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# **zoo**report

the magazine for friends of the Brno Zoo

## **BRNO**



special supplement

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Indian takins

UNSALEABLE



## To breed endangered species is not enough

**2010 is the 30th anniversary of the start of my career in zoos so it is perhaps a natural time both to look back and also to try to articulate what I would like to achieve in the last epoch of my career.**

When I began work as a keeper in the Gaherty Reptile Breeding Centre at Jersey Zoo, immediately after leaving university, I was a passionate believer in the potential of zoos to do great things in conservation. I set to my work, of breeding incredibly rare reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates from remote islands across the globe, with dedication and, I hope, professionalism. I believed that my animals would soon be reintroduced to their native lands once the threats to their existence had been removed.

I always had a career plan that one day I would be the director of a zoological garden; but I never imagined that I would become the chairman of the world's largest zoo association, the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA), not least because, at that time, EAZA did not exist!

Since those far-off days 30 years ago it has become apparent that, although zoos still have an important role to play by simply breeding rare animals, it isn't enough on its own. Many conservationists believe that the most important role for zoos is to inspire and to educate our millions of



Photo from Simon Tonge's archive

**Simon Tonge with an African Rock python in Matopos National Park, Zimbabwe**

visitors to care about the natural world as much as we do. On top of that, many of us believe, in the face of the depressing and accelerating decline in global biodiversity, that zoos also have a duty to support the conservation of animal and plant populations in the wild. Our top zoos do all three things at once, perhaps still best exemplified, at least within EAZA, by my old alma mater in Jersey, though many zoos are catching up fast.

It is almost a cliché now that globalisation has come to dominate our lives, but it is nevertheless true. Whenever good or bad things happen in a zoo anywhere in the world, we all get either damned or praised. It is unfair, but a fact of life, that bad news travels quicker and lasts longer than good

news; so we have a duty to aspire to be the best that we can be. I visit many zoos and aquariums and sometimes get bored with seeing the same animals presented in the same way as I have seen a thousand times before. Zoo people are always happy to steal other people's ideas; but I get driven to fury when I see good ideas copied badly! Innovative and lateral thinking are as welcome in zoos as they are in any other walk of life.

An association is really only as strong as its weakest link, which is why EAZA has been trying to encourage greater aspirations and higher standards among its members. It is absurd to claim that any one zoo is 'the best'. We all have different tastes, but mostly we know a good zoo when we see it.

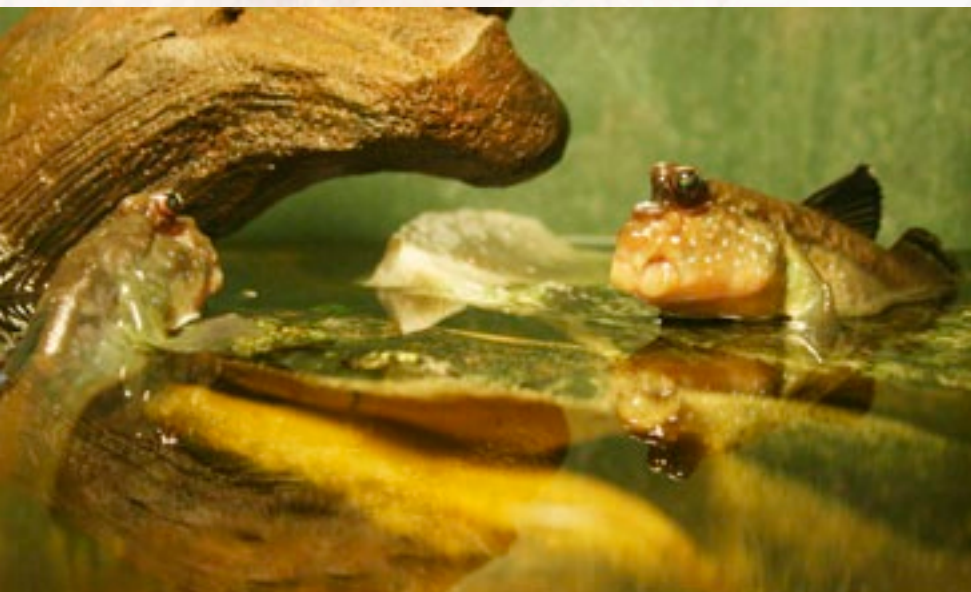
If, by the end of my chairmanship, EAZA is an association that is comfortable with its role, and its members and their work are accepted as the benchmark for what zoos can achieve globally, then I shall be content.

