

No. 2 / december 2012

zooreport

the magazine for friends of the Brno Zoo

BRNO



special supplement

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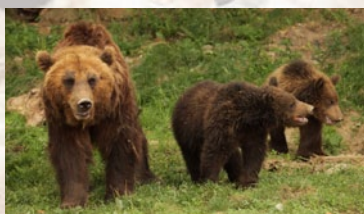
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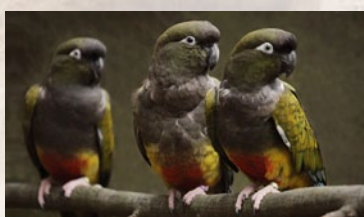
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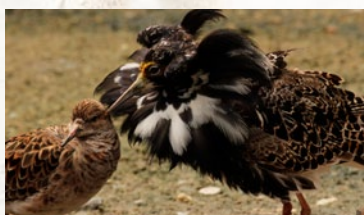
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Zooreport

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december 2012;
No. 2/12, volume XIV

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Distribution:

500 pcs in the English version
1,500 pcs in the Czech version

Photos by:

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UNSALEABLE

With Our Hearts, We See What Is Important

A city is not just made up of its human inhabitants, but also of their animal counterparts, all those vertebrates and invertebrates that accompany us humans in our lives at home, outdoors, and also at the zoo. Animals are part of the natural environment that influences our city and our mentality as inhabitants of Brno. They are our housemates, whether we live with them in close proximity, or whether they are just somewhere around us – in the forests, meadows, and fields, in the water, and also at the zoo on Mniší hora (Monk's Hill), which has been a firm favourite with the public in Brno for many decades.

I am proud that "our" zoological gardens are making a significant contribution to the ethical behaviour of children, and to the deepening of their relationship with the living creatures of the natural world. Brno Zoo is today involved in many prominent organisations and conservation programmes at regional and international levels. I am also pleased to see how it is gradually changing, expanding, and modernising. Despite all the changes, its mission remains always the same – to support our love for animals, which includes the wish to get to know them, to understand their behaviour, and to help protect those animals that need our aid. It is only when a person begins to feel this way that he or she can speak of a genuine love for animals.

Sometimes, however, we forget that there are people among us for whom domestic animals are not "merely" well-loved pets, but irreplaceable friends who make their owners' lives manageable. I'm speaking about



Roman Onderka and a guide dog

those of us who are blind or with failing eyesight, who are shown the way by specially trained guide dogs. The preparation and training of such dogs is highly expensive in terms of both time and money. For this reason I have been supporting Brno's Škola pro výcvik vodících psů (Guide Dog Training School) for a number of years. In what way? An example of one of the many forms of support is the charity soup stall at Brno's Christmas Market on náměstí Svobody (Svoboda Square), the profit from which is used to buy food and other requisites for these four-legged heroes. This year the stall will be in operation for the fourth time, which suggests that the foundation of this new tradition must be a strong one.

After all, the motto of the aforementioned school is that well-known Saint-Exupéry quote: "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." It is exactly this that we can learn from animals, and so don't forget to try that excellent soup this Christmas and support a worthwhile cause. Perhaps then we'll be seeing more happy owners of those fantastic creatures – guide dogs – at Monk's Hill. I very much hope so.

Bc. Roman Onderka, MBA
Mayor of the City of Brno



Bc. Roman Onderka, MBA

He was born in 1965 in Brno. A Brno patriot and social democrat, originally a technician by profession, he takes constant interest in everything that influences the quality of life of individuals and of society as a whole, and as such couldn't avoid entering politics. He is Mayor of the Statutory City of Brno for the sixth year, having been re-elected in the communal elections of 2010 for a second term of office as city leader. He graduated in Economics and Business Law from Brno's Karel Engliš College, and then completed a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree at Brno University of Technology's Faculty of Business and Management. During his term of office, a variety of goals were achieved, including the wide-ranging and complex reconstruction of Brno's historic centre as well as the reconstruction of the Hala Rondo multipurpose venue, which many considered unlikely to happen. An event given exceptional attention by the media both at home and abroad is the successful realisation of the demanding rescue of that monument of international modern architecture, Villa Tugendhat, which is featured in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Also in the media spotlight was the project to create the largest planetarium in Europe, which is part of Brno Observatory. He considers his greatest success in the service of his beloved Brno to be the revitalisation of Brno's economic activities, with the city long considered to be exceptionally successful in this sphere within the context of the whole Czech Republic.

