biggest challenges we face is acquiring enough high quality photographs. Recent advances in technology have meant that new opportunities to collect data for our research have arisen. With the help of the zoo we're currently developing a remote control Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) to fly over colonies and collect photographs for photo identification. With the UAV we'll be able to collect photographs from areas that were not accessible before, such as offshore sandbanks and steep gullies on breeding colonies.

The grant we received from the zoo was used for the acquisition of parts for the UAV and training for pilots. The UAV is able to fly to heights of up to 400ft, up to a distance of one mile from the pilot. The pilot has real-time video footage sent back to a screen on the controls which enables easy positioning of the UAV. The photographs are taken using a High Definition camera, which is positioned underneath the UAV to dampen vibration which leads to much higher quality images.

We are in the early phases of the project but trial flights have been extremely successful. The ability to acquire more photographs means knowledge of the distribution and movements of individual animals over long time periods will improve. This could ultimately lead to better informed management decisions for grey seals, such as the creation of protected areas. Furthermore, once the technology has been established we hope to use it for the conservation of other species.



Photographs © Luke O'Connor

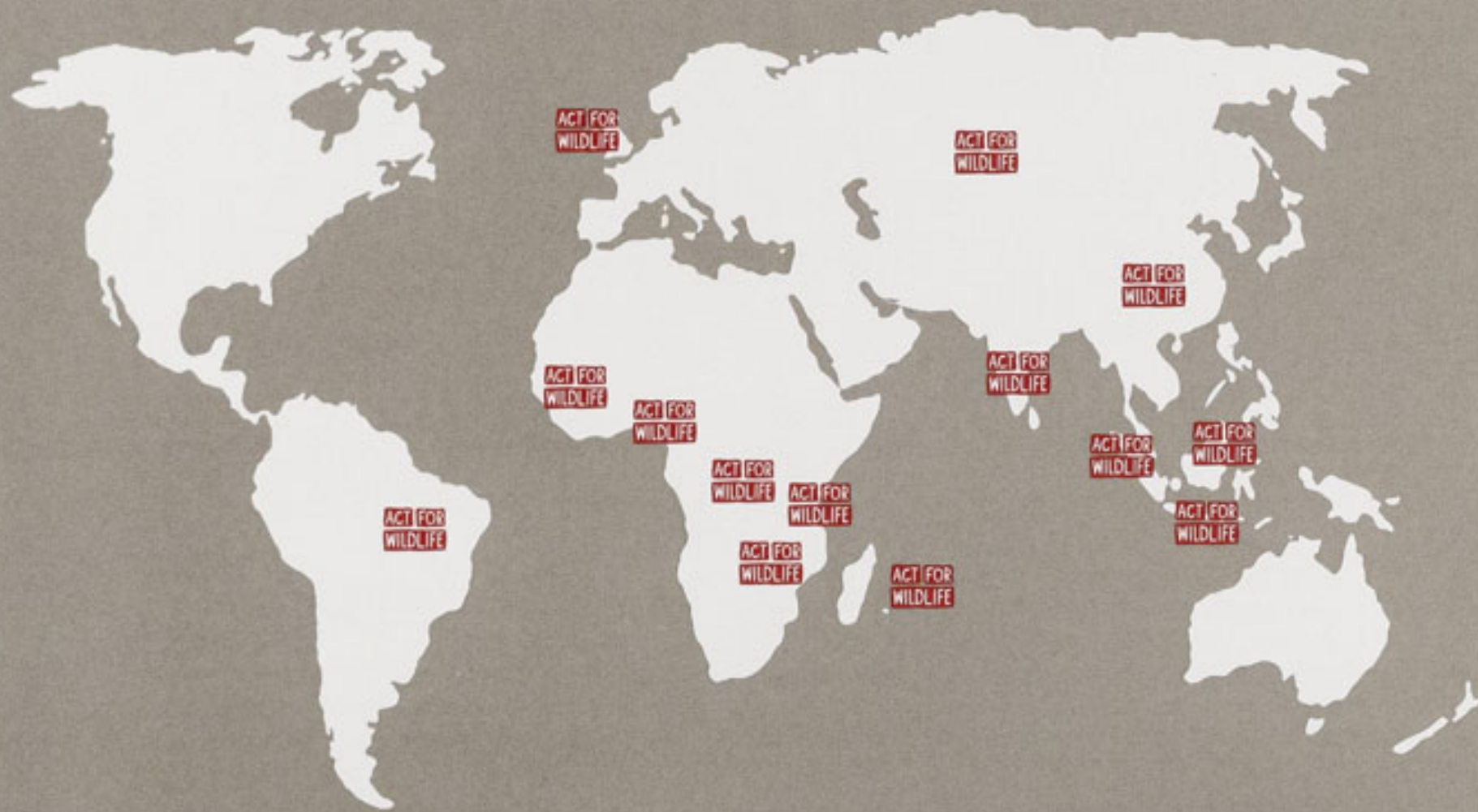


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# MAKING A DIFFERENCE AROUND THE WORLD

All the places we have ACTED FOR WILDLIFE in the last three months.



## A focus on THE 2013 CHESTER ZOO STUDENTSHIP AWARDS

Supporting conservationists of the future, our annual Conservation Studentship Awards are open to applications from the UK and overseas. These awards provide financial support to undergraduate and master students who are completing a field based research project as part of their