



NOVEMBER

MONTHLY OVERVIEW REPORT / 2025

COLCHESTER
ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Charity no. 1105621

THE ZOO

ANIMAL ARRIVALS

A male armadillo arrived from Shepreth Wildlife Park on 6th November following a breeding recommendation. He is called Indie and is 6 years old.

5 juvenile cone-headed iguanas arrived from Hertfordshire Zoo on 6th November. The juveniles will be housed off show whilst they grow and develop.

One of our female Solomon Island skinks gave birth to a single offspring on 7th November; this brings our group number to 11.

A strawberry dart froglet was seen in the exhibit in the Sensation Station on 16th November, bringing the group total to 9.

A giant Madagascar day gecko, previously housed off show, is now on show in the blue-tongue skink habitat in Kingdom of the Wild.

The king vultures returned to their aviary on the 8th November, having been off show since September, whilst adjustments were made to their housing.

Giant Madagascar day gecko



Smooth-coated otter



Asian short-clawed otter

OTHER NEWS

Male Asian short-clawed otter Ravi was sadly euthanised on 5th November. At 16 years of age, Ravi was an elderly animal and was under veterinary care and treatment for abdominal issues, which sadly revealed cancer on post mortem.

Male Humboldt penguin, Big Baby, was sadly euthanised on 26th November. Big Baby was 24 years old and suffering from ongoing lameness.



Humboldt penguin



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

This month, three members of the Animal Care Team visited Suffolk Owl Sanctuary to attend a workshop on animal training.

The 6-monthly mortality review was conducted with veterinarians from the International Zoo Veterinary Group (IZVG), to look at mortality within the zoo collection to further discuss causes of death and look for any trends.

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

Online meetings took place this month with our Deputy Team Leader of Reptiles attending an online British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) Animal Behaviour and Training Working Group meeting and the Zoological Director attending an Elephant Welfare Group meeting.

An internal team leader meeting centred on an animal escape drill with four dik dik 'escaping' from their habitat.

HABITAT MAINTENANCE

Maintenance work this month included:

- Work on the reindeer paddock in time for Christmas
- Drainage work in the juvenile pygmy goat and Cameroon sheep walkthrough (the area that was formerly Wallaby Walkabout)
- Installation of winches in the elephant house
- The final addition of remaining rhino door plastic flaps to conserve heat
- Adaptation on the blue-tongued skink enclosure for the day gecko arrival
- Installation of a new slide on the blue duiker habitat for ease of access

The Animal Care Team also worked on renovating the off-show mandrill habitat with new enrichment linked to natural behaviour.



EDUCATION

African elephant



47

SCHOOLS VISITED
COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY THIS MONTH

BRINGING IN A TOTAL OF

2,042

STUDENTS

73

SCHOOL SESSIONS
WERE RUN AT THE ZOO

Academic year-to-date,
we've had about 7,200 school
visitors so far, and are just
about equal with 2023-2024
(best historic year-to-date
across autumn term),
and above other years.



Reindeer

72%

SCHOOLS ATTENDED
SESSIONS

In addition to schools,
there was also a lot
of Home Education teaching,
with the regular monthly
sessions and a further
4 reindeer sessions.

16

HOME EDUCATION
SESSIONS

WITH A TOTAL OF

446

PARTICIPANTS

11

OUTREACH EVENTS
THIS MONTH

ENGAGING WITH A TOTAL OF

235

PARTICIPANTS

VOLUNTEERS

5 VOLUNTEERS ATTENDED
ON THE BUSIEST DAYS

600 VISITOR ENGAGEMENTS
ON THE BUSIEST DAYS

Volunteer engagement was good this month.
The skull artefacts were particularly popular with visitors.

The Exploratorium also ran with:

817 VISITOR ENGAGEMENTS

648 BOXES OF PROPS AND GAMES USED

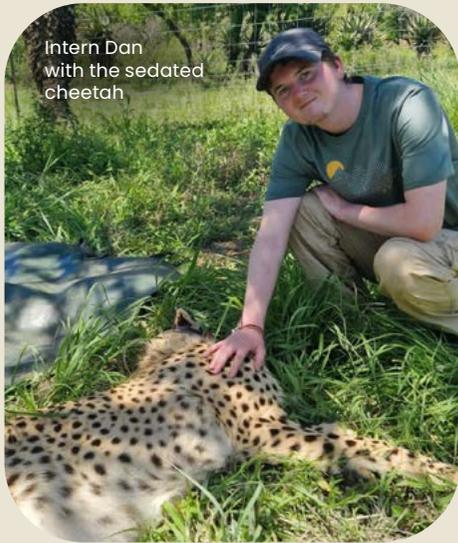


Animal skulls



Amur tiger

UMPHAFA NATURE RESERVE



Intern Dan with the sedated cheetah

CHEETAH NEWS

The intern coordinators and remaining intern, Dan, dragged meat around the outside of the boma this month, getting the male cheetah, Balula, to move to exercise his injured leg. This proved successful when, later in the month, he was successfully collared and released on the Reserve.

