



FEBRUARY

MONTHLY OVERVIEW REPORT / 2025



THE ZOO

3 ANIMAL TRANSFERS

On 12th February, one of our female prehensile-tailed skinks housed in Worlds Apart transferred to Zooparc de Beauval, France.

Male Bush dog (named Kourou) arrived on 12th February from Zooparc de Peaugres, France. He is currently off show until five of our bush dogs leave for Belfast Zoo in March, at which point he will be mixed with the remaining female.

A male golden-headed lion tamarin arrived on 13th February from Karlsruhe Zoo, Germany. Named Edward, he can be seen in the Rainforest walkthrough with the titi monkeys. A female will arrive in due course to join him.

1 BBC LOOK EAST FILMING VISIT

BBC filming took place for Look East, focusing on breeding programmes, highlighting the leopard and aardvark new arrivals, and the difficulties in conducting animal transfers to mainland Europe post-Brexit.





2 MEETINGS ATTENDED

The Lead Keeper of Primate Section led an internal team leader meeting focusing on Visitor-Animal Experience Assessments. The assessments will be rolled out across the Zoo as part of our BIAZA membership requirement.

The Team Leader of Giraffe Section attended an online meeting focused on aardvark husbandry and management.

MANY ZOO IMPROVEMENTS

Work continued this month upgrading the buff-headed capuchin habitat and improving the visitor viewing area at mangabeys and lemurs, with additional upgrading of the lemur climbing frame.

Work commenced on installing a new shelter and fence in the goat and sheep walkthrough at Colenso Village and drainage and substrate alterations were made at Walking Giants.

Adaptations were made to the Amur tiger habitat to enhance separate management of the two females; to the Asian short-clawed otter housing to promote husbandry training; and new boxes were made in the sloth habitat for a new sloth in March.



15 DENISON BARB FISH

The 15 Denison barb fish that arrived in January and were off-show in quarantine, have now gone and are now viewable in the Rivers Edge Aquarium.



1 ANNUAL INSPECTION

Our annual BALAI inspection took place with the Animal and Plant Health Agency; BALAI rules govern the import of animals and germinal products to Great Britain from EU and non-EU countries.



EDUCATION



27

SCHOOLS VISITED
COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY THIS MONTH

BRINGING IN A TOTAL OF

1,078

STUDENTS

36

SCHOOL
SESSIONS RAN
AT THE ZOO

10

HOME EDUCATION
SESSIONS

241

PARTICIPANTS

7

OUTREACH
SESSIONS

Of these 7 outreach sessions, one was held at an event reaching over 400 participants, five were delivered in the community, with two of these reaching over 100 participants, and one was presented virtually.

859

PARTICIPANTS

We still have not reached the pre-Covid February numbers of schools and session numbers, however, this is partly explained by busier Januarys compared to historical figures and also to do with later timings of Easter in 2025, so March is looking comparatively busier.

Post-Covid, our total number of pupils is ever so slightly down compared to other years following 2022, however, our number of teaching sessions is up.



VOLUNTEERS



In half term, students from the University of Essex volunteered to provide additional educational activities, alongside our regular volunteer cohort.

ON SUCH DAYS, UP TO

6 VOLUNTEERS
ATTENDED
PER DAY

REACHING UP TO

600 VISITORS
IN A DAY

The Amur leopard cubs were a focal species, although the volunteers also focused on other themes including orangutans, chimps and lions.

On the rainy days, engagement with the volunteers increased in indoor areas and, in term time, a number of school groups engaged with the props, and asked lots of questions as the volunteers moved around the Zoo.

2,592 VISITORS
ENGAGED
WITH AT THE EXPLORATORIUM

EDUCATED USING
2,259
BOXES

UMPHAFA NATURE RESERVE

1 EVER-GROWING LEOPARD POPULATION

With the ever-increasing leopard population on the reserve, the maintenance team have been constructing a trap to catch a number of leopards to move to new reserves.

Whilst visiting the cheetah, the vet did suggest that if the leopards are baited with food close to the road and the leopards get used to the team being there whilst they are feeding, then he may be able to dart them from a vehicle. Baiting so far has gone well, so hopefully the team will manage to successfully capture some individuals.

1st FEMALE CHEETAH RELEASED

Thursday 13th of February was a cause for celebration, with the female cheetah - Ashia, released from the boma. The vet fitted her new tracking collar and once she had eaten, Ashia left the boma to walk to the highest point on the reserve.

Ashia started to explore following her release up and down the hills and successfully managed to feed.

With all the rain, she has been difficult to spot hiding under trees to keep dry. As part of the process of post release monitoring, Wildlife Act joined the team for 5 days to ensure they got used to monitoring the cheetah as she roamed the reserve.





2nd INTERN OF 2025

Our second intern of the year joined this month and has been kept busy with maintenance tasks, dam surveys, camera trapping, spraying invasive plants, carrying out vegetation and butterfly surveys and monitoring the female cheetah.

200^{mm} OF RAINFALL

With over 200mm of rain received in February, the wetland area has come into its own, with new birds arriving every day, including sacred ibis, glossy ibis and yellow-billed egrets.

With all the rain, the roads, dongas and gullies have not fared well; the team are constantly working on these areas trying to improve them and prevent further damage and erosion. Weeds, such as bug weed, also flourish after the rain, so the interns spent several days clearing the bug weed off the dam walls on the ryefield.

1 VISIT FROM SAVSIM

At the end of the month, a UK charity, called SAVSIM, visited the reserve to train the Field Rangers. SAVSIM was born from a group of conservation and veteran supporters who visit reserves to support the well-being of field rangers. A veteran from the Royal Anglian Regiment joined the team to train them on different techniques when out in the bush. Each group will cover numerous activities such as firearms usage and control, making a gillie suit out of hessian sacks with paint, water and dirt, patrolling techniques – night and day, awareness and ambush techniques, hand signals, correct kit list and PT.



CONSERVATION

We became conservation partners of Nature's SAFE. Nature's SAFE is one of Europe's first charitable living biobanks, dedicated to storing reproductive cells and tissues from animals at risk of extinction. They focus on preserving genetic diversity to halt species decline and reverse biodiversity loss. Cryopreservation methods allow them to store cells indefinitely at -196°C in a dormant state, enabling future use in reproductive technologies or cell regeneration. Partnerships with zoos work to cryopreserve the genetic materials of threatened and native species in their care. By working together, we can ensure these species have a legacy for future generations, even in the face of increasing threats.



The Zoological Director attended an online BIAZA Conservation Committee meeting.

