

No. 4 / december 2015

zoo report

the magazine for friends of the Brno Zoo

BRNO



special supplement

ZOOREPORT PROFI

The Zoo Shouldn't Preach Water and Drink Wine

RNDr. Mojmír Vlašín

PAGE 3



Biodiversity Is Us

Mgr. Jana Galová

PAGE 4



The Region Podblanicko Attracts Scholars as Well as Sightseers

Prof. RNDr. Lubomír Hanel, CSc.

PAGE 5



The Aquaterrarium Has Been Rejuvenated

(Eds.)

PAGES 6, 7



Visitors Guttled Thousands of Pumpkins on Halloween

(Eds.)

PAGE 8



Hot News

(Eds.)

PAGE 9



Clawed Monkeys Are Some of the Most Vulnerable Animals

(Eds.)

PAGE 10



Golden-Headed Lion Tamarins Were Saved from Extinction by Zoos

(Eds.)

PAGE 11



Zooreport

the magazine for friends of the Brno Zoo

december 2015

No. 4/15, volume XVII

Editor:

Zoo Brno a stanice zájmových činností, p. o.

U Zoologické zahrady 46, 635 00 Brno,

Czech Republic

phone: +420 546 432 311

fax: +420 546 210 000

e-mail: zoo@zoobrna.cz

Publisher:

Peleos, spol. s r.o.

e-mail: info.brno@peleos.cz

Editor's office address:

Zoo Brno a stanice zájmových činností, p. o.

redakce Zooreportu

U Zoologické zahrady 46, 635 00 Brno,

Czech Republic

phone: +420 546 432 370

fax: +420 546 210 000

e-mail: stuchlik@zoobrna.cz

Editor manager:

Bc. Eduard Stuchlík

Specialist readers:

RNDr. Bohumil Král, CSc.

Mgr. Lubomír Selinger

Emendation:

Rosalind Miranda

Distribution:

500 pcs in the English version

1,500 pcs in the Czech version

Photos by:

Bc. Eduard Stuchlík

First page:

Golden-headed lion tamarin

UNSALEABLE

The Zoo Shouldn't Preach Water and Drink Wine

Zoos are as old as human culture. Their origins can be traced to the days when man began to raise animals for meat and fur, or for labour. The rulers of ancient empires (such as the Mayan, Roman, or Chinese) have always bred various animals not only for profit but for pleasure, out of curiosity, or for reasons of prestige. Their menageries were intended only for the privileged; only much later were they opened to the public.

Menageries very slowly renounced the „staring at animals behind bars,“ tradition and aimed to be more like our present concept of the zoo as a facility where nature conservation, environmental education, and environmental awareness meet. We attach increasing importance to the protection of nature, and recognize it as a specific human activity which is supported by an applied scientific discipline – conservation biology. Its foundation consists of ecology and various biological sectors which aim mainly to preserve natural diversity in all its forms. Efforts to preserve natural diversity in all its forms are no longer a matter only for scientists and associations, but are also an important political agenda in the European Union, promoted not only by political leaders but even by the Pope and the Dalai Lama.

The transformation of menageries into modern zoos is still accompanied by contradictory pressures. On one side are people who are fundamentally opposed to any possession of wild animals in captivity. On the other hand, there is the general public which, for the most part, loves the zoo but often wants to do what is forbidden (such as knocking on the glass of an aquarium, feeding a giraffe, or tickling a bear's ears).



RNDr. Mojmír Vlašín observes the recently established wetlands in the valley of the Rakovec stream in Brno-Ořešín

Also, public scrutiny is increasingly focused on zoos. They are not usually forgiven what ordinary llama- or ostrich-breeders quietly get away with today. Many farm animals hidden from the public eye still live and die in poor conditions.

