

the magazine for friends of the Brno Zoo

Zooreport

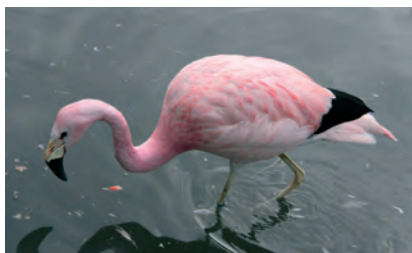
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Amazing Flamingos

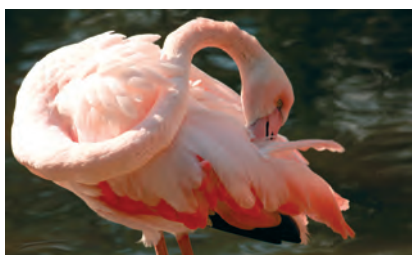
4 Flamingos

Everything about flamingos



6 Flamingos

Interesting details about the life of flamingos



8 Flamingos

Special rugs and no corners



10 Expected transport

Noria goes to Germany



12 News from the Exotarium

Egernias add to the Australian collection



13 New even-toed ungulates

Himalayan tahrs at Brno Zoo



14 Rescue Station

Stories of 2018



16 Centre of Environmental Education

Holidays at "Hlídka"



18 Unique exhibition

National Geographic exhibits in Brno



20 Traditional events

ZOO BRNO



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First page: The greater flamingos
Photo by Michal Vaňáč

UNSALEABLE

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

You may have walked past these creatures in the zoo, but they are definitely worth every bit of your attention. They are the flamingos – beautiful, majestic and the main topic of 2018's penultimate issue of Zooreport magazine. At Brno Zoo, we have a species called the greater flamingo. At first glance, it may appear that taking care of them is easy, but in the following pages, you will learn that flamingos need and rightfully deserve special care. You will also learn a lot of interesting details about their lives. It is unfortunate that only two of our supporters have contributed to the breeding of these beautiful birds. If you would like to change that, you can join our adoption programme from the "Support us" page on our website or write to zavadilova@zoo-brno.cz. Thank you!

Recently, we transported a young polar bear to Rostock in Germany. Of course, we miss Norinka, but you can read about her journey to Germany here. We also have photos of her first days in her new home and the insights shared by the breeders there. Norinka is very popular there, but that is not surprising because we know her very well, and we know how great she is. Anyway, we hope she feels great in her new surroundings.

With the summer temperatures touching intolerable levels, one may think that we should rest as much as possible. But reality is exactly the opposite. It is in July and August that we have the maximum number of visitors at the zoo, and we want all of them to have a good time. In the Exotarium pavilion, you can see reptiles of the *Egernia stokesii* species. One of the interesting things about them is how they



defend themselves from their predators with their thorny tails. You can read more it on page 13.

Another novelty are the Himalayan tahrs, living next to alpacas since August this year. It is worth seeing them in the winter months. They have a reddish-brown to dark-brown thick coat and a strong undercoat. In winter, the coat keeps them warm. But in the spring months, the warmth is not needed, so they lose most of it, and the colour of their coat in summer is generally lighter.

Also, this time, we have covered our events at the Centre for Environmental Education "Hlídka" and in our Jinačovice Rescue Station.

Finally, I'd like you invite you to two events, and I assure you that they will definitely be worth your time. The first one is not directly connected to Brno Zoo, but you should not miss it in the centre of Brno. The world-renowned National Geographic Society is exhibiting its photographs on Radnická Street 6. Sixty large-format wildlife photographs from around the world are on

display and they have been shot by leading National Geographic photographers, including Chris Johns, Robert B. Haas, Michael Nichols and Bill Curtsinger. It is open on all days, except Monday, from 10am to 6pm.

The second invitation is more traditional, and I'm sure that it will make you happy. Like every year, this year too, we will host Halloween at Brno Zoo. So on Saturday, October 27, carry your spoons and knives and come to Brno Zoo to gouge pumpkins and enjoy other fun activities. We will have 1000 pumpkins again, and they will be free for visitors. So you only have to pay the entrance fee, and we will take care of everything else.

To all the supporters of Brno Zoo, I wish you a pleasant read and a beautiful season of autumn ahead!

Mgr. Michal Vaňáč
Head of External Relations



Everything about Flamingos

In scientific classification, flamingos (*Phoenicopteriformes*) are grouped together with parrots as one of the most popular set birds kept in zoos. It's because of their fragility, elegance and colour. The flamingo has a small order of only six species, spread across the continents of the world, barring Antarctica and Australia. Their closest living relatives are probably *Recurvirostridae* of the order *Charadriiformes* or *Podicipediformes*.

The black flight feathers, on the other hand, are full of a pigment called melanin, because it mechanically strengthens the most stressed feathers on the wings to last longer. Coloured variants, barring a few exceptions, have neither been found in nature or captivity. In 2015, a full black flamingo was repeatedly sighted on the salt lake of Akrotiri in Cyprus. It was obviously a melanin aberration, and it was a complete rarity.