### **Simon Tonge**

was born in the UK in 1958 but then moved to Africa in 1965 where he lived first in Zambia, living in remote towns in the northern and Luapula provinces before moving to Malawi in 1974. Mr. Tonge graduated in Zoology from the University of Bristol, UK, in 1980 and then started work in the Herpetology Department at Jersey Zoo, now Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. During his time there he participated in fieldwork on highly endangered amphibians and reptiles in Mallorca and in Mauritius and had his first experience of working with other zoos to manage animals co-operatively. In 1991, he left the zoo and trained as an accountant for two years (!) in order to gain experience in financial management. At the end of 1993 he was appointed as Senior Curator at London Zoo, a position he held until late 2000, when he was appointed to his current position as Executive Director of the Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust and its three zoos in Paignton, Newquay and Living Coasts. The Trust also owns several nature reserves in the UK and has extensive field conservation interests overseas. The plenary session of EAZA's 26th Annual Conference elected Simon Tonge the new Chairman of EAZA for the 2009-2012 period.

Simon Tonge,  
Chairman of EAZA





Mudskippers



A Mudskipper at the bottom of the aquarium

### **“Walking Fish” Spend a Part of Their Life Onshore**

Since last year, we have bred mudskippers [*Periophthalmus barbarus*] in one of many smaller reservoirs arranged at the Permanent Aquarium Exhibition in a cylindrical wall, a so-called “rotunda”. These mudskippers are imported to the Czech Republic under the name of *Periophthalmus papilio*. They are fish adapted to life at the boundary of two elements – water and air. They are characterized by a special anatomic structure as well as by unusual behaviour.

Mudskippers especially draw attention because they are able to stay outside an aquatic environment for long hours. Their movement on dry land is enabled by pectoral fins connected to the body by strong muscles. They can even jump using their

tail. Their eyes are high-positioned on the head, and are movable, with sharp vision both in water and in the air. Their turning eye sockets enable good orientation. We often find mudskippers with the body submerged in water and only the eyes above. Mudskippers breathe with gills, but not only with them. When staying on dry land, they use atmospheric oxygen – by means of skin well supplied with blood. Drying out of the gills is prevented by a gill bag, which mudskippers fill up with water before going onshore. A cap closes the bag. These unusual and unique accommodations have developed as a result of tidal fluctuations to which mudskippers have managed to adapt.

The habitat of mudskippers is in the shallow, muddy shores of West Africa from Angola to Senegal, particularly in places where rivers flow into the sea and where dense mangrove growths have developed. They live in brackish water, but often leave it and move onto mangrove roots, stones, or sand. They catch small meat food – insect larvae, fish spawn, and small shellfish – in water as well as on dry land.

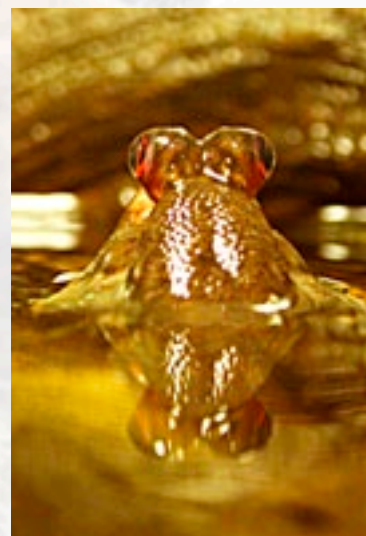
The mudskippers genus [*Periophthalmus*] belonging to Gobiidae family consists of 18 species. Their territory is spread over shores with mangrove growths in the continents of Africa, Asia, and Australia. The Atlantic shore of Africa is only occupied by amphibious mudskippers. They grow up to 25 cm. Their oblong, slightly side-pressed and front-cylindrical body is coloured in various grey-blue and brownish shades,

with dark spots and light spots on the side. Sexual dimorphism is little visible. They live to the age of approximately eight years. They spawn in a den up to one meter deep, the entrance of which is often on dry land for part of the day. Their breeding in captivity is difficult; the biggest and probably the most successful breeder of mudskippers is Burgers’ Zoo in Arnhem, the Netherlands, where they are bred in a special pavilion for animals living in mangrove growths.