He is happiest when with those close to him – his son, partner, and dog. And if he gets a little spare time, he enjoys travelling, photography, and supporting Brno's sports teams.



The young vicuña

First Breeding of a Vicuña

The first-ever vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*) to be born at Brno Zoo entered the world on 9th August 2012. Since her birth, which took place under somewhat dramatic circumstances, the little female has been doing well. She can be seen in the enclosure by the main visitor route, in the neighborhood of the alpaca (*Lama pacos*) run. She is part of a group which comprises her parents and one other adult female. There have now been births of all four kinds of llama at Brno Zoo. However, aside from vicuñas, the zoo keeps only alpacas at present, as it has ceased to keep llamas (*Lama glama*) and guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*).

Vicuñas have lived at Brno Zoo since 2010, when two young females arrived from Moscow Zoo in Russia, as well as one male from Hannover Zoo in Germany. The natural shyness of vicuñas demonstrated itself very



Vicuñas

strongly at the beginning; but they eventually got used to the environment of the new exhibit, which was much larger than the area in the breeding facilities which they inhabited after their arrival in Brno. If they are grazing by the fence in their run and a visitor comes along, they now just calmly walk a short distance away for a while, and then return.

On the aforementioned day of the vicuña's birth, during a hot summer afternoon with a temperature of around 30 °C, a keeper noticed that one female had started to give birth but that labour had halted. Her baby's head and one of its front legs had already emerged, but the young animal had its second limb stuck under its body within the birth canal. Such a situation is dangerous both for such an inexperienced primipara and for the baby animal itself. (There is a danger of suffocation, for instance). The keepers decided that they would help the mother with the complicated birth. They caught the delivering female in a net in the enclosure, pushed her baby back into her womb, and then – with its legs straightened – pulled the little vicuña out of its mother's body. Similar interventions, which are quite common in the case of farm animals, are carried out only seldom in zoos, where animals usually give birth spontaneously.

Vicuñas are used to the harsh conditions of high mountainous regions, and so their enclosure is equipped only with a simple shelter. The keepers therefore moved the mother and new-born baby to the stables in the neighboring alpaca exhibit. Four men accompanied

the female, and one carried her daughter. They have thus removed them from the presence of the bothersome male, who started to attack the female sexually immediately after the birth, and who also attacked the young one.

The female found a quiet place in the stables, where she spent the first days looking after her child and giving her all her attention, undisturbed by anyone. On the morning of the second day, the baby vicuña, cleaned, nursed, and full of life, stood on her own feet. Mother and daughter spent three days in the stables, and then they were both returned to the vicuña exhibit. The male started to behave rather inhospitably towards the young vicuña again; so, just to be sure, we kept him separate from his family for five days in a small enclosure within the nearby ibex run. After his return to the group, he began to tolerate the presence of the young animal, which could already run well, and he soon also became her protector. When a visitor with a dog approaches the exhibit, the whole herd is paralyzed; but the male runs forward to the fence in order to protect the females and the young vicuña, and to scare the intruder away.

Vicuñas have their home on the plateaus of the Bolivian, Chilean, and Argentinean Andes at a height of 3,500–4,800 m above sea level. As they are appreciated for their wool and skin, they almost became extinct in the past. However, the majority of their populations are now strictly protected. At present, there are about 350,000 individuals in the wild, and their numbers are gradually rising.