What a Flamingo Looks Like ▼

Flamingos are over two metres tall with extremely long neck and legs. Both sexes look the same, differing occasionally in size. Except for black flight-feathers, their feathers are coloured in shades of white and pink to dark red. The intensity of the colouration corresponds to the amount of carotene in the diet or the health of the bird. Carotene is a pigment that is not independently synthesised in the body, so flamingos need to regularly receive it as part of their diet. Decrease in carotene intake may be associated with a certain amount of energy; for example, birds nestling or taking care of their young ones and losing their red colour.



The lesser flamingo. Photo: Petr Suvorov

◀ *Flamingos in the African Village of Brno Zoo.*
Photo: Eduard Stuchlík

The greater flamingos in Cyprus. ▶
Photo: Petr Suvorov

Interestingly, flamingos shed all their feathers at once (like cranes or geese), so they are unable to fly for some time of the year. During this period, aware of their disability, they stay in the worst available swamps and wetlands as far away from their natural enemies as possible.

A characteristic feature of the flamingo is a massive, light, curved beak whose cavity is filled with a fleshy tongue. Their nutrition strategy is filtration, and their organs are perfectly suited to this. The bird bends its neck near the water, sucks water into its beak and slips it through the tongue so that the small invertebrates stay inside the beak and the water flows out. Discarding of the water is aided by soft spines on the tongue. Some evolutionary biologists compare this mechanism to the filtering of krill by whales using the whalebone. But flamingos did not always have the curved beak – fossils of flamingos of the genus *Palaelodus* prove that prehistoric flamingos had straight beaks.

The long and thin legs end in digits with small claws between which the floating membrane is stretched. The birds usually use their feet to search for food. They trample on a spot, swirling small invertebrates in the mud under water, and then suck the water straight into the beak and filter.



At first sight, the built of a flamingo may give the impression that it has a very small chance of defending itself against any predator. They bird has two main survival strategies. The first is safety in numbers – if there are numerous flamingos feeding together, there is a smaller likelihood that a particular one may fall prey to the predator who may randomly attack. (2) The second strategy is occupying inaccessible areas. Because of their low weight of 1–4 kg (by species), these light birds can nest on very unstable muddy subsoil, where most four-legged predators cannot reach. That is why the birds stay on the islands in the middle of lakes. Most water areas that the birds inhabit have salty or brackish water. Although they do not do it often, they can swim in

deep water and, if necessary, sink and emerge.

Reproductive System ▼

The family life of flamingos is surprisingly simple. The mating takes place in a group. Birds march in a flock in one direction and at certain intervals they rotate their heads or stretch the wings. Couples live together in monogamous bundles, although in human care, nesting in triplets (one male, two females) has been observed in exceptional cases. Because the individual pairs stimulate each other to nest, the size of the colony can become quite large. The rule is simple: the more we are, the more successful we are in nesting.

As with all long-legged birds, the male has to learn to climb the female's back during copulation. This topic has been extensively discussed in zoos in recent years. The Flamingo Research Group recommends keeping the birds in aviary, rather than in zones with limited flying ability, as fully flying birds have a higher proportion of fertilised eggs.

When the time comes, a couple will build a nest shaped like an upside down pot from clayey soil that can be from 6 to 40 cm in height, with a nesting hole of 20–25 cm in diameter. Some couples 'steal' an already built nest from others. Flamingos lay a single egg on which both parents sit for about a month. Egg laying is synchronised throughout the colony, which may have a purely pragmatic effect (see more in box). The young are hatched downy and are dependent on the care of their parents. Both partners take care of the young.



The Andean flamingo. Photo: Petr Suvorov

The young are fed a liquid mixture that forms in the craw of adult birds. Parents can fly daily up to 90 km for feeding. From the age of about two weeks, youngsters are grouped in “nurseries”. Parents mostly still feed them for about 2.5 months (in captivity sometimes to one year) until they are completely independent. They change feathers roughly on the 50th day after their birth and are considered fully grown up at around three years of age.

Lifespan ▼

Despite their fragility, they have a long lifespan. In the wild, it is about 40 years, and in captivity nearly twice as much. The oldest flamingo in human care was probably a bird that passed away in the Adelaide Zoo in Australia in 2014. His age was probably 83–95 years. The bird was brought to the zoo between 1919 and 1933 either from Cairo or from Hamburg as a full-grown. Because of his age, he was nicknamed “Flamingo One”.