We can read in professional literature that mudskippers are easily frightened animals and we should behave quietly and avoid sharp movements near an aquarium. Another described characteristic is their ability to get used to human speech. We decided to place the above-mentioned species in the reservoir in the lowest row so that children can also comfortably watch them. The water level in the aquarium, which is here and there interrupted by dry land, is approximately 15 cm. After many unsuccessful attempts, the animals have gradually realized that glass is an impermeable barrier and that no danger to them is posed by visitors. Three months after their release into the exposition, they calmly tolerated the presence of people.

The news of “walking fish” climbing on a rock or at least watching their surrounding with their eyes above water level has quickly spread among the Brno public, especially children. Many entries of praise have appeared in the chronicle of the Permanent Aquarium Exhibition.

Eduard Stuchlík



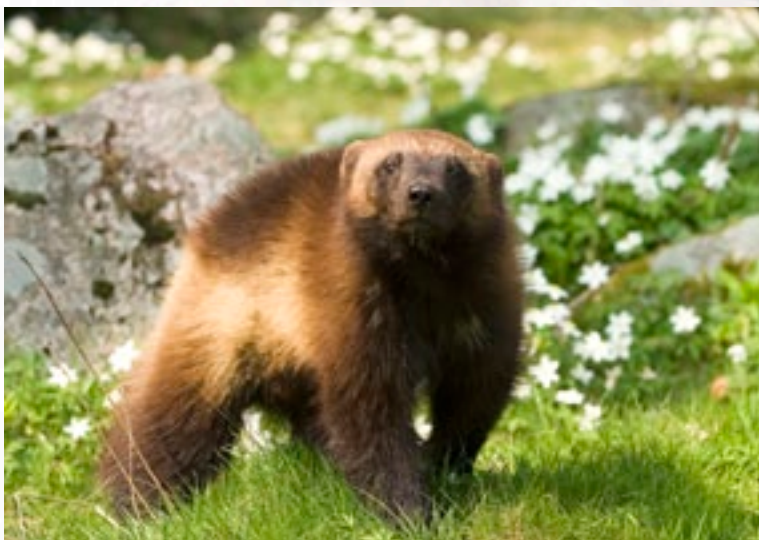
Eyes of mudskippers are high-positioned on the head



## Nordens Ark – a Refuge for Endangered Species

Nordens Ark on the Swedish west coast was established only 20 years ago but, despite its young age, it has already reached an enviable reputation in the zoo world. From the very beginning, the zoo has focused on species with decreasing population trends in the wild, most of which are threatened either on a native or a global scale. Most of the animals in the collection originate from a climate similar to that of northern Europe, and are therefore found in large outdoor paddocks in beautiful surroundings. During recent years, some exotic species from temperate and warm climates have also been included in the stock, most of which can be found in a small tropical building. The animal collection can therefore mainly be included in the following four categories: endangered exotic species from a colder climate, threatened native species, most of the reptiles and amphibians from the Swedish fauna, and, last but not least, threatened old native breeds which also are becoming extremely rare in current farming.

Visitors can observe large reproducing herds of such exotic species as Przewalski horses, markhors, and urials, but also wild forest reindeer from the taiga zones in Finland and Russia. Breeding populations of carnivores from our old continent include solitary animals such as wolverines, Eurasian otters, and lynx; and a nice pack of wolves can be observed in an enclosure of almost 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> located in a natural forest. Among the exotic carnivores, Amur tigers, snow leopards and maned wolves, as well as lesser pandas,



Wolverine

Photo from Zoo Nordens Ark's archive



### Bird's-eye view of the Nordens Ark

can be seen from large wooden bridges which have been built to avoid abrasion of the fragile landscape in the coastal landscape of the Bohuslän county. An impressive wetland landscape has recently been built with an interesting collection of white-naped and Manchurian cranes, Waldrapps, and white storks, the latter of which is classified as Regionally Extinct from the Swedish fauna.

