Fennec fox kit

AUGUST

MONTHLY OVERVIEW REPORT / 2026

COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Charity no. 1105621

THE ZOO

Slender-tailed meerkat pups

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

On the 28th August, an 8-year-old male Colombian black spider monkey, Febo, arrived from Drayton Manor. He is currently off-show, but once he is settled, he will be mixed with the rest of the group.

Four meerkat pups were born to Fang and Victor on the 24th August. They are currently down the burrow so cannot be seen at present. They will start to venture out as they develop.

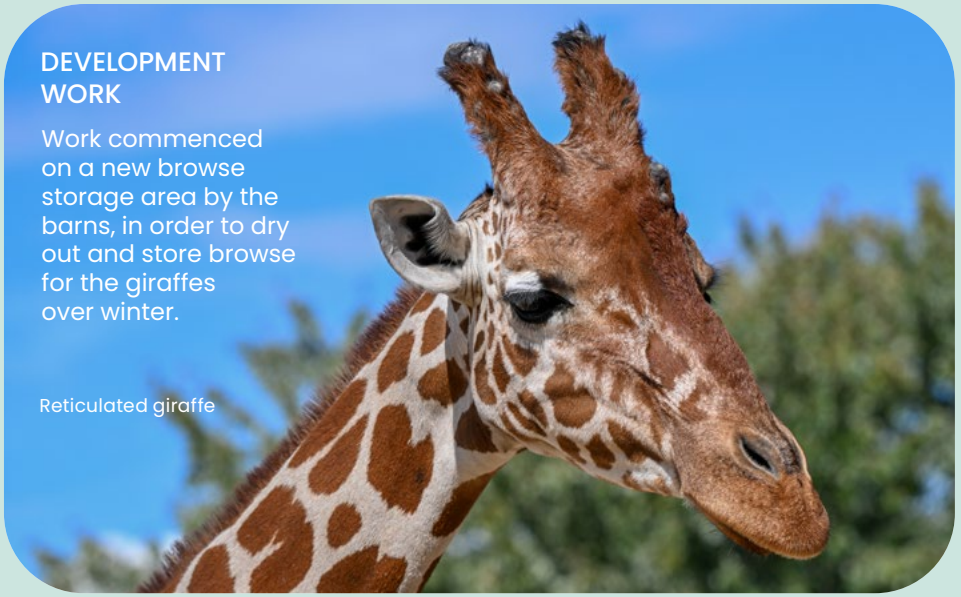
A tamandua was born on the 29th August to female, Ruth. It is spending the majority of time in the nest box, although can occasionally be seen clinging onto Ruth's back.

The two fennec fox kits born last month, have been sexed as male. Both continue to do well.

Southern tamandua pup

DEVELOPMENT WORK

Work commenced on a new browse storage area by the barns, in order to dry out and store browse for the giraffes over winter.



Reticulated giraffe

INTERNAL TRANSFERS

An additional 40 electric yellow lab cichlids, which arrived from Sealife Adventure in July, finished quarantine and can now be seen in the cichlid tank in Kingdom of the Wild, opposite the Hippo Cove.

The 100 Congo tetra that arrived last month finished quarantine and can now be seen in the tetra tank in Worlds Apart.

Work on the Flamingo Lake perimeter was completed and 39 additional Chilean flamingos joined the existing flock on the lake, bringing us up to 64 birds.

Chilean flamingo

MORE NEWS

Welfare work focused on reviewing welfare audits and creating welfare action plans for mandrills, ring-tailed lemurs, red-bellied lemurs and blue duiker. A number of quality of life assessments were reviewed this month for individuals of various species, including African elephants, reticulated giraffes, maneless zebra and white-lipped tamarins. Visitor-animal experience assessments were reviewed for Giraffe Section and plans continued for monitoring welfare surrounding events.

An internal meeting was held this month for Rainforest Section to discuss section developments and collection planning.

Mandrill

On 27th August, Burgess Diagnostics brought their specialist mobile CT scanner to the Zoo. Ten animals underwent CT scans to take a closer look at their health.

Scanning a giant anteater

EDUCATION & VOLUNTEERS

2

SCHOOLS VISITED COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY THIS MONTH

BRINGING

54

STUDENTS

Due to it being the summer holidays, school visits were low and no school group sessions were run this month.

Across the summer, the team hosted 13 adult Summer Lectures with 170 people in attendance in August (as well as 50 in attendance across the 3 July lectures). Zookeeping Career Information Nights generated particularly strong booking interest.

The team also met with the mayor about ongoing fundraising for his charities, as CZS is one of his elected charities for 2026/27, and also hosted the Field Studies Council from Flatford Mill as part of their Zookeeper and Ecology course for Duke of Edinburgh awards.

Keeper working with reticulated giraffes

VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED WITH

27,000

VISITORS THIS MONTH

35 VOLUNTEERS ATTENDED DURING AUGUST

786 VOLUNTEER HOURS WERE DONATED

Two days even had 10 volunteers volunteering their time to educate our visitors!

