



OCTOBER

MONTHLY OVERVIEW REPORT / 2025

COLCHESTER
ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Charity no. 1105621

THE ZOO

ANIMAL TRANSFERS

Female cheetah Anika moved back to the cheetah habitat at Edge of Africa on the 13th October. In the future, she will be mixed for potential breeding with male Azizi.

Male stingray, Stuart, from the Heart of Amazon aquaria transferred out of the collection on 15th October.

5 West African land snails arrived from Call of the Wild on 15th October to increase our population here at CZS.

Our group of 5 Orpington chickens moved to the llama and alpaca stable (Southern Wild) on the 21st October.

Female smooth-coated otters, Dara and Sai Lam, who had been housed off-show, transferred to Buckfast Butterflies and Dartmoor Otter Sanctuary on 23rd October.

3 male mini lop rabbits arrived on the 24th October. They are currently in quarantine, but will be housed in an area not on view to public. The rabbits will be seen by those on experiences and during some up close encounters in future.



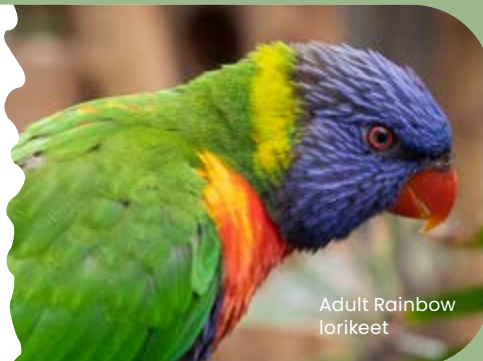
Female cheetah Anika



Smooth-coated otter

CHICK HATCHED

A lorikeet chick hatched on 13th October; it is doing well and the parents are being attentive.



Adult Rainbow lorikeet

Gelada baboons



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

This month, members of our animal department attended various conferences and workshops including the International Gelada Baboon Workshop at Yorkshire Wildlife Park, the 2025 European Turtle Alliance Conference at ARU Writtle, the BIAZA Big Cat Workshop at Wildheart Animal Sanctuary and a Live Food Workshop at ZSL London Zoo.

Various online meetings took place this month with our Deputy Team Leader of Reptiles attending BIAZA Animal Behaviour and Training Working Group meetings, a Pet Care Enrichment Summit and a BIAZA Species Advisory Committee meeting, our Team Keeper of Africa Section worked in her own time to achieve her BIAZA Accreditation Screener Certification and our Lead Keeper of Sea Lions attended a BIAZA Pinniped Subgroup meeting.

An internal team leader meeting was led by the Team Leader of Africa Section and Research Coordinator focusing on integrating behavioural monitoring into animal husbandry. The monitoring system is now being tested across each animal section.

HABITAT MAINTENANCE

Red panda, Liwei, returned to her renovated habitat on the 4th October. The beams were altered and new platforms added.

The king vultures remained off-show this month whilst work was carried out in their aviary with adjustments made to their housing.

Other maintenance work included window and beam replacement at Chimpanzee Lookout, work on the Australian rainbow lorikeet roof and flooring, adjustments to the meerkat den, and work on the guttering and new storage area at elephants.

Red panda



MORE ZOO NEWS

Our last remaining rat was put to sleep this month due to age related ill health.

We hope to welcome a new group of rats in the coming months.

EDUCATION

Slender-tailed meerkat



54

SCHOOLS VISITED
COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY THIS MONTH

BRINGING IN A TOTAL OF

4,011

STUDENTS

90

SCHOOL SESSIONS
WERE RUN AT THE ZOO

A lot of this is down to the Teacher in Training group bringing their whole cohort on the school trip across one week, compared to previous years when they would just bring one or two classes.



Keeper window
cleaning at
Aardvark Burrow

The website downloads have also been updated for September and October, with;

146

ACTIVITY PACK / TRAIL
DOWNLOADS

384

INFO PACK DOWNLOADS

By far the most popular was the zoo career pathways document.

7

OUTREACH SESSIONS
THIS MONTH

WITH A TOTAL OF

324

PARTICIPANTS

4

OUTREACH EVENTS
THIS MONTH

ENGAGING WITH A TOTAL OF

275

PARTICIPANTS

Academic year to date, although slightly lower in September, numbers were more than made up in October.

VOLUNTEERS

77 VOLUNTEERS
ATTENDED
THIS MONTH

11,088

VISITOR ENGAGEMENTS

The orangutan-focused activities were popular this month, as were the volunteer team's new giraffe neck bone and ostrich bone artefacts.

In addition to the regular volunteers, we also had the volunteer team in over half-term with an extra

22 VOLUNTEERS

CREATING AN ADDITIONAL

2,117

VISITOR ENGAGEMENTS



Reticulated giraffe



Slender-snouted crocodile

The Education Team also ran a touch table of 'Not-so Spooky Animals' over the half-term with

3,124

VISITOR ENGAGEMENTS

430

VISITORS ENGAGED WITH
AT THE EXPLORATORIUM

EDUCATED USING

456

DISCOVERY BOXES

UMPHAFA NATURE RESERVE

LEOPARD NEWS

Two bait sites and a capture cage were set up for leopards. In 2 days, a male and a female were caught and relocated to Babanango Reserve. The male was captured on 14th October and taken directly to the boma in his new home. The female was caught a day later, although once her new collar was fitted, she managed to get up and out of the boma to explore her new reserve within 45 minutes.

Another 4 solar trail camera traps were purchased – that gives the team 14 to use across the Reserve – these camera traps have been invaluable for monitoring leopard movements!

CHEETAH UPDATE

The collar was replaced on the female cheetah as the old one was not sending a satellite signal. The team can once again track her movements around the Reserve.

