

zooreport

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the magazine for friends of the Brno Zoo

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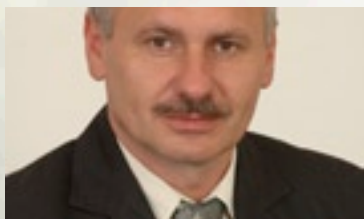


special supplement

ZOO REPORT PROFI

The Speech
Ladislav Macek

PAGE 3



*All Four Females
of the Pere David's Deer Gave Birth*
Lubomír Gala

PAGE 4



*The White Carpathians – Harmonious Landscape
with Butterfly Paradise*
Ondřej Konvička

PAGE 5



One Day as an Ape Breeder
Simona Blahaňovská

PAGES 6, 7



Earth Day Appealed to Every Visitor
Jan Kameník

PAGE 8



Hot news
(red)

PAGE 9



Six Young Ones in the Wolf Pack
Bc. Eduard Stuchlík

PAGE 10



Both Wolf Females Whelped
Bc. Eduard Stuchlík

PAGE 11



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Patagonian maras

UNSALEABLE

On the Threshold of Development

Building the entrance part of Beringia exposition has started this year in spring and intensely continues nowadays. Opening of the new exposition with the Siberian Brown bear as a dominant breeding species should take place in the beginning of the second half of the next year. The entrance part is the first project co-financed from the European Regional Development Fund.

The Brno city plans to repeat the successful subsidy application for the Brno Zoo by submitting other five applications. Five building actions should move the Brno Zoo quite a few steps forward again. The Brno city also included finances for another three constructions of no less important objects into its budget.

A modern zoo must have a relevant parking to perform all its functions properly. According to a project that should be supported by the European Union, such parking should be built on a parcel that neighbours the zoo in the cadastral area of the Kníničky city district. It will cover an area of 9000 m² and its capacity will be up to 300 cars and ten buses. The project contains a whole new entrance to the zoo because the parcel is about 500 m far from the present entrance that doesn't correspond with the zoo's needs any more. The new area will include service for visitors, sea aquarium, restaurant, administration building and technical

background with works. Present 2nd-class road will go through the new area and it will be bridged for the pedestrians. Objects of organic shapes will be integrated into the green and partly deepened not to violate the landscape character of the neighbouring family house development. Existence of the entrance area will not worsen the quality of life in this part of the city.

Sea pig pavilion, African Village, Moravian Cottage and reconstruction of the old entrance area are the other projects that should be co-financed from the European funds. The African Village should be located at the look-out near the Safari exposition, where the Giraffes dominate. The Safari will get a new pond with a lemur island and a flamingo colony. All the objects in the village will have a circular ground plan, but they will vary in construction, size and function - there will be stages for domesticated animals, display of ethnographic artefacts, through parrot aviary and a lecture room there. The Moravian Cottage will be located in the area of present orchard, which is a part of the zoo. It will show the visitors the life in a peasant yard that had been built in 19th century in Koclířov near Svitavy. The exposition is designed as the best possible replica of two farmhouses (with a pub in one of them) and other farm buildings, stages, hayloft, smaller objects and a garden. Vanishing old livestock species will find their homes in the exposition. Despite the construction of a new entrance area in Kníničky, the old entrance will be preserved. Mostly the visitors walking from the tram stop will use it. The traditional entrance deserves a complete reconstruction because it has been in service since 1961.



Ladislav Macek

Also the first stage of reconstruction of the ape's pavilion for chimpanzees, exposition of Bald eagles, skunks and porcupines near the wolves' area and a kangaroo run out belong to the three mentioned projects that will be co-financed from the Brno city budget. The kangaroo run out will become the basic exposition of a future complex called Australia, located under the Exotic Birds pavilion.

The Brno city management makes efforts to change the evident long-lasting neglect of technical stage of the Brno Zoo. Many investment projects have been prepared or realized as results of these efforts. The Brno Zoo should build a relevant position among the Czech zoos with strong economic self sufficiency that would allow it to perform all its functions properly. Probably the most important is an offer of quality and attractive expositions, going along with high attendance. I believe we will manage to realize most of our resolutions and plans and the Brno Zoo, which is now on the threshold of full-valued development, will soon bring itself to public notice as one of the most attractive places of Brno.