Their visitor highlights this month included Caroline, the slender-snouted crocodile, in her outside habitat and the kudu horn also seemed popular.

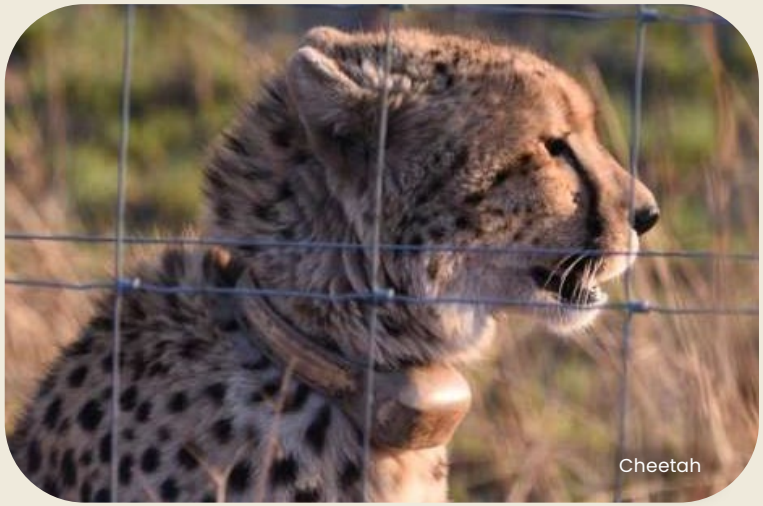
4,009

VISITORS ENGAGED WITH

3,481

EDUCATIONAL BOXES AT THE EXPLORATORIUM

UMPHAFA NATURE RESERVE


Cheetah

CHEETAH NEWS

Male cheetah, Storm, was darted in the middle of the month as the limp he developed last month was getting increasingly worse and, with not being able to hunt, it was critical he was put back into the boma to recuperate. The vet and veterinary students came for the darting. He will remain in the boma for 3-4 weeks whilst he rests his sprained ankle.

Unfortunately, male cheetah Balula's collar is not working. We need to have a replacement made so we can fit it the same time as taking the old collar off. Forever Wild Foundation Trust have agreed to pay for the new collar, so we are very grateful to them. We have ordered a hybrid collar (this has a solar panel on it) and we are hoping this will extend the battery life.

Blesbok release

MORE ANIMAL NEWS

A further 28 blesbok were released this month.

A serval was found dead in one of the dams. This is the second one this quarter, likely killed by leopard. It is not however the serval released by Free Me Wildlife; that individual appears to be doing well and can be tracked via its collar.

Blesbok release

INTERN ACTIVITIES

The University of Suffolk joined with a packed itinerary, including looking after the cheetah in the boma, conducting a game count, a full maintenance day burning part of the Reserve to prevent runaway fires in the dry conditions, night drives, and putting out camera traps.

The group have also had modules to complete, so have been very hands on, focused on getting the information from all sources, asking lots of questions and being very enthusiastic.

Fence maintenance

Reserve burns

RESERVE MAINTENANCE

Another gabion was constructed with a concrete pipe in it for drainage. These come in very useful in the fight against erosion.

The team carried out maintenance on the roads and fixed an old slasher so it could be used for rougher areas rather than destroy the new grass slasher.

Gabion with drainage

Grass slasher

OTHER NEWS

Reserve Managers, Anthony and Amanda, visited the UK this month, met the Colchester Zoological Society trustees at their AGM and also had meetings with UmPhafa Conservation Trust trustees.

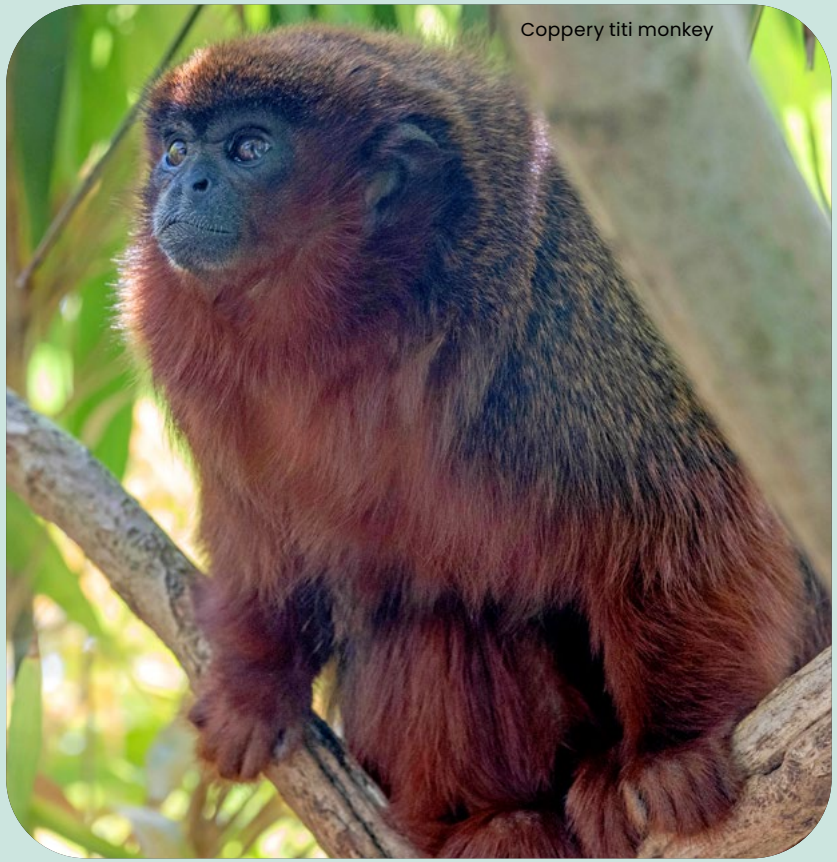
There are currently three Field Ranger vacancies, so the team are currently reviewing CV applications.

