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zooreport

the magazine for friends of the Brno Zoo

BRNO



special supplement

ZOO REPORT PROFI

The Speech
Roman Onderka

PAGE 3



"Marble Crayfish"
at the Permanent Aquaristic Exhibition
Ing. Vladimír Spurný

PAGE 4



Yucatan Tropical Hall at the Zlín Zoo
Romana Bujáčková

PAGE 5



Patients of the Children's Oncology
Visit the Zoo for already 10 Years
Eduard Stuchlík

PAGES 6, 7



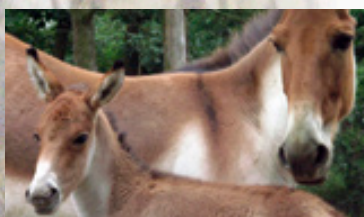
Animals Know How to Brave High Temperatures
Jan Kameník

PAGE 8



Hot news
(red)

PAGE 9



Brno Zoo Won the Zoogames
Mgr. Světlá Vítková

PAGE 10



First Rearing of Saker Falcon
Simona Blahoňovská

PAGE 11



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First page:

Saker falcon

UNSALEABLE

Start to Take Animals as Living Creatures

Good communication between citizens, specialists, politicians and municipal authorities is a requirement for good working city and happy life of its citizens. After all, the city is made by its citizens and the city serves their purposes. But there are also animals among the inhabitants – both the vertebrates and the invertebrates – and we are accompanied by them at home, outside and also, for example, at the zoo.

Animals are also a part of our surrounding, which affects our city and thinking of us, the Brno citizens. They are our “roommates”, no matter if we have them at home or in our surroundings – in gardens, forests, meadows, fields, water or at the given area at the “Mniší hora” hill. The zoo is an important part of our “forests, waters and hillsides” that encircle the city from southwest to northeast.

The new civil code will “elevate” the animals

Do we forget about our animal companions? That should be solved by a new Civil

Code, which is being prepared for already seven years and it could become effective in 2011. De jure, it should promote animals from mere things to living creatures.

Animals surely deserve it. They live in this world much longer than people. We’re just convicted about our superiority over the whole nature and about a belief that the whole Earth was created to secure our existence. And we behave in accordance with this conviction.

We are not gods

But it wasn’t like this in our past. Remember the strange thrill, when you as a kid entered the zoo for the first time. You were amazed, when you firstly saw with your own eyes animals that you only knew from narration of your parents, picture books or at best from TV. Not to say animals that you had no idea about! Remember, how all this challenged your imagination... Unfortunately, the prime view disappears soon and the adults sink into various stereotypes, including the conviction that we are the lords of creation.

That’s what we should realize – if only for the reason that we are citizens of a city, symbol of which is a crocodile, the notorious Brno Dragon. We should refresh our childish view of the world and then we will appreciate



Roman Onderka

the work of the Brno Zoo. It serves not only for watching exotic and inland animals for our entertainment and mind recovering, but also for general lesson, animal protection and animal life research.

Disallow our separating from nature!

The zoological garden also helps us to realize that man is a part of a whole complex of living organisms and a part of nature. And if man will continue in separating from nature, it will cause irreparable consequences for human society.

Roman Onderka,
Brno City Mayor

Roman Onderka

was born in Brno in 1965. He graduated from secondary school and from managerial school in Ostrava. After military service he worked for Adast Adamov, then for České dráhy in Brno as a rolling stock foreman.

He has been a Brno City councillor since 2002. He was a Brno-Starý Lískovec city district councillor and a member of the Investment Committee and the Transport Committee of the Brno City Council during 2002–2006. He has been a chairman of the ČSSD councillors’ party of the Brno City Council since 2002. On 7th November 2006 he was elected the Mayor of the Statutory City of Brno for the 2006–2010 electoral term.

He was appointed as a member of the State Council for sustainable development and a member of the Council of Europe based in Strasbourg in 2007.

Nowadays he is a shadow minister of transport, a member of presidium of ČSSD and a senior vice-chairman of the ČSSD executive committee of the Brno-město city district.

Roman Onderka is married for the second time and has got an adult son from his first marriage. He lives with his wife and three-year-old son in Starý Lískovec city district. He plays football, football-tennis and squash recreationally and also computer technology, music, theatre and literature belong to his hobbies.