Ladislav Macek,
Vice Mayor of the Brno City

Ladislav Macek

was born in 1961 in Brno and lives in the Kohoutovice city district. He graduated from an industrial school, educational school and achieved a Bachelor degree in economy.

He worked as a dispatcher, cleaning centre chief, later as a director of a company dealing with maintenance of the Brno road network and also as an executive director of companies focused on communal services and estate management for several years.

He entered the professional politics in 1998, when he became a representative of the Kohoutovice city district. He worked as a vice chairman of the district; he was in charge of the property field and administration of housing. In the municipal elections of 2006 he was elected a representative and a member of the Brno Council. He also was elected a vice Mayor for technical domain.

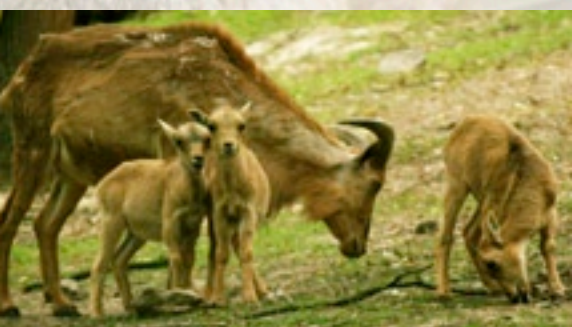
He is married and has two daughters and two grandchildren. We can find cycling and country among his hobbies.



Bisons

All Four Females of the Pere David's Deer Gave Birth

All four females from the Brno group of Pere David's deer have delivered young this year. The first one was born on 24 March and the second one on the following day. After a month, on 20 April, a third was born; and after another month, on 21 May, a four-year-old female coming



Barbary sheep



Pere David's deer



Bactrian camels

from Chomutov Zoo gave birth. This last, unlike the others, was a first-time mother. One of the other females, of the same age, also originally from Chomutov, had another baby last year; the other two females, which were born in the Estonia's Tallinn Zoo in 2001, are experienced mothers which have already given birth to seven young in the Brno Zoo. The father of all this year's young – three males and one female – is an eleven-year-old male born in Ostrava Zoo.

In addition, our Antlered District, where we also breed the Pere David's deer, has had more species born this year: the Siberian ibex had two young and the Barbary sheep had four. We should also mention our neighbouring Safari District, where – as in most previous years – Bactrian camel and buffalos gave birth. The female camel, Sulika, gave birth to a male, Kamil, on 13 April. The herd of buffalos, consisting of five

cows and a bullock, has had two more young since the spring: One of the females delivered a calf on 12 March, and another on 11 May. Both small buffalos are males. We did not have any young buffalos last year but, previously, buffalos had young regularly. Our breed of buffalos has a long tradition dating back to the 1960s.

The Antlered District also is home to white-lipped peccaries, llamas, guanacos, domestic sheep, European elks, European reindeer, Indian takins, Sika deer, and geladas, as well as Pere David's deer, Siberian ibexes, and Barbary sheep. The Safari District looks after giraffes, blue wildebeests, ostriches, Chapman's zebras, Grevy's zebras, camels, Przewalski horses, equus kiang, buffalos, Tibetan yaks, Bennett's tree kangaroos and Australian cassowaries.

Lubomír Gala,

The game keeper at the Antlered District



Siberian ibex

Photo by Jiří Němec



View over the Žitkovský Hill from Vápenice

The White Carpathians – Harmonious Landscape with Butterfly Paradise

The Protected Landscape Area (PLA) of the White Carpathians spreads over the territory along the border with Slovakia roughly marked out by two towns: Valašské Klobouky in the north and Strážnice na Moravě in the south. The elevation of PLA ranges from 175 to 970 m above sea level. This part of our country has been cultivated by humans for centuries and despite this fact – or rather, due to it – highly valuable natural treasures have been preserved there. We can even speak about a harmonious landscape at many places.