The Reserve has been assigned a further donation of two security cameras; vital equipment in helping protect our fence lines.

The Reserve Management attended the inaugural meeting of the Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Forum. With a new Head of Conservation Operations, they are working to improve and reintroduce communication to all parties that use and need Ezemvelo's services. The meeting was insightful and interesting, and we look forward to working alongside Ezemvelo on a more open footing.

Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Forum meeting

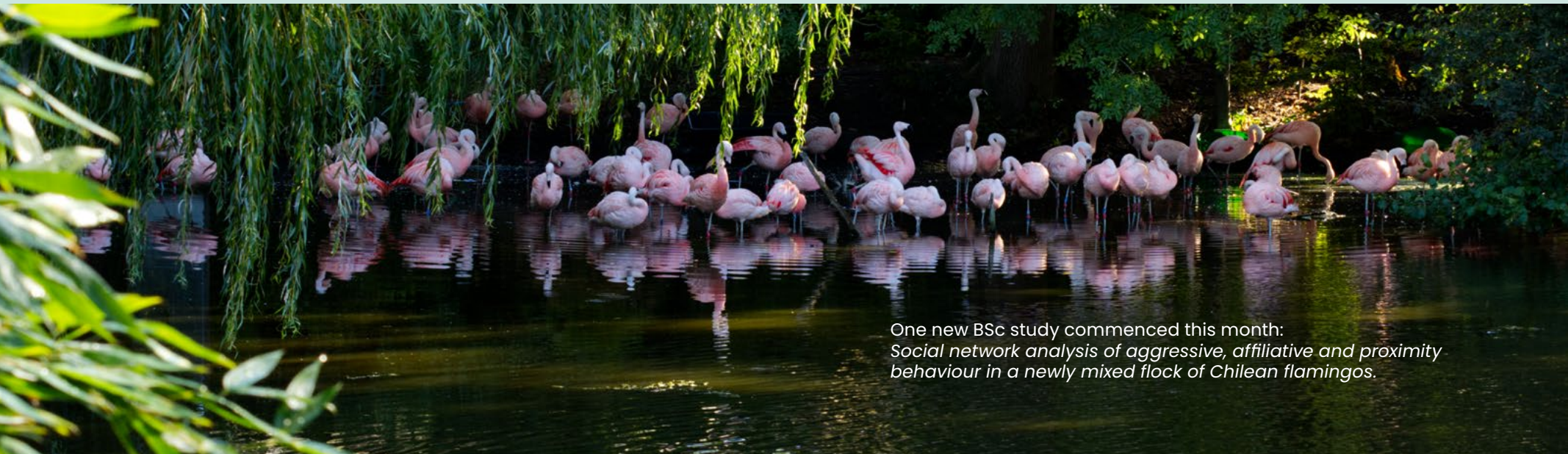
RESEARCH


Coppery titi monkey

RESEARCH NEWS

This month, the Research Lead completed the new CZS Research Strategy outlining research aims for the next 5 years and formalised the zoo's keeper research training programme as part of this. She also contributed data summaries from research conducted on various species, such as the zebra, to feed into the quality-of-life assessments and, utilising the zebra case study, wrote up a publication for a CABI Online Case Study publication. By trialling publication, we aim to showcase our case studies of research and animal welfare.

For the first time, two year-long research interns started at the Zoo this month. They have been concentrating on studies which are linked to welfare assessment, focusing on behaviour and habitat use of species, such as Visayan spotted deer, coppery titi monkey, cherry-crowned mangabey, ring-tailed and crowned lemurs, buff-headed capuchin and slender-tailed meerkat, and event impact on rainforest species.



One new BSc study commenced this month:
Social network analysis of aggressive, affiliative and proximity behaviour in a newly mixed flock of Chilean flamingos.