



Village weaver bird

JULY

MONTHLY OVERVIEW REPORT / 2026

COLCHESTER
ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Charity no. 1105621

THE ZOO



100 Congo tetra arrived on 22nd July. They are currently off-show undergoing quarantine.

Congo tetra

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Seven village weaver birds arrived from Welsh Mountain Zoo on 10th July. The new birds have been imported to help increase the gene pool of our current flock.

Female guinea pig, Gracie, arrived from Cotswolds Wildlife Park on 10th July.

On 19th July, female rock hyrax, Cindy-Lou, gave birth to a healthy pup.

Female gelada baboon, Malaika, was sadly euthanised on 8th July due to ongoing health and welfare concerns.



Colombian black spider monkey

DEVELOPMENT WORK

The filter system was adapted in the cichlid aquaria next to Hippo Cove. New substrate and planting were added.

Beams and platforms were added to the outside of the Colombian black spider monkey habitat, Medellin Monkeys.

Additional overhang and airlock systems were added to the enclosure adjacent to the main Call of the Wild habitat for the wolves to have overnight access.

An extractor fan was added to the rabbit and tree monitor habitats, a chiller unit to the silver dollar aquaria and air-conditioning installed in the off-show reptile facility to control temperatures in the heat wave.

New rockwork was added to the meerkat habitat, Suricata Sands.

The perimeter fencing construction continued on Flamingo Lake, ready for the arrival of new flock members in August.

Work continued throughout the month on the boiler system in Kingdom of the Wild.

INTERNAL TRANSFERS

66 yellow lab cichlids arrived from Sealife Adventure, Southend. These can be seen in the cichlid tank in Kingdom of the Wild, opposite the Hippo Cove.

Four crowned cranes have moved from the paddock at Kingdom of the Wild to the old cheetah habitat opposite Dragons of Komodo.



Yellow lab cichlid



Crowned lemur

MORE NEWS

Welfare work focused on reviewing welfare audits and creating welfare action plans for Amur tigers, Goeldi's monkeys, crowned and ring-tailed lemurs, Komodo dragons, surgeonfish and damselfish. A number of quality of life assessments were reviewed this month for individuals of various species, including blue duiker, spotted hyena, gelada baboon, buff-headed capuchin, and Rüppell's griffon vulture. Visitor-animal experience assessments were reviewed for Farm Section and plans commenced for monitoring species welfare surrounding events.

An internal team leader meeting centred on SEND training for staff management.

A new Head Keeper commenced her position this month. She has started to undertake communications with EAZA Ex-situ Programme (EEP) coordinators regarding our species plan and collection changes and completed various activities such as development of a standard operating procedure (SOP) and check sheet for CZS Animal Transports. She also commenced shadowing Team Leaders on various sections to increase her knowledge of their section management.

Various staff members undertook Continued Professional Development (CPD) watching a BIAZA webinar on paperwork requirements for the new Standards of Modern Zoo Practice for Great Britain (SMZPGB).

An animal escape drill was carried out with a tiger 'escaping' outside of the Zoo perimeter.

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



Amur tiger

EDUCATION & VOLUNTEERS

122

SCHOOLS VISITED
COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY THIS MONTH

BRINGING

8,685

STUDENTS

94

SESSIONS WERE RUN
THIS MONTH

A community outreach
was conducted in the middle
of the month in Wrabness
for 40 participants.

A careers day was also
attended at Colchester
Sixth Form.



Komodo dragon

VOLUNTEERS
ENGAGED WITH

18,000

VISITORS THIS MONTH

38

VOLUNTEERS
ATTENDED
DURING JULY

600

VOLUNTEER
HOURS WERE
DONATED

Their visitor highlights this month
included Caroline, the slender-
snouted crocodile, in her
outside habitat and Komodo
dragon artefacts.

1,854

VISITORS PARTICIPATED WITH

1,600

EDUCATIONAL BOXES AT THE
EXPLORATORIUM

UMPHAFA NATURE RESERVE



CHEETAH NEWS

Cheetahs Ashia and Storm have joined up a few times, confirmed via their tracking collars. Hopefully they will successfully breed in future.

Cheetah Storm developed a bad limp at the end of the month, which we presume was from taking down an impala last week. The vet will come and look at it.

Male cheetah, Balula's, collar stopped working so the team will need to investigate what has happened.



