



# JANUARY

MONTHLY OVERVIEW REPORT / 2025





# THE ZOO

## 20 ANIMAL TRANSFERS

15 Denison barb fish arrived on the 2nd January, these were not publicly viewable for the initial 30 days whilst they served quarantine. The rosy barbs, which arrived in December, have now finished their quarantine and moved into the aquarium in River's Edge.

On 8th January 2025, male African pancake tortoise "Banana" transferred to Ventura Wildlife Foundation.

Male aardvark "Koos" and 3 female juvenile warthogs transferred to Chester Zoo on 16th January.

## 7 ATTEMPTED ANIMAL TRANSFERS

Our plan this month was to export our 2 male chimpanzees, Tombe and Tumba and five bush dogs Pele, Pedro, Sith, Salem and Smeagol to Belfast Zoo. ITV News filmed before their departure, but sadly, Storm Éowyn had other ideas, so this transfer will be reorganised.







### 3 MEETINGS ATTENDED

A team leader internal meeting was held focusing on the outcomes of the rangeland vegetation assessments conducted on UmPhafa and the plans for future reserve management to improve the status of the vegetation condition.

The Senior Keeper of Carnivore Section attended the BIAZA viverrid workshop at Dudley Zoo, to learn more about husbandry and welfare management of binturong.

The Deputy Team Leader of Reptile Section attended an online meeting for the BIAZA native herptile focus group, as we are keen to collaborate on further native species programmes in future now that the breeding element of our Fisher's Estuarine Moth programme is on pause.



### 1 ZIGGY THE ZEBRA PASSED

Sadly, on 10th January, our male half-maned zebra, Ziggy, passed away following an incident with our female rhino in our mixed species African habitat. The female was sparring with her son and accidentally caught Ziggy with her horn in the process.

Since the passing of Ziggy, keepers continue to monitor the welfare of our remaining half-maned zebra, a female called Anna. She has a strong social relationship with the greater kudu that share the paddock and so is not on her own. The breeding programme coordinator (EEP) has identified a male to join us quite soon and a second female will hopefully join us in 2026. Imports from European zoos take a period of time to complete, but we are working diligently to bring in the male zebra as soon as practically possible.

# 1 NEW NAME

On 23rd November, aardvarks OQ and Koos, welcomed a new little arrival who now weighs 8.47kg!

Although this is OQ and Koos' first young together, OQ is an experienced mum, with this new arrival being her 12th offspring! The Animal Care Team have kept a close eye on mum and her new arrival over the last month, and OQ has proven to be an excellent and caring parent.

Koos arrived for a temporary stay from Chester Zoo back in October 2023 as part of a breeding recommendation. After successfully fulfilling his duty as dad, he returned back to Chester Zoo on 16th January. Out in the wild, aardvarks only come together to mate so it is not unusual for the male to leave once the female has given birth.



# 1 ANIMAL SEXED AND NAMED

Our king vulture juvenile, hatched in July 2024, has now been sexed as male, and been named Luther.



# 2 EXPLORING LEOPARD CUBS

The two leopard cubs are developing well and gaining confidence as they explore their habitat under the supervision of their mother, Esra.





# EDUCATION



**11**  
SCHOOLS

**443**  
STUDENTS

**23**  
SCHOOL  
SESSIONS RAN  
AT THE ZOO

**10**  
HOME EDUCATION  
SESSIONS

**300**  
PARTICIPANTS

**4**  
OUTREACH  
SESSIONS

**110**  
PARTICIPANTS



# RESEARCH

## 1 NEW STUDY

One new research study commenced this month looking at: Investigating visitor effects on cherry-crowned mangabeys: comparing behavioural responses in females and males.