▼ ▲ "Marble crayfish"



"Marble Crayfish" at the Radnická Street

There are not only fish at the Permanent Aquaristic Exhibition on the Radnická Street, but also representatives of other vertebrates and even some invertebrate – e.g. crustaceans that belong to arthropods, similarly as say bees. I would like to mention one of the crustaceans - the "Marble crayfish" (*Procambarus* sp.). The name is in quotes, because this species, common in artificial breeding, could not be scientifically named so far. It is not known, where it comes from (probably south of USA) and only specimens of one sex – females – have been found so far. The "Marble crayfish" caused a scientific sensation in 2003, when its parthenogenesis (self-fertilization) was proved; no other decapods can reproduce without males. Eggs that are protected beneath the female's "tail" develop without precedent fertilization. There even doesn't have to be another specimen

of the same species, as with the hermaphroditism (intersexuality), also known with some crayfish. Many low animals can be reproduced parthenogenetically, e.g. the aphids; massive population increase occurs in suitable conditions this way.

The body length of our "Marble crayfish" varies from 0,5 to 12 cm. They live in a multiple-species aquarium – its bottom is covered with light silica sand with 2-5 mm big grains; larger stones act as shelters and decoration. There are no plants in the pool. These crayfish don't like vegetation at all: they don't stop cutting the leaves with their pincers until there are only leafstalks projecting from the bottom and limbs floating on the surface. It also isn't right to keep them with fish. It was observed that they cut their fins, when the fish rest – mainly during the night. If there are more crayfish in one pool, they get along quite well with each other and they usually make do with warning positions. However, a case, when other ones gradually cut legs of one specimen that has already been handicapped, also occurred. But it is enough to separate such crayfish and it will completely regenerate.

The "Marble crayfish" breeding is not difficult in any way. They are active even during the day and we feed them with both the freely available feed for aquarium fish and the bloodworms or floating organisms, such as daphnia or water flea, whose chitinous shell the "Marble crayfish" uses for building its own shell. There are already special feeds for crustacean, of course. The crayfish regularly casts its carapace

during the growth and in many cases, it eats it to use its substances for its own further development.

If this crayfish multiplies excessively, it should not be released into wild, nor flushed in the toilet, as people prefer to do. It is a quite hardened animal that is able to survive even in Central European conditions. Then it competes the original kinds of crayfish, as e.g. the Noble crayfish. In addition to that, the "Marble crayfish" transmits the crayfish plague, which our species of crayfish are not able to resist.

A flagellar water bound mould is the crayfish plague agent. A disease that decimates the numbers of crayfish in Europe for more than a century most probably comes from North America, where the crayfish are resistant to it. After the infection, the specimens are uneasy, they often clean themselves and then they become paralyzed and die. Resistant kinds of crayfish are able to capsule the mould in their body and thus isolate it from the organism. But the encapsulation may rupture and the spores can be released into water. That's why the crayfish plague may be transmitted even by healthy looking specimens. If breeding more kinds of crayfish in separated pools, it is necessary to follow strict hygienic rules so as not to transmit the mould by e.g. net, plants or similar.

For its modesty, I can recommend the "Marble crayfish" to everyone, who wants to breed some crustacean – even in a small jar.

Ing. Vladimír Spurný,

Permanent Aquaristic Exhibition section foreman

Yucatan Tropical Hall at the Zlin Zoo

Air so hot and humid that you could cut it with a knife. Plants of unusual shapes, colours and scents, giant trees and brittle bromelias and orchids. Whispering waterfall, drizzle and steam mist. Bright-coloured birds fly and scream above your head and you can see tamarins and marmosets romping in lush vegetation. An emerald green iguana lazily crawls over the pathway. Predatory piranhas glance in pools, stingrays float with grace and crocodiles wait for their prey. You have got slow sloths and tree anteaters within reach.

Such experience is offered in the new Yucatan Tropical Hall that was opened at the Zlín Zoo in October 2006. It is absolutely unique with its conception; you can't find a similar one anywhere in Europe. It represents richness and variety of Central American rainforest. It's a home for more than 20 animal spe-



Photo by Zoo Zlín

Maya god of sun

cies and 1700 plants of 200 kinds. Except animals and plants, we will show you ancient Maya civilization that developed on the Yucatan peninsula. You can see Maya shrine, stone relieves, hieroglyphics, sacrificial altar and even a tomb of Maya king.

The Tropical Hall is the newest but not the only magnet of the Zlín Zoo. Several other expositions have been built during the last four years. You should surely see the African elephants' pavilion, new lions' exhibit and the attractive Ring-tailed Lemurs' Island. In the unique Amazonia pavilion you can meet a band of restless Squirrel monkeys and walk through the largest aviary for macaws. In summer, the Amazonian area becomes a home for alligators. Their exposition is really exceptional. Two-meter long reptiles live in part of a natural pool. Through exhibit of the Rednecked wallabies and the Emus is the centre of Australian area. You can watch the popular pouched mammals

Photo by Zoo Zlín



Female Rednecked wallaby
with an albinotic young one

Photo by Zoo Zlín



African elephants



Photo by Zoo Zlín

Waterfall at the Yucatan Tropical Hall

from close proximity and you can also see white wallabies among them.