degree programme. Past recipients have gone on to complete important conservation research projects. This year the awards were given to seven projects taking place in six countries including an assessment of surface water quality and effects of water extraction in Arusha National Park, Tanzania, an investigation into the population status of the Camiguin Hawk-Owl in the Philippines and an evaluation of community-based conservation programmes in Samburu, northern Kenya.



© Fiona Burns

Past Studentship recipient collecting data on rare St. Helens Plover

### Fast Fact

Since 1992 we have supported over 140 student projects in 47 countries.

## NEWS FROM JAVA

The illegal trade in ornamental birds is big business and poses a huge threat to the survival of many bird species. One such species is the Javan Green Magpie, a stunning bird which is endemic to the Indonesian island of Java. But with only one wild sighting in recent years the species is thought to be on the brink of extinction.

In an attempt to salvage this species, with the aid of our funding and technical support, a breeding programme was established at Cikananga Conservation Breeding Centre on Java. In 2011 the centre began rescuing magpies from trade markets and the great news is that this year they successfully hatched chicks. These chicks will hopefully grow up to be part of a larger breeding programme helping to secure a future for the species.



© Stephan Bulk



© Stephan Bulk

### Fast Fact

Indonesia is made up of over 18,000 islands with only 920 of them having permanent human inhabitants.

## NEWS ON CONSERVATION FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Some good and bad news from the past few months....

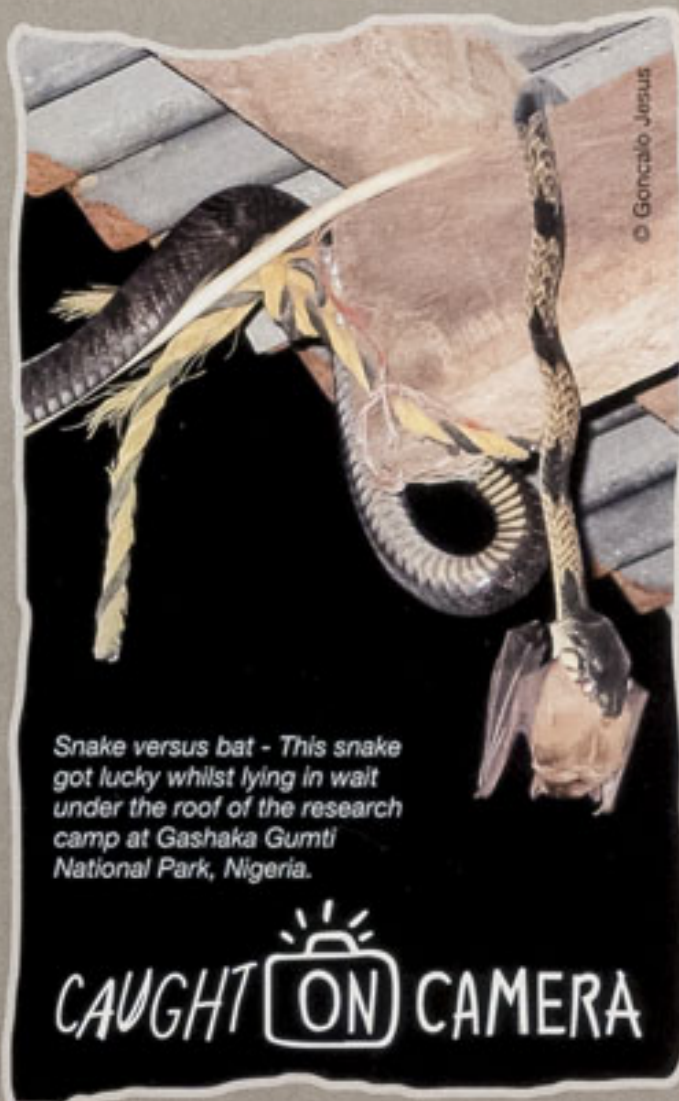
**GOOD** Researchers have recently discovered a new population of the rare Irrawaddy Dolphin close to the island of Palawan in the Philippines. This species of aquatic mammal is considered Critically Endangered with only four pods known in the wild. This discovery is positive news for the future of the species.