Eduard Stuchlík

Blanský Forest is Home Even to Lynxes

The Protected Landscape Park (CHKO) of Blanský Forest, founded in 1989, covers an area of 21,235 hectares. It is a very well preserved landscape unit lying to the north of the town of Český Krumlov, amidst the foothills of the Šumava Mountains. This forested highland/mountain region is in the shape of a horse-shoe which 'opens' towards the southeast, and which has the Křemežská Basin at its centre. The axis of the basin is formed by Křemežský Stream, which flows into the Vltava River on the southeast border of the region under the ruins of Divčí kámen Castle. The highest point in the area is the summit of Kleť, at a height above sea level of 1,083 meters. Until the Middle Ages, Blanský Forest was made up mainly of primeval oak; today, the actual forest makes up 56% of the total land area. (Apart from spruce and pine plantations, large areas of the original oak woodlands remain.)

The Chvalšinský and Křemežský streams are home to the bullhead (*Cottus gobio*), a now-rare bottom-dwelling fish, and also to a lamprey species, the European brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*). The abundance of species is enhanced by the presence of small open watercourses, pools, and fishponds which are subject



White stork

to extensive water management. Many species of frog can be found; for example, during the breeding period it is possible to hear the croaking of the European fire-bellied toad (*Bombina orientalis*) even during the day. Every year, the citizens of Holubov participate in carrying common toads (*Bufo bufo*) across a road to their breeding grounds in the Adolfovský fishpond. In recent years the secretive common spadefoot toad

Photo by Libor Svátek



A view of the Blanský forest

(*Pelobates fuscus*) has been gradually increasing its range. Our tailed amphibians, the great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and the Alpine newt (*Ichthyosaura alpestris*) can also be found at a relatively large number of locations.

One of the most important parts of the region is the area of mixed submontane forests, which are dominated by oaks and are rich in herbaceous undergrowth. Fully grown trees containing cavities can be found there, enabling the nesting of several species of tree-hole nesting birds such as the stock dove (*Columba oenas*), the red-breasted flycatcher (*Ficedula parva*), the boreal owl (*Aegolius funereus*), and the Eurasian pygmy owl (*Glaucidium passerinum*). One can also see the attractively coloured Eurasian three-toed woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*) and, for most of the year, the spotted nutcracker (*Nucifraga caryocatactes*), a bird the size of a jay equipped with a strong beak. In order to accommodate tree-hole nesting birds, trees with cavities are marked with a blue triangle; therefore, when timber is harvested, the foresters allow such trees to remain standing.

Areas with plentiful bushy and herbaceous levels are home to an inconspicuous gallinaceous bird, the hazel grouse (*Bonasa bonasia*). Thanks to the support of the owner of a land parcel in Chvalšiny and the village of Křemže, nesting pads were built in those locations for white storks (*Ciconia ciconia*), which regularly raise their young there. The massive Eurasian eagle owl

(*Bubo bubo*) nests up to an altitude of 100 meters on rocks in the canyon of the Vltava River on the border of the Protected Landscape Park.

The area under the roofs of the churches in Chvalšiny and Brloh provide a home for a summer colony of greater mouse-eared bats (*Myotis myotis*), which look after their young there. In the surroundings of fishponds and watercourses, an observant visitor can notice signs of European otters (*Lutra lutra*). Our largest feline predator, the Eurasian lynx, has also made a home in the Blanský Forest, having expanded its range to this area since the reintroduction of the species in the 1980s. Thanks to the presence of the Eurasian lynx, greater mouse-eared bat, bullhead, European brook lamprey, and other animals and plants, the area of this Protected Landscape Park was accepted into the Natura 2000 European system of nature protection as a European locality of significance.

