



SEPTEMBER

MONTHLY OVERVIEW REPORT / 2025

COLCHESTER
ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Charity no. 1105621



THE ZOO

ANIMAL TRANSFERS

On the 21st September, king vulture female, Midas, and her male offspring, Luther, moved off-show whilst maintenance work is carried out on their habitat. Once complete, Midas will move back on-show with adult male Martin, and Luther will move out of the collection.

On the 21st September, female red panda, Liwei, moved to a vacant habitat at the back of giant anteaters whilst maintenance work was carried out on her habitat. New beams and platforms were installed and a new pathway outside her exhibit. Once complete, she will move back and we will import a new male to join her.

On the 24th September, female golden-headed lion tamarin Blondie moved from the first exhibit in Worlds Apart to the walkthrough to be paired with our male, Edward, who moved over from the Rainforest Walkthrough habitat. The pair have a recommendation to breed.

A female golden-headed lion tamarin named Dani also arrived from London Zoo on 24th September. She has been mixed with our existing male, Harvey, at the Rainforest Walkthrough. This pair do not have a recommendation to breed.

With the golden-headed lion tamarin moves, our family of red-bellied tamarins moved from the walkthrough at Worlds Apart to the first exhibit vacated by the tamarins. Their offspring has been sexed and is male.

HABITAT MAINTENANCE

Work continued in the elephant house this month, installing the new heating system, removing the old stalls to increase the sand area for the two female elephants and to provide further enrichment devices. Further development work will continue into next month.

New beams and platforms were added to the outside and inside of primate habitats this month for the mandrills and mangabeys and the doors were hung in the rhino house to facilitate easier movement of the gates when managing the rhino.

MORE ZOO NEWS

On 1st September, female great grey owl Aphrodite passed away overnight from an infection. We will look to import another female to join our male, Pann, in due course.

Male great grey owl, Pann.



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

This month, our curator attended the EAZA AGM in Lodz, Poland, and our Team Leader of Familiar Friends attended a harvest mouse workshop at Wildwood.

Various online meetings took place this month, with a number of keepers attending a live food culturing and welfare workshop, our Deputy Team Leader of Reptiles attending BIAZA Animal Behaviour and Training Working Group meetings, and our Lead Keeper of Sealions attending BIAZA Pinniped Subgroup meetings.

An internal team leader meeting was held at the Elephant Section to practice a drill to get an elephant standing should it go down. This is important to practice as our elephants are aging and we need to ensure we have all protocols in place to manage their welfare.

EDUCATION



24

SCHOOLS VISITED
COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY THIS MONTH

7

EDUCATIONAL YOUTH
GROUPS VISITED COLCHESTER
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
THIS MONTH

BRINGING IN A TOTAL OF

1,237

STUDENTS

44

SCHOOL SESSIONS
RUN AT THE ZOO



4

OUTREACH SESSIONS
THIS MONTH

There are many more of these
booked across the Autumn,
as well as career fairs and other
outreach as well.

315

ATTENDEES
TO HOME
EDUCATION
SESSIONS

Lots of new families have joined
the programme.

Advertisement for the Christmas reindeer session for schools
opened this month.

Along with the Research Coordinator, the education team met with
University of Suffolk staff to discuss development of a new degree
programme and to plan module content.

Discussions have commenced with SEND group leaders interested
in bringing groups to the Zoo.

VOLUNTEERS

6 VOLUNTEERS
ATTENDED
PER DAY

REACHING

9,465

VISITORS THIS MONTH

Volunteers helped to engage the visitors with activities such as classification games, Komodo dragon objects and orangutan activities.



Komodo dragon.



Bornean orangutan.

411

VISITORS ENGAGED WITH
AT THE EXPLORATORIUM

EDUCATED USING

377

DISCOVERY BOXES

UMPHAFA NATURE RESERVE



Carrying out
block burns.

OWL RETURNS

The spotted eagle owl that nested in an erosion site in 2024, returned to her nesting hole this month, so hopefully will breed successfully again this year.

SECURITY EXAMS

The Reserve Manager and Maintenance Manager did their security exams this month as they hand out firearms to our field rangers and are the responsible for monitoring of the use of firearms.

Head Ranger, Sandiso, has already passed his grading.

SPECIAL MEETING

This month, the team hosted a meeting for the Honorary Officers from Ezemvelo.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

604 hectares was burnt in a planned burn this month. This is the first time this section has burnt since 2017, so it was important that this was carried out for management of the vegetation.

The animals returned to the burnt area straight away to pick out new shoots as they grow.

NEW BABIES

4 new baby giraffes were seen this month, bringing the total up to 8 in 2025!

STAFF FAREWELL

Ethan, the student intern coordinator, left this month as he finished the practical elements of his studies. He has been a valuable help over 2025.

CHEETAH NEWS

Released cheetahs Ashia and Duma continue to do well.

This month, the team were asked to take an injured male cheetah from Babanango. The 12–13-month-old has a broken foot so will remain in the boma for 6–8 weeks until he is fully recovered. The bandages and injury were restitched this month by a local vet, but thankfully the original fracture injury is healing nicely. The bandages will be removed in due course so the male, named Balula, can start his full recovery.

VITAL MAINTENANCE

The maintenance team continued work on the field ranger's outpost. A new rocket stove was constructed, which will heat water for the shower and washing up when the solar is not working due to cloudy weather; these rocket stoves can heat water in minutes.

Other work has focused on road maintenance; with 86mms of rain received in September (this is the highest rainfall in September since 2007) the roads and dongas need quite a bit of work so the team need to construct gabions to stop the flow of water and reduce the erosion going forward.

