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## Six wolves escape at Whipsnade

One day in February six wolves escaped from their compound at Whipsnade, UK. The 100-pound animals tunneled overnight beneath a fence around the Wolf Wood compound. They escaped into the park but a 9-foot boundary fence kept them within the zoo grounds.

The zoo was closed to the public, and staff — some armed with shotguns — combed the 500-acre park as the Canadian timber wolves prowled the grounds in pairs. With police on standby outside the zoo, the wolves were eventually caught — some by using tranquilliser darts — and returned to the 13 other animals which had stayed in Wolf Wood. *(Daily Telegraph)*

Whipsnade curator Vistor Manton said: "The animals had to dig under an 18-inch concrete curbstone before getting under the fence. It was a determined effort. We shall have to consider further precautions. We do not know why they wanted to escape."

## Chester's rare cats

Chester, UK, reports the arrival of a male pampas cat on loan. This rare animal has so far eluded all photographic efforts. Chester now has the following rare South American cats: 1.1 Geoffroy's cat, 2.3 jaguarundi, 1.1 margay, 1.0 pampas cat, 2.5 jaguar. It is hoped to obtain a female pampas cat to make a potential breeding pair.

The absence of the Geoffroy's cats from their outside enclosure may be due to the fact that a lot of mating behaviour has been noted, although at the best of times, these lovely animals are rather shy and secretive.

The margays which arrived in 1979 have settled down very well, and can often be seen playing. Frenzied chases through the fir branches of their enclosure are quite frequent, and most amusing to watch.

## Woodland Park Zoo gets "excellent" rating

It wasn't just an ordinary visit to a zoo. Sue Pressman, the Director of Wildlife Protection for the Humane Society, visited the Woodland Park Zoological Gardens, Seattle, USA, last September to re-evaluate its status in comparison with the other zoos and aquariums in the country. As a result of Pressman's visit, Woodland Park Zoo was rated as one of the best in the US and shares the excellent rating along with the Bronx, San Diego, and Cincinnati Zoos, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, and the Vancouver, B.C., Aquarium.

The Humane Society adopted a zoo-evaluation programme eight years ago to provide a means for realizing and understanding the problems of zoo animals. A total of 370 zoos and aquariums have been rated as either No. 1 — excellent, No. 2 — in need of improvement, or No. 3 — candidate for closure.

"For the first time in the history of

our programme, a major zoo has moved from a No. 2 position to a No. 1 position and this zoo is Woodland Park Zoo," asserted Pressman.

A snow leopard grant, funded by the Wildlife Preservation Trust International was awarded to Helen Freeman, Curator of Education at the Woodland Park Zoo. Freeman has been conducting research on snow leopards since 1972. The grant will be used to study the social behaviour of the captive snow leopard in six zoos. Participating in the study are the Bronx, Brookfield, Calgary, Washington Park (Portland), Helsinki, and Woodland Park Zoos. The scientific information collected by observers at each zoo will be accumulated in a data bank on the social behaviour of snow leopards.

#### A new zoo for north of England?

A new Zoological Society of Greater Manchester has been formed in Manchester, UK, following the demise of the Belle Vue Zoo. This brave venture aims to set up a new zoo, and chairman Derrick Van de Schwartz writes as follows in the first issue of the society's journal:

"As I travelled round I asked my audiences 'Would you like to see a new zoo in Manchester?' Happily, the answer was more often yes than no. But always, it seemed, followed by the statement 'Not Like Belle Vue', meaning that what was really required was a proper zoo park, without the pleasure gardens. This set me thinking: What could I do? Was a new zoo possible? This led to the formation, on the 11th December 1979, of the very first Zoological Society of Greater Manchester.

"But a society is not a zoo, and there are many many problems to overcome. New members (lots of them) are necessary, supportive funds are needed. A charity will be the next step, and through this medium grants, donations, etc., may be solicited. We shall need land — a suitable site would perhaps be an existing park, preferably with a manor-type house, and a lake — but even then the task is still a formidable

one. Yes, a gargantuan task, but one that I feel can, with combined effort, result in a new zoo that will be worthy of the city."

#### News from Wassenaar

Wassenaar Zoo, Holland, reports the following births/hatchings in the last quarter of 1979: 2 eland; 5 meerkat; 2 Rothschild mynah (DNS); 1 black agouti; 0.1 moormacaque; 0.2 Chinese panther (DNS); 1 red-bellied tamarin; 1 blackbuck; 1 patas monkey; 3 wart-hog (DNS); 1 sambhar deer (DNS). New acquisitions during the same period: 1.1 golden-bellied mangabey; 1.0 spectacled owl; 2 grey-headed gallinule; 1.0 black and white casqued hornbill (on breeding loan from Antwerp Zoo); 1 white fruit pigeon; 0.1 cinereous vulture; 1 Stanley crane; 1.1 snowy owl; 1.0 guanaco; 1 argala marabou; 7 leopard gecko; 1.0 coucang; 1.1 fur seal.

#### British gorillas to go on the pill

Samson, the first gorilla to breed in Britain (in 1971), is a favourite with keepers at Bristol Zoo. But Bristol now has nine gorillas, and there is no room for further gorillas in the present accommodation. The solution? Give the potential mothers The Pill. Says director Geoffrey Greed: "There's no difficulty — we'll just slip the pills in with their bananas."

#### Cats and tapirs at Howletts and Port Lympne

The collections at Howletts and Port Lympne, owned by John Aspinall, report various new arrivals amongst the Felidae. First, a young pair of Barbary lions (Atlas lions, North African lions) arrived in 1979 and are now on display at Howletts. They came from the National Zoo, Washington, where they were born at the beginning of 1977, as part of an international breeding programme.

The female Barbary lion in fact gave