**BAD** Many rare birds have been a victim of the UK's cold weather with many species being found dead across the country. Stone Curlews, one of the UK's most threatened birds have been badly hit by the ongoing cold snap, with the continuous freezing conditions making it harder to find food.

## AMPHIBIAN PROGRAMME

### Update

The Philippines have been a focus of our conservation efforts for over twenty years including significant support for work with hornbills, critically endangered mammals and community outreach programmes. Most recently we have begun supporting a new initiative which will carry out an assessment of the conservation needs for Philippine amphibians. This project will evaluate over 100 species of amphibian, 50% of which are found only in the Philippines. As part of the project, a workshop will be hosted in the Philippines which will enable information sharing between local and international experts in order to generate a number of priority conservation action plans for amphibians.



JOIN US TO ACT FOR WILDLIFE AND VISIT  
[www.actforwildlife.org.uk](http://www.actforwildlife.org.uk)

## Meet...REBECCA our Endocrine Technician

Earlier this year our Endocrine Technician, Rebecca Purcell, travelled to Malaysia to help set up an endocrinology laboratory at the University of Nottingham's Malaysian Campus. This trip was to support MEME 'Management and Ecology of Malaysian Elephants', a project which is working to advance conservation of elephants through scientific research.

Rebecca used tried and tested methods from our endocrine lab to help set up the new lab, which will be used to analyse faecal samples from elephants that have been translocated due to human-elephant conflict. Whilst in Malaysia Rebecca was able to travel to the MEME field site. She had the opportunity to go out with an experienced elephant tracker who uses

known GPS locations and signals from radio collars to locate the elephants. She managed to see three wild herds, including calves. Following her visit the university now have a fully functioning endocrinology lab and an established method to collect and store faecal samples in the field. Having a dedicated endocrinology lab means that eventually other students can be trained to take advantage of these resources in the future.



## GRANT SUPPORT

During the last quarter we've also supported a number of other projects around the world. These include:

### AFRICA

On-going sponsorship for the Kibale Fuel Wood Project which is working to empower local communities to protect their native habitats in Uganda. We have also given new support to a wildlife disease surveillance and law enforcement initiative, which is creating a diagnostics laboratory in Cameroon.

### SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

We have provided financial support for two projects in the Brazilian Pantanal. The first is the Lowland Tapir Conservation Initiative which is a long-term investigation into the ecology and conservation of the Brazilian Tapir. The second is the Pantanal Giant Armadillo Project, which we have provided radio telemetry equipment to aid their research into this shy nocturnal species.

### ASIA

In Borneo human-crocodile conflict is a problem and we have supported for the second year a study which is using satellite tracking and community engagement to increase the understanding of this issue. In Nepal we have sponsored a comparative study into the nutrition of wild, domestic and zoo-housed Asian Elephants.

### EUROPE

In the Russian Federation we have supported a conservation breeding and reintroduction initiative for the Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper, one of the world's rarest birds.





*Great crested newt*



*Bank of America volunteers help with tree planting*



*Checking newt traps*



*Casey inspecting a pitfall trap*



*Cat releases a frog*



*Newt volunteers ready to go*



*Newt fencing ready*

# STAFF GO WILD ...on the zoo site

The current development of the zoo is providing many opportunities for staff from different departments to get involved in projects right on our doorstep. Here's an update on what we have been getting up to recently.

## GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

The Great Crested Newt is the UK's largest and rarest newt. Strict protection laws are afforded to the species with any handling and movement requiring a licence from the relevant national governing body. These newts are found in lots of places here, including the Islands development site. So, we have to provide new safe homes for the newts whilst the building work is happening. Consultants Cheshire Ecological Services have secured a licence from Natural England for trapping and relocating the newts, and a team of zoo staff are helping with the 'big newt move' which will take about three months to complete.