The zoo is heavily involved in co-operative breeding programs, and most of the species in the stock play an essential part in global and national recovery programs. For more than a decade, the zoo has been involved in breeding and restocking activities on peregrine falcons, white storks, lesser white-fronted geese, white-backed woodpeckers, and green toads in Sweden. Although all these species are on display,

the main breeding stock of these species is kept off-exhibit in a separate part of the park. Close contact is maintained with NGOs both within Sweden but also with colleagues from abroad. Thus, during the last nine years, more than 100 peregrine falcons hatched in the zoo have been released into the wild and, currently, the zoo keeps a stock of the locally Critically Endangered white-backed woodpeckers which presumably exceeds the number of free-flying birds in Sweden. To endeavour to save the lesser white-fronted goose, in a joint effort of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, Moscow Zoo, and Russian ornithologists, the zoo has established a breeding population founded from wild-caught birds from the Russian tundra. The decline of this small arctic goose is greater than that of any other bird in northern Europe.

Two EEPs and one European and one International studbook are maintained by the zoo staff in addition to the large number of jointly managed breeding programs the zoo participates in. A long-term cooperation with the University of Gothenburg and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences has also been established. Here Nordens Ark functions as a field station for students, researchers, and post-graduate students who pursue their studies in the zoo. We are proud to also have a professorship in conservation at Nordens Ark. The position is held by Claes Andrén, who is a well-known amphibian expert. Overnight possibilities are offered for students, visitors, and conference delegates at the zoo's own hotel.

Lena M Lindén, Dr Ph h c, CEO Nordens Ark

Photo from Zoo Nordens Ark's archive





Clive and Danny with their keeper



The Irish cobs have long callow whiskers and they may have one eye unlike the other

### Irish Cobs, Piebald Evil Spirit Horses for Children's Pleasure

Two geldings of the Irish cob breed supplemented the group of seven Shetland ponies in the Children's Zoo in February 2009. Fairytale-like, beautiful Irish cobs, spectacular with their colour, rich manes, strong tails, and marked whiskers mainly serve, together with the ponies, as popular horse-riding attractions for our young visitors.

It is said in England that a proper cob should have the head of a maiden and the croup of an older woman-cook. The type of horse we call "cob" characteristically has a robust figure and high versatility. Before mechanisation developed, it did all the heavy work on farms, drove everybody in a carriage, and carried easily even the heaviest family member on its back. We distinguish Irish, English, Welsh, and Norman cobs.

Irish cobs are amongst the popular horses to be used during leisure time. They carry people either harnessed or without a saddle, and are often used in hippotherapy. Some eco-farmers in Ireland, the country of their origin, still use them for work in the field. It is also possible to hire cobs with a caravan to spend a holiday with them in Ireland in the style of coaching gypsies. An Irish cob is also called a "tinker" or, formerly, "gypsy

horse". It evolved from a horse which came to Ireland from continental Europe during the expansion of the Celts around 400 B.C. Many other breeds later contributed to the breed, such as Clydesdale horses, Welsh cobs, or Dales ponies. Irish cobs used to be deployed as military horses but, due to their striking roan colour, they were too obvious on battlefields. The aristocracy considered pied horses inferior, and got rid of them. Fortunately, gypsies, who appeared in the British Isles after 1500 A.D., liked them. They became the gypsies' favourites not only because they like everything colourful, but also because cobs were the cheapest horses of that time.

Strolling gypsies, for whom a horse was almost the only and indispensable property, were experienced breeders who understood horses, although they treated them harshly. Their horses, harnessed up to their typical carriages, crossed the whole of Ireland and lived on grass along the roads; they did not usually get any other pasture. Travellers were also ingenious. Under the veil of darkness, they set out with their mares to graze people's enclosures or other quality sites. Their mares then would deliver ever better pied individuals until the typical characteristics and features of the Irish cob stabilized. These obedient, modest, and tough draught animals have spread along with the



Eyes of the Irish cobs



travelling people, whose livelihood mostly consisted of tinkering pots and selling horses, from the British Isles to the Continent, and even farther afield.