RNDr. Libor Weiter,

Zoologist for the administration of the Blanský Forest Protected Landscape Park



Eurasian lynx

Photo by Zdeněk Hanč



During the summer, Cuba was the first who learned to stand on his hind limbs. He also likes to explore the enclosure alone. Smaller, lighter Toby prefers to keep close to his mother

The Bear Cubs Say: "Come and See Us!"

Two young Kamchatka brown bears, born in January this year, have become the most exciting attractions of the season at Brno Zoo. Their enclosure, which lies close to our stylish wooden Kamchatkan cabins, is most popular at feeding times. There, visitors are separated from the predators only by a moat, which is two metres wide and twice as deep. Right there in front of them, on the lakeside, is where the bears come to eat various goodies.

The massive Kamchatkan predators, surprisingly, have marked vegetarian tendencies: In the wild they mostly hunt only salmon, and many are the times,

particularly in the spring, when they have to survive on whatever they can find to graze on in the green meadows of their home. Here, the keepers throw them various kinds of fruit and vegetables, such as apples, pears, plums, tomatoes, cabbages, pumpkins, and melons. Bread also comes flying through the air to the hungry bears (two loaves per adult animal) and also fish (three kilos of mackerel per adult). They are not given any other meat. They are also provided with oats in their indoor sleeping quarters, and are occasionally treated to yoghurt or honey. Bears in zoos typically fast for one or two days a week, but we feed our Kamchatka bears daily, as even a short-term fast wouldn't do the young bears any good. The feeding of

the Kamchatka bears, during which the keeper gives a short talk on the lives of the animals and answers questions from visitors, takes place at 10:00 four times a week (on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays). On the other days it isn't possible to give a definite feeding time in advance.

Our breeding pair of Kamchatka brown bears have been living separately since last November, when the female headed for the birthing quarters and began her preparations for the birth. The male, Jelizar, who spent the winter in the main enclosure, was prevented from entering the breeding area. The mother, Kamchatka, and her children, the two male cubs Kuba and Toby, left their den and started to venture into the outdoor enclosure at the end of May. Jelizar then had to stay in the paddock away from the visitor route, as he might have been a danger to the young bears. On some days, the bears swapped locations, with the mother and her young in the paddock and the male having the run of the whole enclosure.

Since the beginning of August, when we completed construction of an electrified fence, the enclosure has been separated into two areas of roughly the same size, allowing visitors to view the cubs and their parents daily. The female and her young occupy one half, while the male is in the other. The cubs can see their father through the fence. Kuba is darker and larger than Toby and, from watching Jelizar, has learnt how to stand upright while catching fish thrown by the keepers. Kamchatka is usually found with her young in the part of the enclosure where the lake is, which is easily viewed from the area between the Kamchatkan cabins. However, we have to let Jelizar bathe sometimes too, at which times



Female Kamchatka with Toby



In early September, the young bears were still quite small



Cuba, as always, everywhere the first...

the little bears can be seen in the second part of the enclosure, the walls of which feature a viewpoint equipped with a large glass window.

Where the bear cubs will go once they have grown up is not yet known. They will stay with their mother until they are around two years old. Once they have left, the fence dividing the bears' enclosure will be removed. However, it hasn't been completely ruled out that the grown-up bears will stay at our zoo to form a group of four with their parents. If the male bears are unable to get along and conflicts occur between them, it would then be necessary to have the young bears castrated.

Jelizar and Kamchatka were born to different mothers in 1993 in the surroundings of the town of Yelizovo in Kamchatka. They were found abandoned, and were captured and taken to Rostov-on-Don Zoo, where they twice bred successfully. They travelled to Brno Zoo in 2010.

About 16,000 Kamchatka brown bear individuals live in the wild. Their distribution range is restricted to the Kamchatka peninsula and a small portion of the neighbouring mainland. They occupy almost all of the biotopes within their range, from riverine forests to Alpine tundra areas. They live for 20-30 years in the wild, and up to

50 years in captivity. They represent the second largest brown bear subspecies (after the Kodiak brown bear). They can reach weights of around 750 kg – exactly Jelizar's weight when he arrived in Brno. (Kamchatka weighed just over half a ton.) The bear cubs gained weight very quickly after their birth. They came into the world as little mites of only half a kilo each but, in May, when we weighed them for the first time, they had both reached 10 kilos. It is possible to assume and estimate that they will have greatly exceeded 100 kilos by the end of the year.