## TREE PLANTING

Preparations for our new nature reserve which is to be created on zoo land are in full swing. Showcasing the Cheshire landscape, the site will be a haven for wildlife, and construction has now begun on footpaths and the grass amphitheatre. With the help of volunteers from Bank of America the first trees have been planted. They include native tree species such as hazel, oak, field maple and crab apple. These trees will encourage a diverse range of wildlife to the reserve. The reserve will be open to the public in spring 2014.

In the last edition of Z we told you about a field trip to Ecuador taken by Director General Dr Mark Pilgrim and Technical Assistant Becca Biddle to run a preliminary survey and identify conservation opportunities for the endangered Ecuador Amazon Parrot (*Amazona autumnalis lilacina*), a charismatic bird that Mark has worked with and studied for many years.

# STAFF GO WILD Special

## A Passion for PARROTS

Mark's passion for parrots started long before he began working at the zoo as a parrot keeper in 1988 and now, as Director General, parrots are still a part of his working life.

Mark has undertaken years of important research into the taxonomic status of the Ecuador Amazon Parrot, gaining him a PhD in 2010. Additionally, since 1997 he has coordinated the European Endangered Species Programme (EEP) consisting of 75 birds within 18 EAZA collections, including 12 in our Parrot Breeding Centre. Now, with Becca's help, this careful management of birds maintains both the genetic and physical health of the captive population, which is essential for its longevity and viability if a future reintroduction programme is needed.

Despite his long standing interest and expertise in Ecuador Amazon Parrots, previously, Mark had never seen one in the wild. This field trip offered not only the opportunity to discover how we can help conserve the species, but also the chance to catch a first glimpse of this shy parrot in the wild.

## Parrots in ECUADOR

The endemic Ecuador Amazon Parrot exists only along the west coast and only where coastal mangrove islands for roosting at night are in close proximity to dry forests where they feed during the day on a variety of fruits and seeds.

Being reliant on these two habitats, has resulted in the parrots significant decline in recent years, predominantly as a result of the shrimp farming industry and demand for cocoa / banana plantations. Additional threats such as nest robbing for pets and forest fires have affected them too, and the last survey claimed there were less than 600 individuals left surviving in the wild.

Becca researched evidence of where these parrots still survive by reviewing birding literature and international birdwatchers reports. The evidence suggests that they may now only be found in four small locations on the southern half of the Ecuadorian coast line. Mark and Becca travelled southwards down the west coast, covering almost half of the coastline in 12 days. After hours of observations, parrots were spotted in each of these four locations, but only 225 were seen. This number can be taken as a relatively reliable estimate of the total number of birds in those locations, as they roost communally and flock together very noisily at dusk to travel to the mangroves therefore you are likely to see none or all of them!

## The FUTURE

With such a small, endangered population in possible decline, it is essential to highlight how we can help and act now before it is too late. Mark and Becca met with conservation foundations working with other endangered bird species in Ecuador to discuss the parrots' futures.

The important work of Fundacion Pro-Bosque (Pro-Forest Foundation) in 6,000 hectares of dry forest just outside of Guayaquil, was highlighted. Through protection and restoration, environmental education and ecotourism, the foundation is safeguarding and restoring this habitat for its communities and wildlife, including 55 species of endemic birds and between 47 and 120 Ecuador Amazon Parrots.

We have now pledged funds to support the work of Fundacion Pro-Bosque. Firstly to prevent habitat degradation through forest fires and overgrazing by supporting the honorary park guard programme. This helps to train new guards to increase awareness among community members of biodiversity conservation. Additionally from June 2013, we will support the development of a monitoring programme of the local Ecuador Amazon Parrot population. This will allow us to better determine the range and size of the population, to protect nests and to gain a better understanding of their behaviour. All these measures will hopefully help to protect the population in the long term.

Mark's passion for parrots has been the driving force behind this important work to help the Ecuador Amazon Parrot. However, it is a combined effort of global partnerships that is needed to make a difference in saving this species. But, with a combination of conservation breeding in zoos around Europe, direct protection of habitats by colleagues in Ecuador, future monitoring and research by both Ecuadorian and zoo staff, we are taking the first step in the right direction to ensure the survival of this species in the wild.



