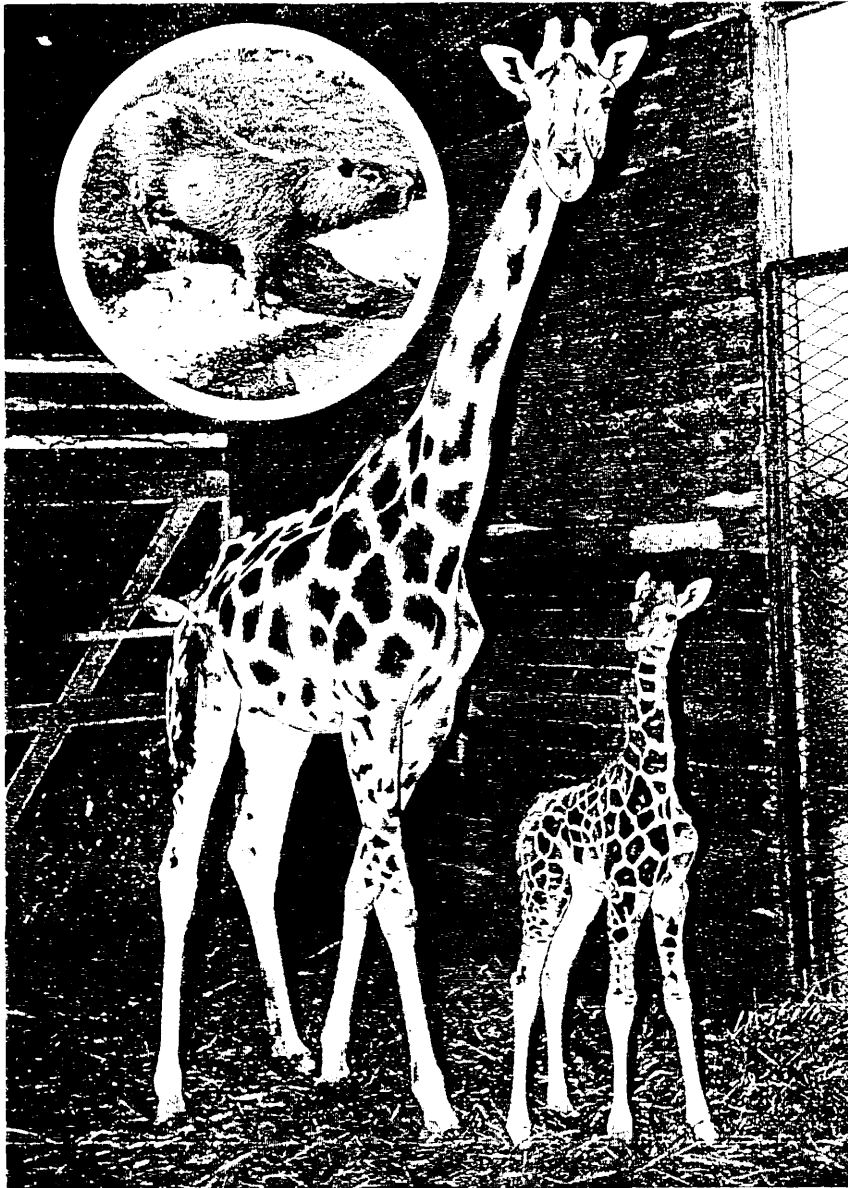


NEWS FROM THE ZOOS



"Maggie" and her daughter photographed at Whipsnade. Photo: Fox Photos. Inset: One of the Capybaras brought from British Guiana. Photo: Zoological Society of London.



The two Pumas recently arrived from Buenos Aires. Photo: Fox Photos.

Report from WHIPSNADE

By E. H. TONG

MAGGIE, the Giraffe, came to Whipsnade from Regent's Park after she had lost her first baby. She refused to feed it and it died on the second day. Maggie then became famous—or infamous—by refusing to enter a box for transfer to the country. It took fourteen days or more to convince her that she was destined for Whipsnade. Now she has produced a fine female baby, and this time is being a very good mother. She is very possessive and attacks everyone who attempts to go too near her baby.