Today a zoo cannot preach water and drink wine, so to speak, even in the field of environmental education. A zoo cannot encourage visitors to participate in separation and recycling of waste while it produces hundreds of kilos of unnecessary plastic disposable dinnerware. It cannot point to a lack of water and tolerate a constant flow at the same time. It cannot alert the public to the protection of orang-utans when it offers visitors palm oil in its restaurant food, when mass production of the oil is one of the main causes of the disappearance of the tropical forests of endangered

primates. It cannot encourage people to maintain an empathetic relationship with animals if it rejects those who bring in a wounded bird or other animal.

In my youth, I became acquainted with nature and its protection not only in the Boy Scouts but also in Zoo Brno – in a hobby group of young biologists led by Professor Bruno Valoušek, a pioneer of nature conservation and environmental education and awareness. My wish is to see Zoo Brno remain intensely focused on the aforementioned fields and to remain an important breeding, scientific, educational, and conservation institution worthy of our beautiful city.

RNDr. Mojmír Vlašín,
Environmentalist, member of the Municipal Council
of the City of Brno
and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Zoo of Brno

Mojmír Vlašín (*1954)

graduated from the Faculty of Science at Masaryk University, Brno. He majored in biology. He deals with the protection of nature, both theoretically and practically. He affirms his belief in environmentalism at the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University, holds an office in the Commission of the Environment of the Municipal Council of the City of Brno, works in the Ecological Institute Veronica, and, as an environmentalist, is also active in other NGOs. He scientifically focuses especially on bats, amphibians, and reptiles. He is the author and editor of numerous academic texts and publications.

He entered local politics for the first time in 1990 when he was elected to the city council of Brno. After the 2004 regional elections, he served four years on the Committee for Education, Training, and Employment; and on the Environment Committee of the South Moravian Region. In last year's municipal elections, he defended the post of representative of Brno. He is entered as a non-party candidate in the electoral list of the Green Party.



A sample of the artwork submitted to the contest "Biodiversity Is Us." By seven-year-old Markéta Bryšová, who attends the Elementary Art School of Pavel Křížkovský in Brno-Komín, it is entitled „Each Cat is Not the Same“

Biodiversity Is Us

Short footage filmed in our zoo contended as one of the ten best entries for the promotion of a campaign named "Biodiversity Is Us". This campaign was announced by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) in 2014 as part of the UN's Decade of Biodiversity, 2011–2020. The association called on member organizations to produce audio-visual records focusing on the importance of preserving biodiversity, and on the ways in which these organizations encourage people to make even small changes in their behaviour that might alleviate or stop the extinction of species.

One of the first opportunities for our zoo to get involved in the campaign was on April 25th, 2015, Earth Day. Students of the Faculty of Business and Economics of Mendel University prepared and installed six playful and educational sites for young visitors in different parts of our facility. At the station named Proper Waste Sorter, competitors had to sort waste correctly. At the station Ostrich Egg Rescue, children worked hard at completing an obstacle course, which rewarded them at the finish with a look at a real ostrich egg. The post titled Kangaroo Pocket tested the children's ability to throw a ball at a target; while

the station named Journey through the Desert had them running repeatedly through an obstacle course to fill a glass with water from small containers. Children could present their manual dexterity at posts called Manufacturing Badges and Creative Corner. The university students prepared an easier version of a popular geocaching game for small „cachers“, with the children having to search for hideouts with a quiz which concerned biodiversity – all without GPS. The children then handed their quizzes to a zoo worker in one of the huts in the African village, and were given gifts if their answers were correct. At the Earth Day celebration, more than 3,500 visitors participated in the aforementioned stations.

Students at Mendel University also organized an art and literary contest for elementary school students, the theme of which was biodiversity. A student jury selected winners from 43 pictures, and 45 fairy tales and stories which had been submitted. The winners were announced at the zoo on Earth Day.

Even before the Earth Day celebration, on April 23rd, educators of Zoo Brno set, for the first time, a task trail leading through the zoo. This was linked to the theme of biodiversity and its conservation. The trail had seven stations for 1st grade pupils, and

eleven posts for 2nd graders. Schoolchildren who came with their teachers to complete this task trail picked up worksheets at the zoo ticket office. The forms contained questions and assignments from various habitats which were marked along the zoo map.