And what new do we prepare? We are going to open a new exhibit of Greater flamingos near the elephants' exhibit next year in spring. We will start building a through aviary for birds of prey. Expositions for Jaguars, Red pandas, new pavilion for African primates and aviaries for Australian birds belong to the other novelties that we would like to open in 2010.

Romana Bujáčková,
Education and Propagation Department of the Zlín Zoo

Photo by Zoo Zlín



Alligators in the new exhibit



Prof. MVDr. Dagmar Ježková, Dr.Sc. moderated the colloquium



Prof. MUDr. Jaroslav Štěrbá, Ph.D.

Patients of the Children's Oncology Visit the Zoo for already 10 Years

Zoos and Little Patients or About the Tiger's Invitation – that was the name of colloquium that took place at the Brno Zoo on 15th June 2007 to remember decennial of the first visit of the patients of the Children's Oncological Clinic at the zoo. It was already a second meeting that resumed the cooperation of the zoo and the clinic; the first colloquium took place at about the same time in 2005.

Prof. MVDr. Dagmar Ježková, Dr.Sc. was the initiator of the idea to open the zoo to oncological patients and hospitalized children in 1997. The first children's visit took place on 1st June 1998 and as of the end of 2006, there were 56



Doc. PhDr. Hana Horká, CSc.



Prof. MUDr. Jiří Vorlíček, CSc.



Doc. PhDr. Věra Linhartová, CSc.

visits registered – 757 little patients and 694 parents or other attendance have visited the zoo. Prof. Ježková plays the most important role in the zoo's cooperation with the



PhDr. Blanka Knopová, CSc.

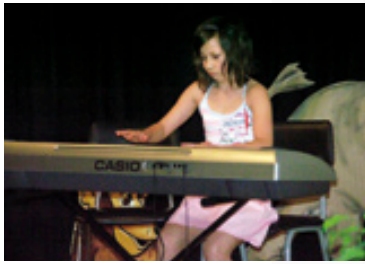


Mgr. Irena Vlčková

clinic from the very beginning. She helps with her sensitive approach to run all the actions successfully.

It was obvious already in 1998 that the visits had a beneficial influence not only on the children, but on whole their families: stress evoked by the illness and the therapy eased and was replaced by enthusiasm from being with animals in natural surroundings of the "Mniší hora" hill and joy from a pleasant change of common daily routine. Thus the clinic decided to make regular visits, which the children go through with their parents, nurse and sometimes even a doctor once a month, except the summer holidays.

Children are driven by a minibus through the zoo and they get off on interesting places to see the chosen exhibits closely. Workers of the Promotional and Educational Section act as the special guides for them, but also the breeders like to devote their time to them: they tell the children interesting things about breeding and allow them to stroke or feed some of the animals. The children meet female camel Majda, offer some fruits or vegetables to Barbary sheep, elks and geladas, watch the Dracaena feeding, feed the Meerkats with insects and stroke Russian rat snake



Bohunka Pečeňová

and Tapir. Filling in simple tests that review the children's knowledge about animals is a part of the programme in recent years. After the tour of the zoo, they usually have a rest and some refreshment in the restaurant "At the Tiger". Some children come repeatedly – they even call for the visit; they already know the zoo and they ask informed questions about the animals. Once a year, usually in September, they go for a trip to another zoo.

During his opening speech, MVDr. Martin Hovorka, Ph.D., director of the Brno Zoo, pointed out the importance



Launching ceremony of Věra Linhartová's book

of zoos for human profit and interest in the 21st century. Panel discussion, moderated by Prof. Ježková, dealt with the trends of social pediatry from the point of view of oncologists, pediatrician-oncologists, social educationalists, psychologists and ecologists. Following guest speakers took part in the discussion: doc. PhDr. Hana Horká, CSc. (Faculty of Education of the Masaryk University), PhDr. Blanka Knopová, CSc. (Faculty of Education of the Masaryk University), Mgr. Irena Vlčková (Children's Oncological Clinic), Prof. PhDr. Marek Blatný, CSc. (Institute of Psychology), Prof. MUDr. Jaroslav Štěřba, Ph.D. (Children's Oncological Clinic), Prof. MUDr. Jiří Vorlíček, CSc. (Children's Oncological Clinic) and others. Doc. PhDr. Věra Linhartová, CSc. (Faculty of Medicine of the Masaryk University) talked on how the children and their parents appreciate the regular visits at the zoo in the course of ten years.

