



MAY

MONTHLY OVERVIEW REPORT / 2025

COLCHESTER
ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Charity no. 1105621



THE ZOO

ANIMAL TRANSFERS

On the 6th May, the trio of red-necked wallabies moved off display, joining the reindeer in an off-show paddock. Their habitat will be redeveloped to form an additional goat and sheep walkthrough with new pathways, fencing and housing developed.

The remaining female radiated tortoise transferred to Bristol Zoo Project on 7th May; we no longer hold this species in our collection.

Female rhinoceros iguana, Carmen, has now successfully mixed with male Rico and both can be seen in the enclosure in Worlds Apart

The male green anaconda, Jake, from Crocodiles of the World is now on show at Rivers Edge.

6 ANIMAL BIRTHS

Four Philippine tree skinks hatched and have been moved off-show for rearing.

Two rainbow lorikeet chicks hatched on the 21st May. These are our first hatchlings of 2025.



THE ZOO

1 ETHICS MEETING

The Ethics Committee met to discuss the ethical considerations of Colchester Zoological Society. This committee meets in person bi-annually.

1 LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETING

A meeting took place with our local authority to receive our zoo licence inspection report from our most recent inspection. Our new licence will be valid from the 19th June.

2 SECTION INSPECTIONS

Animal Management Team inspections were conducted on Carnivore and Elephant Sections.

1 MEDIA TRAINING SESSION

An internal team leader meeting was run by Andy Moore, Director of Science, Education and Training to provide media training.



15 KOI CARP ARRIVED

A group of 15 koi carp arrived on 7th May and can be seen in the smaller aquaria at Koi Niwa.



50 PENGUIN TETRA

A group of 50 penguin tetra arrived on 23rd May. These are currently off-show serving 30 day quarantine.

MORE ZOO NEWS

At the end of the month, a crate was delivered to the Kingdom of the Wild hardstand to begin crate training for male rhino Tayo's June departure to Safari Madrid.

Dummy eggs were added to the flamingo nests this month to encourage breeding.

The 6 monthly mortality review was conducted with IZVG veterinarians to look at mortality within the zoo collection to further discuss causes of death and look for any trends.

The Team Leader of Africa Section and Deputy Team Leader of Carnivore Section attended the BIAZA Mammal Working Group Conference at Hertfordshire Zoo.

EDUCATION



94

SCHOOLS VISITED
COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY THIS MONTH

BRINGING IN A TOTAL OF

4,279

STUDENTS

97

SCHOOL
SESSIONS RAN
AT THE ZOO

9

HOME EDUCATION
SESSIONS

280

PARTICIPANTS

9

OUTREACH
SESSIONS

Of these, 8 outreach sessions, were presented virtually for 240 participants and one career fair for approximately 800 people.

7

YOUTH
GROUPS

These youth groups brought along 138 children, with 70 completing Challenge badges.

Historically, there were a lot more 'fun' trips that happened either side of the May-half term with whole year groups visiting (hence some high pupil numbers in some of those years without that much higher school or session numbers). Post-covid, our May is comparable.

It is getting into the busier time of teaching. We had 5 schools with 12 sessions which were cancelled last minute/unattended on the day. Also during the month, we had another 3 schools requesting 5 sessions that were turned away due to lack of availability.

VOLUNTEERS

6 VOLUNTEERS
ATTENDED
PER DAY

REACHING UP TO
600
VISITORS IN A DAY

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

Topics included bears and
bile farming, chimpanzee
intelligence, elephants, giraffes
and a range of reptile species.

The elephant jaw and giraffe
vertebrae were popular, and
lots of scouts, cubs and beavers
engaged, along with young
students completing school
projects.



2,592

VISITORS ENGAGED WITH
AT THE EXPLORATORIUM

EDUCATED USING
1,452
BOXES

UMPHAFA NATURE RESERVE



1ST GAME CAPTURE

Towards the end of the month, the first game capture of the season took place with the focus on zebra and wildebeest.

The team found a suitable site on the reserve, built the capture shoot / hide (this can be a few hundred metres in length and ends at the truck). A helicopter was then used to push the animals into the capture area.

In total, **102 zebra** and **55 wildebeest** were caught. Not only does this bring in an income, but it is also vitally important to reduce animal numbers for the reserve's carrying capacity to try and reduce overgrazing.