Becca and Mark set out in search of the parrots (top)

Becca prepares to meet with other conservation organisations (left) and right the mangroves

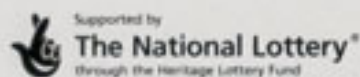
# Fundraising NEWS



## Welcome to our new BIODIVERSITY TRAINEES

A big welcome to this year's intake of biodiversity trainees – Andrew Perry, Kerry Shone, Laura Riley and Clare Sevar (pictured left to right). They will spend the next 12 months gaining experience and developing their skills here, at Record and also at Cheshire Wildlife Trust, as part of a programme to train future conservationists. This traineeship project is funded by Heritage Lottery Fund but simply couldn't happen without the support of our partners and zoo staff that kindly host the trainees and share their expertise with them.

If you belong to an organisation that is thinking about running a training project, then please do get in touch as we'd be happy to tell you about our experiences and lessons learned. Please contact Lynsey Jones on [l.jones@chesterzoo.org](mailto:l.jones@chesterzoo.org) for further information.



## ZOO DIGS IN TO CREATE WILDLIFE HAVEN

We are creating a wildlife haven, opening a free nature reserve.

The reserve – part of the zoo's commitment to the conservation of native species – will be free of charge and accessible to the public without them having to enter the zoo.

The two acre site is being developed with wildflower meadows and a dipping pond along with a grass amphitheatre which will be used for environmentally-themed events and as an outside classroom for schools.

Planting has already started with zoo staff joined by volunteers from Bank of America-owned MBNA and Chester-based employees of Bank of America Merrill Lynch who helped plant the first 150 native trees. Bank of America Merrill Lynch is one of the organisations that helped to fund the project, which is being developed on a site just off the zoo's main car park.

**Development Director, Simon Mann, said:**

**"There's some pretty wild animals in the zoo and some pretty wild creatures outside of it too! The nature reserve will give people the chance to come along and see all sorts of fantastic native species such as orange tip butterflies, buzzards, a huge array of invertebrates and lots of small mammals.**

**"The nature reserve will be open all year round and will showcase the very best of Cheshire's natural environment. It will be a fantastic place for recreation, education and, above all, enjoyment for everyone. We hope it'll inspire a new generation to take an interest in all the wonderful nature that's around them and the importance of looking after it."**

The paths within the reserve will also link to cycle routes and a local bridle path and it is hoped it will open in spring 2014.

If you've been inspired by the volunteers from MBNA and Bank of America Merrill Lynch, and you want to see your company getting their hands dirty and supporting the zoo through volunteering then we'd love to hear from you. Corporate volunteering ranges from activities like planting trees to helping at events – but never working directly with any of our animals. Health and safety risk assessments are completed for each activity and we'll even make sure there is a spare 30 minutes at the end of the day for you to have a wander round the zoo.

Because volunteering opportunities here at the zoo are limited we do ask that all companies looking to undertake some staff volunteering are supporting us through our new corporate scheme. For more information ask to speak to the development team on **01244 650229** or email [development@chesterzoo.org](mailto:development@chesterzoo.org)

## CHESTER ZOO 100 CLUB

The winners of the prize draws, held recently, were:

### January 2013

£100..... Mrs Molly Bryceson, Chester  
£100..... Mr Stephen Pettitt, Crewe  
£50..... Mrs Sandra Soul, Northwich  
£50..... Miss Janis Coulson, Wallasey  
£50..... Mrs Ann Ursell, Hartford

### February 2013

£100..... Mr Will Harrison, Wern  
£100..... Mr C J Fay, Chester  
£50..... Mrs Andrea Evans, Chester  
£50..... Mrs Elaine Glover, Liverpool  
£50..... Mr Alan Favager, Wirral

### March 2013

£100..... Mrs Ann Buglass, Todmorden  
£100..... Miss Michelle Ainscough, Wigan  
£50..... Miss Celia Watson, Welshpool  
£50..... Mrs Joanne Bowles, Chester  
£50..... Mr Mark Cleave, Chester  
£50..... Mrs Kathleen Oakes, Manchester

Membership of the 100 Club is still invited. All prize winners will be notified by post and will be listed in the next edition of Z. Please inform us as soon as possible if you change address.

If you wish to participate, please contact the Development Office on 01244 650 229.