Eduard Stuchlík



Male Jelizar can bathe in the pond twice a week (Mondays and Fridays). On the other days, this part of the enclosure is reserved for Kamchatka with her cubs



Male Jelizar



Patagonian conures

Patagonian Conures Return

The Patagonian Conure (*Cyanaliseus patagonus*) may once have been part of Brno Zoo's bird collection, but very few people now remember this. However, this year the species returned to Mniší hora (Monk's Hill). Two males, two females and one individual whose sex has yet to be determined were obtained by Brno Zoo from a private breeder in September 2012. After a month in quarantine the group of parrots was placed in one of the aviaries that line the way heading from the U Tygra (By the Tigers) restaurant to the administrative building. Even though all the other birds in that area of the zoo (mainly Australian parrots) are moved to their breeding quarters before the onset of frost, our Patagonians (as we also call our Patagonian conures) are able to stay outside all winter without suffering any ill effects, thanks to their physical disposition gained from the conditions found in their homeland. These medium-sized parrots (growing up to nearly half a metre in length), with plumage coloured in shades of brown, yellow and orange, greet the arrival of visitors with characteristic loud squawks.

Patagonian conures come from central Chile and central Argentina, where they inhabit the dry steppe and semi-desert regions from lowland areas

up to a height of around 2000 metres above sea level, including areas close to human settlements. Four subspecies are distinguished. The nominotypical subspecies *C. p. patagonus*, which our parrots belong to, is found in central and south-eastern Argentina and is migratory; it flies to north-eastern Argentina and Uruguay for the winter. In north-western Argentina *C. p. Andinus* is found, while *C. p. Conlara* inhabits the western part of central Argentina. The Chilean subspecies *C. p. bloxami* is the largest and most colourful of the conures.

Patagonian conures are social birds that live in colonies. They live on seeds and berries and live in burrows that sometimes extend for up to three metres, which they create themselves by digging into limestone, sandstone or clay cliffs. The end of a burrow contains an expanded nesting hollow which remains unlined by the parents; the eggs and young simply lie on a little sand. The 12-kilometre-long sandstone cliffs by the village of El Cóndor in the Argentinean province of Río Negro contain around 35,000 occupied Patagonian conure nests.

Imports of the birds from their place of origin to Europe began as early as in 1868, when the first Patagonian conures were brought to London Zoo. However, it wasn't until 1957 that the first successful breeding took place, at the Avifauna bird park in the

Dutch town of Alphen aan den Rijn. Thanks to the information gradually collected about the biology of the species the breeding of Patagonian conures is relatively successful today. During such breeding, use is made of special, long, artificial burrows ending in a nesting chamber.

Patagonian conures are a common species in their homeland; the total number of individuals is not known, but is currently high. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species categorises the species among those of 'Least Concern', although their population trend is one showing some decline. The closest to being under threat is the Chilean population, which according to the last count in the 1980s contained only 3000 individuals, a number which seems to have decreased further since then. Patagonian conures are not numerous even in every part of their Argentinean range any more; they have completely disappeared from the province of Córdoba and have become rare in the north of Buenos Aires province.

The capture of birds in the wild for hobby breeding is widespread. It is regulated according to the CITES II international treaty – Argentina permits the export of a maximum of 7 500 Patagonian conures per year. Aside from any increase in the numbers captured (the illegal collection of young birds from their nests is currently flourishing) another future source of danger is the loss of their biotope as it is converted into agricultural land; the existing persecution of the species by farmers, who shoot the birds considering them to be pests, may also increase over time.

