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zoo report

the magazine for friends of the Brno Zoo

BRNO



special supplement
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Polar bears

UNSALEABLE

Modern Zoos Struggle for Preserving the Biological Diversity of the Planet

To learn about nature is not only interesting and sometimes entertaining, but also necessary. Whether we are ten, forty or seventy years old, we can always find something new in nature, something not known yet, and we always remember that nature is something what goes beyond us we are only a part of.

Zoos have an irreplaceable role in such learning. They make us possible to encounter the amazing diversity of nature face to face. An immediate contact with animals is something which can hardly be substituted by hours spent over textbooks, atlases or by watching scientific films.

The truth is that historical origins of zoos were not what the mankind could be proud of. The Victorian menageries, where animals caught in the open countryside suffered in small cages, where unnatural environment, stress, loneliness and the lack of movement made wrecks of the living beings, are a dark chapter of the human history. Thanks to courageous people from unions for the protection of animals the opinion of the necessity to close animals in confined cages has

gradually changed. People understood that the view of wretched animals subject to permanent stress had not brought neither knowledge, nor pleasure to them.

Present modern zoos are not "museums of live animals" any more. Zoos become the centers of the scientific education, ecological education, the place, where people strive for preserving the biological diversity of the planet and survival of endangered animal species. They have become the centers of family entertainment, the place of rest or the sought after tourist attraction.

Our Brno Zoo should also become such a zoo. New expositions, e.g. the Tiger Rocks or the wolfs' run-out are the evidence that we are able to create good conditions for animals and an attractive environment for visitors in Brno. But there is still something to improve. All the obsolete pavilions and run-outs cannot be rebuilt to modern expositions from day to day. However, regular visitors to the Brno Zoo see the gradual changes. More run-outs are added which meet the present requirements for breeding, the provided services are improved, the number and attractiveness of events drawing the attention of ever bigger number of people to the issues of the fauna and flora protection has been growing. I have been observing with pleasure how the Brno inhabitants are more and more interested in animal arrivals. For example, the fate of small polar bears has been eagerly watched by thousands of people. I believe the



Martin Ander

Mgr. Martin Ander, Ph.D.

was born in Vyškov on 17th May 1975. He graduated from gymnasium in Brno and then from mathematics and physics on the Faculty of Science of the Masaryk's University. He successfully gained his doctorate on Department of applied mathematics in 2005. Since 1993 he had worked for ecology organizations in Brno; he was mostly interested in animal protection, restriction of transport pollution and noise and projects of advancement of public transport development. In 2003–2006 he worked as a director of the Rainbow Movement, a national ecological organization based in Brno. He has been a member of the Brno Council since 2006 and he was elected the deputy mayor of Brno for the city development, city planning and environmental protection. He was elected a member of the Green Party all-state board in February 2007.

Mr. Ander lives in the Old Brno district. In his spare time he goes in for swimming, cycling or excursions to the nature.

small Brno bears will be soon as popular as their Berlin colleague Knut. It has become a symbol of events for the preservation of the global climate. This currently most urgent world ecological problem is the matter of all of us. Each of us may contribute to the generation of our children to have at least the same chance as we have: to happily live on this planet. Do not forget that nature will survive without us, but we will not without it.

Mgr. Martin Ander, Ph.D.
Deputy Mayor of Brno



New exhibit The "Coral Reef"



The Hammer coral *Euphyllia* sp.

Coral Reef in the Centre of the City

A new exposition was established during the replacement of tanks in the Permanent Aquarium Exhibition in Radnická Street which imitates the biotope of a coral reef. We have planted there fish from the original sea aquarium and some new species were added. We have selected the species so that the inhabitants of the new vessel mutually complement and do not compete and so that everything is pleasing to the eye, especially the colours.

In the new exposition there are e.g. Yellow tail blue damselfish (*Chrysiptera parasema* and *Ch. hemicyanea*), Red flame angel (*Centropyge loricula*), Foxface rabbitfish (*Siganus vulpinus*), Blue tang (*Paracanthurus hepatus*) and Yellow tang (*Zebrasoma flavescens*) or Purple tang (*Zebrasoma xanthurum*), whose colours can be judged from the name. The popular Nemo known to children from the fairytale also swims there. Its scientific name is Ocellaris clownfish (*Amphiprion ocellaris*). We have



The Foxface rabbitfish

enriched the aquarium by sea anemones and various kinds of corals from the family of stag horn corals, reef-building corals, pore corals, green tree corals and others, which also improve the range of colours. Pelecypods of Smooth giant clam (*Tridacna teresa*) and gastropods of Nassa mud snails (*Nassariidae*) assist in maintaining the ecological stability.