A wide variety of tasks awaited them, the results having to be recorded on the worksheets. For example, the children had to try to identify the tracks of Barbary sheep from a set of three different mammal species. Other tasks asked them to use their own senses: From three bags which contained dried medicinal plants, they had to determine by smell which was peppermint; or, placing their hand into a box with a circular hole, they had to determine by touch what was inside (e.g., a red deer antler). There were many other entries to keep the children alert and interested.

In addition, there was a final short treatise on the importance of biodiversity conservation, which again was accompanied by a knowledge test. The pupils assessed the results and lessons which they had learned on the task trail with their teachers either while they were still at the zoo or the next day at school.

The trail, which had been completed by 1,635 children by the end of October, will be used primarily by schools in and around Brno until the end of the UN Decade of Biodiversity in 2020.

Mgr. Jana Galová,
Head of the Educational
Programs Department



Photo: Martina Dvořáková

At one station on the task-track, children try to discover what's inside the box by using their sense of touch

The Region Podblanicko Attracts Scholars as Well as Sightseers

The Protected Landscape Area (PLA) Blaník is located in the Benešov District, south of Vlašim. Its area is 40 km²; it is the smallest PLA in our country. The reason for its establishment was to maintain a harmonious and biologically balanced Central Bohemian landscape which includes the dominating legendary mount, Blaník. The axis of this area is the valley of the river Blanice, from which rises a series of peaks and ridges. A third of the area is covered with forests, the rest being agriculturally farmed land, meadows, wetlands, and ponds. Researchers have observed over 2,000 species of invertebrates and 260 species of vertebrates there.

An example of water bivalves found in Blanice River is the largest known population in the Czech Republic of the rare species *Pisidium supinum*. The protected European crayfish (*Astacus fluviatilis*) lives there, as well. Among other valuable species in the area are a community of dragonflies that congregate around flowing waters formed, among others, by the common clubtail (*Gomphus vulgatissimus*), the small pincertail (*Onychogomphus forcipatus*), and the green snaketail (*Ophiogomphus cecilia*). Large white-faced darter (*Leucorhina pectoralis*), which are protected throughout Europe, appear at some of its stagnant waters. A rare species of beetle in the area is the endangered *Cucujus cinnaberinus*, with its flat body, which allows him to crawl into crevices beneath the bark of certain species of deciduous trees. Among the numerous species of hymenopteran insects,



The many-colored common kingfisher is the jewel among our birds



Photo: Lubomír Hanel

The pond Malý Býkovický near Louňovice pod Blaníkem has a great diversity of animal species which are associated with water

we can mention *Xylocopa valga*, a strikingly large black-coloured bee with shiny blue and purple wings.

Among the 23 fish species registered in the Blanice River, we can find the protected common bullhead (*Cottus gobio*). Near local stillwaters, 11 kinds of amphibian occur, including the moor frog (*Rana arvalis*), known by its blue colour during the breeding season; and the common spadefoot (*Pelobates fuscus*), whose tadpoles sometimes reach a length of up to about 20 cm. Seven species of reptiles live in this area, including the only poisonous snake found in the Czech Republic – the common European adder (*Vipera berus*). Bird fauna include 183 recorded species, of which 111 nest here. Some of these are highly endangered, such as redwings (*Turdus iliacus*), hoopoes (*Upupa epops*), stock doves (*Columba*



Photo: Lubomír Hanel

The species diversity of fauna of PLA Blaník includes the highly endangered brook lamprey, which inhabits clean running waters. This vertebrate belongs to an ancient group, the Petromyzontes, which occurred developmentally earlier than fish (for which lampreys are often mistaken)

oenas), spotted crakes (*Porzana porzana*), common kingfishers (*Alcedo atthis*), red-breasted flycatchers (*Ficedula parva*), Montagu's harriers (*Circus pygargus*), and boreal owls (*Aegolius funereus*). Forty-two mammal species have been confirmed as living in PLA Blaník, with some protected species appearing regularly, including the barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), the greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*), and the European otter (*Lutra lutra*).