Population Statistics and Protection of Flamingos ▼

Because flamingos are well known among the public and conspicuous by their colour, there is growing awareness towards protecting them. However, only two of the six species are not on the endangered species according to the IUCN – these two are **the greater flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) and **the American flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus ruber*). The greater flamingos mainly inhabit the warm coastal areas of the Old World, as well as some inland areas of Africa and

India. On the other hand, the American flamingo inhabits islands of Central America and those adjacent to continental areas. The population of both these species is on the rise, though at the beginning of the 20th century, the American flamingo was almost extinct due to intensive hunting in some areas. Because of its colour, this species is also the only species listed in the CITES Appendix 1A of the Animal Trafficking Directive. The current global population of these flamingos is roughly around a quarter of a million. The greater flamingo has fared slightly better. Population estimates suggest that their number is almost half to three quarters of a million. Still, flamingos are being illegally caught for captivity.

The most common species of flamingo, **the lesser flamingo** (*Phoeniconaias minor*) is paradoxically already an “almost endangered” species. This is mainly because of its vulnerability. The current population size of these flamingos is about 2.5 million individuals, and they live mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and the north-eastern coast of India. At the Natron Lake nesting site in Tanzania, 1.5–2.5 million birds can be seen each year, nearly 75% of the world’s population. Thus, the location is very crucial for the future survival of the species. However, the lake is also a strong reservoir of soda, and mining companies are pushing for more and more area to extract this substance. Mining would threaten the nesting of flamingos. By sucking water from the lake, one half a million tons of soda can be made each year. The lesser flamingo is susceptible to any

long-term fluctuation in water or change in water composition, and this may result in abandonment of the nest. Birdlife International is therefore actively monitoring this topic and has tried to control the mining, while it is still possible.

At the centre of the conservation interests are the three remaining mountain species of flamingos from South America, namely **the Chilean flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*), **the Andean flamingo** (*Phoenicoparrus andinus*) and **James’s flamingo** (*Phoenicoparrus jamesi*). While the first species inhabits almost the entire southern part of the South American continent, the area of the two remaining species is limited only to the lakes in the mountainous areas of Andes, from 2,500 to 5,000 metres above sea level. With a bit of luck, one can find locations where all three species can be observed in the wild together. The current population estimates are about 300 thousand wild individuals of the Chilean flamingo and between 50 and 100 thousand of the remaining two species. However, given the inaccessibility of the terrain in which birds are seen, these data may be inaccurate. The main causes of threat are egg collection in the last century and changes in the water column of wetlands because of mineral mining. As a result, James’s flamingo was officially considered an extinct species between 1924 and 1957; however, later, living individuals were found in enough numbers in the Andes Mountains and in the surrounding areas of Chile. Nevertheless, the species deserves conservation attention, especially given its small area of inhabitation.

While flamingos may benefit from their popularity, it is important to remember that the causes of their decline may be very large and often related to system errors. It is therefore appropriate to say that this is the ideal flag species, under whose protection dozens of other, less attractive species can be sought. At the same time with the protection of a particular species, it is necessary to protect its natural environment and maintain a high degree of species diversity in the landscape. It is up to us to decide our long-term attitude towards the protection of flamingos and other species of animals and plants.

RNDr. Petr Suvorov, Ph.D.
Bird Breeding Curator



The American flamingo. Photo: Petr Suvorov

Interesting Details About the Life of Flamingos

Perhaps, the northernmost nesting flamingo colony can be found in ZwillbrockerVenn sanctuary on the border between Holland and Germany. In 1983, this colony was founded by birds who fled from private breeders. The current flock is composed mainly of Chilean flamingos (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*) and to a less extent of greater flamingos (*P. roseus*). In the group, we also can see some lone American flamingos (*P. ruber*) and a few lesser flamingos (*Phoeniconaias minor*). The colony began to produce offspring in the 1980s. The problem, however, is the interspecies breeding. Therefore, at present, the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums is concerned that the birds will gradually be caught from the wild. Dissemination of cross-breeds across Europe can have fatal consequences for wild populations of the greater flamingo, which is growing in the Mediterranean.



The greater flamingo is known to most zoo visitors. Photo: Petr Suvorov

On some drying salty African lakes (e.g. in Namibia), lesser flamingos (*Phoeniconaias minor*) and greater flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) nest together. To ensure room at the nesting site, the lesser flamingo nesting season is balanced against the greater flamingo season. When greater flamingo youngsters are already flying, the lesser flamingos start to nest. During their nesting, the lakes gradually dry out. When the lakes are reduced to salty swamps, the lesser flamingo youngsters are still not fit to fly. Therefore, they form flocks and march away from the salt marshes sev-

eral tens of kilometres to another water source. The youngsters who hatch later, unfortunately, become victims of the salt swamps – when they move in the biotope, the salt mud sticks to their feet and forms a hard, stony and heavy crust. This prevents their movement and they eventually die.

Today, most zoos want to have a beautiful and large flock of flamingos. The world's largest registered flocks of flamingos are probably at Dubai Safari Park (1,300 specimens), JurongBird Park in Singapore (402 specimens), Slimbridge Waterfowl and Wetland



The Chilean flamingo. Photo: Petr Suvorov

Trust in Great Britain (289 specimens), and National Zoological Gardens of South Africa in Pretoria (228 specimens).

