



Fiji banded iguana

# FEBRUARY

MONTHLY OVERVIEW REPORT / 2026

COLCHESTER  
ZOOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY

Charity no. 1105621



On 2nd February, female pileated gibbon, Qiwen, gave birth to a single offspring.

# THE ZOO

## ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Female pygmy marmoset, Queenie, transferred to Dudley Zoo on 5th February.

A female Colombian black spider monkey arrived from Dudley Zoo on 5th February. She is called Ivy and is 5 years old.

4 male rats arrived on 9th February from a private owner. They are 6 months old and called Edward, Egg, Dobby and Darwin. They can be seen in the rat habitat inside the Pig Patch.

4 male juvenile rock hyrax, Gus, Max, Fred and Barney, transferred to London Zoo on 12th February.

Female juvenile Visayan spotted deer, Gee, transferred to West Midlands Safari Park on 19th February.

Female sea lion, Winnipeg, was put to sleep on the 12th February due to age-related illness.

Male emerald monitor, Kubor, passed away on 5th February. He was sent for a post mortem which revealed severe visceral gout.



4 Cameroon sheep ewes arrived on 8th February from a private breeder. These can be seen in the old red river hog habitat at Edge of Africa.

## INTERNAL TRANSFERS

Our group of 5 Orpington chickens moved to a new habitat at Farmyard Hill (formerly Wallaby Walkabout) and have mixed with the juvenile Cameroon sheep and pygmy goats.

Our group of prehensile skinks moved from opposite the rhinoceros iguanas to the first habitat in Worlds Apart. The male Fiji banded iguana moved to their vacated habitat.

Male Amur leopard, Akovi, moved off show in preparation for transfer.

# THE ZOO

## DEVELOPMENT WORK

Work was completed this month on the drainage in Farmyard Hill (formerly Wallaby Walkabout) and construction of new housing for the Orpington chickens.

New beams were installed in both lemur habitats this month, along with a new shelter in the Lost Madagascar Walkthrough.

New furniture and rock were installed in the meerkat habitat, with work carried out on the visitor experience hut.



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



Mandrill

## MORE NEWS

Welfare work focused on completing and reviewing quality of life assessments for various species, including sea lions, mandrills, spotted deer, lion-tailed macaque, ostrich, crowned and blue crane, zebra, blue duiker, Oxford sandy and black pig and llama, reviewing visitor animal experience assessments for ferrets and tigers and completing a detailed welfare assessment audit for capuchins following the new BIAZA assessment toolkit.

Heating and lighting workshops were run this month for animal care staff across the zoo to expand their knowledge on monitoring parameters in their habitats.

Our annual BALAI inspection was conducted this month which passed successfully.

The Zoological Director attended an online BIAZA Elephant Subgroup meeting.

Two members of the Farm Section attended a kidding workshop organised by the Essex and Suffolk Goat Club.

# EDUCATION



**23**

SCHOOLS VISITED  
COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY THIS MONTH

BRINGING

**1,034**

STUDENTS

**48**

SESSIONS WERE RUN  
THIS MONTH

There was also a lot of outreach in February:

VIRTUAL OUTREACH

**7**

SESSIONS FOR

**210**

PARTICIPANTS

CAREERS FAIRS

**3**

SESSIONS FOR

**233**

PARTICIPANTS

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

**2**

SESSIONS FOR

**65**

PARTICIPANTS

In addition, the team also delivered 4 blocks of half-day teaching for ARU Writtle including virtual, in person and at the zoo sessions.

# VOLUNTEERS

There were some very busy days over February half term. Most days now have at least one regular volunteer with additional volunteers trained over February half term and now fully independent.

Visitors enjoyed interacting with the artefacts and the volunteers ran their skull and sounds activity table.

**94** VOLUNTEERS

**470** HOURS DONATED

**9,777** VISITORS  
ENGAGED WITH

# UMPHAFA NATURE RESERVE



Male cheetah,  
Balula

## CHEETAH ADVENTURE

Male cheetah Balula went on an adventure to the neighbour's reserve this week. The team got an alert on his collar that he had walked through the fence.

Unfortunately, he went down for a drink at one of the dongas that the team hadn't fixed since the rain a few days earlier and walked straight through. His telemetry showed he walked over the hill and down the fenceline towards the road, where the team caught up with him ambling along the fence line. He was safely captured and released back on to UmPhafa.



Fence patrol

## INTERN ACTIVITIES

Three interns left this month and three more joined. They spent a rainy day fixing the owl boxes, brush clearing and brush packing.

They also had a poaching presentation and joined the field rangers doing a snare sweep followed by ambush practice and then a fence patrol.



Buffalo  
and calf

## RESERVE ANIMALS

The buffalo are continuing to calf, with 43 individuals now, up from 33 at the beginning of the year.

The Endangered Wildlife Trust visited this month to discuss some locations for a new vulture restaurant. The site now needs to be tested to see if the vultures can land and take off. So far, unfortunately vultures haven't arrived, but leopards and bushpigs appear to be enjoying the carrion.

## RESERVE MAINTENANCE

The maintenance team tackled the Ithala road this month - it's by far the steepest road on the Reserve and the power of the rain brought down lots of soil and rocks onto the road, making it undriveable. The team walked up the road with shovels and pick axes to repair it.

The second maintenance team worked on building gabions to stop the erosion along parts of the fence line. One gabion was constructed covering an 80m stretch along part of the community fence line where it always washes. One of the foot and mouth wheel washes was also upgraded to allow larger trucks like the game capture trucks to get in.



Flooding due to heavy rain



Testing the fence line

## OTHER NEWS

Poachers entered along the community fence line this month. The field rangers saw them when they were coming back down the hill and heard a gunshot. They had cut 4 holes along the fence and put their dogs in. When they saw the rangers they moved away from the fence. The next day the 2 rangers went to the police station to report the incident, and the police came out to see the crime scene. In a second incident, the camera traps picked up 3 men and 3 dogs walking along the fence line. Using the thermal drone, the field rangers managed to find the poachers resting nearby waiting for night fall. The pictures were sent off to the Police Community Forum to take action.

We successfully passed our 3-year fence line inspection with the local wildlife authority, and the Reserve Managers also attended the Midlands Wildlife Security meeting which talked about community programmes and current poaching statistics.

# CONSERVATION & RESEARCH



The Zoological Director hosted the annual Fisher's Estuarine Moth Steering Committee Meeting here at Colchester Zoological Society to discuss the moth's conservation programme progress in 2025 and plans for 2026 with other stakeholders including Natural England, the Essex Wildlife Trust, National Trust, Environment Agency, Tendring District Council and Butterfly Conservation.

The Conservation Education Team hosted a Local Council Nature Day attended by 80 local councillors and nature group members.

The Zoological Director and Director of Science, Education and Training attended a meeting with the Climate Action Engagement Manager from Essex County Council to look at future opportunities for sustainability collaboration.



Fisher's estuarine moth



Fennec fox

## RESEARCH NEWS

This month, our Research Coordinator assisted in the Carnivore Section monitoring project studying the mixing behaviours of the fennec fox and presented to the University of Chester to advertise careers and research placements.