Antonín Dvořák's Moravian Duets and Ludwig van Beethoven's Romance F dur for violin and piano were played by students of the Faculty of Education, conducted by PhDr. Blanka Knopová, CSc., during the musical part of the colloquium. Eleven-years-old Bohunka Pečeňová



Acknowledgement to performers of the Educational Faculty

from Vizovice, former participant of the visits, played Ludwig van Beethoven's Waltz no. 9 and Luigi Boccherini's Fandango on electronic organ.

When ivories and applause died away and Bohunka brushed away her tears, a little climax of the colloquium came: launching ceremony of the perfectly wrought booklet called "Watch the chimpanzee smile". The literary work of Věra Linhartová has a subtitle: "Stories from the Oncological Clinic". The author was captured by the idea of Prof. Ježková to visit the families of some children, who used to be patients of the clinic and used to visit the zoo. She wanted to find out, how the children managed to return into common life and what did the visits give to them. In six chapters, the book shows, how the children cope with the family climate changed by their long therapy and it also mentions the life of families that have lost their children.

The morning meeting of specialists in the projection hall of the administration building was followed by an afternoon



Registration of guests of the afternoon programme



Riding ponies

programme prepared for the former patients of the clinic and their attendance. Invited guests could go by a little train or an electric truck and see the feeding demonstrations in the main exhibits. The children compared their knowledge about nature during the competition trail, enjoyed the performance of Zeman's Wooden Theatre and rode ponies. There was a surprise for everyone – a pig roasting in the Indian village. The afternoon programme also included christening of giraffe Julie, born in December last year. Julie was christened by Mr. Roman Onderka, the mayor of Brno.

Eduard Stuchlík



Christening of giraffe Julie (Mayor Roman Onderka in the middle)



Performance of Zeman's Wooden Theatre



Polar bear with a frozen piece of meat

Animals Know How to Brave High Temperatures

A year passed by and summer came again with a heat wave. Time, when the same questions return: what do the Polar bears and other animals do in such heat? It's true that it's really hard for the "ice animals", especially reindeers, but they know how to cope with it (maybe even better than people). Although a two-days old reindeer died during the almost tropical heat in July, but



Bald eagle's bath

the main reason was not the heat: the young one almost didn't suck the breast milk from its mother – an inexperienced primipara.

Animals have various thermoregulation mechanisms to brave the high temperatures. Mr. Zdeněk Veselovský in his book called *Animals' Ethology* wrote that even outlasting the highest temperatures in shadow or in shelter belongs to such mechanisms. Among other methods Mr. Veselovský ranks e.g. gradual rising of the body temperature up to 41 °C during the day, so that there would be a minimum difference between the body and surroundings temperatures and that should decrease sweating and limit the water loss. Especially ostriches and Arabian camels are good at this method. Storks extend their wings and expose unfeathered parts of their bodies. Same as condors, the storks spray their legs with thin droppings that also cool the body while vaporizing. The same effect has the saliva, which the kangaroos cover especially their lower limbs with.

It is typical for many desert animals to go out of their burrows only by night, when it's colder outside. Squirrels in the Kalahari Desert tip their densely furred tail over their bodies like

an umbrella. (Birds that rear young ones do it similarly – they shade the nest by extending their wings.)

Water vaporization is an effective means of cooling, especially for mammals with large number of sweat glands. Birds don't have sweat glands and that's why they use the open beak ventilation and the rapid breathing to cool their well perfused tissues. Pigeons, nightjars, some gallinaceous and especially pelicans and cormorants vibrate the jugular wattle, which reminds fanning. The ventilation decreases the throat temperature by up to 5 °C and this gradually cools the whole organism.

Also dogs, cats and some ungulates use the open mouth ventilation. Besides, mammals have certain places on their body to radiate heat, which are not hairy and we call them thermic windows. Dogs have such places on their stomach and chest and that's why they sleep on their side, when it's warm; they close these windows by curling up in cold weather. Also pinnipeds have the thermic windows – they use them while on dry land.

Animals from dry areas can effectively economize on water. Camel knows this very well; it can drink a hectolitre of water in one stroke and then it doesn't have to drink for 10 months (as long as it doesn't have to work). Many rodents from dry deserts and also Australian koala bears and other animals gain water only from food.