Bc. Jaroslav Nádeníček,

Curator of Birds and Reptiles at Brno Zoo



Patagonian conures

Brno is expecting the arrival of a Komodo dragon

We have altered the largest enclosure in our terrarium building, which neighbours on the Tropical Kingdom pavilion, to house a male Komodo dragon (*Varanus komodoensis*). The lizard comes from a successful breeding in Prague, and will be given to Brno Zoo by Prague Zoo. Of course, Brno's keepers expect eventually to start their own breeding programme for Komodo dragons, the largest of lizards. (red)

Tapir Neny has given birth to a third female

The South American tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*) Neny gave birth to her third child, once again a female, on 27th September 2012. The mother, despite being somewhat experienced at this sort of thing, was rather irritable after the birth and didn't let anyone near her. Her reaction to the behaviour of the male tapir, Cuzco, who followed Neny around the run shortly before the birth, was clear. Her enlarged udder signalled that birth was imminent, and she constantly defended herself by squeaking loudly and running away; therefore, the keepers moved her into the sleeping quarters, where she gave birth three days later. Neny and her baby



▲▼ The female of Azara's agouti with her child in July 2012 and two months later



South American tapirs. The female of Azara's agouti with her child in July 2012 and two months later

stayed in the birthing room afterwards. A keeper approached her on 1st October for the first time to find out the baby's sex, among other things. At that point, the female was completely calm and the little one was hopping around her happily. When they started to go into the paddock during the day, after about a week, the male had to be kept separate from them in the enclosure. He spent his nights next to the birthing room.

The breeding of tapirs at Brno Zoo started in 2005, when we brought a one-year-old male, Klarnet, from Gdansk Zoo in Poland. We brought Neny to Brno from Riga Zoo in Latvia, where she had been born a year earlier. She gave birth for the first time on 14th June 2009, and the little female was christened Adina by her sponsor, Lad'a Kerndl. A second birth followed for Neny on 8th August 2010. That little female, Bibi, came into the world after the death of her father, Klarnet, who succumbed to an infection in November 2009. However, we had seen him mate with Neny in July of that year. (The gestation period in tapirs lasts for

approximately 400 days.) Both young females have already found new homes in other zoological gardens. The male, Cuzco, who was born in 1993 at Burgers' Zoo in Arnhem in the Netherlands, was transferred to our zoo from Jihlava Zoo in 2011. (red)

An Azara's agouti has reproduced for the first time

We have kept a pair of Azara's agouti (*Dasyprocta azarae*) since 2009, and this species reproduced in our country for the first time in 2012. A viable young animal was born on 23rd July and is doing well. The Azara's agouti exhibit can be found inside the Tropical Kingdom pavilion, with an outside run connected to it.

The mother, which was born at Zlín-Lešná zoo, had a different partner at first. However, the male, from Zoo Amersfoort in the Netherlands had a significantly lighter skin, which didn't attract her in any way. She avoided meeting him and they were hardly ever seen together. However, the zoo in Zlín-Lešná showed interest in this male and, in March 2011, they exchanged him for another male agouti, which had been born at Ústí nad Labem Zoo in 2004. Our female behaved in a friendlier way towards this new one, and we observed their mating not long after his arrival. Although it was a while before the first of their offspring arrived, we still perceive it as a good step towards future breeding success. (red)



Snowy owls

Owls and Foxes

Since October 2010, part of the new entrance section of the Beringia exhibition complex, which attracts visitors mainly to see its bears and wolverines, is a spacious aviary divided into two exhibits of the same size and dedicated to birds of the northern coastal regions. If one is in this part of the zoo, one also should not ignore the Arctic fox enclosure, situated in close proximity to the aviary.

The Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) section of the aviary offers an uninterrupted view of those marvelous, black (or brown) and white birds with their great golden eyes. On entering the aviary one finds oneself at an observation point at the centre of the exhibit. A ramp leads down one side to the sandy bottom of the aviary, while the other side is separated from a small lake by railings. Beyond the railings there is an area planted with vegetation, which allows access to the sleeping quarters. The owls can fly over the observa-

tion point from either side, or walk around it, sit on the railings, etc. A person comfortably watching them at close range (there is nothing between the visitors and the birds!) hardly notices that the birds' escape distance is only several tens of centimetres. Brno Zoo keeps a pair of snowy owls. Both were born at Ostrava Zoo, the female in 2008, and the male in 1999. The extreme closeness of these birds makes a visit to the aviary an extraordinary experience.

Snowy owls belong to the family of true owls (*Strigidae*). With their weight of up to 2 kg and body length of almost 70 cm, they are one of the largest species in that family. The females are larger than the males and their plumage has more areas with dark feathers. Snowy owls nest in the tundra on the northern coasts of Eurasia and America, wintering in a region that extends

in North America from south Alaska across the north of the USA, and in Eurasia migrating to south Scandinavia, northern Russia, and Siberia. They are occasionally known to spend the winter much further south, even, for instance, in northern China. In the winter of 2011/12, thousands of individuals were spotted at various locations across the whole USA. This unusual phenomenon is connected with an overabundance of snowy owls due, in turn, to a decline in numbers of their main prey, lemmings, which occurred in the northern tundra on the North American continent in the summer of 2011. In the past, snowy owls have even been seen in the Czech Republic after wandering from their normal routes.

The Arctic fox (*Alopex lagopus*) run was built in the neighbourhood of the aviary in 2011, and we keep a small group of foxes there. Not far away, at an older exhibit bordering on the seal enclosure, visitors can see more such foxes. We have been keeping them since 2007, when we brought the first animal over from Kazan Zoo in Russia.

Arctic foxes and snowy owls share the same biotope, where they compete. This can involve foxes stealing the owls' eggs from nests built in the grassy tundra, while owls return the favour by hunting the foxes' young. These two species are typical inhabitants of the Arctic plains, and suitably illustrate the natural character of the regions around the Bering straits, which form the leitmotif of our exhibition complex.

However, small wading birds, which we also keep in the second part of the aviary, are also highly characteristic of Beringia. These birds are covered in the article on the following page.

Eduard Stuchlík



Polar fox



Between the visitors and the birds is nothing

Ruffs Have Every Right to a Place in Our Beringia Exhibit

Our aviary, which since 2010 has formed part of the new entrance area of Brno Zoo's Beringia exhibit complex, is composed of two sections which mirror one another in their arrangement and design. The first houses our snowy owls, while the second contains ruffs – small northern birds which, though seemingly upstaged by their more glamorous neighbours, are definitely of interest to the discerning visitor.

The exhibit contains several bird species from the northern coastal regions. Northern pintails and Eurasian oystercatchers share the aviary with a large group of ruffs (*Philomachus pugnax*, order Charadriiformes, sub-order Scolopaci (waders) and family Scolopacidae), which are small, unostentatious birds. The suborder of 'waders' includes small- to medium-sized birds of the wading type which are often dependent on water. Most of them have long, thin beaks which they use to hunt small creatures in waterlogged soil. We brought to Brno three pairs of ruffs from NaturZoo Rheine (Germany) in 2010. They live in a totally natural manner in our exhibit, and we often spot them exploring the bottom of their swamp with their beaks, searching for food.

Ruffs nest in grassy wetland areas in the north of Eurasia (more than a million pairs live in Russia) and spend the winter in tropical regions, primarily in Africa. During their spring and autumn migrations we can also spot their flocks in the Czech Republic. They mainly live on insects (aquatic and terrestrial) though, during their migrations and at their wintering grounds, they will also eat spiders, crustaceans,



A male ruff with a raised neck collar (on the left a female)

molluscs, worms, frogs, small fish, water plants, and grasses and their seeds.