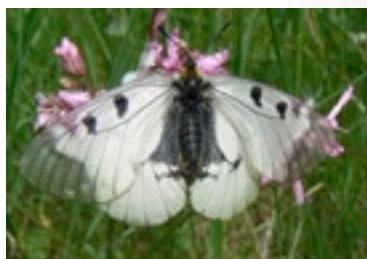


Photo by Ondřej Konvička

Clouded apollo [*Parnassius mnemosyne*]

The wide deforestation carried out in the past resulted in thousands of hectares of unique flowery meadows with solitary tree species distinguishing the present landscape character of the White Carpathians. The central part of PLA, a wider vicinity of Starý Hrozenkov, is called Moravské Kopanice. It is characterized by dispersed villages, alternating forested and meadow areas with a mosaic of small fields, drier places and marshland. Its present appearance was only finished by the late Wallachian colonisation in the 17th and 18th centuries. Various farming methods, diverse historical development and distance from industrial centres made

it possible to preserve an unusually high biodiversity of many types of biotopes. The White Carpathian meadows are rich in insect and plant communities with a high representation of critically endangered species. Widespread forest complexes in the central and northern part of the range with typical Carpathian fauna and flora are no less valuable.

The White Carpathians are one of three territories in the Czech Republic with the occurrence of the Aesculapian snake [*Zamenis longissimus*]. All kinds of species are dependent upon human constructions (barns, farmsteads, lofts) in this region and were found in the entire territory of the PLA, except for its most southern corner. Bears appear in the northern part regularly, while wolves and lynxes can be seen irregularly. Important small mammals include the Alpine shrew [*Sorex alpinus*] which mainly occurs near forest streams. Virgin beech forests are the habitat of rich populations of the fire salamander [*Salamandra salamandra*] and you can see rare birds such as the white-back woodpecker [*Dendrocopos leucotos*] or the black stork [*Ciconia nigra*].

The virgin beech forests are very important with regard to the occurrence of saproxylic invertebrates (dependent upon rotting wood). The most endangered of them is the alpine capricorn beetle [*Rosalia alpina*], which is subject to the availability of dead wood in forests, as are most other endangered species. Thermophilic oak groves and solitary trees in the southern part of the region are also a habitat of typical representatives of saproxylic insects. The flat-headed borer [*Anthaxia hungarica*] or the great capricorn beetle [*Cerambyx cerdo*] are very rare there. Extensive pastures in the northern part of the PLA,

which reach to the southern Wallachian region, are absolutely unique. Their sunny places are occupied by, e.g., the large blue [*Maculinea arion*], which is tied in its development to the lemon thyme [*Thymus spp.*] or to the rattle grasshopper [*Psophus stridulus*], characterized by the red colour of its wings and the rattling sound made by flying males. The high species' diversity of plants enables the development of a rich community of photophygous invertebrates. Thanks to this, the White Carpathians are a mecca for lepidopterists (butterfly specialists). Typical representatives of day butterflies are, e.g., the twin-spot fritillary [*Brenthis hecate*] or the Nickerl's fritillary [*Melitaea aurelia*].

To maintain the high biodiversity of meadow ecosystems, the areas must be sensibly and gradually (in mosaics) cut to prevent a high mortality of insects and to ensure always a space for successful development of further generations.

RNDr. Ondřej Konvička,

Zoologist of the White Carpathians PLA Administration



Photo by Ondřej Konvička

Smooth snake [*Coronella austriaca*]



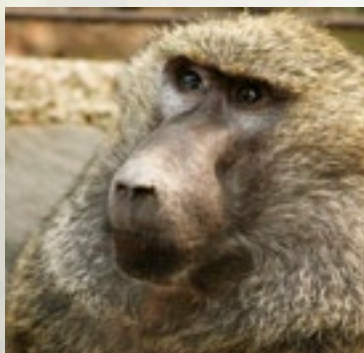
Dadyna



Pegyna

One Day as an Ape Breeder

It's a little before 8 a.m., and I am toiling again along the Mniší Hora Hill, where the Brno Zoo is situated. It has been just 15 years since I started working here as a breeder of beasts. Today I was



Olive baboon

to be in service with the apes. My colleague fell ill, so I had to stand in for her and take care of her beloved animals.

During a morning observation, I walk through the two areas where our apes live. I look at all the little faces, to see if everything is going well. Lemurs with eyes like emerald buttons watch the intruder as though they are saying: "What does that strange woman want here? And where is our Mariánka?" I try to sing a song from the movie "Madagascar"...Well, they are ok. I go to the baboons. I count them: no-one missing, all healthy. The mess is all around the floor and they display it as if to announce all that I have to clean today.