We had to replace one of the oldest tanks with sea animals at the end of the last year especially because its technical condition and the condition of the stand under it were unsatisfactory. The obsolete type of filtration was not very good as either. The new tank with the volume of more than 900 litres with the walls made from 15mm glass certainly does not have the aforementioned shortcomings. It may be proud of its greater diversity of species, a richer internal decoration from natural sea stones partly glued to the back wall and partly placed on the bottom covered with fine sand. The water overflow situated in the middle of the tank according to the recent trends, offered more variants for the division of the interior.

A sea aquarium must be founded according to previously set steps. First, the glued decorations must harden and stop working in water. In our case, it took approximately three weeks, when we exchanged the

water filled from the mains to the tank several times. Only in the next stage we filled the sea water mixed in such manner that it would meet requirements of the later planted animals. We added so called live stones with the original sea flora and fauna, we applied sea microbes directly to water and let the aquarium stay for two weeks. During this period the stabilisation of the water chemical composition incurs. Then we added fine sand and after it had deposited, first fish species. At that time we were in another stage of the aquarium foundation, when microbes necessary for maintaining the water quality begin to act and when the effectiveness of the mud filter with the sea grass *Caulerpa* (situated under the aquarium and visitors cannot see it) can be monitored. Sea animals, particularly corals, respond to fluctuations in the water quality highly sensitively. The mud filter serves for degradation of surplus nutrition and hazardous substances, e.g. copper. It also contains a device for reduction of an excess of microbes. We monitor the sea water quality, which must be regularly exchanged, at regular measurements of various chemical and physical values.

We reduce growing of the sea grass in the aquarium especially due to aesthetic reasons. The fine sand also plays an important role. Animals planted in the aquarium seek food in it, sometimes they live in it and they continuously turn it over – the sea grass cannot grow in the moving substrate. However, newly founded aquaria face a higher growing of sea grass after some time anyway. We can reduce it by less lighting or more frequent replacement of water. Brown sea grass appeared on the decoration and sand in our new tank, which began to disappear after a month. It was replaced by the green sea grass on the decoration after three months and then a purple so called lime sea grass began to appear at all places of the aquarium, which should prevail at the end of the tank stabilisation.

We would like to add other fish and shellfish species to the aquarium. We wish to create an exposition which would make it possible for visitors to watch such sea animals, which they cannot breed at home, which would distract them from everyday rush and learn to relax.

Ing. Vladimír Spurný,

Foreman of the Permanent Aquarium Exhibition

The Podyjí-Thayatal National Park: Small, but Nice

The only national park in Moravia and at the same time the smallest one in the Czech Republic is the Podyjí National Park. It was declared in the area of 63 km² in 1991 to conserve a deeply cut-in and rarely preserved unique river valley, where the richly winding Dyje is surrounded by meadows and forested slopes. The bilateral area of the European importance originated after the declaration of the Thayatal National Park in the adjacent Austrian territory with the area of 14 km² in 2000. When the Austrians speak about it, they say: "Klein, aber herzlich", and we say: "Small, but nice."

As the only national park in our republic, the Podyjí National Park spreads over the border of two big orographic units – the Bohemian Massif and the Carpathian System. This fact is also reflected in the composition of wildlife. You can find both thermophilic Pannonian species and the species typical for the area of Hercynian forests.

While the fauna of invertebrates is not fully examined in the Podyjí and further explorations bring



The Hoopoe on nest

new information on its species richness, the fauna of vertebrates is known very well and new species are found only rarely. The occurrence of 65 species of mammals was evidenced in the Podyjí National Park. Important species include Lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) or plentiful Edible dormouse (*Glis glis*). An important inhabitant of the Dyje flow is Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*), and Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*), which have begun to spread in recent years. To the contrary, some species has disappeared from the Podyjí or they are missing, such as European ground squirrel (*Spermophilus citellus*). The recent finding of Wild cat (*Felis silvestris*) in the Thayatal National Park

Photo by NP Podyjí direction archive



View on Podyjí National Park

is very interesting. But the wild cat has not been found on the Czech side yet.