Region Podblanicko, situated near the capital, can serve as an attractive destination for school excursions, but it is also a protected area sought out by zoologists of different specializations to conduct research which often brings remarkable new insights.

Prof. RNDr. Lubomír Hanel, CSc.,
Head of Management of PLA Blaník

Photo: Zdeněk Souděk



Cuvier's dwarf caimans are active at night, resting on land for most of the day. They stare stiffly ahead, not moving for long minutes so that sometimes zoo visitors think the crocodiles are stuffed or made from plastic

The Aquaterrarium Has Been Rejuvenated

The biggest aquaterrarium in the Tropical Kingdom pavilion, representing the tropical river system, has been in operation since 1998. This year, it underwent a major renovation, the most important part of which was improving the water treatment by incorporating new parts into the filtration system. Now, the water is cleaned mechanically and chemically, and is also sterilized. Also, the newly equipped breeding facility has been made more attractive by replacing the glass, shaping the bottom to simulate a natural surface, and having epiphytic bromeliads attached to branches in the space above the water. High humidity, which is required by bromeliads, is maintained by the natural evaporation of the water, with the addition of sprayers and misters.

After the renovation, three Cuvier's dwarf caimans were returned to the aquaterrarium, a group of five black pacus (*Colossoma macroponum*) from Olomouc Zoo were added, and visitors can also admire three pig-nosed turtles in the water.

The Cuvier's dwarf caiman (*Paleosuchus palpebrosus*), one of the smallest members of the family Crocodylidae, can grow to a length of around 1.7 m, but is usually smaller. It lives along the banks of streams and lakes in the basins of the Amazon and

Orinoco rivers, feeding on small mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, and invertebrates. Cuvier's dwarf caimans are not as endangered as are some of their larger relatives. People do not hunt them, because they are small and their skin is not suitable for further processing. Their number in the wild is estimated at over 1,000,000.

The body shape of the black pacu (*Colossoma macroponum*) resembles that of the predatory red-bellied piranha (*Pygocentrus nattereri*), but it is

larger and less highly coloured, being mostly various shades of grey with black fins. The black pacu is the largest characidae fish (family *Characidae*), grows to a length of about 1 m, and can weigh up to 40 kg. It also originally comes from the Orinoco and Amazon rivers, living in the troughs of larger flows or in the brackish water of the mouth of a river. It breeds in the shallow water of periodically flooded forests, where there is enough food and less risk of predation. It is herbivorous and mainly feeds on water plants,



Black pacus do not eat meat, but their teeth are strongly developed in order for them to be able to chew some large plant seeds

and on fruits and seeds of terrestrial plants that have fallen to the water surface; but it will eat insects, zooplankton, and small fish as well. It chews larger seeds with its strong jaws that contain teeth similar to human molars. Smaller seeds swallowed with the fruits are mostly indigestible, and the fish excrete them in places often far removed from where they were swallowed. (As with some birds, this fish helps in the spread of various plant species.)

People often fish black pacu or breed them for meat in fish farms in many places in South and Central America as well as in the United States and Southeast Asia. In the Brazilian national economy, pacu fish farming plays an important role, and is even being considered as a gentle alternative to establishing plantations that would destroy the rainforest.

Animal traders often suggest the fry of these piranhas for hobby breeders. In many places in the US and elsewhere, wild populations of black pacu have been observed, multiplying from individuals who either escaped from a breeding farm or were put in the river by irresponsible aquarists when their growing fish began to be crowded in a small tank.