# VOLUNTEERS

UP TO

**4**

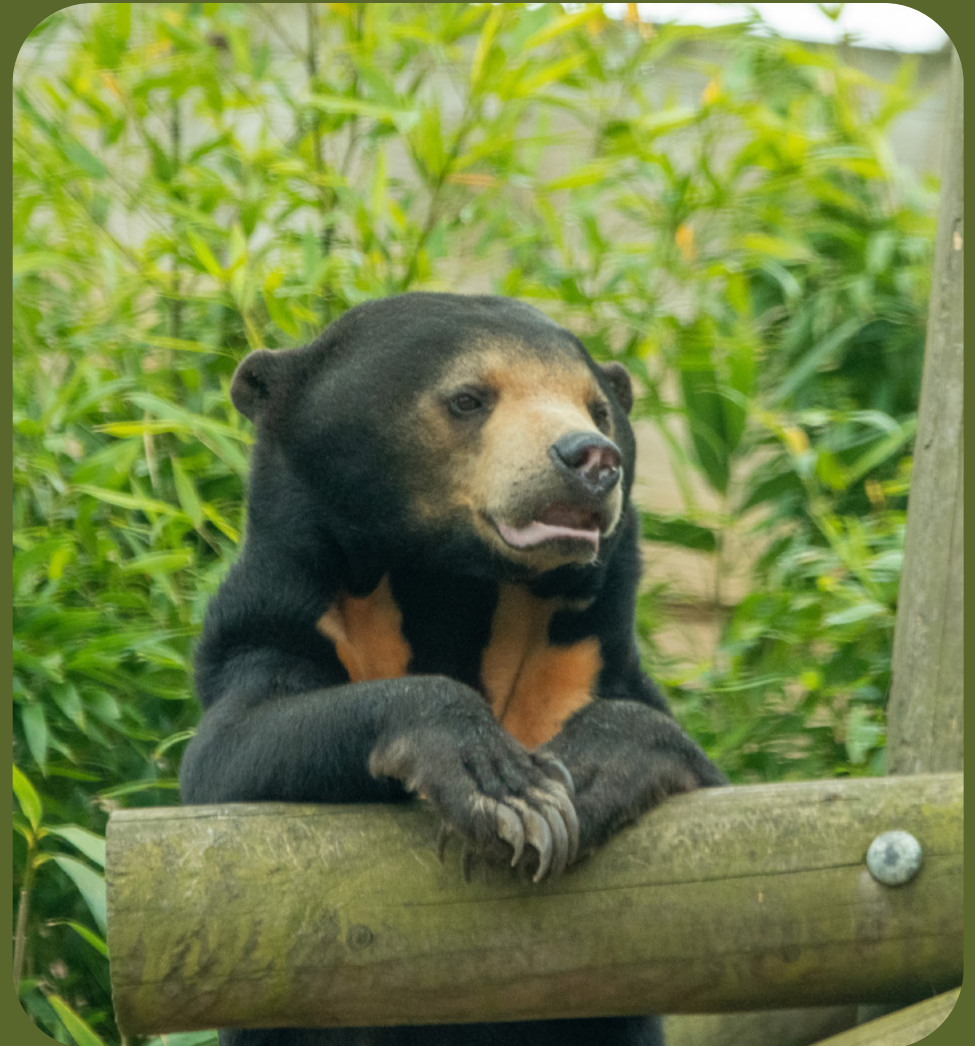
VOLUNTEERS  
ATTENDED  
PER DAY

ENGAGING UP TO

**280**

VISITORS  
PER DAY

The Amur leopard cubs were a focal species, although the volunteers also focused on other themes including reptiles, sun bears, lions, and great apes.



**1411**

VISITORS  
ENGAGED

WITH AT THE EXPLORATORIUM

EDUCATED USING

**1345**

BOXES

# UMPHAFA NATURE RESERVE

## 1<sup>st</sup> CHEETAH ARRIVED

In preparation for the arrival of a female cheetah, the team worked hard in the boma, cutting the grass, sorting out the electrics and ensuring the boma was in perfect condition to receive its new guest. She arrived safe and sound on the 20th January and seems to spend a lot of her time in the shade of one of the trees.

## 1<sup>st</sup> GAME COUNT OF 2025

The team conducted their first game count of 2025. Thankfully with cooler weather, the team got good numbers which, once confirmed, will enable them to determine what animals to bring on or move off the reserve in 2025.

## 8 MEN SPOTTED ALONG THE FENCE LINE

Poaching activity picked up this month after a quiet holiday period over Christmas. Rangers spotted 8 men and 13 dogs walking along our fence line. The drone was used to monitor the would-be poachers who left the area. Footage is vital to ensure we can bring cases to the police of any incursions.

Other cameras along the fence line have also been picking up pictures of would-be poachers walking along our fences with dogs. With these pictures going to management phones as an alert, they can immediately go and check the area.







## 1<sup>st</sup> INTERN OF 2025

The first intern of 2025 arrived this month, joining from Hungary. In addition, new Student Intern Coordinator, Ethan, arrived; he will spend his university practical year on the reserve.

The intern team have been carrying out activities such as camera trapping, helping the maintenance team fix fences, tidying the boma, putting out feed licks for the animals, dam stocking, night drives, and patrolling with the Field Rangers.

## 2 MAINTENANCE DEVELOPMENTS

The maintenance team have been working on constructing a leopard trap in order to capture and move some of the growing leopard population off of the reserve in 2025.

They also installed a buffalo fence around the Rangers' tent on the top of the mountain, Ithala, as each evening the buffalo like to go and stay there, giving the Rangers a fright when they go to the bathroom.

## 1 GOOD MONTH OF RAIN

Thankfully this month the reserve had some rain. The wetlands are starting to look good and already we have had several birds claiming it as their new home. However, fences again got washed away, in particular near the river, so the maintenance team have concentrated on repairing these, along with carrying out road repair.

# CONSERVATION

Our Director of Science, Education and Training, and our Senior Conservation Educator attended the Great British Wildlife Restoration event at the Houses of Parliament where their work with the school camera trap loan scheme was nominated for an award.

Whilst we didn't win the award, the event on 21st January, brought together scores of people at Speakers House including MPs, Lords, and those representing zoos, aquariums and conservation organisations to celebrate the conservationists protecting our native wildlife.



Our Zoological Director attended an online webinar run by TRAFFIC looking at "Wildlife Trade in Focus 2025: Trends, Events, and Opportunities Across Europe and Central Asia" as an opportunity to connect and exchange about wildlife trade priorities.



Our Zoological Director and Team Leader of Reptile Section hosted the annual Fisher's Estuarine Moth Steering Committee Meeting here at Colchester Zoo to discuss the moth's conservation programme progress in 2024 and plans for 2025 with other stakeholders including Natural England, the Essex Wildlife Trust, National Trust, Environment Agency, Tendring District Council and Butterfly Conservation.