More than 200 species of birds were found in the territory of the Podyjí National Park, of which approximately 140 species nest there. Typical species of the eastern, warmer part of the park include e.g. hoopoe (*Upupa epops*), wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*), Syrian woodpecker (*Dendrocopos syriacus*), Barred warbler (*Sylvia nisoria*), Red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*) or corn Bunting (*Miliaria calandra*). Of many forest inhabitants, we would like to mention at least emblem Black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*), Pigeons stock dove (*Columba oenas*) living in cavities or the rare Boreal owl (*Aegolius funereus*). Many species living in the territory in the past disappeared, e.g. Black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*) or Rufous-tailed rock thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*). The formerly nesting Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) can be watched only rarely today. The species regularly spending winter here include White-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), flocks of the Great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), and rarely also Alpine accentor (*Prunella collaris*).

Eastern green lizard (*Lacerta viridis*) and Aesculapian snake (*Zamenis longissimus*) belong to the most outstanding species of eight species of reptiles. Fire salamander (*Salamandra salamandra*), Eurasian newt (*Triturus cristatus*) or European green toads (*Bufo viridis*) are the examples of amphibians, which were found in the park in the number of 13 species. The fish species composition in the Podyjí

National Park (39 species) is adversely influenced by of the dams in Vranov nad Dyjí and Znojmo.

Other species of the extraordinarily rich fauna of invertebrates to be mentioned are the Fairy shrimp (*Eubrachipus grubii*), Assmann's fritillary (*Melitaea britomartis*) or thermophilic Praying mantis (*Mantis religiosa*) and European mantispid styrian (*Mantispa styriaca*). Some Europe-important species of insects have great populations in the Podyjí National Park, e.g. European stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), great Capricorn beetle (*Cerambyx cerdo*) or Clouded-apollo (*Parnassius mnemosyne*).

Fauna of the Podyjí National Park is very diverse and it still hides many surprises.

Mgr. Martin Valášek,
Zoologist of the Podyjí National Park

Photo by NP Podyjí direction archive



Photo by NP Podyjí direction archive

The Aesculapian snake



Photo by Tomáš Hájek



The first Cora's bath after about four-month stay in the birth box



White cubs became a little bit dirty during their first trip-it was raining in the night and playing cubs were rolled around at the moment

Skinny after the four-month stay in the gloom of the delivery box, she plunged to the small lake without hesitation. When she heard the voices of the young bears standing indecisively in the entrance area, she went out of the water and driven them back to the lodging with a characteristic growling. Then she jumped to the small lake again, after a while the young bears began to peep again and the scene repeated several times. When the insistent small curious bears managed to run up to the shore of the lake, the female emerged, came to the dry land – and since then she kept an eye on the off-springs and supervised them. She meticulously drove them away from the deep water, but she walked throughout the entire sloping run out with them even with its more distant upper flat part adjacent to the visitors' route. Cora probably also wanted to boast; she walked on the terrace like on a catwalk...

Young Polar Bears Have Gone to the Run Out

The twins of Polar bears born in the Brno Zoo last year on 23rd November, left the indoor lodging for the first time on 11th March, and accompanied by their mother Cora, they set out to explore the outdoor run out.