As opposed to Welsh and Norman cobs, Irish cobs show high variability. The Stud Book Standard, established in Ireland in 1997, divides them into three height categories, of which the highest has a top limit of 170 cm. We can also find differences in the body build, richness of tufts of horsehair, and colour; an Irish cob can be a brown or black piebald, or a three-coloured horse, and, rarely, a black or brown piebald horse with markings. They have various eye colours, and each eye can be a different colour.

Such a horse should look like a picture, and our small geldings really almost are as pictured. The older Clive, surnamed Clifard, is nicely black-brown pied with a long thick tail reaching to the ground. Its mane grows on both sides symmetrically and is very long. The fore lock – the mane between the ears leading to the front – is so long that it covers the eyes. When I do not see the eyes, of which one iris is blue and the other brown, I lose control over what tricks are right now going on in the head of this Old Nick.

Clifard was born in 2005 and seems to be wise. Whoops, I was mistaken: It likes most to throw a rider off its back. That is its specialty. It can be galloping calmly, and suddenly it is heading at speed for a thick set of overhanging tree branches. We have explained to it many times that this style is not the most suitable and that visitors will certainly not like it. Diligence is the mother of good luck, and Clifard has finally forgotten its spitefulness. Nowadays, it is a 100% reliable horse during trips in the forests around the zoo.

Its one-year younger brother, Danny alias Denis, also a black pied horse, is bigger. It has a beautiful long



The saddles for the Irish cobs are equipped with handles



A ride at the ponydrome

mane, thick tail, and each eye of a different colour. Both of them have huge tufts of hair above the hooves, which looks like slippers according to visitors. A beard growing from the skin above its upper jaw appears in the autumn and disappears during the fur exchange in the spring. It is an indication of primitivism of the breed. Denis is a baby of about four hundred kilos. We walk slowly together, step by step, at a foot-pace. As my colleague says: "It walks as if it had a nappy between its legs."

Both piebald horses are gourmets, and they would like to be eating all the time: hay, carrots, apples, beet-roots, stale bread, horse granules, pasture in the meadow in the alley, water in a manger, and mineral lick. During the daytime, they are most interested just in these things and situations. They recognize when I carry a bowl with delicacies, and Denis immediately starts whinnying. The dandy, Clifard, does not like begging. It only raises its ears and looks to see if anything will drop. I, of course, do not resist and give a piece of carrot to each of them before the evening feeding, when they are stabled in outdoor boxes with a deep bedding, after coming from the run-out.

If the cobs see that we are bringing a bridle, seat, or cushion with handles for a rider to adhere to, they hide themselves in the most distant corner of the run-out and pretend they are not there. They withstand carrying children and adults quite well, but it cannot last too long. After some monotonous walking around a ponydrome, they become bored and stubbornly stop. Then we have to push them to get them walking again.

I cannot omit a mention of the Propet, an exhibition of breeding and riding needs which was held in the Trade Fairs Brno in June 2009. Clive and Danny took part, and



The cobs have given a ride to the patients from the children's oncology clinic even out of the ponydrome

all the people liked them very much. We prepared the geldings for the performance very well, which included long currying, washing, and combing of their tails. We braided their manes into pigtails first so that they were richer after they were unbraided. We oiled their hooves to shine nicely. At that moment, they became really good-looking horses, and they swaggered, being aware of their importance.

Zoo visitors admire them and often have their photos taken with them, which proves their popularity. Almost everybody is touched by their easy-going and hard-working characters, which rank Irish cobs along with higher horse breeds. In future, we would like to introduce another service for visitors: We would like to harness Clive and Danny to a buggy and offer joy-rides around the zoo and its surroundings.

Simona Blahoňovská,  
Breeder at the Children Zoo





Bagoun catches a fish

### Seal Training Has Nothing to Do with a Circus

Fur seals belong among the most popular animals in zoos. Their rather comical appearance and natural playfulness, and the delight with which they are able to tumble in water, wheezing on hot days, attract almost every visitor.

Our zoo breeds Southern fur seals (*Arctocephalus pusillus*): Bagoun, a male born in the Antwerp Zoo, Belgium, in 1993; Bobina, the daughter of the legendary Gaston, born in the Prague Zoo in 1998; and Geisha, a female born in the coast of Namibia in the wild in 1992. Southern fur seals are quite often imported to zoos from the wild because there are huge numbers of them along the south-African coast, particularly in Namibia. Their colonies often amount to thousands of individuals and, even nowadays, people sometimes control their numbers by hunting.