Chimpanzees, very dangerous and very strong animals with sharp teeth, welcome me in the second pavilion. They slam the cover of the tunnel leading outside and they think: "It's going to be fun, there's another breeder today, we have to tease her properly!" I'm thinking how to get them indoors, so that I can clean the outdoor part. And then I'll have to bring them out again to clean the indoor part. I'm going to look into the other exhibits in the meantime to see the Celebes crested macaque and the mandrills, called Žofka and Mates. Žofie shows her teeth in a smile; she is interested to discover if I have something to eat. I come closer, quickly stroke her hand and briskly step back. Mates, slightly outraged, shows his fangs - at least 3 cm long. "You're as a lion, boy!"

Returning to chimpanzees, I am reminded me the proverbial small cherry on a cake: I have to water the chimps with tea from plastic bottles. I dread what these smart guys will think of this time. I shall introduce them: a male, Fáben; females Nymba, Peggy and Dadyna, who is the head and the oldest grandmother. "Come on, drinks are here, Peggy, Dady, Fábi, Nymba!"



Mandrill

I pass them bottles with tea through the cage bars - gradually, to all of them as they take their permanent seats and await their turns. "Come and drink. It is with honey." They drink, leaving some behind their temples. They are finishing the third litre bottle when Peggy splutters out onto my face everything she has collected in her mouth. I bounce back, but too late - a direct hit. "You small big-eared ape!" The chimpanzees kick up a racket, thrash about, and wildly jump in the air as if they were in a jungle. They are happy they got me. My face is wet and my hair is sticky with honey tea. "1:0 for you, guys; you got me." Their first food contains special granules and is thrown into the runs, where the apes collect and eat them. The chimpanzees take them to their hands - hopefully, they do not want to throw them at me? No, they don't, they realized it is something to eat.

I return to the lemurs, which get special dough. Baboons get granules - also outside in the run. Then I enclose them there so that I can clean the interior. I spray it with hot water, wash it with a detergent, and rinse it with clear water. When everything is finished, the apes rush in, curious to see what had happened there. Then I take myself out and clean the outside run. After that, I prepare all possible delicacies - fruits and vegetables - in small buckets and bowls.

And back again - to clean the chimpanzees' lodge. Unfortunately, three of them are inside and one outside. "Nymba, come in, have a sponge." Fáben immediately stretches its long black arm. "I won't give you anything until all of you are here. Then I'll clean your lodging."



Black-and-white ruffed lemur

They don't come. "No sponge then." I leave, which raises a wave of resentment. Excrement and bedding fly to all sides, the chimpanzees bang their seats, and the females yell loudly. "1:1, my dears. I'm going to the mandrills. In the meantime, think where you want to stay." Bad luck, they create more hell. I clean the other lodgings, where no problems occur. Everything is clean, except at the chimpanzees' place. I cannot get to them. "So, what about you, scamps?" They stare at me ruffled and irritated. All of them are suddenly inside. "O.K., good apes; come and have some sponge. 2:1 in favour of me." I clean the run out and prepare several cups of rice pudding so that the females will get some as well, because the male sometimes takes their food. When I release the chimpanzees, Fáben immediately takes two cups and pushes the pudding into its mouth. He hides in the corner, groans with satisfaction and eats. All that accompanied by a cry from the whole bunch. The females take the other cups - everybody gets his food. The greedy Peggy rushes to Fáben, wanting to get a little bit more. But he pushes the female away with a hand resting against his forehead. I lock the outside run and stay inside the lodging. Dady opens the cover of the tunnel and monitors me through the screen to see whether I clean it thoroughly. Then it tries the lock to see whether I locked it well. After cleaning, I prepare small buckets with fruits and vegetables for all the apes, as a main course.

At the stroke of eleven, I distribute the main dish. Everybody eats and takes what they like the best - bananas. The chimpanzees only get oranges,



Celebes crested macaque

because their main dish comes at three in the afternoon. Everybody has come for oranges. I praise them: "Good apes, good apes." Suddenly, Peggy spits me at my face - she seems to worry about whether I like hairy Fáben. Luckily, she missed. "Peggy, don't worry. I like blond boys with blue eyes." She probably understood.