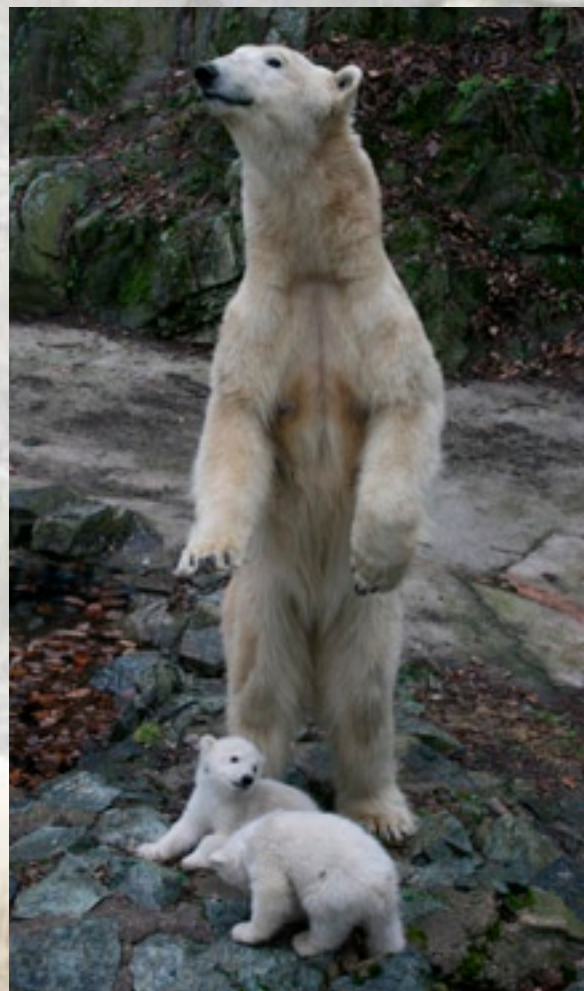
Cora appeared the first in the run out shortly after its opening – it was an hour before lunch.

The first steps of the young bears in the free area were eagerly observed by many journalists and visitors. One of them, probably from a German-speaking country, kept repeating: "Gute Mutti, gute Mutti..." He evidently remembered the fate of Knut, who had to be taken care of in the Berlin Zoo by its breeders because its mother had little milk.

The entry to the inside lodging was opened in the following days and bears could decide whether to move in the run out, or stay in the bear den. Cameras transmitting the picture and voice from the delivery box to PCs of zoologists and on the zoo web began to pick up the area inside the lodging and the adjacent outside area with the lake. Bears spent the night outdoor – in a pile of straw spread at the lower edge of the run out near the small lake.

Cora was born in the St. Petersburg Zoo on 27th November 1998 where she was naturally bred by her mother. She came to Brno on 16th March 2000. The male Umca of nearly the same age, born in the Kazakhstan Almaty Zoo, was awaiting for her there (Umca was bred partly artificially). At first they found their home in the former run out for lions, which was built in 1971 as a part of the veterinary surgery. An exhibit vacated after the departure of the Brown bears to another zoo in 2006 became a more suitable exposition for the Polar bears.

Breeders noticed the first manifestations of the sexual behaviour of Umca and Cora in April 2003 and March 2004. The mating at the end of March and at the beginning of April 2005 was fertile and



Photos placed on this page were taken third day after the bear burrow opening

in the end of November 2005 Cora began to visit the delivery box more often. By that time Umca had been moved to the former lodging of Syrian bears for several weeks which was only about 100 m distant from the Polar bears' exhibit. Unfortunately, the first breeding was not successful. On 1st December 2005 Cora delivered two male off springs, but both of them died within two weeks because the female did not have milk. Since the summer of 2006 the couple has been given a larger modified exhibit with lodgings after the Brown bears. In order to assure more peace for the female before the expected date of delivery, we transferred the male temporarily to the Prague Zoo. Cora delivered two young bears right in the exhibit on 6th December 2006. She did not accept one of them – so we immediately started artificial breeding. She took the second one to the den and stayed there with it. Unfortunately, the small female died on the fourth day and the artificially bred male ended as bad as it the day before.

We have taken a series of actions so that another expected pregnancy led to the successful breeding – either natural, or artificial, if needed. We bought e.g. a quality incubator. When Cora was delivering for the third time on 23rd November 2007, it was an experienced expectant mother and its mother instincts were fully developed. Umca was moved again to the Prague Zoo for the period of the third pregnancy, where it is going to stay for a year. It may sire further young bears there.

Visitors and the zoo employees are pleased with the lively small Polar bears and they believe their development will continue without complications. The reproduction of Polar bears in captivity is a very demanding task and the importance of the successful breeding of this species exceeds the border of the central European region. Statistics show that only eight per cent of Polar bears born in zoos lives to be adult.