The vet checked his leg over and it had healed nicely. Following his release, the team have been keeping a close eye on him; each time they have seen him he has definitely had a meal and his body condition looked good.

MORE ANIMAL NEWS

A professional beekeeper visited, who is looking for a place to put 14 hives that will harvest the buffalo thorn flowers.

A game count was carried out this month, to count the new babies, but unfortunately hardly any animals have been born yet. The team did manage to see the oldest leopard tortoise on the Reserve and identified a new frog species for the Reserve, a Poynton's river frog.

INTERN ACTIVITIES

The intern coordinators and intern, Dan, carried on with pitfall trapping this month, with 2 red lipped heralds caught, cleared invasive bugweed from around the ryefield dam and cleaned out the water jojo tanks at the Intern House.

Into Dan's final few weeks on the Reserve, he was able to see the release of the male cheetah, put out licks for the animals, and used telemetry to find the cheetah on release.

One of our previous interns from ARU Writtle, who came earlier this year, had a paper published this month on: An Observation of Traumatic Globe Luxation in the African Red Toad (*Schismaderma carens*) (Smith 1848) in KwaZulu-Natal.



Telemetry training

RESERVE MAINTENANCE

Work continued on the safe room – the front section will have a roller door where the Agri drone will be stored, and at the back, the safes for firearms will be constructed. This development is now complete. The maintenance team also sprayed the fence line, fixed roads and, with the heavy rain, carried out some inside maintenance work – cleaning, repairing and varnishing the bee hives, tiling the laundry floor at the intern accommodation and painting under the veranda. They also installed solar at one of the outposts, so the rangers now have lights and a fridge, and fixed its sewage tank.

The team worked to harvest poplar trees for the boma and hide going on the rye field, removed a gate from the rye field as the warthogs are constantly digging under it, and replaced it with a fence line, and finally extended the beehive protection fence.



POACHING ON THE RESERVE

The Reserve had more incursions this month – on the first attempt, the poachers left the carcass of a warthog at the fence as they were disturbed, but unfortunately, they came again a few days later.

UmPhafa has joined the community police forum. The forum shares information gathered from communities in the area and any illegal behaviour is reported. They work alongside the police and the police intelligence service. So next time the Reserve gets poachers, the team will report them to the forum and they will investigate and pass the details on to the police. The community police forum is used by many local farms and reserves to try to combat stock and fence theft, etc.

The field rangers undertook a training day this month with an update on security and then personal training – a 2.4km run, sit ups, push ups and pull ups, followed by a kit check to ensure they retain fitness to combat increased poaching attempts over Christmas.

Buff-headed capuchin



RESEARCH

No new research studies commenced this month.

This month, our Research Coordinator:

- Set up lion, giraffe and blue crane behavioural monitoring to trial the integration of behavioural monitoring into quality-of-life assessments.
- Reviewed data collected by carnivore section keepers for sun bear visitor-animal experience assessments and lion quality of life assessments.
- Taught a session at Anglia Ruskin University Writtle College, led a bespoke trip for students from Anglia Ruskin University (Cambridge Campus) on zoo science and delivered a research session for our current cohort of student keepers.
- Worked with reptile, carnivore, primate and rainforest sections 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 a keeper from primate section to develop a research survey to investigate capuchin behaviour and enclosure use for an apprenticeship project.

CONSERVATION

On Friday the 14th of November, Colchester Zoological Society welcomed around 80 teachers to a Teacher Climate Action Planning CPD Day. From improving energy efficiency, and increasing biodiversity on school grounds, to embedding climate education across the curriculum, Colchester Zoological Society's CPD Day was designed to help schools take achievable steps towards sustainability.

Throughout the day, teachers joined in on workshops and discussions led by local councils, education networks, and environmental organisations, focused on turning ambition into measurable impact.



Smooth-coated otter



Our Primate Lead Keeper attended an online water literacy course this month. She will now work to implement some of the actions discussed in the course around the zoo site.

On the 18th and 19th November 2025, 65 delegates from 20 countries visited CZS in person or attended remotely to attend a Eurasian otter capacity building workshop. The end goal of the workshop was to form a Eurasian Otter Network so that more information and experience can be shared.