Together with true seals and walruses, fur seals belong to the group of Pteropoda ("wing-footed"). The extremities of Pteropods may appear as fins. Thirteen species of fur seals are perfectly adapted to the life in sea. Their body is of a hydrodynamic shape, and they are protected against cold by a dense, greasy fur through which no water penetrates. They can stay under water for seven minutes with each single inhalation of air. They catch fish, cephalopods, and shellfish.

They are very playful and intelligent animals. Their character can be compared to that of hunting dogs, for example, to which seals are related anyway. According to many authors, Pteropoda belong under the order of Carnivora, and their closest relatives are the Ursidae and Canidae. Seals are very bright and masterly hunters.

They hate boredom, and therefore enjoy themselves by, for example, releasing bubbles from their mouths under water and swimming around them; or they will play with a stone which they pick up from the bottom, then letting it fall back down. This is the reason why people should work to train seals which are living in captivity. Zoos which do so and offer seal performances to the public are sometimes accused of breeding them as for a circus. But regular training is important for seals, as it helps to maintain their brightness, improves their mental state, and brings them joy.

Our exposition is equipped with a larger outdoor fresh-water pool which is connected to land and two smaller salt-water pools inside the lodging. We regularly feed the seals, during which time they perform easy exercises.



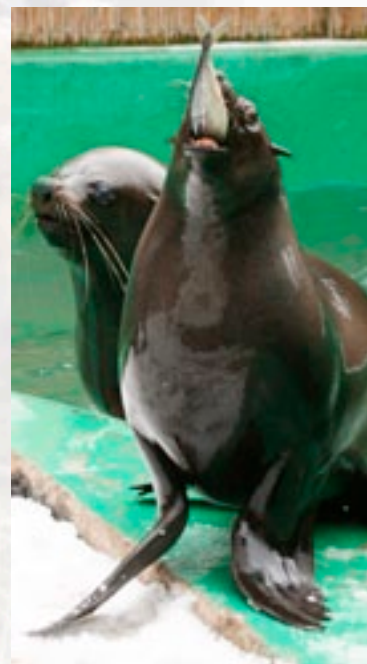
Gejša shakes its flipper

Each of the animals has its trick which it shows to visitors. Gejša, for example, climbs on a training box and, as a well-brought-up animal, shakes its fins with the trainer. Bobina stands up on its back fin, hugs the trainer with its front fins and then eats its reward. It is also able to make visitors laugh by refusing to wait until its turn comes, and likes to steal fish from the box. Bagoun, a male, is highly impatient and greedy compared with them. Its specialty is that it jumps about two meters from the water when it catches its fish. But we must be careful of Bagoun, especially during the mating period when the symptoms of territoriality are manifested, and it starts to think that we are aliens in his harem and is ready to fight with us. Although this group of seals has lived in our zoo for about ten years, we unfortunately we have not yet seen any young.

Top zoos only breed seals in saltwater. This is enabled by a high-tech filtration technology with which it is not necessary to change the saltwater in the pool for a long time. Unfortunately, our exposition is obsolete. There is not enough money for a complete reconstruction; therefore, we will try to at least make a partial refurbishment which would improve the living conditions of our seals.

Ing. Miloslav Walter,

Gamekeeper at the Beast of Prey Unit



Bobina (left) and Bagoun





Vicugnas

### New Vicugna Run-out Built at the Main Route

A new run-out adjacent to the main road of vicuñas, wild llamas, is going to be finished soon. The fence is complete; it is only necessary to furnish a shelter and other equipment. Two young females arrived from the Moscow Zoo at the end of February. A male will arrive from the Hannover Zoo in Germany.

