



# APRIL

MONTHLY OVERVIEW REPORT / 2025

COLCHESTER  
ZOOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY

Charity no. 1105621



# THE ZOO

## 3 NEW ARRIVALS

On Wednesday 2nd April, we welcomed male chimpanzee, Napoleon, also known as Napo, as part of an EEP breeding recommendation. The mixing process with the females began on the 22nd of April. Whilst it will take a while for them to learn about each other and form tight bonds, the mixing went well.

On the 2nd April, female two-toed sloth, Midnight, who transferred from Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park in March, was moved to Worlds Apart to join male sloth, Tucurui, and the family of red-bellied tamarins.

On the 23rd April, Jake, a male green anaconda arrived from Crocodiles of the World. Jake will be introduced to other male, Nino, in May.





# THE ZOO



## SEA LION ATLANTA PASSED AWAY

Female sealion, Atlanta, sadly passed away on Sunday 13th April 2025.

Over the recent period, Atlanta was under veterinary treatment, with the post mortem revealing that she had cancer.

## 2 WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

On 3rd April, the ABWAK Basic Reptile Skills Workshop was held here at the Zoo. On the 14th April a number of keepers attended an online BIAZA Live Food Workshop looking at invertebrate husbandry and welfare.

## 1 TEAM LEADER MEETING

An internal team leader meeting was held, focusing on updating staff on the topics covered in the March ABWAK symposium. An Animal Management Team inspection was conducted on Africa section.



## 2 VULTURES MOVED

On the 30th April, the African white-backed vultures, Betty and Wally, moved on show to the African vulture habitat to join the Ruppell's vultures.



## FEMALE CHEETAH ANIKA MOVED

On the 3rd April, cheetah Anika, was moved to the habitat opposite Komodo dragons. In time the two males will hopefully re-bond at Edge of Africa.

## MORE ZOO NEWS

The capuchins moved into their renovated home, Capuchin Climb, on Tuesday 8th April. The pair of barbary macaques, M'Punky and her offspring Safi, returned to the Barbary macaque enclosures at Out of Africa.

On the 25th April, the pair of black tree monitors, Velma and Vinnie, were mixed together at Heart of the Amazon.

Development work took place this month on the Colenso Village goat and sheep walkthrough, with new fencing, shelters, hayracks and pathways.

Work was also conducted on the Lost Madagascar lemur climbing frame and finished on the visitor viewing area into this exhibit.

# EDUCATION



**52**

SCHOOLS VISITED  
COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY THIS MONTH

BRINGING IN A TOTAL OF  
**2,188**  
STUDENTS

**62**

SCHOOL  
SESSIONS RAN  
AT THE ZOO

**10**

HOME EDUCATION  
SESSIONS

**300**

PARTICIPANTS

**5** OUTREACH  
SESSIONS

4 community outreach  
sessions were delivered,  
along with one virtual  
outreach session.

**2** YOUTH  
GROUPS

These youth groups brought  
along 285 individuals.

Easter dates meant that March was much lower than most years, but April was higher. Academic year to date heading into the busy summer term, we are looking at the higher end of average.

Our sessions delivered are tied for the second busiest April – and both those years had considerably more students.

# VOLUNTEERS & RESEARCH

**4** VOLUNTEERS  
ATTENDED  
PER DAY

REACHING UP TO

**400**

VISITORS IN A DAY

The volunteers used props, answered questions at enclosures and roved around the zoo.

Topics included crocodiles, anacondas, great apes and big cats. The bones, skulls and cuddly toys engaged with pre-school and primary school children



**2** RESEARCH  
STUDIES  
BEGAN

The effect of visitor numbers on the behaviour of an all male group of captive meerkats, *Suricata suricatta* at Colchester Zoo.

Behavioural comparison and enclosure use of Komodo dragons.

# UMPHAFA NATURE RESERVE



## 1<sup>ST</sup> DRONE FLIGHT

The new agri drone took its maiden flight this month.