Most zoo visitors know three species of flamingos – greater flamingo, American flamingo and Chilean flamingo. True rarities in human care are two alpine species of flamingos: the Andean flamingo and James's flamingo. At present, you will find them only in Berlin Zoo and the Slimbridge Wetland Park in the UK, which is perhaps the most specialized flamingo breeding centre in Europe.

Berlin Zoo holds the Andean flamingo group 8 males and 7 females and a James's flamingo 4 males and 6 females. Slimbridge has a flock of 22 Andean flamingos and one old male James's Flamingo. In the Czech Republic, James's flamingos were kept in Prague Zoo from 1973 to 1977, but without much breeding success.

The reproduction of both species is sporadic. While in 2014, James's flamingo was reproduced in Berlin, the Andean flamingo in Slimbridge was reproduced after several long years of waiting. The two species therefore present a breeding and conservation challenge for the future.

RNDr. Petr Suvorov, Ph.D.
Bird Breeding Curator



Special Rugs and No Corners. Breeding of Flamingos at Brno Zoo

Brno Zoo has been home to the big flamingos since the opening of the African Village exposition in 2014. The details and the special care needed by these beautiful birds is described by Petr Suvorov, the Bird Breeding Curator of Brno Zoo.

How does the breeding of flamingos in Brno Zoo take place? ◀

We currently have the 16 greater flamingos in Brno Zoo. The first group came from Borås Zoo in southern Sweden; the other birds are from Liberec, Bratislava and from the German Zoopark Erfurt. Some of them are on the verge of sexual maturity. Others have begun to exhibit certain signs of sexual behaviour – not in terms of mating, but in seeking a partner. At the time of arrival, they were not even fully coloured, so they have gradually become coloured. Visitors can easily distinguish the youngest birds because their legs are still dark and their coloured beaks are not fully coloured.

How old are the flamingos of Brno? ◀

The oldest flamingo is a female born in 2010, and the youngest birds were born in 2014.

What does everyday care for these beautiful fliers look like? ◀

Like all waterfowl, flamingos produce a large amount of excrement that needs to be cleaned daily. For this, the breeders put all the birds out in the open aviary and then clean the indoor exposition. There are plastic carpets with a massage function, because flamingos often suffer from foot galls. These carpets must be washed with a high-pressure cleaner. After clean-

ing, their food is put into an indoor swimming pool. During the day, the birds move in an enclosure with a water basin. There, they can filter the invertebrates that naturally occur there, mainly larvae of different water insects. In addition, they are able to consume tiny particles of plants. Eventually, the flamingos are brought back into the inner quarters.

How is the aviary for flamingos special apart from the carpet? ◀

An observant visitor may notice that most of the internal quarters for flamingos are circular or oval. Although flamingos are calm in the daytime aviary, they do not tolerate changes very well. If they get trapped, they become panicky. It is therefore best for their quarters to be as simple as possible without obstacles or corners.

RNDr. Petr Suvorov, Ph.D.,
Bird Breeding Curator

Flamingos in the African Village of Brno Zoo.
Photo: K. Teličková

So what food do they get?

How is it different?

Proper nutrition of flamingos is a long-term focus. In the wild, they consume food with a pigment called carotene. Carotene is not synthesised in the body of flamingos, it is taken through food. The more carotene, the better is the condition of the bird. The better the condition, the more intense is their colour on the scale from yellow / pink to red. It is therefore necessary for flamingos to receive feed with a high content of this substance. Nowadays, high quality granular feeds are already available in the market, which provide all the nutrition that the birds need. In addition to these granules, we also serve soaked *Gammarus*, which adds diversity to their diet.



Many visitors ask how is it that the flamingos don't fly. Will you tell us what's the secret?

The flight of the flamingos can be restricted in two ways. One of the meth-

ods is cutting the last wing item two days after they are hatched. This causes a permanent handicap, but it ensures that the bird does not need to be caught or held for the rest of its life and thus avoids stress. The second and less invasive method is the annual trapping and trimming of flight feathers, but it is more stressful. Basically, Europe is addressing the dilemma of how to keep flamingos properly so that we can have them in open spaces. There is no clear rule.

How do we deal with it at Brno Zoo?

Our birds have come from different zoos, including from places where the first method is prohibited by law. The flock at Brno Zoo must be trapped and trimmed because some birds have been brought in as fully flyable.

Who is in their aviary with them?