The pig-nosed turtle (*Carettochelys insculpta*) has a very unusually shaped nose for a turtle, reminiscent of a swine's snout (hence its English name). It is the only representative of the family Carettochelyidae. Its dorsal shell is flat, the upper part coated



A pig-nosed turtle arrives at the wall of the aquaterrarium, where zoo visitors are not able to disturb it. This species of freshwater turtle is kept and enjoyed by some aquarists; but they can grow to a length of 70 cm



In the largest aquaterrarium of the Tropical Kingdom pavilion of our zoo, which was recently refurbished, you can see Cuvier's dwarf caimans, black pacus, and pig-nosed turtles

with soft leather. This turtle can reach a length of up to 70 cm and can weigh over 20 kg. It has webbed feet and two loose nails on its legs. It lives in the southern part of the island of New Guinea (both in the Indonesian and Papua New Guinea parts), and locally in northern Australia, inhabiting jungle rivers and their estuaries. It spends the whole of its life in water except during the breeding season, when the females climb ashore and lay their eggs in dents that they dig in soft soil. In periodically dwindling smaller

watercourses, pig-nosed turtles remain buried in the mud in until the arrival of the rains.

The pig-nosed turtle is omnivorous, eating fish, mainly shellfish and crustaceans; but also it nibbles aquatic plants and eats various fruits. In some places today, it has almost been eradicated because it is hunted for its meat. Although protected in Indonesia, young turtles are sometimes exported from the Indonesian part of New Guinea to be sold to hobby breeders. The Indonesian conservation society BKSDA returns confiscated smuggled turtles to the wild in areas from which they came, such as Lorentz National Park. In Papua New Guinea, however, people still hunt pig-nosed turtles; and in Australia, the turtles are endangered by the planned occupation of land for agricultural production and by the degradation of egg-laying areas by the hooves of herds of feral water buffalo.

Floating pig-nosed turtles, flapping with their oar-like legs, resemble – like sea turtles – flying birds. They effectively live in the aquatic environment in the terrarium, where a flock of large piranhas swim. Above the water, on the contrary, calm reigns: Cuvier's dwarf caimans hunt mostly at night, so often rest on land during the day, not moving for long minutes. Only occasionally do they open their eyes and stiffly stare into the distance. All three species tolerate each other well in the exposition, with no conflicts.

(Eds.)



About a thousand pumpkins were hollowed and carved near the booth "Na Otočce"

Visitors Guttled Thousands of Pumpkins on Halloween

Halloween was celebrated by us on the 31st of October as a feast of pumpkins. The garden, open that night until 8 pm, became a bit scary, although good humour prevailed throughout the day.

Before dark, from 4 pm, the zoo staff handed out a thousand ripe yellow field pumpkins. Family teams hollowed them with great fervour and enthusiasm in the area around the refreshment stand at the bottom turn of the zoo train. They then put

lit candles inside and took the finished works to a sidewalk along the main road. From the booth "Na Otočce" to the exposition of meerkats, a serpent of flickering ghosts undulated. It was there that the jury selected the ten most haunting pumpkins. The announcement of the winners and the presentation of their carvings took place on the stage above the petting zoo. First, though, Lucie Dobrovodská and the band Paka performed their own and other songs, and magicians from the amusement park Vida Science Center performed spectacular stunts with dry ice and launched a balloon filled with carbon dioxide. Only then did a group of ghosts wandering around the stage present the ten winning pumpkins.

During the haunted late afternoon and early evening, visitors encountered mysterious figures with torches and listened to lectures by breeders at the exhibitions of meerkats, red pandas, northern fur seals, Kamchatka brown bears, ring-tailed lemurs, and Komodo dragons. Refreshments were offered in several places such as in the African village where, among other things, coffee harvested, roasted, and packaged in African Uganda under the rules of fair trade was served. Workers of the Ecological Centre Hlídka, which has been since last July a part of Brno's Zoo, offered healthy food in the Kamchatka brown bears' hunter's hut. Grilled pumpkin delicacies were served with a smile and with information about attractive leisure-time programs that the centre offers for families with small children.

A visit to the dimmed zoo is apparently attractive, with its enlightened exhibitions replete with a hint of mystery and the possibility to assert one's creativity. More and more people – this year more than 3,500 – come for our annual pumpkin feast. The fact that it really is a different experience was evidenced by the reaction of one young visitor: When her parents urged their daughter to finally finish carving their pumpkin so that they could go home, the thirteen-year-old girl, busy chiselling, enthusiastically said, "Why can't we stay here until until morning?!"