The Reserve Manager is busy getting the feel of the drone, which is very similar to the thermal drone, filling it with water he practiced watering the garden.

The next stage is mapping the area where there is a lot of alien plants that need to be sprayed.

## 1<sup>ST</sup> AERIAL PATROL

Earlier in the month, the team hosted the Midlands Wildlife Security Initiative group where they got to meet the gentleman who will be doing aerial patrols over the reserve, looking for poachers and carcasses.

The team worked on clearing the runway, although due to the rain, it wasn't ready for the first anti-poaching flight, so the plane had to take off from town.

One of the field rangers joined the pilot, with them then zigzagging across the reserve.

Thankfully they didn't spot any poachers or carcasses.

## 2<sup>ND</sup> LEOPARDS MOVED

Over the last few years, the leopards are starting to spread out across the reserve and, with more camera traps out, the team are getting more sightings.

The leopards don't just pose a predation risk for game species, but also for smaller cats such as serval and cheetah.

This month, the team captured a 5-month-old male cub in a trap and with its mother close by the vet managed to dart her. The female is a well-known leopard called Chui and this is her 4th set of cubs for the reserve.

At 10 years old, she and her cub moved to Babanango Game Reserve in Zululand where she will be the founder female to help populate the 20,000 hectare reserve.



## 1 CHEETAH UPDATE

The female cheetah, Ashia, has been busy walking the perimeter and feeding successfully.

## 1 COLLEGE VISIT

East Coast College joined later in the month. Rain affected their arrival, but their experience was enhanced with the leopard darting, as well as a trip to the local school where they provided 600 doughnuts for the children, ran lessons and sang songs.

## MANY ANIMALS COUNTED

A new giraffe calf was spotted this month and the team finally managed to locate 29 buffalo after several weeks of not seeing them.



## 4 BAT SPECIES CAUGHT

Two researchers visited the reserve for a week this month to catch and identify bat species.

They caught Cape serotine, little free-tailed bat, Egyptian free-tailed bat and the slit-faced bat. Of the 4 caught, 2 are new species for the reserve.

The researchers also caught Natal multimammate mouse, tete veld rat, greater red musk shrew, single-striped mouse and striped mouse.

## MORE UMPHABA NEWS

Heavy rains caused many roads to wash away and fences to collapse, which has meant the maintenance team have been busy with repairs to make the reserve safe again and have trialled a new rock terrace erosion control method.

On top of the issue with the heavy rain, poachers took advantage of the reserve by stealing 35 fence standards – with the soil being wet they managed to remove the standards, leaving the fence behind, which was left lying down. Maintenance, rangers and interns all helped fix the 350 metres of fence that was damaged.

April's intern had an exciting week spending several days helping to fix fences with the maintenance team, spraying invasive plants, doing a vegetation study, as well as helping put another bait up for the three male leopards.

# CONSERVATION



## 1 MAYORAL VISIT

On 16th April, the Mayor of Colchester, Cllr Lesley Scott-Boutell, was invited by CZS to speak with the management team to learn more about the Zoo's recent transition to a charity and how its conservation work is helping to care for wildlife and wild places worldwide.

**£5,999.84** DONATED TO VULPRO

Funds were sent over this month to VulPro with a donation of £5,999.84 to support breeding monitoring of white-backed, hooded and lappet-faced nesting vultures across South Africa. These tree-nesting species are particularly vulnerable, with white-backed, hooded and white-headed vultures all listed as critically endangered, and lappet-faced as endangered.

A crucial step towards the implementation of effective conservation management practices is the obtainment of a detailed understanding of current population trends and the evaluation of emerging threats. This enables the development of targeted conservation measures that directly address the most pressing issues.

Colchester Zoological Society's funding will once again be instrumental in covering essential monitoring costs such as fuel, accommodation, staff, and equipment. This critical support ensures the continuity and success of VulPro's conservation efforts, safeguarding vulture populations and their habitats across southern Africa.