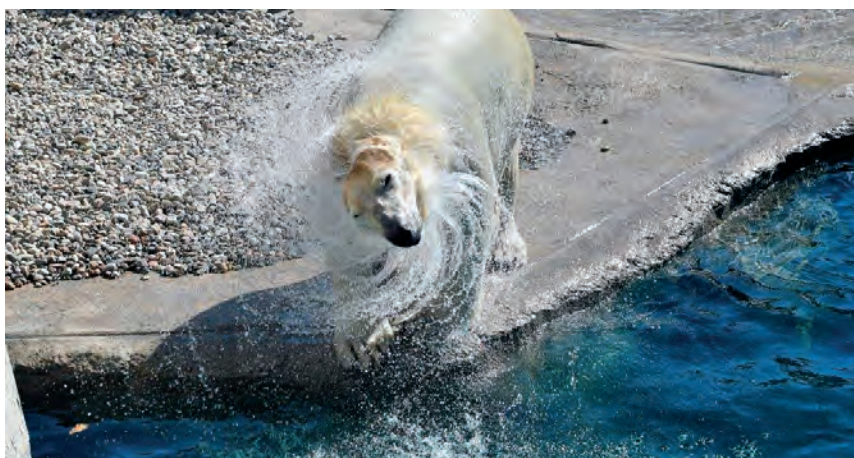
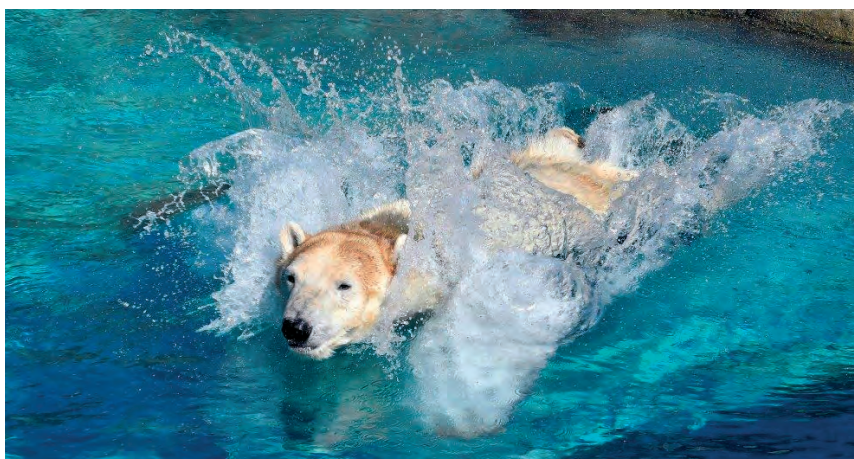
Flamingos are a group of birds that are uniquely peaceful and can be kept with many species of water birds. It is possible to combine them with a wide range of *Anseriformes*, but we must be careful about large species that could harm the flamingos. In Brno Zoo, we keep two species of whistling ducks together with flamingos, fulvous whistling ducks and white-faced whistling ducks.

Flamingos on the Mniší hora have come from several zoos.
Photo: Václav Pokorný



Noria goes to Germany

The young polar bear is already at home in her new enclosure in Rostock, Germany, for which she left 15 September. Noria, as she is known in Brno, mainly uses the swimming pool and other water elements.



Noria in her new home. Photo: Rostock Zoo

Noria stole the hearts of her breeders right on arrival. A few days later, she was let into an entirely new outdoor space. "She was very curious and checked every bit of her new home. She mostly swam and explored all the water areas that the exposition had to offer. She also walked to see the big glass panes, and then she met her breeder. She is very attentive and cheerful. We really fell in love with her," said Antje Zimmermann, Curator of the Rostock Zoo.

The Brno girl has already met her future partner – Akiak. But our German colleagues say that it was not love at first sight. Akiak is larger than Noria, but they two will have as much time as they need.

The young Noria was transported to the zoo in Rostock, Germany, on Saturday, 15 September, without any complications. Noria managed the journey perfectly.

"The transport was originally scheduled for the end of August, but we were asked to postpone it. Thanks to that, we avoided the heat and had more time for technical arrangements. The breeders tried to assemble the transport box in advance, and the bear had the opportunity to test it before the trip," said Martin Hovorka, Director of Brno Zoo.

"Noria's co-operation was excellent; she went into the box on the first attempt and did not have to be sedated. She started her nearly 800-kilometre-long trip to Rostock shortly after half past nine and mastered it like an experienced traveller. For a part of the journey she was sleeping well and she even ate at one of the check-ups," said Dorota Gremlicová, Mammals Curator of Brno Zoo.

The transporters checked the bear regularly and in addition to snacks, they had carried chilled water and ice in case she was nervous or if the journey became too long, and the bear started to overheat.

According to Zimmermann, Noria arrived on the same day in the evening and was immediately admitted to the exhibition enclosure, so that she didn't have to prolong her stay in the box.

Noria was born on 21st November 2015. She is the fifth bred cub of her mother Cora since 2007.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

DECEMBER 2
AT BRNO ZOO



zoo
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STATUTÁRNÍ MĚSTO BRNO
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PŘÍSPĚVKOVOU ORGANIZACI



Egernia has a thorny tail to protect itself against predators. Photo: Petr Šrámek

Egernias Add to the Australian Collection in the Exotarium Pavilion

Visitors can see the new inhabitants of Brno Zoo in the Exotarium Hall. In a special terrarium, two egernias (*Egernia stokesii*) soak up the sun.