(Eds.)



Some „pumpkin carvers“ managed to finish off their work in daylight



Ghosts on the stage show the winning pumpkins

Polar Bear Cora Gave Birth to Another Baby

Cora, our female polar bear, who had successfully bred four cubs (twins born in 2007 and 2012), gave birth in her enclosure to another baby on November 21, 2015 at 3.40 p.m. Immediately after, she picked up the infant in her mouth, carried him into the den, and stayed there with him. Umca, the father of the cub, has been living separately in a nearby enclosure since the beginning of October. A camera transmitting images and sound from the den to Brno Zoo's website shows Cora lying on her side with her back to the lens. We cannot see the cub, which is grasping her chest. We can, however, hear the distinctive sound of suckling. If the breeding is successful, Cora should leave the den for the first time around mid-March, which is when visitors will be able to see the new baby. (Eds)

The Alpacas and Vicuñas Reproduced Again

In the neighbouring yards of the vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*) and the alpacas (*Vicugna pacos*), located near the main visitor route, five calves appeared in August and September of this year, three alpaca males, and one male and one female vicuña. All were born right in their usual runs, making it possible for visitors to see the births with their own eyes.

The vicuñas, which have been bred here since 2009, have reproduced regularly since 2011. We keep one male and two females, shipping the young to other zoos once they are raised. The coordinator of the European Rescue Vicuñas Breeding Programs, which is based in the Zurich zoo, decides where



This year's vicuña cubs. Both our breeding females have given birth every spring since 2012

they should go. Vicuñas have the finest coat of all vertebrates, and their skin is also highly valued. As a result, they were nearly hunted to extinction in the past. Their natural habitat is on the slopes of the Andes and on the plateaus of Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Chile at altitudes of 3,500 to 4,800 meters above sea level. Most of their population is protected today and live mainly in reserves and game parks, sometimes half wild.

Alpacas have been bred from vicuñas especially for their hair, which is used for making knitted

garments and woven fabrics. The group of alpacas in our zoo consists of three females and one male, the latter of which is changed periodically in the interest of preserving genetic diversity. (Eds)

Non-smoking Zoo

In accordance with the decision of the city council, Brno Zoo has significantly reduced smoking on its grounds on Mniší hora. From 1st January 2016, zoo visitors will be permitted to smoke only in four locations, all of which are sufficiently separated from dining facilities, children's play areas, and attractions. Along with adjusting the Visitor and Operational Regulations and adding information and a navigation system, it was necessary for us to carry out new landscaping efforts in order to implement this. Specifically, we had to plant greenery, define the new places by erecting low wooden fences, and equip the areas with tables, benches, and ashtrays. Visitors will find smokers' corners below the terrace of the restaurant U Tygra, near the Pallas' cat exhibition, at the Exotarium pavilion, and in the African village. (Eds.)



The alpaca's coat has many shades of color



We have kept pygmy marmosets since the late nineties

Clawed Monkeys Are Some of the Most Vulnerable Animals

Clawed monkeys (tamarins, marmosets, golden lion tamarins, and Goeldi's monkeys) are small primates from the family of marmosets (*Callitrichidae*) which belong among the most vulnerable groups of animals. They live only in the tropics of South and

Central America and are closely tied to the forests, the area of which is continuing to shrink. When moving about in the trees, these monkeys use the claws on their front paws to propel them, as the nails on their back legs are flat. Most of their time is spent searching for food, which they dig from cracks in the bark of epiphytes or from the cavities of the tree trunks in which they sleep. They feed on fruit, flowers, nectar, sap, resin, small vertebrates, and invertebrates.

The zoo in Brno keeps four species of clawed monkeys, two of them being with us continuously since around the early 90s. Golden-handed tamarins (*Saguinus midas*) are now on display at the departure station of the zoo train, which runs at half-hour intervals. The location of the exposition inhabited by

these joyful monkeys suitably sweetens one's wait. Pygmy marmosets (*Cebuella pygmea*) can be found in the Tropical Kingdom pavilion, where they have been since 1998, when the pavilion was opened to the public.