The males are noticeably larger than the females, though when they are in winter plumage there isn't much difference between them, as both sexes have the same brown colouration with black flecks and a white stomach. In May and June, when the males gain their breeding plumage, their appearance changes dramatically. A colourful, raisable ruff of feathers appears around their necks, while reddish-yellow growths arise on the face along with two curly crests on the ears. The male's ruff can range from dark brown, through golden, to white in colour. Viewing the contests of the males when they defend their position in the mating arena is an unforgettable experience.

Brno Zoo's progressively expanding Beringia complex, with its focus on animals of the northern regions, will in future display tens of species originating from a wide area around the Bering Straits. Beringia isn't just about wolves, bears, and wolverines; the small creatures living in the region far outnumber the large mammals, both in the number of species and in the total numbers present. Aside from rodents, which mainly live in the soil or under the snow, the majority of the animals living in the region is mainly made up of huge flocks of birds which are concentrated near water – on the shorelines of seas, lakes, and rivers, and in the waterlogged tundra. Without them, our picture of the far north would not be complete.

Eduard Stuchlík



A male ruff who is courting a female has this typical stance, with his head down



A male ruff with the erectile collar of his breeding plumage at rest

VÁNOCE V ZOO BRNO!

PŘIJĎTE OZDOBIT A ROZSVÍTIT VÁNOČNÍ STROM PRO ZVÍŘÁTKA!

1. 12. 2012
OD 14.00 HOD.

VSTUPNÉ:
PRO DĚTI
OD 12 HOD. ZDARMA



KAMČATSKÉ CHALUPY A JEJICH OKOLÍ V AREÁLU
EXPOZIČNÍHO SOUBORU BERINGIE SE UŽ RÁNO PROMĚNÍ
VE VÁNOČNÍ VESNÍČKY PLNOU STÁNKŮ S KERAMIKOU,
MODROTISKEM, SVÍČKAMI A PERNÍČKY

NÁVŠTĚVNÍCI SE BUDOU MOCI
ZAHŘÁT PUNČEM A OCHUTNAT
TRADIČNÍ POCHOUTKY Z GRILU
NEBO ZE ZABÍJAČKY

HLAVNÍ PROGRAM PROBĚHNE NA PÓDIU PŘED VSTUPEM DO BERINGIE
14.00 ZÁBAVNÉ ODPOLEDNE ZAHÁJÍ ŘEDITEL ZOO BRNO
MARTIN HOVORKA, PROGRAM BUDE MODEROVAT
MONIKA BRINDZÁKOVÁ
14.10 VYSTOUPÍ FOLKLORNÍ SOUBOR KOMIŘÁČEK
14.30 ČLENKY STANICE MLADÝCH PŘÍRODOVĚDCŮ PŘIVEDOU
NA PROSTRANSTVÍ PŘED PÓDIEM VELBLOUIDICI MAJDU
A LAMY A BUDOU VYPRÁVĚT O ŽIVOTĚ ZVÍŘAT
14.50 ZAPÍVÁ HONZA MLČOCH ALIAS KAREL GOTT REVIVAL
15.00 VYSTOUPÍ DĚTSKÝ SBOR BRNO
15.20 MONIKA BRINDZÁKOVÁ A HOSTÉ VYZDOBÍ VÁNOČNÍ STROMEČEK
PRO ZVÍŘÁTKA
15.35 VÁNOČNÍ PÍSNĚ ZAPÍVAJÍ SPOLEČNĚ DĚTSKÝ SBOR BRNO
A KAREL GOTT REVIVAL
15.55 VYSTOUPÍ SWINGOVÝ ZPĚVÁK LAŠA KERNDL
16.00 SVĚTLA VELKÉHO VÁNOČNÍHO STROMU ROZSVÍTÍ
PRIMÁTOR BRNA ROMAN ONDERKA



SLAVNOSTNÍ ROZSVÍCENÍ VÁNOČNÍHO
STROMU V 16.00 HOD!