“There are a lot of interesting features to this species. One of them, for example, is how they defend themselves against predators, with their thorny tails. At first, they run away from danger, but if they are not successful, they will puff up and cling to the surface. This is a huge problem for the predator along with their thorny tail, because the predator has to tear the prey off the ground,” said Petr Šrámek, the curator of reptiles at Brno Zoo.

These reptiles are also unusual because they live in groups with their family relatives who actively defend their territory. Thus, it is easy for them to spot possible predators (dingo, foxes, cats, birds of prey, varanids and snakes).

The egernia (*Egernia Stokesii*) lives in several mutually separated areas of dry

Australian inland. This helps classify the species into several subspecies, which differ in colouring. Over the years, the population of these skinks has declined significantly because of negative habitat changes, and this species survives only in these isolated subpopulations.

“Threats from loss of natural environment persist to this day. They include, among other things, felling, burning, conversion to pasture, salting, changing the cycle of fires and removing alternative sanctuaries such as man-made habitats – piles of wood or waste,” explained Mr. Šrámek.

In nature, egernias live in the woodless areas on rocky outcrops, as well as in places where trees grow. Egernias inhabit tree trunks and old hollow trunks and branches.

Visitors will surely see how the two egernias enjoy the sun in open places. They are omnivorous and consume whatever their poor environment offers, i.e. insects, their larvae, other invertebrates, but especially plant parts like flowers, fruits and leaves.

They reproduce once a year, they are viviparous and have 1-8 juveniles that born up to 12 days. They live for about 20 years.

At Brno Zoo, we currently have two egernias that were brought from Germany to the zoo at Mniší hora. Most likely, these are females.



Both egernias like to soak up the sun.

Photo: Petr Šrámek

The Himalayan Tahrs Arrive at Mniší hora

Brno Zoo is now home to a few shaggy inhabitants of high mountains. A herd of Himalayan tahrs has settled in an exposition located above that of the white-lipped peccary, where the Iberian ibex was housed earlier.



colour of their coat is generally lighter. The coat of adult males is particularly long and dense, so they look distinct from females. Both the sexes have horns, though the horns on the males are longer and can measure up to 46 centimetres. They are also curled back and towards the body, which prevents serious injuries during duels in the mating season.

Himalayan tahrs live in small herds of up to 20 individuals. They inhabit the mountain slopes of the Himalayas from west India to east Bhutan, and up to 5000 metres above sea level. Isolated populations are also found in New Zealand, California, New Mexico and South Africa, where they were brought for hunting.

They are herbivores and feed mainly on grass, plants and shrubs, if the pastures are covered with snow. They live for up to 14 years, and in human care, it can be 20 years.

Himalayan tahrs are an important part of the food chain for “mountain spirits” or snow leopards. Their species is threatened by excessive hunting and the degradation of the natural environment. They are on the red list of endangered IUCN species and are considered as close to being extinct (near threatened).

◀ *The female tahrs arrived at the Mniší hora in August from France.* Photo: Eduard Stuchlík

The length of the pregnancy of the female tahrs is at least half a year. One of the females gave birth to this little female in Brno Zoo.

Photo: Eduard Stuchlík ▼

“A total of six tahrs arrived in the summer: first, four females from France and then two males from Košice. The coupling was easy. Initially, the males remained aloof, but soon they followed females, and now the whole herd moves and rests together,” said Dorota Gremlicová, Mammals Curator of Brno Zoo.

Tahrs are the first new species in the Himalayan enclosure, which aims to introduce visitors to the most common animals found in harsh and extreme climate regions.

Tahrs are perfectly adapted to mountain life. They have hoofs with hard edges and a soft elastic core that allow them to grip to the smooth surface of the rocks.

Their most visible feature is the reddish-brown to dark brown thick coat with a strong undercoat. In winter, this coat keeps them warm, but in the spring months, this warmth is not needed, so they lose most of it. In summer, the



Eurasian Eagle-Owl

An interesting patient at our station was the Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*). It was found near Čebín – people walking around the Čebínka area found the eagle-owl on the walking path and unable to fly. One of the walkers placed it under their coat, took it home, gave it some water and called the rescue station. Upon arrival, we found out that the bird had a wounded wing but was in good shape. He was immediately taken to a veterinarian who discovered the dislocation of the wing. The eagle-owl is in our care and will be released back into the wild around Čebínka.

Deep Ululation

A regularly nesting and stable bird of our fauna, our biggest owl. Over the day, it sits among a shelter of rocks or old trees, outside the forest. In the evening, its deep ululation can be heard. It lives in forests of various

kinds, especially on slopes with rocks, but hunts mainly in the open terrain. It nests on rocky ledges, in high altitudes. The nest has two to three eggs. It hunts mammals, birds, and does not ignore carrion. It is active mainly at night.