Jan Kamenik





Professor Valoušek showed up his scientific explanation with strong gesticulation



The Members of The Young Naturalist Station are listening prof. Valoušek lecture with attention

Thankful Students Remember the Legendary Professor Valoušek

In January it has been 120 years since the date of birth of Bruno Valoušek, a legendary founder of educational work in the Zoo Brno. He succeeded in

promotion of the Brno Zoo as early as in its beginnings. His lectures broadcast by the local radio throughout the area of the zoo, an enthusiastic guiding activities and an attractive way of leadership of the circle of young biologists made him a popular person known in the whole Brno and its vicinity. The interest groups he founded and led later became the basis for the Station of Young Scientists, whose members have been more than three thousands of young people until these days. His way of teaching – to bring it as much to the terrain as possible – may give us inspiration especially in the era of personal computers.

Unfortunately, the name of professor Valoušek has been slowly forgotten. Although one of the streets in Brno-Bystrc is named after him, his merits, as far as we know, were mentioned only in several articles at the occasion of his eighty's birthday and then in 1971, when he died. Last year Czech Radio mentioned him in the Osudy (Fates) programme broadcast by the Brno and Vltava radio stations: "Professor Bruno Valoušek taught science at the grammar school in Břeclav in 1920s. I have not met a better teacher. Whenever it was possible, he did not teach in the classroom, but in the open countryside. I have not brought so much from anywhere, as from his lessons. Not only due to the taught topics, but also because this teacher was well informed also in other fields, including art," one of his students living now in Israel recalls. We believe many of his students would say the same.

Bruno Valoušek was born in Jičín in 1888, where he studied the grammar school. In 1906–1910 he studied science, physics, mathematics and singing at the Philosophical Faculty of the Charles University. He taught at grammar schools in Jičín, Rakovník and Břeclav, at the Higher Gardening School in Lednice and finally, he worked in the Brno State Teachers' Institute. There he was already a member of the Scientific Club and in 1941 he became the duly member of the Moravian Scientific Association. In addition to a special interest in small shellfish species, he worked particularly in the field of methodology of scientific education and became its lecturer at the Faculty of Science of the Masaryk University. At the same time he devoted his time to his second big love – music and singing. His beautiful deep voice was heard in the Moravian Teachers Choir, he

was a conductor of a choir in Břeclav from 1920 to 29 and from 1922 to 25 he was a headmaster of the Music School of the Břeclav Foundation. But he had not an easy life. He was imprisoned during the Nazis' occupation in 1942. Not long after February 1948, he had to stop teaching in public schools. But his quenchless enthusiasm did not allow him to be inactive. He helped with the reconstruction of a small garden of J. G. Mendel in the Old Brno Monastery and then he found full entertainment in the work for the Brno Zoo. He became its employee in 1955 and actively worked there until the last days of his life.

And how do we remember the professor?
"I personally met professor Valoušek for the first time as an enthusiastic lecturer in the field of the methodology of teaching science. He always tried to show the presented topic on examples, and sometimes in quite an unconventional way – e.g. the students of the Faculty of Science traditionally eagerly expected the demonstration of movements of fairy shrimps during copulation. But I have fully appreciated the importance of passion for the loved field much later, when I started to teach at the secondary school as a freshman." This is what the first of us say and the other adds: "I experienced professor Valoušek at several trips of the Brno Scientific Club. He accompanied his presentations with strong gestures, which is perfectly documented by the photograph taken by Dr. Zdeněk Kux, the then head of the Zoological Department of the Moravian Regional Museum, in 1950s. I will mention at least one example from the course of a trip. One hot afternoon we stopped at the cage of wolverine in the Brno Zoo. The professor immediately started explaining why the animal of prey was situated right there, on the northern slope of Mniší Hora Hill, which is exposed to the flows of cold air from the forests in Baba. He spoke about the original biotope, the northern taiga and tundra, where wolverines dig its lodge in windfalls of spruce trees and rocky crevices and seeks remains after "feasts" of wolves chasing the herds of reindeer and caribous in the deep snow. It was so suggestive that we transferred in our minds somewhere far to the north of Siberia or Canada and we did not feel the surrounding oppressive hot..."