The run-out is built next to the Alpaca llamas and visitors can observe expositions of cavies, suricates and peccaries along the main route. After finishing the run-out of vicuñas, we would like to build another two run-outs there – for kangaroos and Jacob sheep. Then, new expositions will surround the main route for its entire length. (red)



Cora rolled around in snow after a long stay in the den



Cora (left) and Umca together again



The wolf pack has decreased after the bred young ones left

### Three Couples of Wolves Left for the Ukraine

Until the end of March, Brno Zoo visitors were able to observe an unusually large group of eleven Arctic wolves. It consisted of the pack leader, its two partners, two young of 2008, and six young born last year. To achieve further successful reproduction, some members of the new generation must separate from their parents and go the the world, where they can establish and supplement other breeding groups. The transport of three couples of wolves set out on the journey to the zoo in the Ukrainian Rovno at the end of January, and one couple of young born in 2009 remains with the pack. (red)

### Umca at Home Again

Umca, the father of successful polar bear twins Bill and Tom, returned to Brno in the middle of January after a two months' stay in the Bratislava Zoo. It was originally supposed to stay longer in Slovakia in order to ensure that its partner, Cora, was not disturbed while taking care of an expected increment to the family. However, the belief that Cora was pregnant and would deliver and take care of young has not been realised. We

can expect now that the couple will spend the spring mating season together, and hope that Cora will be pregnant again. (red)

### Mini-appaloosas – New Inhabitants of the Children Zoo

A four-member group of Dutch-bred mini-appaloosas arrived at our zoo in February to extend the collection of contact animals in the Children Zoo. These small horses, which will carry the smallest children after saddling, have a height at wither of 87 cm, which ranks them with medium-sized ponies. Their attractively spotted, speckled fur is eye-catching. The Dutch Breeding Book of Appaloosa lists a stallion, Belfigor, the oldest member of the group, born in 2003.

Appaloosas were named after the Palouse River in the east of the North American state of Washington. They were bred by the Indians of the Nez Percé tribe, who obtained the horses from Spanish conquerors. The breed became known in the 18th century. As with other breeds of Indian horses, appaloosas later nearly became extinct; but, thanks to their unusual appearance, a group of enthusiasts fell in love with them and bred them again. (red)



Stallion called Belfigor





Heiko (in front) and Helge



Ladislava Macek, the Brno Deputy Mayor, was accompanied to the ceremonial act by his horse

### Heiko, We Won't Give You Up!

After a nearly half-year stay out of sight of the public, Heiko, a gelada male, entered again its run-out on the first spring day, 21 March 2010. The famous escapee immediately climbed to one of the higher places serving the apes for viewing or resting, and greeted its more obedient friend, Helge, while a group of Barbary sheep was grazing nearby. Tens of visitors, journalists, and guests to the opening ceremony of a newly modified exposition of Barbary sheep and geladas observed Heiko's first steps.



Hana Horáková, the captain of the Basketball Representation Team, handed over a symbolic cheque to the zoo representatives. Roman Onderka, the Brno Mayor, on the left, Martin Hovorka, the Zoo Director, on the right.

Heiko became known after its two escapes from its breeders. In September 2007 it roamed about surrounding forests, meadows and fields until it was caught at a golf course on the third day and taken back to the zoo. In October 2009, when it saw a vet coming with a well-known narcotisation gun in hand to treat one of the Barbary sheep, it took to its heels in disgust and climbed over the electric security fence. This time, it only hid in and near the zoo, but for the whole week. One day, when it was snooping around in the kitchen at the giraffe stable, an experienced keeper coolly closed the door from the outside and called the vet. Then the male ape was taken directly to a separate part of the zoo.

After the second escape, the zoo management thought of transferring Heiko to another zoo, as there was not enough money for the perfect securing of the run-out. But the escaping ape became so popular in the meantime that news of its imminent departure raised a wave of protest. Brno inhabitants decided not to give up their Heiko. Emails as well as traditional mail asked that Heiko not be transferred from Brno. This was not the only support the ape received. Direct financial gifts and paid SMS messages intended for the run-out modification raised CZK 170,000. The most generous sponsor was Ladislav Macek, the Brno Deputy Mayor, who donated CZK 100,000. The women's Basketball Representation Team sent CZK 10,000. Česká pojišťovna, the insurance company, spread an information campaign and ordered the production of souvenirs with a Heiko motif, the earnings from sale of which will also serve to buy exposition equipment. The insurance company

together with the zoo declared an art competition for children on the theme of Heiko, in which 860 children took part. The ten best competitors were given diplomas and awards at the occasion of opening the exposition.