▲ The Eurasian eagle-owl. Photo: RS Jinačovice

The Eurasian eagle-owl caught near Čebínka. It had a wounded wing. Photo: RS Jinačovice ▼





Year in the Rescue Station

The Jinačovice Rescue Station has been in operation for three years. The station has undergone some changes and has shifted to rescuing animals of our fauna.

Animals and Drought

At the beginning of the year, the station was struggling with rescued bats in the winter and was gradually preparing for spring reintroductions. Many surviving hedgehogs have also come to Jinačovice. They are mostly underweight and may not have made it through the winter without care. In the warm spring season, the animals were released into nature.

In the summer months, birds were brought to the station – illegally captured, bitten by pets or unwell for various reasons. Our most common patients were tits, blackbirds, thrushes or birds of prey and owls. Among mammals, we cared mainly for squirrels, fawns, or hares. People often found animals on the road with fractures caused by vehicles. Unfortunately, we were unable to save some of them, because their injuries

◀ Hare "kindergarten" at our station. After rearing, we reintroduced the hares back into the wild. Photo: RS Jinačovice

▲ Young fox freed from the drainage ring. Photo: RS Jinačovice

were severe or they were already in a critical condition by the time they came to us.

For much of this year, drought was a big problem. So the animals were dehydrated. They were weak, confused, and needed water and help. After their treatment, feeding and recovery, they are released back into nature. We thank all the people for their support and also for not being indifferent to the fate of our fauna.



We took care of the white stork after it collided with the high voltage line. Photo: RS Jinačovice



A young tawny owl found in Rosice at the entrance to the church of the Holy Trinity. After treating, we let it back into the wild. Photo: RS Jinačovice

“Hlídka” hosted a fun-filled holiday programme

The main summer activity at the Centre for Environmental Education “Hlídka” is, as always, suburban camps. This year, we organised seven tours with more than 160 children. The popularity of these camps and the happy faces of the participants are always a source of joy to us.

As part of this year’s camp game, children were familiarised with prehistoric times, where they had to master some of the skills of mammoth hunters.

On Monday, it was handicrafts time. Our hunters made ceramic bowls using one of the oldest techniques – gluing with clay rolls. Then, together with other members of their tribe, the children assembled a skeleton of a prehistoric creature from paper rolls. These were then decorated with handmade copper jewellery and an amulet. The rest of the day was filled with games and informative activities. The children spent their free time in the playroom of the centre. Although the playroom is for younger children, their older friends also joined in.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are traditionally dedicated to animals. We spend the first two days at Brno Zoo and

the third in another zoo. This year, it was Olomouc Zoo. Accompanied by zoo breeders, the children were acquainted with the animals; they even fed some of them. Although the children saw all the animals in the zoo, they were asked to pay special attention to those species that prehistoric hunters could have actually encountered and hunted, such as the reindeer, bear, wolf, wolverine, European bison and wild horse. Basic knowledge of these species was recorded by the children in their “Hunting Diary”. This information was supplemented with more notes on prehistoric living, clothing, art and weapons on Friday, after they visited the Anthropos pavilion. Friday afternoon was dedicated to the highlight activity of the camp – the prehistoric “Olympiad”. Children participated in archery, target practice, obstacle run, mammoth run,



carrying water, prehistoric ritual dances and painting. Not only did they enjoy new experiences, they also gained new knowledge and, of course, won prizes.

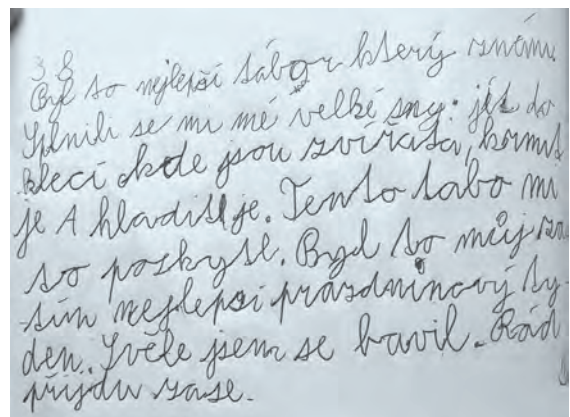
Holidays at “Hlídka”, however, are not just about the camps; they also involve various educational events. The most important of these are the Fair Trade meeting, the popular “Recycle” games and two quiz tracks in the zoo, complemented by hand manufacturing and simple experiments. The first quiz track was about life in the forest, the second one was about life in water.

The holiday activities ended with the traditional Harvest Festivities, a day full of action and creativity, with lessons on food species and the significance of field crops and tasting of different kinds of pastries.



During the visit to Brno Zoo, the campers fed giraffes.