## Turn over a NEW LEAF

Our Giving Tree is an attractive way to show your support for the zoo. By being part of the Giving Tree you will get your name, or that of a loved one, engraved on one of the tree leaves. It's a great way to make a special donation to the zoo and can be used to mark an occasion such as a birth, marriage or to remember a loved one. For more information and terms and conditions see [www.chesterzoo.org/givingtree](http://www.chesterzoo.org/givingtree) or contact the development team on 01244 650229 or email [development@chesterzoo.org](mailto:development@chesterzoo.org)



## Zoo to benefit from sale of **WILDLIFE ART**

Chester Zoo is to benefit from one of the biggest birthday parties on the Wirral this summer to celebrate the 20th annual National Exhibition of Wildlife Art (NEWA). Hundreds of collectors and enthusiasts will be joined by a VIP-studded audience for a charity auction of original art works and we hope you'll join us too!

Thirty of the world's most talented wildlife artists have already donated paintings and sculptures which will go to the highest bidder on the night, Thursday July 18th 2013. The auctioneer for this gala evening will be the irrepressible John Crane, fresh from his appearances on 'David Dickinson's Real Deal'.

Monies raised from the auction will go to our new Nature Reserve as well as the Wildlife Trust and 'Tusk'. The auction will take place in parallel with the exhibition preview at the award-winning Gordale garden centre.

We very much hope members will be able to support NEWA's exhibition which is in its 20th birthday year. A limited number of invitations to NEWA's VIP auction are available to members on a first come first served basis by calling 01244 650229 or email [development@chesterzoo.org](mailto:development@chesterzoo.org).

The exhibition continues at Gordale, near Burton, until August 4th - details at [www.newa-uk.com](http://www.newa-uk.com)



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To find out more or to book a test drive<sup>†</sup>, contact us on 0845 470 4130.

**Haliwell Jones Chester**

Sealand Road, Chester, CH1 4LS.

0845 470 4130 [haliwelljoneschesterbmw.co.uk](http://haliwelljoneschesterbmw.co.uk)

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Finance example is based on a BMW Select agreement for the model stated a BMW 118d Sport Plus Convertible with a contract mileage of 32,000 miles and an excess mileage charge of 7.5 pence per mile. \*On the road cash price is based on manufacturer's recommended retail price and includes 3 year BMW Dealer Warranty, BMW Emergency Service, 12 months' road fund licence, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and VAT. †Option to purchase fee and optional final payment payable at the end of the agreement if you decide to purchase the vehicle. Excess mileage charges and vehicle condition charges may be payable if you return the vehicle. Prices are correct at time of publication (April 2013) and are subject to change without notice. Retail customers only. Finance is subject to credit acceptance and available to over 18s in the UK only (excluding the Channel Islands and Isle of Man). Guarantees and indemnities may be required. Advertised finance is provided by BMW Financial Services Europe House, Barby Way, Hook, Hampshire RG27 9UF. We commonly, but not exclusively, introduce customers to BMW Financial Services, who may pay us for introducing you to them. †Test drive subject to applicant status and availability.

## STREETS AHEAD for SAFARI RANGER



David hands over the keys to Safari Ranger Carrie.

Halliwell Jones Chester has put us in the driving seat by supporting its schools' project for a third year.

The company has donated a BMW X1 to the zoo's Safari Ranger project which works with schools that are unable to visit.

Safari Ranger Carrie Littlehales, who picked up the keys from Dealer Principal David Nutter, said:

"I take quite a lot of artefacts out with me so having an X1 is fantastic as there is plenty of space. The car is branded with a great zoo theme which creates a real buzz when I arrive and the children get very excited about the sessions."

Last year Carrie visited around 90 different schools, teaching over 7,000 students.

David added:

"We are pleased to associate ourselves with Chester Zoo as not only one of the top tourist attractions in the country but also for its important work in conservation and education. The X1 will be conspicuous within the community by nature of its appearance."



Visitors can now get top tips on the go with a new mobile website by Chester Zoo.

Smartphone users can access information about the zoo's animals and conservation work and buy fast track admission tickets via the site at [www.chesterzoo.org](http://www.chesterzoo.org).

The website detects when users are browsing from a phone and automatically directs users to a mobile optimised version of the desktop site.

It includes a brand new interactive map and an online shop, plus easy-to-use navigation.

Online Marketing Manager, Simon Hacking, said:

"Our new mobile website will provide a richer and more engaging user experience.