Four white Bactrian Camels received in exchange from Prague Zoo a year ago have been transferred from Regent's Park on the completion of quarantine. Two Sambar Deer similarly transferred brings our number of these Indian deer up to six.

A half-grown Cheetah, "Mickie," purchased from John Seago, promises to be as tame as "Prince," so well known for many years at Regent's Park. It is hoped that "Mickie" will live in the Children's Corner upon completion of his quarantine. Two Pumas received in exchange from Buenos Aires are also particularly tame.

Mr. Lester brought back from British Guiana a pair of Capybara for Whipsnade. These had been children's pets and are very friendly, whistling and grunting when stroked and petted. Capybaras are the largest living

rodents, reaching a length of about four feet and a weight of nearly 100 lb. They are bulky in build, with a short neck, small ears, cleft upper lip, no tail and altogether ugly creatures.

Eight Red-breasted Geese, two Emperor Geese and six Barnacle Geese have been hatched in the Park, together with large numbers of the commoner geese. A Citron-crested Cockatoo, probably only the third to be reared in this country, has been bred at Whipsnade.

Report from REGENT'S PARK

By MOIRA KELHAM

AT first sight it would appear that all the interesting animals during the period under review arrived in the collection from British Guiana, and the 25 mammals, 131 birds and eight reptiles that came certainly represent one of the most varied and valuable collections that has reached this country for some time.

It had been got together in British Guiana by Mr. J. W. Lester, the Curator of Reptiles, who was assisted by Mr. H. Vinall, the Overseer in charge of the Zoo's ungulates. They had combined with Mr. David Attenborough and Mr. Charles Lagus of B.B.C. Television in a sequel to the Sierra Leone "Zoo Quest," and this trip has proved, if anything, more profitable from the collecting point of view than the first.

Zoo Life, 10(4) Winter 1955/56

The only fly in the ointment was the illness of Mr. Lester, who had to be flown home for prolonged and unpleasant treatment for a variety of tropical diseases. His place was taken at short notice by Mr. J. J. Yealland, the Curator of Birds, who, assisted by the

indefatigable Mr. Vinall, brought the collection safely to the Zoo.

Many of the seventy species, of which several have not been exhibited before, are dealt with in detail elsewhere in this number, and some readers will have seen the animals in the B.B.C. Television series. A stroll round the Gardens at Regent's Park will, however, reveal a wealth of other new arrivals that have come in one by one or in small collections and which are worthy of honourable mention.

In June it was obvious that "Rota," Sir Winston Churchill's lion, who had been ailing for some years, would not recover and was definitely unhappy. With his owner's approval it was decided that he should be quietly put to sleep. The event was widely reported in the Press,



A male Saiga antelope. Photo: Zoological Society of London.



"Rusty," Sir Winston Churchill's lion cub. Photo: Zoological Society of London.



One of the recently arrived White rhinoceros. The wide square lips are well shown in this photograph. Photo: Zoological Society of London.

and within a very short time a cable had been received from Lions International in the United States of America asking Sir Winston to accept a lion cub born in the Zoological Gardens at St. Louis. This gift, a fine young fellow called "Rusty," arrived by air early in July and was sent to the Gardens here for his quarantine period. It is likely that, as in the case of "Rota," Sir Winston will decide to leave him on deposit.

At first "Rusty" did not appear very happy, probably on account of being separated from his brothers and sisters, but a companion was quickly found for him in the person of "Okene," who has featured in a previous number of ZOO LIFE, and now the two lions, one wild-caught and the other menagerie-bred, are the very best of friends.

There has been no trouble in the "settling down" of "Bebe" and "Ben," the two young White Rhinoceros (*Diceros simus*) collected in Uganda and brought home by sea in June. The third largest living land animal, exceeded in size only by the African and Indian Elephants, it has not been exhibited in this country before, and was first seen in captivity in the National Zoological Gardens of South

Africa at Pretoria as recently as 1946. This is largely because it is one of those animals which was on the verge of extinction, and only the strictest preservation laws have saved it. Recently the signs have been more hopeful, however, and the increase in its numbers has made it possible for occasional export licences to be issued. It is hoped also that the few pairs in captivity may breed so that, even if the race should become extinct in its natural state, it will not become lost to posterity.