The male cheetah in the boma, Balula, had his foot dressings and bandages removed. Over the coming weeks, the team are hoping that he starts to strengthen his foot and increase his muscle mass ready for release.

The released male cheetah, Duma, and female, Ashia, met for the first time. They only stayed together one night, but at least they have located each other now. Both are thriving and feeding well on the Reserve, with Duma even catching a blesbok.





Water
biodiversity
study

INTERNS GET INVOLVED

The interns have been repopulating some of the dams using the catch net. They transferred fish from one of the more successful dams to those which needed a little help to recover their numbers and maintain an ecological balance.

They also cleared out one side of the cheetah boma by cutting back some overgrown trees, cleaning away the old bones and spraying the fence line so that it doesn't trip the electrics.

Other activities this month included frogging, conducting a water biodiversity study, bush clearing with the new brush cutting machine and checking the pit fall trap where they found a new species for the Reserve – a snoring puddle frog (*Phrynobatrachus natalensis*)

Towards the end of the month, only one intern remained, who put out mineral licks for the animals, helped increase the cheetah's fitness by walking alongside the boma getting the male to follow a bait, repaired the bird aviary for the soft release of two jackal buzzards from Free Me Wild and reset the camera traps in pairs in order to capture both sides of passing animals.

SECURITY ON THE RESERVE

Early in the month, 75 metres of fence was cut and removed. The team upped the patrols and found on 2 occasions people outside with dogs; they moved off the fence line once they knew they had been seen.

Later in the month, fencing was cut in multiple places and 3 x 10m sections were stolen in one night. The fence had been removed and salt licks and corn on the cob put outside to try to entice the animals out of the Reserve, where they would be killed and eaten. The team have organised a meeting with the local induna (community leader) to discuss what is happening and to see if they can help in reducing the poaching.

TRAINING & MEETINGS

Reserve Management and Intern Coordinators went to a meeting about bats and owls – it was informative covering topics about toxins, poisons and ways of housing both bats and owls. The team will implement some of the actions on the Reserve.

The Reserve Management team also went to Zululand for 3 meetings; about wild dogs, protection of vultures and predators, in particular wild dogs, leopards and cheetah. They also had the opportunity to watch the release of 3 vultures that had been either injured or poisoned in the last few months.

A new TLB (Tractor Loader Backhoe) driver started training this month.

RESERVE MAINTENANCE

The team managed to complete the rest of the block burn this month. Work continued building gabions and fixing roads, and new blocks and gravel were delivered to start building the new 'safe' room for the Field Rangers' firearms and for the agri drone. By the end of the month, the floor was completed.

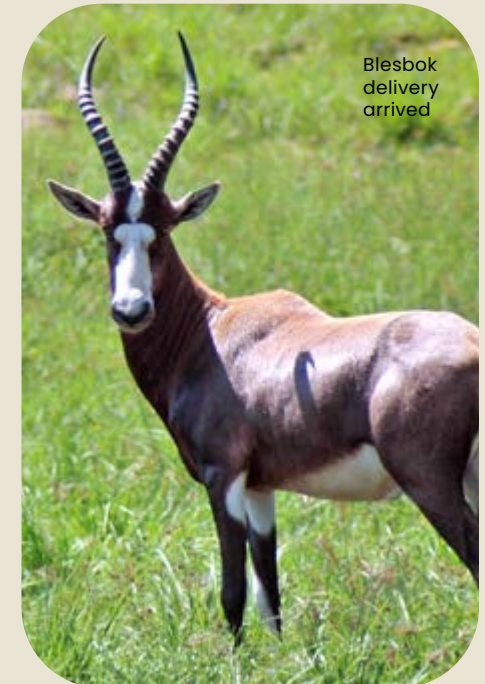
Maintenance have also been hard at work fixing the fences in the dongas, which are eroding away due to the warthogs trying to get in and out as well as making large holes along the Tugela River fenceline. More metal standards and better rock packing should deter them for a while.

OTHER NEWS

The team took delivery of 32 blesbok, even though they had ordered 200, it is proving difficult to source them when foot & mouth disease is so prevalent in KwaZulu-Natal.

The Reserve passed its annual buffalo fence inspection.

The bee hives were serviced this month. Unfortunately, one of the hives had hive moth which has completely destroyed the hive, so now only 2 active hives remain, although these did produce 12 jars of honey.



Blesbok
delivery
arrived

RESEARCH



Southern white rhino

One student study commenced this month, looking at social interactions, behaviour and activity budgets in a mixed species paddock focusing on southern white rhino.

This month, our Research Coordinator attended online meetings for the Amphibian Taxon Advisory Group (TAG), where she gave advice on the communication of amphibian conservation messaging and is working to develop some educational guidance for best practice guidelines, and attended a BIAZA Research Committee meeting, where she summarised progress made on the planning of the 2026 BIAZA Research Conference to be hosted by Colchester Zoological Society.

In addition, our Research Coordinator:

- Continued designing sessions and delivering teaching to students from Anglia Ruskin University, ARU Writtle and the University of Suffolk, with the latter sessions focusing on animal welfare and husbandry.
- Set up a capuchin behavioural monitoring study to trial the integration of behavioural monitoring into quality-of-life assessments.
- Reviewed data collected by carnivore section keepers on the mixing of the lion-tailed macaques.



Buff-headed capuchin

CONSERVATION



An internal meeting was held with the green subgroup, made up of representatives from the animal, grounds and gardens departments. The actions of the meeting will be rolled out across the Zoo in the coming weeks.

The Zoological Director attended the BIAZA Conservation Conference at Yorkshire Wildlife Park.



View across the Kingdom of the Wild paddock from the Africa Plateau walkway