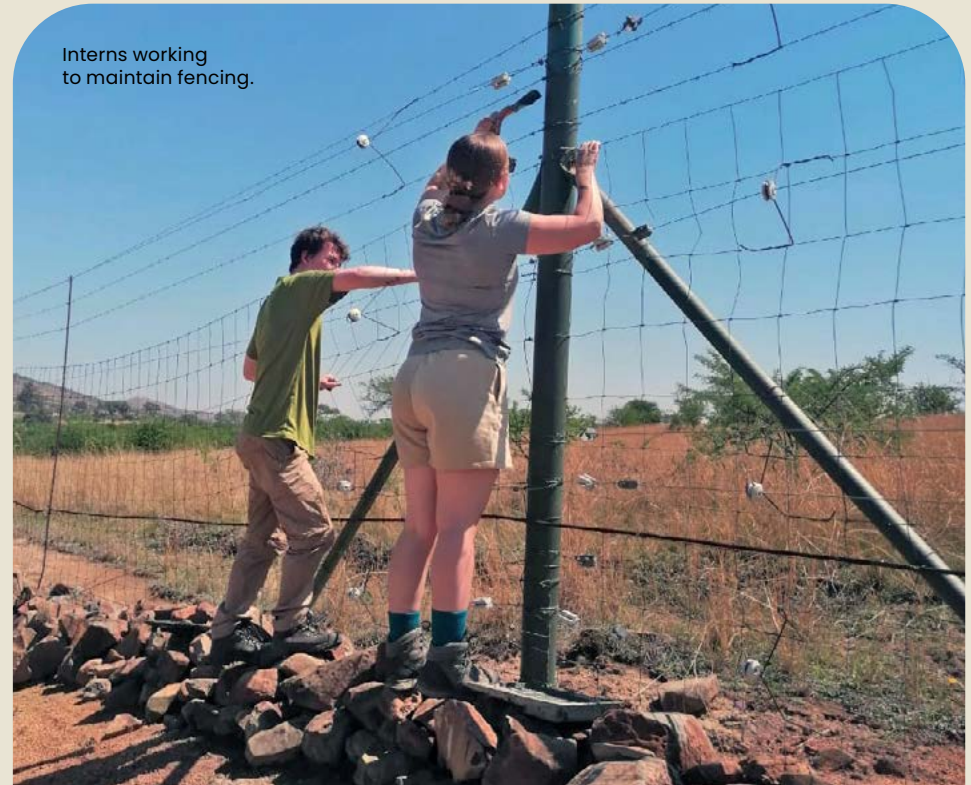
NEW INTERNS

7 new Interns joined us this month, including two volunteers from Colchester Zoological Society. They helped with cheetah monitoring and feeding, made plaster casts of tracks, conducted a snare sweep and fence patrol, fixed and painted fences, carried out a game count and spent a night at the bushcamp. They also got the pitfall trap ready to hopefully identify some new species.

Injured male
cheetah, Balula.



Interns working
to maintain fencing.





Maneless zebra.

RESEARCH

This month, our Research Coordinator :

- Met with Anglia Ruskin University to discuss developing a more collaborative relationship with the development of short-term research placements and delivering more course content
- Met with the module leader for the Zoo Management module at Writtle University College to maintain our relationship offering support through module delivery
- Met with the University of Suffolk staff to discuss development of a new degree programme which enhances research relationships and opportunities
- Visited conference facilities at the University of Essex Business School for the BIAZA Research Conference in 2026
- Continued to support Giraffe Section with data collection on zebra behaviour and to train the team members to collect the data themselves
- Developed and trailed a standardised mammal ethogram that will contribute towards integrated behaviour husbandry and feed into quality-of-life assessments and visitor-animal experience assessments. The tool was tested with the mandrills, geladas and sun bears
- Worked with the Team Leader of Africa Section to integrate the monitoring tool into the new integrated behaviour husbandry template to focus provision of enrichment and habitat modifications in line with a species' natural behaviour
- Worked with two keepers from Farm Section to develop a research survey for the Animal Behaviour and Training Working Group regarding alternative reinforcers with a view to providing some non-food-based options to use with goats and a second study looking at giant tortoise behaviour in winter
- Helped keepers from Africa and Carnivore Sections produce posters on cheetah training and leopard breeding for the BIAZA Big Cat Workshop in October.



This month, a student study commenced on enclosure use and swim patterns of Patagonian sea lions.

CONSERVATION



Our annual contribution for the EAZA EEP Komodo Dragon programme was sent this month. We have supported the Komodo Survival Program since 2005 when the species first joined our collection.

In the second quarter of 2025, the project team conducted their annual camera trapping survey in the Golo Mori region, located along the west coast of Flores. A total of 30 camera traps were strategically deployed across the landscape, focusing on coastal valleys dominated by hill savanna and tropical dry deciduous forest—habitats known to be suitable for Komodo dragon activity. The survey successfully recorded Komodo dragons at 18 of the camera trapping locations, indicating a relatively wide distribution across the monitored area.

The Zoological Director attended an online BIAZA Conservation Committee meeting this month.

An internal Sustainability Committee meeting was held, with approval of a new Sustainability Policy and targets and actions plans set for 2025–2026.

A targeted environmental education initiative was conducted, aimed at increasing awareness and knowledge among local youth about Komodo dragon conservation. The program was conducted across three educational institutions, reaching a total of 115 students and 11 accompanying teachers. This initiative was part of a broader effort to integrate conservation messaging into local communities, particularly in areas adjacent to Komodo dragon habitats that lie outside the boundaries of formal protected areas. Through a multifaceted approach, the programme sought to foster a sense of environmental stewardship among the younger generation and build long-term support for biodiversity conservation at the community level.

In the third quarter of 2025, the team will conduct a Komodo dragon population monitoring programme on Longos Island, Pota and Wae Wuul Nature Reserve, and community awareness meetings on Longos.