When fully adult the male may measure six feet at the shoulders and the length of the head and body is about twelve to thirteen feet. Both sexes carry two horns and in the female the front one generally measures about two feet (it is shorter in the male), though the record length is 62½ inches.

White Rhinoceros graze on grass and low shrubs. They usually feed by night and lie up during daylight hours. While feeding, the long horn is pushed along the ground, making a track through the grass, and resulting eventually in a flattening of the surface of the horn. When a female is moving around with her calf, the youngster walks slightly ahead and the mother indicates the direction she

wishes it to take by the pressure of her horn on its flank. The White Rhinoceros is an exceedingly peaceable animal, although a mother will become angry and probably attack if her calf is approached, but it will normally trot away from any real or imagined danger. Its sight is very poor, even worse than that of its near relative the Black Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) and the African Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), but its sense of smell is extraordinarily keen, and it is frequently warned of danger by ox-peckers or tick-birds.

In spite of its great bulk it is fleet of foot, and a man running would easily be out-distanced. It likes to wallow in the mud, but will drink only from clear pools or running streams. The name "white" has nothing to do with its colour, which is yellowish-brown, and there are a number of theories as to how it came to be applied. The most feasible appears to be that it is a corruption of the Boer word "weide munde," which refers to the characteristic wide square lip.

One of the more exciting acquisitions has been that of a baby Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) born to "Abena" in August. It is the fifth to be born in the London Gardens, but the first male. It has been named "Benaudi"—a combination of the names of its mother and father "Daudi." "Abena," quite convinced that hers, if not the first to be born in captivity, is certainly the most beautiful, is caring for him very well, although she is inclined to be rather exclusive and is more keen to steal the picture with herself in the role of the devoted mother than to exhibit her offspring to an admiring public.

"Benaudi" is a quaint little fellow with a mop of thick black hair parted in the centre, and since he gets fed, cleaned and put to rest at the proper times, is quite content with the very small part he is allowed to play at the present moment. The time is not far off, however, when he may be expected to demand—and get—more of the limelight.

From the Middle East

In recent months some very interesting fauna has been received from the Middle East, and to add to this Mr. G. C. Tweedie has sent a young Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) from Iraq. This species has a wide distribution in Europe and Asia, but has

everywhere been driven by the advance of civilization. It was once common in these islands, where our ancestors considered the hunting of it a most enjoyable sport.

Squadron Leader K. C. Searle has again made generous contributions to the Bird section and many interesting examples of Far Eastern specimens have arrived from this source. Besides arranging for the purchase of a Two-wattled Cassowary (*Casuarus bicarunculatus*), he has presented a Rosy-headed Parrakeet (*Psittacula cyanocephala rosa*), a Burmese Slaty-headed Parrakeet (*Psittacula himalayana finschi*) and a Malaccan Parrakeet (*Psittacula longicauda*) for the Parrot House. In the Bird House can be seen a Blue-breasted Banded Rail (*Hypotaenidia striata*), a Red-sided Titmouse (*Parus varius*) and, new to the Society's collection, two Macklot's Sunbirds (*Chalcostetha calcostetha*) two Little Green Herons (*Butorides striata javanica*) and a Daurian Redstart (*Phoenicurus aureus*).

New exhibits

Also in the Bird House are two Jamaican Long-tailed Humming Birds (*Trochilus polytmus*) which have been received in exchange from an American collector. These, which have not been exhibited before, are among the more striking Humming Birds. The body is a brilliant metallic green, even brighter on the chest than elsewhere, and the head is black and crested. The tail feathers, also black, are about six inches long, curved and crossing each other: they create a humming noise when the bird is flying at speed.

In the Penguin Pool by the Mappin Terraces, the King Penguins have reared a chick. For many years, although they laid regularly and incubated their eggs with apparent care, the King Penguins rarely hatched out, and if they did the chick seemed to come to an untimely end, usually through one of its parents becoming over-enthusiastic when feeding the baby and trampling it to death. Recently, however, they have become more experienced and "Sally" is the third to come through the difficult egg and infant stage.

Apart from the specimens sent or brought home from British Guiana, the Reptile House has had a number of interesting additions. These include an Anderson's Snake



"Abena" and her son "Benaudi". Photo: Fox Photos.