Karel Hudec and Jan Zejda

Photo by Zdeněk Kux

Photo by Zoo Brno archive



The Sri Lanka leopard Arnold

Leopard Female Changed Her Partner

The Sri Lanka leopard male called Arnold, born in 1995 in the Fuengirola Zoo, Spain, arrived in Brno in the beginning of February to create a breeding pair with a female called Ruwani. She comes from the Sri Lanka nature; therefore she is very valuable for the European breeding. Her previous partner Maga had lived with Ruwani in Brno since 2004, when we imported both of them from the Colombo Zoo. Unfortunately, an examination in the end of the last year proved that Maga was infertile. We delivered him to the Burgers' Zoo in Arnhem, Netherlands, as an exhibit animal after Arnold's arrival. (red)

Photo by Jiří Vitek

Wolf Pack Is Lead by Atila

The Brno Zoo brought a four-years-old Polar wolf male (*Canis lupus arctos*) from the Sóstó Zoo in Nyiregyháza, Hungary, before Christmas. He was named Atila. As every imported animal, also Atila had to go through quarantine first. Already in January he was running around the exhibit together with two females, who had been impatiently expecting the future pack leader long time before his arrival. They both come from the French Amnéville Zoo; they came to Brno in November 2006. We innovated the exhibit after Atila's arrival: we have deepened a den under the artificial rock that could become a good shelter for a female with whelps. The Polar wolves live in arctic part of Alaska and Canada and in Northern Greenland. In the exhibit, which had been awarded an Exposition of 2006 by the Czech Zoos civic society, we originally kept the Canadian wolves. (red)

Grand Cayman Ground Iguana in New Exhibit

We got a new exposition of the Grand Cayman ground iguana (*Cyclura nubila*) by adapting the area, where the Spectacled caimans used to live – this species will not be bred in our zoo anymore, we moved the female to another place. Visitors may see the renovated facility in the vivaria building that neighbours with the Tropical Kingdom pavilion. The water element has disappeared, of course; there are several bigger live xerophytic plants complemented by stones, stumps and boulders; illusive painting creates the background. A male and four females from Prague settled in the new surroundings; we placed the iguanas from our breeding to another vivarium in the same building. The Grand Cayman ground iguanas live both in dry rocky areas of tropical forests and coastal mangrove vegetations on Cuba and the Cayman Islands.



The Cuban ground iguana in new exhibit

A pair of the Radiated tortoises (*Geochelone radiata*) found their place in the new roomy exhibit, too. Although they come from Madagascar, the conditions in both the biotopes are very similar. (red)



The basic element of wolf pack. Right male Atila

15 millionth Visitor Got a Tour to Bali

The Brno Zoo, which has been opened for public since 1953, welcomed the 15 millionth visitor on 15th March 2008. Mrs. Martina Dršková from Brno, who came to the zoo with three-years-old Adam and six-years-old Kamila, received a holiday voucher worth 100 000 CZK for the whole family to the Indonesian Bali island. (red)



The new walk for the Arctic foxes



The Arctic foxes

New Exposition of Arctic Foxes

An unusual hustle has been usually heard from the former exposition of polar bears since the end of the last season. A group of Arctic foxes (*Alopex lagopus*) has been running around and playing there. Their presence is sometimes accompanied by a range of noises produced by foxes – howling and barking. The group consists of seven females.

With regard to the fact that the zoo has no intention to breed Arctic foxes for now, two males are separated in the background.

The exposition had to be rebuilt before importing the animals from the Russian Zoo Kazan in November 2007. Walls made from concrete closed the yard, where the same material prevailed. The austere area was lightened by illusive paintings on two neighbouring walls; the opposite walls were covered with webs with dry vegetation, which should gradually grow over by climbing plants. We brought soil on the bottom of the run-out and planted trees and bushes to it. The water supply to a small lake is in the shape of a waterfall and the second glazed view was inserted to the walling. The exposition was secured by an electrical fencing.

Arctic foxes, also called white foxes and in many languages also “pesec” (from Russian), are a new species in the Zoo Brno. In future we would like to breed them in two places in the Beringia set of expositions of the northern animals: in the Kamchatka, where Arctic foxes will have a joint aviary with snow owls, and in the through exposition, which will fill the currently empty place in the curve of the road leading to the exposition of polar bears in the area of deer.

Only few animals are adapted to the life in extreme conditions of the faraway north as well as

Arctic foxes. In addition to the long winter fur, the warmest in the world of animals, they are characterized by small round ear auricles, a short nose, short legs and a shortened head – such adaptation ensures the least radiation of heat. In the fifty degrees below zero of frosts, Arctic foxes can sleep on the surface of an icy terrain: they curl up and cover their head with the tail. Their blood contains drops of fat so as not to freeze. There were even the known cases, when a fox survived the temperature of -80°C .

