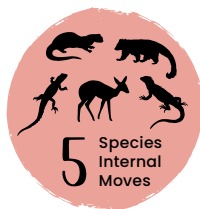




JANUARY
2024

ZOO



The female Fiji banded iguanas that were housed opposite the rhinoceros iguana moved to the first habitat area in Worlds Apart on the 8th January. The group of prehensile-tailed skinks that were in Heart of the Amazon then moved to the vacated habitat opposite the rhino iguana on the 11th January. The habitat at Heart of the Amazon was then refurbished and the male Fiji banded iguana moved in on the 27th January.

On 1st January, male binturong, Teddy, moved back to his mixed-species binturong / Asian short-clawed otter habitat following development work on the exhibit fence line. On the same date, the group of Asian short-clawed otters moved back to the exhibit following work on their housing.

Male Kirk's dik dik, Gregg, moved off-show on the 7th January to the off-show leopard enclosure as it offers a warmer winter environment for him.



A team leader internal meeting was held, with Lead Keeper Katherine presenting an update on quality-of-life assessments; progress to date and plans for the future.

A meeting was held with Rainforest section to look at their progress on working towards the workload set for them in the section inspection and to discuss further priorities.

On the 24th January, the two inspectors from Colchester City Council visited Colchester Zoo for the annual informal zoo licence inspection.



An energy audit was conducted on the 23rd January for an ESOS survey. This will be a lengthy auditing process looking at energy usage and savings across the zoo as part of government requirements.



Our last shubunkin in Koi Niwa passed away on 10th January. This species is no longer at Colchester Zoo.

Male African white-backed vulture, Bert, passed away on 12th January due to neurological issues.



On 25th January, a female coppery titi monkey named Copper arrived from Belfast Zoo. Copper has joined our current male, Lewis, in the World Apart walkthrough exhibit.



On 2nd January, Visayan spotted deer, Autumn, gave birth to a male calf.

Two rainbow lorikeet chicks hatched on the 27th and 30th January; these are the first hatchlings of 2024.



JANUARY

EDUCATION



431 pupils visited from 9 schools in January



11 home education sessions bringing 328 participants



5 outreach sessions for 345 participants

January numbers shift a lot depending on the exact dates of the school holidays and when they end. Some years, school starts back on the 2nd or 3rd of January and some years (like this year), the schools weren't back until Friday 5th, so only three weeks of schools to go on trips compared to years with 4 weeks (which is why the numbers of schools seem to alternate between around 20 schools and around 10 schools).

This year was a late start back, so a very low number of schools visiting, however, they did bring larger groups with more pupils than many of the other low years (2022 and 2019).

So far during the 2023/24 school academic year, we have educated

9,120

participants in formal education sessions.



VOLUNTEERS



22 active animal ambassadors

At present they are running activities and interpreting animal behaviour at enclosures for visitors.

We are also in conversation with Essex University to offer volunteering to students as ambassadors. This will boost our numbers whilst we continue general recruitment onto the scheme.



JANUARY

RESEARCH

Studies commenced
this month looking at:



An investigation into the diversity
of wild bird species at Colchester Zoo.



Using the rubbing behaviour of sun bears
(*Helarctos malayanus*) to test the
effectiveness of olfactory stimuli
and differing brush materials
on the collection
of hair samples.



A behavioural comparison
of Colchester Zoo's
Bornean orangutan
(*Pongo pygmaeus*)
group and their wild
counterparts.

Impacts of captive
environment on orangutan
interaction behaviour
and enclosure budget.



Do zoo visitors have
a taxonomic bias?
A study identifying dwell
time perception of the
following under-represented
species; birds, reptiles and
amphibians at Colchester Zoo
during typical opening hours.

JANUARY



A steering committee meeting was held at Colchester Zoo for the Fisher's Estuarine Moth with representatives from Natural England, Essex Wildlife Trust, Essex Biodiversity Project, Environment Agency and Butterfly Conservation.

Due to the population expansion and colonisation of sites, it was felt that the Zoo captive breeding element of the programme should now pause.

This does not mean it will stop permanently, but rather pause whilst new sites are considered for planting, which will need populating with moths in future.

The Zoo team will therefore continue to maintain the off-show area and grow on plants for future use once additional new sites are created, and will continue to conduct monitoring surveys of larval feeding and adult moth sightings at various locations.

CONSERVATION



At the end of 2023, Colchester Zoo was short-listed for the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) Great British Wildlife Restoration, alongside 21 other native species projects, and on the 16th January 2024, attended the award ceremony hosted by House of Commons speaker, Sir Lindsay Hoyle, in the Speaker House in the Houses of Parliament.

The event brought together thirty MPs, Lords, and those representing Zoos, Aquariums and conservation organisations to celebrate the conservationists protecting our native species; highlighting the role of good zoos, aquariums and others in protecting and restoring UK wildlife through field conservation work, habitat restoration and education.



Zoological Director, Rebecca, attended an online BIAZA Field Conservation Committee meeting for which she is vice-chair.

JANUARY

UMPHAFA



A good start to the year with rainfall, however, following a big storm there was a lot of fence and road damage, as well as several trees down across the Reserve.

The fence damage affects the electrics, however, last year we installed electrics so that if a donga (dry gully) along the fence gets full of water, we can by-pass this drowned section and push the electric across the top of the fence.



In early January, one of the newly-arrived female buffalos gave birth to a healthy calf and towards the end of the month, this was followed by a second.

One of the identified female leopards on the reserve was sighted with two cubs!



Snake season has started with the first Mozambique spitting cobra found in the workshop, which was safely removed.



Between 15th December to 7th January, 10 poaching incidents occurred on the Reserve and it is confirmed they removed 2 animals and a total of 68 metres of fencing.



Sadly, another ostrich chick passed away so now only two survive.

One is almost the size of the adult female now, so hopefully it will avoid any attack in future, but the other is still not that big and could easily be a target for the jackals.



JANUARY

UMPHAFA



Our first intern of the year joined in January and has been getting to grips with alien plant clearing around the dams as well as clearing trees off the road.

She experienced her first 'poaching' activity with the removal of snares, followed by ambush techniques, and then carried out a fence patrol with the rangers.

She also got busy with camera trapping, painting the fence poles, putting out salt licks for the animals and a frog identification activity where she found 3 different species.



On the 24th January, Zoological Director Rebecca delivered a presentation for East Coast College for their upcoming intern trips to UmPhafa – they have two groups visiting in 2024.



The Maintenance Team started on another of the intern accommodation bedrooms, with the carpet removed, the room tiled and painted.



The Team have also started to do electrical work required for our compliance certificate.



The Maintenance team cemented in some of the animal lick buckets to the ground so the animals cannot kick the salt and molasses all over the place.



With a new lease set up and signed for the 200 hectares of farming land adjoining UmPhafa, which our neighbour has decided to take on for a number of years, the team started removing the old fence that was there.

This will come in very handy to complete the buffalo fence we are erecting alongside our neighbours in the section where his buffalo are breeding.

Tiffany joined us as a Student Intern Coordinator for a year to fulfil her practical 3rd year placement and help with the Interns.



A team of ladies from the local community joined us again on temporary contracts to control the alien plants, in particular lantana. They have started to clear new sections and will revisit sites cleared last year to ensure there is no re-growth.



JANUARY