MORE ANIMAL NEWS

The endangered southern bald ibis made its presence known all over the Reserve this month. They like short grass foraging areas and prefer recently burned or heavily grazed fields. With a reducing population, UmPhafa serves as a vital habitat for these birds.

A giraffe carcass was put out by the interns at the vulture restaurant to try and entice some vultures in. On 2 separate occasions, a vulture came and fed. The team need to put more bait out on a regular basis to set up the feeding site for the vultures. Other visitors to the carcass included a family of bushpigs, a male and female leopard and a genet.

Sadly, we lost one of the servals released last month to a leopard attack, the other one is still safely roaming the Reserve.

There have been a number of animal deaths this month due to old age, as the weather has been so cold and the elderly animals don't fare well at this time, as well as carnivore kills and poaching totaling 10 so far.





INTERN ACTIVITIES

Three new interns joined this month. They assisted with a reserve burn, fixing animal feed buckets, constructing gabions, carrying out a game count and putting out camera traps. They installed a new owl box at an old derelict building and had the chance to do a night patrol with the Field Rangers.

RESERVE MAINTENANCE

The reserve burn along the N3 motorway was conducted in conjunction with the road agency SANRAL. With just one fence line left to burn adjacent to the neighbouring property, the Maintenance Team have been brush cutting the area to get it ready for the burn, as well as fixing roads and building gabions.

The Maintenance Manager found an old spring that is still running and diverted the flow with a pipe to the closest dam to increase its volume. With little rain being received, the team need to ensure the animals have enough water to sustain them.



Reserve burn



Field rangers checking fences with the interns.

OTHER NEWS

Two new signs were put up this month, sponsored via Conservation Outcomes, highlighting that UmPhafa is a Biodiversity Stewardship Nature Reserve and a protected area.

The team also received a further 5 knapsacks for alien plant spraying from Conservation Outcomes via Build It.

Unfortunately, we have recently had several incidents of poaching. A lot of the cases don't get very far from a prosecution point of view, but one particular case had forensics carried out and an autopsy on the wildebeest carcass left on the Reserve, which the poachers had killed.



New signage

RESEARCH

RESEARCH NEWS

Seven studies commenced this month;

- Investigating elephant personality, cognition and crop-raiding.
- Evaluating the process of conducting chimpanzee introductions into captive groups.
- Social network analysis of a newly-mixed troop of chimpanzees at Colchester Zoological Society.
- Behaviour and enclosure use of gelada baboons.
- Behaviour of cheetah with reference to visitor number.
- Behaviour of red panda with reference to visitor number.
- Enclosure utilisation in *Varanus komodoensis* (Komodo dragon) and the effects of thermoregulation and body temperature on behaviour and enclosure use.

Colchester Zoological Society organised and hosted the BIAZA Research Conference. A number of staff members presented at this conference, including talks on keeper research methods, chimpanzee behaviour and posters presented on research conducted at the zoo and application of data to visitor animal experience assessments.

The Research Lead also had meetings with Dartmoor Zoo to identify areas of priority research for collaboration and held a STEMPoint Placement Induction to support research opportunities in A-level students to further development of research-savvy students.



Cheetah



Chimpanzee

CONSERVATION



CONSERVATION NEWS

An internal sustainability meeting was held, with a focus on education concerning water sustainability.

The Zoological Director and Animal Records Officer visited Cudmore Grove, Mersea and a team of keepers from Reptile Section visited Copt Hall to survey the Hog's fennel plants and monitor feeding signs of the Fisher's Estuarine Moth.



£10,000 was donated to the Elephant Orphanage Project this month. The Elephant Orphanage Project (EOP) is working to rescue, rehabilitate and release elephants that have been orphaned as a direct result of poaching. The funding helps provide food and medical treatment for the orphaned elephants and supports the wage of one of the elephant caregivers, Aaron, who has worked at the project since 2012.

Aaron and African elephant



€2,000 was donated to the lemur consortium, AEECL. This contribution plays an important role in helping maintain and develop conservation actions in Sahamalaza, Madagascar, particularly in support of the region's unique and highly threatened biodiversity. The AEECL aims to advance the understanding and conservation of Madagascar's lemur populations through scientific research, captive propagation and protection of their natural habitat. Investment in local communities through education, resource management and communication helps ensure the communities of today can forge a safe haven for wildlife tomorrow.

Blue-eyed black lemur