The fur of Arctic foxes is white or even lightly greyish or bluish in winter. The animals become nearly invisible on the snow. It is very important for them when they are in the watch for a kill. In summer their fur becomes thinner and changes to grey-brown, which means, foxes again blend with the surrounding, which is muddy and rocky at that time. Warm and beautiful fur is still demanded; therefore Arctic foxes have been hunted for or bred at farms. The first farm was founded in Alaska in 1865 and since then keepers have bred several colour variants of Arctic foxes.

The genuine home of Arctic foxes is the tundra of Eurasia, North America, Greenland and Iceland, but when looking for food, they stray to the forested areas or to the north to ice plains. One Arctic fox was killed in the south of the US Manitoba, in a place 1000 km far from the border of tundra. The cases of occurrence of Arctic foxes 2000 km far from tundra are known from Russia. When hunting sea animals, the Arctic foxes travel on ice or ice blocks tens and hundreds of kilometres: scientists have found a marked Arctic fox as far as on the 88th degree of the northern latitude, 800 km from the nearest dry land.

The Arctic does not offer too much food. When looking for it, foxes must use nearly everything they encounter: in addition to lemmings, the most common kill, and other rodents, they eat birds nesting on the ground and their eggs, the young of ringed seals, they catch fish and other water animals, they do not put by insect and carrions outcast on the sea coast and they batten on the kill of polar bears.

According to the estimate from 1991 there are 100,000 to 150,000 Arctic foxes living in wild. The species is protected only in Scandinavia, where the numbers of pieces dropped significantly due to hunting.

Eduard Stuchlik



Architectural project for Kamchatka exhibit

Kamchatka Will be the Entry to Beringia

A widespread area which shall make visitors acquainted with the nature of Kamchatka should be the entry to the set of expositions of the northern fauna called Beringia. The main bred species will be the Siberian Brown bear. The new exposition will continue the finished parts of Beringia – the exhibits of Arctic wolves and Canadian beavers. The project of the Brno Zoo workers was processed to its final form by AND, Ltd., the architectural studio. All the project preparation followed from the general plan of the Brno Zoo development.

Several obsolete expositions will give the way to the construction. They include e.g. the gate for Canadian lynxes, for which we have been building a new run out, or one of the oldest facilities in the zoo, so called Brno lodgings for beasts of prey, situated at the border of the planned area near the Tiger Rocks since 1953. It used to be a log house with a small caged exhibit for lions, which was later walled up and supplemented by a pool. Polar bears and Syrian bears

lived there after lions. Today the obsolete facility is empty and it will be demolished soon.

A new widespread exposition, which will take the area of 10,030 m², counts with the location of the Siberian Brown bears, Wolverines, Arctic foxes, Snowy owls and more species of wading birds from the northern polar areas. The proposal follows the current trends in the creation of zoos. A visitor walking through the Kamchatka area will think that he is really moving in the given location and the exposition will take him to the natural environment of animals.

The architectural design follows from the effort to maintain the relief and forest character of the place invoking the image of a real northern forest as much as possible, where bears, wolverines and other animals move calmly and casually. The architecture of individual buildings will also contribute to inducing an authentic atmosphere: aviaries will blend with the surrounding countryside and the architect designed technical and service facilities for visitors in the spirit of the folk architecture of Kamchatka and Siberia. Some original items, such as carved decorations and

window shutters will be used, we are even thinking of importing the whole Cossack's farmstead built in the 19th century.

The planned area consists of several independent units: the exhibit for bears, for wolverines, a joint aviary of Snowy owls and foxes and the aviary of wading birds. The natural trail goes through the area, where the information boards and observation points are situated. The trail is designed as a hunting path going through the taiga. Visitors will see there e.g. castings of bear traces or stems of trees marked with bear claws and various traps and hunting hides. They will learn that historical ways of hunting are not used any more, most species are conserved and therefore, the numbers of animals do not fall in the wild nature any more.

The construction should have started this year but unfortunately, "Kamchatka" has not found its place in the city budget. But there is a chance that the application of the Brno Zoo for a subsidy from the European Funds will be positively settled.

Eduard Stuchlík

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