In the next section of this pavilion, equipped with an outdoor enclosure, visitors can now see cotton-top tamarins. Their earlier breeding in our zoo ended in the 90s. Currently, we have a male, which we imported in 2013 as a one-year-old from Zoo Hodonín, and a female that arrived in the same year from Zoo Göttingen in Germany, where she was born in 1994. The cotton-top tamarin (*Saguinus oedipus*) is 20 to 25 cm long, and its weight usually does not exceed 450 g. A long white fan of hair grows from the crown of its head. When threatened, this tamarin bristles and stands on its hind legs to appear larger. Its original habitat is in a small region in northeast Colombia, where it lives mostly in rainforests but can also thrive in drier deciduous and secondary forests. However, more than ¾ of this area has been converted to pasture, so it survives only in the few isolated remnants that are left. The numbers of this species also fell due to trapping (some of which was for medical research), so the current wild population is estimated at a mere 200 adults. (Currently, more cotton-top tamarins live in captivity than in nature.) The cotton-top tamarin is in the IUCN Red List as a critically endangered species (CR category).

The golden-headed lion tamarins discussed on the following page have the shortest history of breeding from the whole group of clawed monkeys in our zoo. (Eds.)



The cotton-top tamarin



Golden-handed tamarins

Golden-Headed Lion Tamarins Were Saved from Extinction by Zoos

We have kept golden-headed lion tamarins (*Leontopithecus chrysomelas*) since 2014, when we imported two females from the Wuppertal Zoo in Germany and placed them in a terrarium building adjacent to the Tropical Kingdom pavilion. Born between 2005 and 2007, they live near the Komodo dragon exposition, in quarters which originally served tropical reptiles and had no outdoor enclosure. We built a 15-meter-long wire mesh tunnel for them through which they can move into a new outdoor space.

The golden-headed lion tamarin's face is lined with long thick yellow-to-orange hair which is reminiscent of a lion's mane. When excited, the hair bristles. Its hands and tail are also golden, and the remainder of its coat is black. The body of the golden-headed lion tamarin grows to a length of about 30 cm, connected to which is a slightly longer tail; and it weighs about half a kilogram. It occupies about 19,000 square kilometres of rainforest on the Atlantic coast of the Brazilian states of Bahia and Minas Gerais. Its distribution area is scattered, extending no more than 150 km inland. The total area is now less than 5% of its original continuous habitat, where it formerly occupied the entirety of southeast Brazil. The largest wild population (estimated at 400 to 450 animals) is located in the Una Biological Reserve in southern Bahia, which was established primarily to protect this beautiful animal.

Besides habitat loss, the golden-headed lion tamarin and other species of lion tamarins suffered



Golden-headed lion tamarin in the interior exposure

because of their unusually attractive appearance, as they became popular pets. In the middle of the last century, they were almost eliminated from nature. In the 80s, the wild population was maintained only thanks to the release of individuals bred in captivity.

Zoos have well-managed breeding programs of golden-headed lion tamarins as well as large populations that have been confiscated from illegal traders. Zoos therefore maintain an important genetic reserve, which may be used at any time to strengthen the population living in the wild.

The forest which is inhabited by golden-headed lion tamarins is still heavily fragmented, and is continuing to shrink; and the number of individuals in the wild is declining. Brazilian and international conservation organizations are trying to establish corridors linking isolated habitats, and also to spread awareness among the Brazilian public by distributing information about the importance of preserving the Atlantic rainforest.

The IUCN Red List places the golden-headed lion tamarin among endangered species (category EN). Trade is subject to strict regulation CITES 1, and export of every individual to foreign countries must be approved by the Brazilian government.

(Eds.)



Golden-headed lion tamarins in the outdoor exposure

A close-up photograph of a wallaby with brown and grey fur, perched on a large, light-colored rock. The background is a blurred green forest.

Brno Zoo wishes
all our friends success and
all good things in

2016