"It has been designed with an emphasis on simplicity and offers the kind of practical information that visitors need when they are exploring the zoo, as well as everything they require both prior to and after their visit.

"Users will be able to purchase tickets on the way to the zoo, or even when they arrive, and have a barcoded ticket instantly sent to their phone which can then be used at our fast track entrance to beat the queues."

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 ENGLISH HERITAGE  
**BEESTON CASTLE**  
& WOODLAND PARK

*Step into England's story*

We're home to the UK's only endocrinology laboratory which specialises in studying hormone levels in wildlife and were tasked by counterparts in Scotland to predict exactly when Edinburgh Zoo's giant panda *Tian Tian* will be fertile.

Scientific Manager Dr Sue Walker said:

"It is well known that Edinburgh is home to giant pandas but perhaps less well known, is that 240 miles away here in a lab in Cheshire, we were playing a key role in their attempts to breed cubs."

Endocrinology Technician, Rebecca Purcell, added:

"Every day for the last month, samples of *Tian Tian*'s urine were couriered from Edinburgh to Chester. We then performed a series of tests on the samples, looking specifically for changes in certain hormone concentrations.

"In particular we were testing for levels of two hormones - oestrogen and progesterone. By tracking those, it enabled us to predict when we think she will ovulate and thus, be the ideal time for her to be introduced to the male Giant Panda, *Yang Guang*.

"Finding this optimum time to put the pandas together is crucial in giving them the best possible chance of a successful mating.

"We've now seen a vital crossover in the levels of oestrogen and progesterone and so we now believe that time to be very close."

Using hormone monitoring to predict oestrus is vital in giant pandas. Females only come into season once a year for approximately 36 hours. Introductions can only be made when the female is fully receptive to the male, otherwise they may fight and injure each other or the male may waste valuable energy in failed mating attempts.

Endocrinology Technician, Rebecca Purcell, analyses samples of giant panda urine to look for vital clues in helping counterparts at Edinburgh Zoo in their attempts to breed the species

# Panda PASSION



# Zoo TALK

## TALKING CONSERVATION 2013 Programme

We have been thrilled to see so many of you at the members' talks recently. It's really lovely for us to get to know you and to see how interested you are in the zoo's animal and plant collection and our projects further afield. We're going to be bringing you more talks from our animal teams and introducing you to other Chester Zoo staff with zoo stories to tell!

Our primate team are here in June and we're sure they will have lots of anecdotes to tell you about the characters in their care! And don't let anyone tell you that fish are boring! Our aquarium team will be here in October to disprove the idea and introduce you to Chester's fantastic collection of aquarium fish, amphibians and invertebrates. We're really looking forward to this talk and to seeing the enthusiasm of the Team.

Our annual talk to support the European Association of Zoo and Aquariums' (EAZA) Campaign takes place in July and in November you'll have the opportunity to meet a few zoo staff whose faces are often behind the scenes, as they tell you tales of their voluntary work overseas. We round the year off with our celebratory end of year talk with Director General, Mark Pilgrim, and the staff who took part in the zoo's first annual expedition, this year to Gashaka Gumti National Park in Nigeria.

Please come and join us to find out more about the work your membership supports, both in our overseas and UK projects and, of course, with the zoo's own animal and plant collection.

**Thursday 20 June at 19.30**

### Monkeying Around!

**Andy Lenihan, Claire Parry and Members of Chester Zoo's primate keeping Team**

Pictures, props and primates! Join our primate team for a fun evening as they tell you all about the animals on their section and some of the more unusual tasks involved in the husbandry of the various species. There will be lots of pictures and videos to feast your eyes upon and the team is hoping to bring along some props and enrichment feeders for you to handle. The primate team is keen to answer your questions, so get thinking ....

**Andy Lenihan** is Team Manager on the Primate Section and **Claire Parry, Niall Ormerod** and **Debi Williams** are keepers on the section.

**Tuesday 16 July at 19.30**

### Southeast Asia's big four and more

**Cat Barton and Andrew Owen**

2013 sees the launch of Chester Zoo's partnership with DEFRA in the **If They're Gone** campaign, addressing the plight of the orang-utan, rhino, elephant and tiger. These 'Big Four' between them are found in a number of countries around the world – but the only place in the world they can all be found together is on the island of Sumatra in Southeast Asia. These big charismatic species are undergoing rapid declines due to deforestation and poaching and we are leading the orang-utan season of the campaign, from August to October. So that's the big four... but what about the lesser known, smaller species who are struggling with a similar plight? Hear about our **new** projects and how our bird team and conservation staff are working to conserve the critically endangered birds of Indonesia.