I clean the tools, hoses, and buckets, and go to have some lunch. In the afternoon, I pick up small branches in the orchard. Apes like them. It is one of the main ingredients of their food in nature. They get branches of ape trees, plum trees, beeches, oaks, willows, and various non-poisonous herbs. When I bring these leafy branches, everybody is looking and stretching out their hands. I give some to everybody. They browse while chomping - it is a delicatessen. Another feeding of the chimpanzees follows. I throw some bananas to them. They skillfully catch them and eat immediately. Fáben tries to steal the banana from Nymba - unsuccessfully. She guarded it and ate it whole, with the peel. I give them drinks again. Peggy does not spit now and turns back. My colleague told me she wanted to be stroked and scratched on the back. We call a truce. The main feeding of chimpanzees approaches. Dadyna seems to have a clock in her head and knocks at the door: "We are hungry. Give us the food!" I come with small buckets and fill the feed boxes. They yell their head off again, take fruits and vegetables, find an optimum place, and eat. "The best time, I hope you will not complain to my colleague!" I water



Fáben



Nymba

them once more and now they are completely calm. I check the other apes, add water, and say goodbye: "Bye, monkeys, I go back to my tigers. Tomorrow Marjánka will come!"

Simona Blahoňovská,
The beast of prey breeder



Game on sorting the waste



Selling the campaign souvenirs

Earth Day Appealed to Every Visitor

This year we celebrated International Earth Day in our zoo on Saturday, 24 April. The celebration started at the "Camel Stage" at about 1 p.m., where a worker of the Promotion and Education Section, Mgr. Eva Měráková, introduced a campaign on conservation of European beasts of prey, which had been announced by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria.

Then, Martin Ander, the Deputy Mayor of Brno, spoke from the stage. He mentioned that the celebration is a part of a longer action called The Brno Days for Earth, and also emphasized the importance of beasts of prey, and actual trends of sustainable development. He spoke, for example, about waste sorting and insulation of houses.



Introduction of the campaign on conservation of European beasts of prey

Next, a programme associated with different topics about nature was commenced in a playful way intended especially for children at several places in the zoo. They could play a game on sorting waste, or have a predator's mask painted on their faces, or paint animal pictures with chalk on pavements. The youngest children could take part in a target-shooting competition. A stall offered T-shirts and souvenirs with the motifs of beasts of prey. The revenue from the sale was put into the campaign account. A collection of natural substances could be seen at the Children's Zoo, as well as a demonstration of work with horses. In the area in front of the vivarium, there was an illustrative presentation by SAKO waste management with the participation of a dust van crew and vehicle. From morning, visitors could put obsolete electrical appliances into a container of Elektrowin in front of the entrance to the zoo to dispose of them in an environmentally friendly way. Visitors who did that got free tickets to the zoo.

As in most similar events for the public, people could participate in competitions, this time focused on European beasts of prey. Besides this entertaining form of education, we also offered a factual source of information. At a stall built by the municipality, people got to know about subsidies for economical buildings, heating, and insulation. Information about the campaign was several times repeated. Visitors learnt that one of the goals is to look for ways of co-habitation of humans and beasts of prey which have disappeared from most original habitats but which

are indispensable for preserving biodiversity and healthy ecosystems. Visitors could read about the ecological trace method in texts displayed on four panels. Thanks to this method, it is possible to estimate to what extent various technologies, or people's life style, burden the environment. The ecological trace of, for instance, hydroponically grown tomatoes is twenty times as high as the ecological trace of tomatoes from a field culture. A ten-times-higher yield of greenhouse tomatoes can then be seen in a different light.

Earth Day was first time celebrated in the United States in 1970. Millions of Americans, mostly students, went out into the streets then to ask for the creation of laws to remove smog and clean out rivers, amongst other things. Demonstrators requested lower energy demands in production and consumption, renewable sources of energy, the recycling of waste, and a ban on using chemicals which destroy the ozone layer of the atmosphere. The movement was supported by politicians, achieved several beneficial legislative changes, and started spreading to other countries. The Czech Republic joined the American tradition in 1990, and the Brno Zoo joined in during the mid-1990s.

The mission of Earth Day in Brno Zoo was to appeal especially to individuals to take action, however small it may be, in favour of our planet. Everyone can contribute to the protection of nature if he chooses an environmentally friendly way of life.

