



# JANUARY

MONTHLY OVERVIEW REPORT / 2026



# THE ZOO

## 1 CHIMPANZEE BIRTH

On 17th January, female chimpanzee, Kora, gave birth to a single offspring. Both mum and infant are doing well.

## 42 ANIMAL TRANSFERS

39 Chilean flamingos arrived from Auchingarrich Wildlife Park on 20th January. The group is currently off show serving 30 days quarantine.

Female fennec fox, Pinky, arrived from Longleat Safari Park on 21st January 2026. She is 9 months old.

Male southern tamandua, Tobermory, and female buff-headed capuchin, Marina, transferred to Chester Zoo on 22nd January.





### 3 MEETINGS ATTENDED

The Deputy Team Leader of Reptiles attended an online BIAZA Species Advisory Committee meeting.

An internal team leader meeting was held focusing on animal section management for the current year.

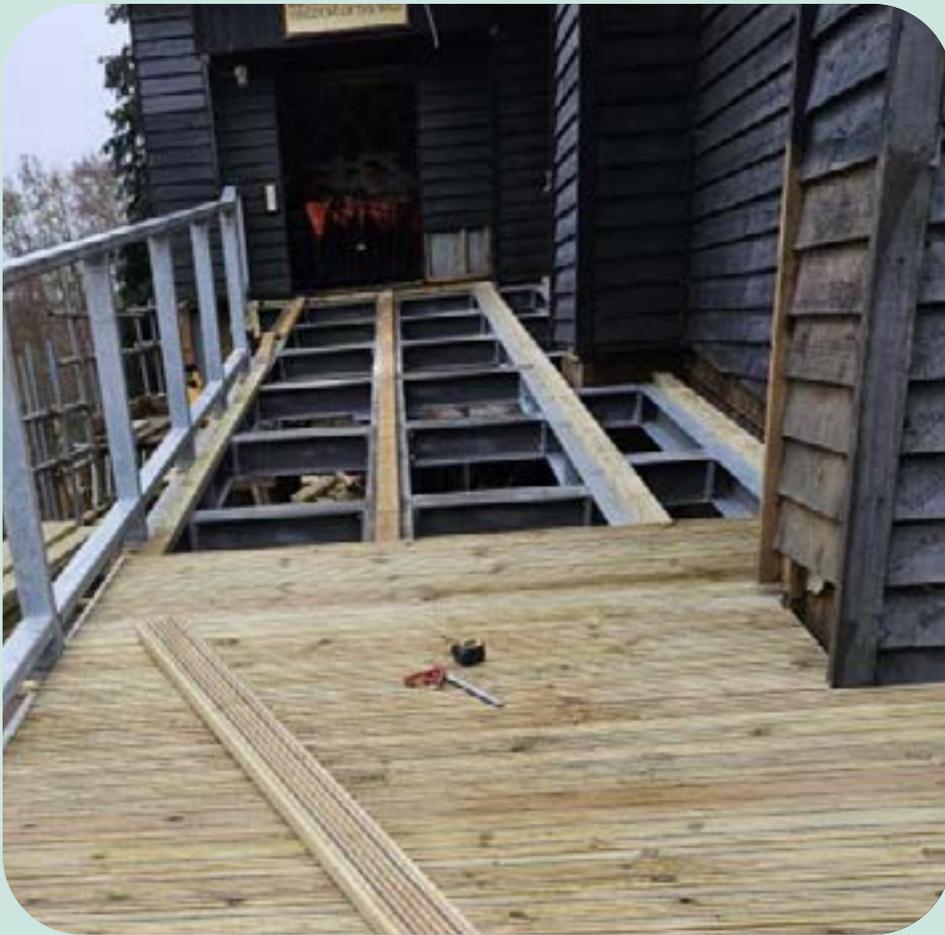
The Zoological Director and Team Leader of Reptiles had an online meeting with a team from Twycross Zoo to share our experiences with the breed and release programme for the Fisher's Estuarine Moth as Twycross Zoo are looking to embark on a moth release programme for a different species.



### 3 ANIMALS PASSED

Female red river hog, Winnie, was euthanised on 7th January. After consultation with the vet, the decision was made to euthanise Winnie on welfare grounds. We no longer hold this species in the collection.

Our pair of male red-necked wallabies were euthanised on 14th January. One male was euthanised due to being diagnosed with a bacterial infection and, after consultation with the vet, the decision was taken to euthanise the other individual on welfare grounds. We no longer hold this species in the collection.



Major work commenced this month on the ramp leading to the top floor of Kingdom of the Wild. The aardvarks have been moved off-show whilst the work takes place. With the top floor of the building closed, work will commence on adaptations to the weaver bird and leopard tortoise habitat in February.