This members' evening will be supporting the second year of the EAZA Southeast Asia Campaign. All funds raised will help towards our target of raising €10,000 this year for the campaign.

**Cat Barton** is the zoo's Assistant Conservation Officer and **Andrew Owen** – Curator of Birds

**October**

### Aquarium

**Chester Zoo's aquarium team**

An evening with our aquarium team bringing you up to date with the animals on their section.

**Wednesday 13th November**

### Keeper for a Day Evening

**Chester Zoo Staff**

Each year, the zoo welcomes a number of guests as keepers for a day and we put the money they pay into a pot which is then used to fund staff to volunteer at certain projects. Our Keeper for a Day fund is open to all permanent employees and gives staff from non-animal sections fantastic opportunities to do conservation work in the field. This talk brings together a group of staff who undertook Keeper for a Day funded work in 2012 and 2013. We'll look at the outreach work they did and how this relates to our own zoo collection.

**Wednesday 4th December**

### Nigeria Expedition

**Mark Pilgrim, Becca Biddle and the Nigeria expedition team**

In August 2013 we will be running the first annual 'Chester Zoo Expedition' - two weeks to Gashaka Gumti National Park in Nigeria (GGNP).

We have been involved in conservation in GGNP for over a decade, primarily focusing on the chimpanzees of the forest. The aims of this expedition are to gain a better understanding of the different animals and plants there (through a biodiversity assessment) and to engage with the local community through visits and fun events. It will also be a great opportunity for us to highlight our involvement with conservation worldwide, specifically in Nigeria.

The expedition team will be made up of ten Chester Zoo experts and staff volunteers to help with the biodiversity assessment by setting field traps, collecting data, recording data, general day to day cleaning and preparation of equipment, plus mucking in with all aspects of surviving in the field including domestic chores.

This will be a celebratory end to the year of members' talks and all the Nigeria expedition team will be there to give you feedback from the trip – the highs and the lows – and the biodiversity findings.

Members' talks are held in the Geraldine Russell Lecture Theatre (near the zoo's Diamond Jubilee Quarter, off the A41).

- They are **FREE** to members (please bring your membership card and welcome letter)
- We offer a special rate of £2.00 to animal adopters
- The public and guests are welcome (£3.50 for non-members)
- Our Lecture Theatre seats up to 170.
- Post-talk refreshments give you the opportunity to have an informal chat with speakers, staff and fellow members
- **Booking essential**

Interested in attending?

Please call **Kate Brankin** on **01244 389444** or email **k.brankin@chesterzoo.org** to book.



# SUPERB STARLINGS

The future of one of the world's rarest birds looks brighter after conservationists helped release eight Bali starlings back into central Bali for the very first time.

Four pairs of the rare birds, classed by conservation organisations as critically endangered, were released into a carefully selected area in the heart of the Indonesian island.

Illegal poaching reduced numbers to a critically low level in 2001 when the wild population was estimated at just six birds, but conservation breeding efforts have since seen a small recovery to between 50 and 115. However, this number is still perilously low which is why the release marks a significant step forward for the long-term survival of the species.

**Dr Roger Wilkinson, our Head of Field Conservation and Research, said:**

**"This stunning starling is critically endangered because it has an extremely small range and a tiny population, which is suffering from illegal poaching for the cage-bird trade.**

**"However, a lot of hard work by dedicated people who care enough to try and save this wonderful species, has now seen us reach this momentous moment where we've been able to help release eight birds into the wild.**

We provided skills, expertise and funding for an important breeding centre in Bali and, alongside the Begawan Foundation and Jurong Bird Park, assists in the breeding and release programme and monitoring of wild populations.





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WILDLIFE**

Chester Zoo, Upton-by-Chester, Chester, CH2 1LH  
Tel. 01244 380280. Fax. 01244 371273 Email: [info@chesterzoo.org](mailto:info@chesterzoo.org) Web: [www.chesterzoo.org](http://www.chesterzoo.org)

Founded in 1934, the North of England Zoological Society is a registered charity. We need your help and support to raise funds for the care and conservation of rare and endangered animals both in the zoo and across the world. Registered charity No. 306077.