Photo: Centre for Environmental Education “Hlídka”



The best rewards are the posts in our guest-book. This was written by a ten-year-old camper in the beginning of August. Photo: Centre for Environmental Education “Hlídka”



▲ A lovely dance performance. Photo: Centre for Environmental Education "Hlídka"



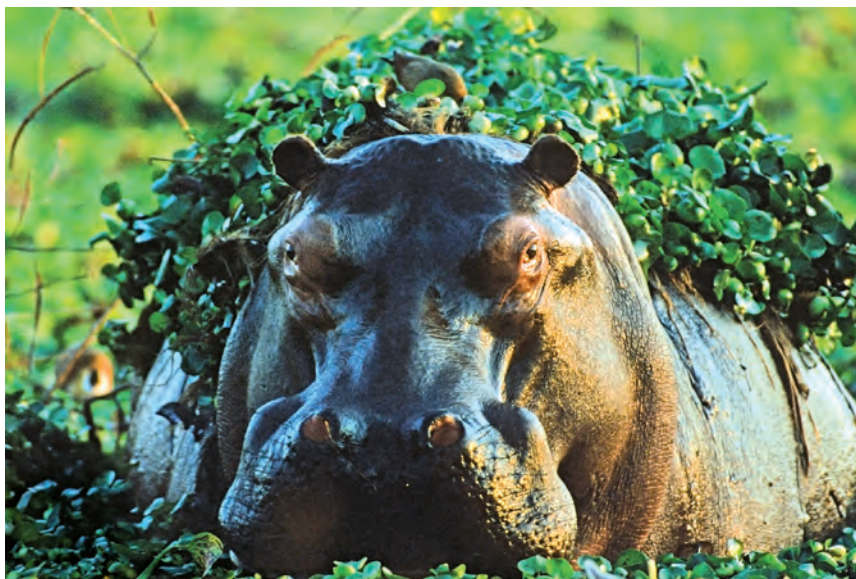
▲ Creativity played an important role in decorating. Photo: Centre for Environmental Education "Hlídka"



► In the prehistoric "Olympiad", the children also participated in archery. Photo: Centre for Environmental Education "Hlídka"



► The tribe members assembled a skeleton of a prehistoric creature from paper rolls. Photo: Centre for Environmental Education "Hlídka"



The common hippopotamus, together with the buffalo, is the most dangerous animal in Africa.

© Chris Johns/National Geographic

Brno Hosts a National Geographic Photo Exhibit

The world-renowned National Geographic Society exhibits its photographs in Brno – on Radnická Street 6.

Sixty large-format photos mounted on natural panels show wildlife captured in their natural habitat by leading National Geographic photographers, including Chris Johns, Robert B. Haas, Michael Nichols and Bill Curtsinger.

One of the main photographers of the exhibit is Robert B. Haas – a brilliant and committed photographer as well as a financier and patron. Having graduated from the prestigious Yale and Harvard universities with a doctorate in law, Haas is a professor in multiple fields, manages a strong financial and investment group and sponsors cultural and charity events. In his spare time, he is suspended on harnesses attached to a Cessna or a helicopter, taking aerial photographs of wildlife. He

says about his photographic work, “The great irony of photography is that when looking through the viewfinder, we find something in the resulting picture that we have not seen with the naked eye. This is the case with aerial photographs. From the first-class perspective – the deck of a flying machine – the lens captures what can be intimately familiar to us in its con-

tent, but completely unknown from a perspective.”

On Radnická Street, Haas’s photographs are displayed horizontally, which is unconventional angle. It allows visitors to view the images from the photographer’s point of view, i.e. from above.

The National Geographic exhibit in Brno is open to visitors daily from 10 am to 6 pm, except Mondays. Entrance fee for adults is 50 Czech crowns; for children aged 6 to 15 years, students and seniors, it is 20 Czech crowns; and families pay 120 Czech crowns.

The National Geographic Society was founded in 1888 by Sir Alexander Graham Bell, among others. From its very beginning, the organisation’s showcase was a magazine by the same name. In the third year of its existence, the editor-in-chief Gilbert H. Grosvenor took a seemingly bold and, in the opinion of some members of the editorial board, non-serious and unscientific step. He decided to publish the first photo.

A few years later, the photographs of the National Geographic magazine acquired a formidable reputation and convinced readers that pictures could tell stories as well as the written word. Since 2002, National Geographic has also been available in Czech. Even since, the Czech editorial staff of the magazine has hosted exhibitions of its treasures – the best photos of nature.



Elephant embryo. © Chris Johns/National Geographic



A bird's eye view of a herd of wild camels. © Robert B. Haas/National Geographic

Brno Dragon

– Legend
Is Back



Available
at Tourist Information
– Radnická Street

TO JE → BRNO

TIC BRNO





Středisko ekologické výchovy **HLÍDKA**

- 9. 11. – Uspávání přírody (podvečerní dílna a světýlkový průvod s uspáním Podzimního skřítky a zvířátek)
- 1. 12. – Advent na Hlídce (výroba adventního věnce a dalších vánočních dekorací)
- 14. 12. – Pečení na Hlídce (den plný zdobení perníčků, pečení vánoček a další skvělá tvoření)

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