Jan Kameník



White-lipped peccaries ▲ ▸

White-lipped Peccaries Arrived from Germany

An eight-membered group of white-lipped peccaries [*Tayassu pecari*] from the Berlin Zoo arrived at our zoo on 22 April. Two males, four females and two young have settled in the new run out near the lower part of the road neighbouring the exposition of meerkats, which is being finished. Peccaries are even-toed ungulates of the *Nonruminantia* suborder and an independent *Tayassuidae* family, related to the *Suidae* family. Three kinds of peccaries live in Central and South America. In 2007, Mr. Marc van Roosmalen, a Brazilian zoologist of Dutch origin, described a fourth – and hitherto unknown – kind, which he found in Amazonia. (red)

Twins Bill and Tom Were Second in the White Elephant Competition

The Czech Zoo's Civic Society awarded the Czech and Slovak zoos White Elephant Awards for the best exposition of the year, or the best breeding of the year, for fifteenth time. Our zoo was given one of these awards on 29 April 2009 in Troja Castle, Prague. The Brno Zoo took second place for the natural breeding of the polar bear twins, Bill and Tom, in the "Mammals" category. Prague Zoo took first place for breeding the northern Luzon giant cloud rat [*Phloeomys pallidus*]. This rat is the biggest member of the *Muridae* family. It may weigh up to 2 kg. It lives in the treetops and high bushes in the northern part of Luzon Island, in the Philippines. Except in this area, it is being bred only at the Prague Zoo, and the Bronx Zoo in New York. (red)



The First Tapir

Neny, a female lowland tapir [*Tapirus terrestris*], gave birth on 14 June. At first, the mother and her one baby were in the indoor part of their exposition and only went out to the inside yard. They first showed themselves for a while in the outdoor run on 30 June, and their walks continued when the weather was good. The male was separated from them. Four-year-old Neny comes from the Riga Zoo, Latvia, and her breeding partner, Klarnet, was born at the Gdansk Zoo, Poland. The little female is their first descendant and is also the first tapir born at Brno. (red)



Tapir female with a young one

Three Maras Were Born

Three young Patagonian maras [*Dolichotis patagonum*] were born on 1 June in a new run out near the lower loop of the zoo train. Therefore, our group has nine members now. These rodents of the *Caviidae* family live in the pampas of middle and south Argentina, where their numbers continually decrease because of the competitive pressure of the imported common hare. Maras and hares resemble each other both in size and body shape. (red)



Patagonian maras



Head of the Lowland tapir (young one)



Six whelps

Six Young Ones in the Wolf Pack

With the adult or adolescent arctic wolves [*Canis lupus arctos*] (Pocock, 1935), the visitors to the Brno Zoo can see six whelps that were born on 28 April 2009. This arrival is another success of breeding of this subspecies, an even bigger one than the two young ones born last year.

We call the young females Blackie, Gira, and Elsa; and the males Gerald, Sam, and Emppu. The young wolves got their names during a christening ceremony. Three of them even took part in it. On 30 June at 2:30 p.m. the young beasts, in their breeders' hands, attracted many visitors, invited guests, and journalists to the Indian log house.

Thanks to an open request, tens of e-mails with proposed names came to us. Their senders were usually whole families, but there was even one from some clients of the nursing home at Vondrákova Street in Brno-Bystrc among them. The senders always gave us at least one male and one female name because the sex of the young wolves was not known until the last moment. The breeders caught the young ones shortly before the christening so that the vet could vaccinate them and provide them with identification chips. While doing so, the vet found out that there are three males and three females in this litter.

The little wolves were christened by Mr. Roman Onderka, the Brno City Mayor, during a ceremonial act. He drew six winning names from two baskets which had altogether 84 proposals. The male names

were in one of the baskets and female names in the other. Each of the drawn names was read by one of the children present. There were many more children on that first holiday day than usual because free entry was guaranteed to everyone who showed a school report with straight A's. The draw gave names also to the two last year's young ones, which had been not christened so far. The female was called Rea; and the male, Charlie. The zoo rewarded the authors of the names, and everyone who participated in the search for names was invited to the ceremony.

The Gray wolf [*Canis lupus*] (Linnaeus, 1758), used to occur in a large part of Eurasia and North America, where it had created more than 30 subspecies. However, in many places the wolves had been exterminated by man. The arctic wolves live in the tundra on Canadian islands and in the north of Greenland and Alaska. The southern part of the area

of their occurrence touches areas of other subspecies, such as the polar wolf [*C. l. tundrorum*] (Miller, 1912), the Mackenzie Valley wolf [*C. l. occidentalis*] (Richardson, 1829), the Alaska wolf [*C. l. pambasileus*] (Eliot, 1905), or the Hudson Bay wolf [*C. l. hudsonicus*] (Goldman, 1941).