The new modification to the run-out of geladas includes a higher fence and installation of a more efficient electrical security fence. Costs, which amounted to approximately CZK 900,000, were paid by the zoo from its budget and by the above-mentioned sponsorship contributions. Further contributions are not limited in any way and are kindly welcome.

The festive opening of the exposition was attended by Roman Onderka, the Mayor of the City of Brno, Ladislav Macek, its Technical Deputy, Petr Špičák, the Director of the Brno Branch of Česká pojišťovna, Petr Kovář, the Manager of the Czech Basketball Federation, Hana Horáková, a captain of the women's Basketball Representation Team, and other generous sponsors. "Heiko is a strong individual, and such individuals can only assert themselves in sport. It became an example for us also in its desire for freedom," Captain Horáková explained as to why her team had chosen Heiko as a mascot.

In addition to the strengthened fence, our escapee should want to stay more at home in future thanks to a harem of females the zoo plans to import. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that the naughty ape will never escape again. "The escaping ape will learn soon that the electricity in the fence will not cause it harm, but is only a deterrent", Martin Hovorka, the Zoo Director, commented about the difficult situation.

Bc. Eduard Stuchlík



## Takins Born in Brno Start Reproducing

Rare Himalayan even-toed ungulates – Indian takins – have formed part of Brno Zoo's collection of animals since 1999. The original couple have successfully bred two young animals. The young takin which was born on 9 March 2010 is the first viable female born in our zoo.

Saxana takes good care of her small male: She has drunk breast milk since the first hours of her life. In the beginning, Saxana stayed with her in a remote corner of the run-out but, after several days, both mother and child have come to a crib amongst the other takins. The other females are also interested in the young female, and she has made friends with all members of the group, including her father, Roman, who came from the Frankfurt-upon-Main Zoo in Germany.

Seven-year-old Saxana was the first takin born in the Brno Zoo. We obtained her parents from the Berlin Zoo in 1999. Another takin successfully bred in Brno is Saxana's three-years-younger sister, who gave delivery this year; but, as an inexperienced primipara, she did not know how to take care of the baby, which died after two days. Saxana had the first young one last year. Although she breast-fed her child, the breeding failed. It was probably caused by health problems in the young one. There is a third adult female in our



Female takin called Saxana with her young one

group of takins – Resi, the mother of Saxana and Šarlota. This female can still become pregnant and rear the young even if she was born in 1998.

From the genetic point of view, the last year's arrival of a young couple from the Berlin Zoo was very important for our breeding of takins. The male as well

as the female are direct offsprings of a takin caught in the wilds of Myanmar and imported to Berlin Zoo in 2004. Before this male, only the foundation couple of the European breeding, which were imported in 1974 and 1976, got to our continent directly from nature. (red)

## Annual Report for 2009

The Brno Zoo 2009 annual report you can see on a website [www.zoobrno.cz/o-nas/vyrocnizpravy/](http://www.zoobrno.cz/o-nas/vyrocnizpravy/). It tries to give as wide a view of the life in the Brno Zoo in the previous year as possible. It sums up achievements as well as shortcomings in our work. The most important event of the monitored period was the commencement of construction of a wide-spread run-out for the Kamchatka bears and additional expositions of wolverines, snowy owls, polar foxes, and the northern species of waders. A nature trail will pass across the new premises, which will show the countryside of Kamchatka and eastern Siberia, its traditional deployment and present environmental trends. We hope the exposition will be opened in the second half of this year. The biggest success of 2009 in the field of breeding includes the delivery of six whelps of Arctic wolves, three African wildcats, and a female of South American lowland tapir. (red)







We have become godparents of Polar bear Umca in 1999. Since that time we have been his proud adoptive parents.



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The Brno agency – Healthy city of Brno town-council organizing an eleven annual volume of the popular actions

**the animals do not smoke either**

at Brno Zoo area on 22. May 2010



It's target is bringing nearer the healthy lifestyle by amusing form, inform about effect of smoking on humans health and advice how to banish this noisome addiction.

The actions the animals do not smoke either is organizing on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day is offering to spend a day off healthy and without tobacco smoke in wonderful natural environment.