The old Wallaby Walkthrough housing the juvenile Pygmy goats and Cameroon sheep remained closed this month due to essential maintenance works on the drainage and the construction of new housing for our Orpington chickens.

Maintenance work was carried out to convert an area of the barn into a quarantine area for the arrival of 39 Chilean flamingos. In time, they will be mixed with our existing flock on the lake.

# EDUCATION

The team have been working to develop training sessions for local authorities on primates as pets licensing and met staff from Colchester Institute to discuss support with T level delivery.



**11**

SCHOOLS VISITED  
COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY THIS MONTH

BRINGING IN A TOTAL OF

**1,339**

STUDENTS

**30**

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.



**13**

HOME EDUCATION  
SESSIONS

WITH A TOTAL OF

**328**

PARTICIPANTS

**9**

OUTREACH EVENTS  
THIS MONTH

ENGAGING WITH A TOTAL OF

**535**

PARTICIPANTS

# VOLUNTEERS



517

VISITORS ENGAGED  
WITH AT THE EXPLORATORIUM

EDUCATED USING

374

BOXES

UP TO

65

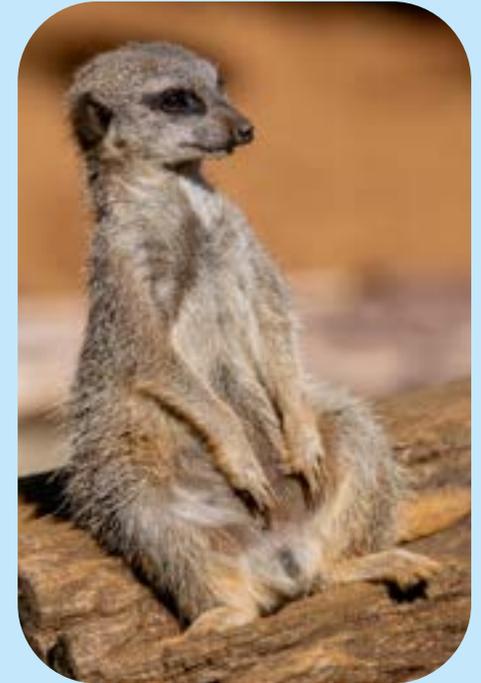
VOLUNTEERS IN  
ATTENDANCE

ENGAGING WITH

5,171

VISITORS

On the busiest days, 4 volunteers educated visitors on bears, orangutans and Komodo dragons. On World Desert Day, they took props to fennec fox and meerkats to talk about adaptations.



A volunteer appreciation day was run in mid January with 20 volunteers in attendance with sessions to provide extra training to help them fulfil their role in the Zoo. Information cards for each prop with a picture, description and facts for each animal have now been completed following feedback from the volunteers. The process for recruiting volunteers is now being streamlined and further promotional material put out to recruit more volunteers.

# RESEARCH



## 2 NEW STUDIES

Two new student BSc research studies commenced this month studying: Gelada baboon feeding behaviour and how Patagonian sea lion behaviour within their enclosure will be affected by sun exposure.

This month, our Research Coordinator:

Continued observations of the fennec fox mixing and completed data summaries for the zebra and sea lions to integrate into quality of life assessments.

Attended BIAZA Research Committee meetings to discuss logistics on the 2026 Research Conference hosted by Colchester Zoological Society and to discuss the development of a grant process for the Research Committee to share.

Attended a Career Skills Workshop at the University of Essex to share elements of the Research Lead role, as well as skills required and challenges faced working in zoos.

Collected data on chimpanzee behaviour, oestrus and diet.

Set up a Zoomonitor project to collect data on the species in Worlds Apart.

Developed a demeanour scoring system to support quality of life assessments and ongoing monitoring.