1ST POACHING INCIDENT

Poachers snared a live animal this month, which the team luckily managed to release, and several poaching holes with snares were found. The culprit was identified and his employer informed.

Thankfully no instances of poaching have been seen since.

The porcupine poacher found on the reserve earlier in the year finally went to court; he pleaded guilty to trespass and was given 6 months imprisonment or a R2,000 fine.

1ST TRESPASS ATTEMPT DETECTED

One of the Wildlife Protection Security cameras picked up some gentlemen walking along the fence line (outside the fence) by the river.

The rangers raced out to try and see where they had gone but by the time they got there, they could not find them.

They put the thermal drone up around the area, but then a new photo came through on the camera trap and looked like they had returned the way they had come.

These cameras play a vital role in protecting the reserve from would be poachers and trespassers.

2 MALE CHEETAH ARRIVED

After a busy week preparing the boma by cutting the grass, fixing electrics, cleaning the pools and water troughs and extending the fence height, on the 24th May, two male cheetah joined the reserve.

One male Duma was born in June 2023; he was orphaned at 3 months old, his mother killed by lions. He was relocated to Ashia (where the female cheetah came from) along with his 2 sisters. The other male, Tswalu, came from Tswalu Reserve in the Southern Kalahari and was born in March 2023. Reared by his mother, he was bought to UmPhafa once he reached dispersal age.

After a long journey, they arrived at UmPhafa at 22:30 where they were immediately released into separate halves of the boma. On release they did check each other out but on arrival the next morning, they were both very fat and relaxing in the shade. The plan is to bond them to form a coalition which could take anywhere from a few months to 6 months. The bonding process will hopefully go well, similar to the Wild Dog protocols that the team have followed for many years.

They will stay in separate parts of the boma for a few weeks being fed separately. Eventually the gates will be opened so they can access each other's boma and finally they will be fed together on a larger carcass. Constant monitoring of their behaviours will be crucial in the coming months.



RESERVE MAINTENANCE UPDATES

The maintenance team have been busy fixing feed troughs, spraying the fence line, fixing eroded roads and fence lines after the huge amount of rain and the ladies from the local community have been busy clearing lantana and acacia karoo.

Fire break season is also here and the team have started burning fire breaks where vegetation conditions and the wind permit.

Once the fire breaks are created, then the perimeter can also be burnt.

Foundations for a new field ranger outpost were also developed, which will enable more efficient security monitoring on the higher reaches of the reserve.

1 ANTI POACHING FLIGHT

Intern Coordinator, Luhan, took the opportunity to do an anti-poaching flight and thoroughly enjoyed flying the whole reserve, and the reserve next door, looking for any irregular activity.

1 PHD RESEARCHER VISIT

A researcher from a landscape architect company joined for the weekend. He is hoping to do his PhD based on the eroded areas on UmPhafa and gave some tips on how to combat this going forward.

1 WETLANDS COUNT

With the wetland area filling nicely, one count saw 55 blue cranes visiting the reserve and flying in to roost by the Ryefield Dam. 2 grey crowned cranes, which are currently classed as endangered on the IUCN Red List, also visited.

1 FIELD RANGER INTERVIEW

The Reserve Managers interviewed for another Field Ranger who is hoping to join on the 3rd June 2025.



MORE UMPHAF NEWS

New solar panels and a new solar battery were fitted to one of the fence lines to ensure constant power runs through the perimeter fence and the team started the foundations on the northern workshop floor as rainwater keeps running into the workshop

Project Rhino joined for 3 nights to visit 4 local schools and lead Rhino Art Conservation Education projects. This project has been running since 2013.

CONSERVATION



1,857
10K RUNNERS

Colchester Stampede 10K run took place this month, starting and finishing within the zoo. 1,857 runners took part raising vital funds for conservation.

1 WEEK ON UMPHAFU

Zoological Director, Rebecca, visited UmPhafa for a week this month.

Whilst there, she visited various areas of the reserve which have been developed since her last bi-annual visit, took part in a game count; a monthly activity to count the species throughout the reserve, and assisted with cheetah tracking to locate the new female cheetah released in February.

Game counts have shown that many species continue to flourish, such as zebra, wildebeest, eland and giraffe, with some individuals scheduled for capture and relocation to new reserves.

Whereas other species have lower numbers, so are scheduled for planned release onto the reserve in 2025, such as blesbok; as the leopard population reduces their numbers through predation. Leopards are very abundant on the reserve with four leopards seen on this visit alone!