The Brno Zoo had bred the Eurasian wolves [*Canis lupus lupus*] (Linnaeus, 1758) in the past, and the Mackenzie Valley wolves in 1981–2007. The Mackenzie Valley wolves had bred altogether 16 young ones; the last one was born in 1997. Later, the zoo didn't manage to create a breeding pair. In 2004 the wolves got a new outside run of a total of 3–500 m² that was awarded an Exposition of the Year award by the Czech Zoo's Civic Society but, nonetheless, no young ones appeared...

The zoo then decided to change the subspecies to be bred, and two female arctic wolves from the Amnéville Zoo, France, arrived on 16 November 2006. A male from the Sóstó Zoo in Nyíregyháza, Hungary, joined them on 21 December 2007. The male, called Atila, chose female Alex as his partner and they mated soon. We don't know the exact date of the birth of the two young ones because Alex whelped in an underground den. The approximately one-month-old wolves left the den for their first short walk on 7 June 2008.

The Brno group of arctic wolves has 11 members. There are three at the age of five (male Atila, females Alex and Clair), two adolescents of about one year old (male Charlie and female Rea) and six in this year's litter. More about this year's breeding appears on the following page

Bc. Eduard Stuchlík



Photo by Milan Kríž

Roman Onderka, the Brno City Mayor (second from the right), drawing the whelp names

Both Wolf Females Whelped

This year's arrival was quite different than last year's. At that time, the female whelped in a den that the wolves burrowed themselves; the female turned her back on both the artificial shelter under the rock and the kennel at the paddock. Unusually, this year, both the females whelped.

Both of them chose the kennel at the paddocks. There are two paddocks connecting with the run-out. Alex, the dominant alpha female, was the first to give birth to five on 25 April. Two days later, we found Clair, the subsidiary beta female, with six whelps in the other kennel just few meters from the first one.

It is known that mainly the dominant pair of wolves (leading male and alpha female) reproduce within the pack. The whole pack takes care of the young and supplies them with food, mostly regurgitated. If another female still gives birth, her whelps are not bred by the pack. Although there are exceptional cases known in zoos, normally, when a pack produces offspring from two or even three females, the dominant female has to give up her position for a certain time.

There were 11 whelps in the paddocks in the two days after 27 April. Both the kennels were occupied by females with their young. The door that connected the paddocks with the run-out stayed opened. When breeders found the door closed on the morning of 30 April, they knew for sure that something had happened. It is possible that the door moved a bit during a fight between the females and then the auto-



Wolf female with young ones

matic mechanism closed it. By coincidence, the alpha female stayed in the run-out separated from her whelps. We found the Beta female and her six whelps in one of the kennels along with a last-year's female. The second kennel was empty. We found the bodies of three whelps near it. The two others had completely disappeared. While losing her young ones, the alpha female also lost her position, which was overtaken by the second female. Relations in the pack quickly calmed down. Besides the mother, who nursed the young ones, other wolves also cared for them. This situation lasted for about two weeks and then everything got back to normal: Alex started to oppress Clair again and regained the second most important position in the pack – right after the leading male. The young ones started to go out for walks through



Wolf female with a young one

the run-out, so some visitors were able to spot them. They mostly appeared on the highest place of the exposition – a hillock just few meters from the visitor's route – or they went with their parents to drink water from a pond near the upper lookout.

The fact that both the adult females whelped this year leads to reflection. It is still possible that the father of the young ones of the subsidiary female is last year's male. Although the wolves sexually mature at the age of 2 or 3, in captivity this process can be shorter. Examples of ten-month-old males that were sexually mature are known. The zoo will press for a genetic paternity test that could solve the mystery.

Bc. Eduard Stuchlík



Three whelps

The Zoological Garden of Brno City is inviting
all off their supporters to the tradicional



ADOPTIVE PARENTS AND SPONZORS MEETING



which will realize on Saturday of 29. August 2009

Copious cultural program will start on podium "U Velbouda" at 2 pm.