# UMPHAFA NATURE RESERVE

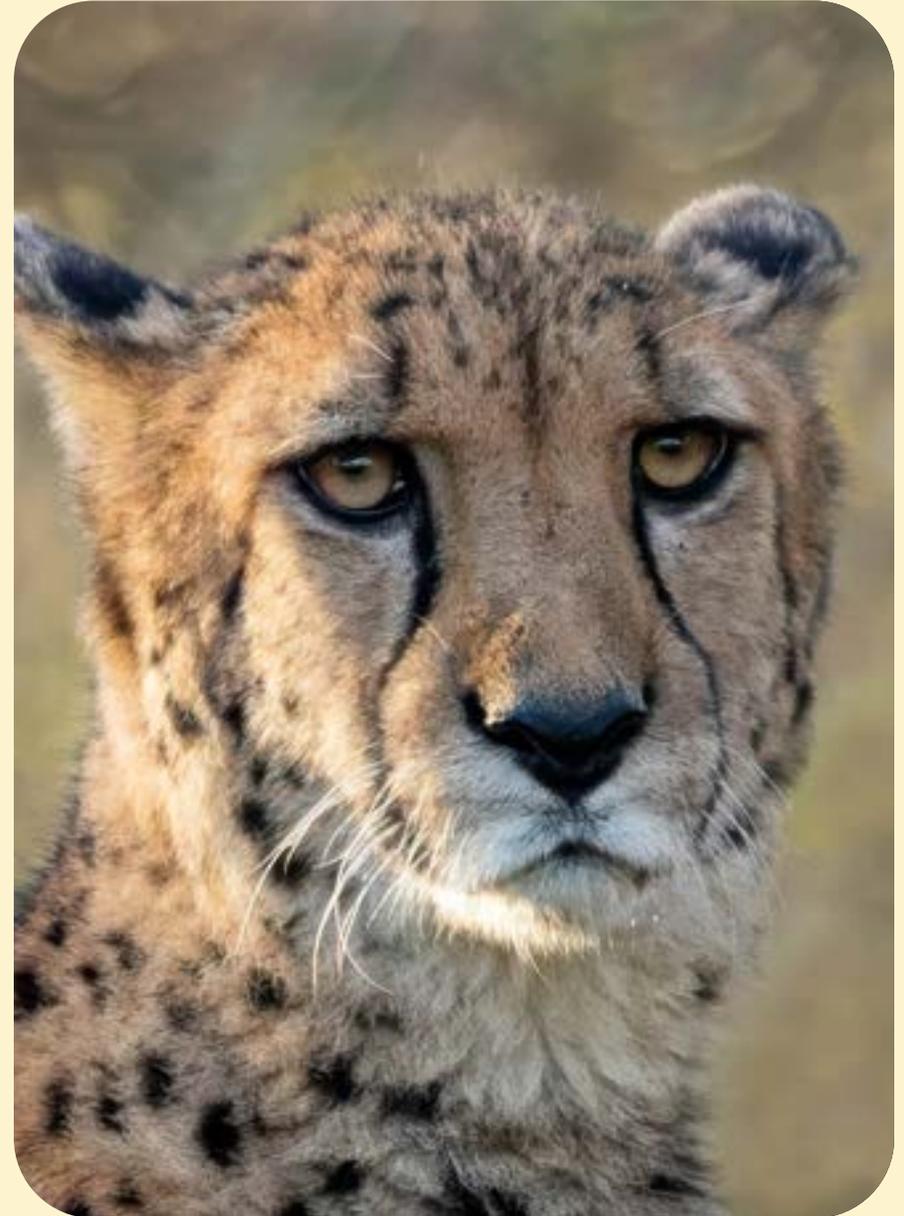
## 1 POTENTIAL TRANSFER

This month we received a call from the Cheetah Advisory Committee who have a single male cheetah in need of a new home - orphaned with 2 female siblings at Hluhluwe iMfolozi Reserve in Zululand, they are currently with a vet.

He is 18 months and will need careful monitoring. The team are now organising his permits to move him onto the Reserve and have started working on the boma spraying the fence line, checking electrics and removing some of the trees to give more space.

The professional beekeeper came in to trim an area and put out a number of hives. The hives seem busy with bee activity already.

The Maintenance Team have been working to repair fences, dongas and roads following the heavy rains. Unfortunately, 50mm of rain in one night meant some of the work has been undone and will need redoing. In other areas, the team are waiting for the water level to go down before putting the fence back up. Even one of the dam walls broke with the velocity of the water. The team are working on constructing gabions where possible to stop the water flow.





# 38

BUFFALO  
CALVES

The buffalo have had more calves  
- we are now up to a total of 38 with more on the way.



# 2

BLUE CRANES  
HATCHED

Two blue crane chicks hatched on the top of iThala and appear to be doing well. Another pair are sitting on a nest on the ryefield so hopefully they will successfully rear too.



## 5 NEW INTERNS

They have been hard at work with poaching patrols, fixing the animal lick containers, water surveys, restocking dams, camera trapping and spraying alien plants. In the hot weather, they have been spending time in the streams doing water biodiversity surveys and frogging.

## 15.72 HECTARES OF ACACIA KAROO

The drone was used to spray 15.72 hectares of acacia karoo. Once this dies off, we can then burn to clear the area.

## 10 DONATIONS

We received a donation of 10 x 16L knapsacks. It couldn't come at a better time as we were using our current sprayers for the cars for foot & mouth protection, so these can help towards spraying the fence line.

## 1 RANGER OF THE YEAR

We celebrated Ranger of the Year– the winner was Sihle, he got a cake and a multi-tool knife.

## 1 RANGER TO BE EMPLOYED

A Field Ranger left this month so we are currently recruiting for a replacement.

The Field Rangers undertook their PT training and spent time with the interns doing patrols and snare sweeps.

We carried out a game count this month with sightings including the male hyena, 2 jackals and 2 leopard males out in the open in the middle of the day.