At the Brno Zoo, animals mostly outlast the heat period relaxing in shade of trees and it's often easier for them than in wild. They can't get too substantial food and they have to have enough water to drink. We give the Polar bears sea fish frozen in an ice cube, which cools them when eating it; in addition to that, it's a good amusement for them to get the prey out of the ice. Some mammals and birds, e.g. tapirs, bears, ostriches, owls and eagles, cool themselves in water pools. We just exceptionally hose water directly on animals. Humidification of surroundings also helps to cool the animals and that's why we spray with vaporizer the exotic birds' aviaries, water plants and floor in aviaries of birds of prey and hose the seals' sandy beach.

Jan Kameník

Photo by Jiří Dočkal



Young kiang

Bison Was Born

The Brno Zoo has bred the Bisons, the well known bovine even-toed ungulates from North America, since its foundation; since then, a lot of young ones were born on the "Mniší hora" hill. The present breeding group consists of three females born in Brno – the oldest one in 1983 and the two younger ones in 2001. A young male born in 2002 at the Prague Zoo joined them. The male proved himself as a sufficient progenitor of new breeding immediately afterwards. The first arrival came on 11th June 2005, another female was born on 18th October 2006 and another young female was born on 3rd July this year. (red)



Young bison

Third Young Kiang

The Brno Zoo has bred the Asian wild ass – Kiang – since 2000, when it gained a male Sumo and a female Ulrika from the Berlin Zoo; soon, they were joined by Irbe, a female from the Riga Zoo. The first young one, male Honzík, was born in 2005, female Hanka was born two years ago and on 4th July this year, another male was born; he doesn't have a name yet. While Honzík already left for the Hodonín Zoo, Hanka can still be seen running around in the exhibit. The leading stallion is separated from the group nowadays.

Kiangs live in smaller groups of females lead by a stallion, which protects the herd both from natural enemies (as wolves are) and another stallions that live either lonely or in so-called bachelors' groups. Thus the leading males tend to be aggressive and they even attack mares and foals. The wild mares leave the herd before the birth and they return after 6 months. Kiangs are highly endangered and they belong to the rarest animals in zoos. Lately, the breeding develops quite quickly. Five zoos breed the Kiang in the Czech Republic. The biggest group in Europe is at the Riga Zoo, Latvia, and it numbers 31 specimens (13 males and 18 females). As of 1st January 2006, there were 119 specimens

kept in captivity recorded in International Stud Book. Kiangs have never been domesticated. (red)

Košičanka Whelped for the Second Time

In the Safari exhibit, where there was a five-member group of Chapman's zebras among other animals, sixth zebra appeared on 27th July morning: female Ajka, also called Košičanka (she comes from the Košice Zoo), gave birth to a young one. It's a female and she doesn't have a name yet. Her father is Ben, the leading stallion, originally from the Bojnice Zoo. Two years ago, Ajka already gave birth to a little male, which is with the herd so far. Until the new arrival, he still tried to romp around with his mother, but she is busy now and drives him away. The second breeding female gave birth to a colt last year and she still takes care of him. (red)



Young Chapman's zebra

Urban Centre Opened a Display about the Zoo

An exhibition about the Brno Zoo, opened on 2nd August in the Urban Centre in Mečová Street in Brno, will be held for three months. The zoo's past, present and also planned projects will be presented on large-area boards and screens; programmes for children and lectures for public are also part of the exposition. The entrance is free; it is closed on Sundays and Mondays. (red)



Photo by Natálie Kantorová

The winning Haida tribe (Brno Zoo) with the Zoogames organizing team

Brno Zoo Won the Zoogames

The Brno Zoo team won this year's Zoological Games without Frontiers, the Zlín-Lešná Zoo was placed second and the Jihlava Zoo third. The points distance was very close. Thirteen Czech teams and one Slovakian – the Bratislava Zoo – took part in the competition. The competition took place in a recreational centre in Heroltice u Tišnova from 15th to 17th June.

This time, the jubilee tenth Zoogames were held in an Indian spirit; there were e.g. horseback riding or ritual dancing competitions among the nine disciplines. The competing zoos created seven-membered mixed teams, because women had to be in team. Every team changed into a certain Indian nation with its sacred animal. So the Apache tribe from Jihlava had a coyote as a sacred animal, Incas from Liberec deified Andean condor, Mohegans from Děčín a Grizzly bear,

Haidas from Brno a Timber wolf and Eskymos from Bratislava an European reindeer.

The Zoogames were officially opened by MVDr. Martin Hovorka, Ph.D., the Brno Zoo director, while the Indian chieftains and their people ceremonially



Photo by Natálie Kantorová

The Naskapi (Prague Zoo) won the tug-of-war

lined up on Friday 15th June at 8 p.m. Immediately afterwards, camp fire lightened the Svratka River valley and the first discipline started – individual Indian tribes introduced themselves by dancing and singing. The best show was the story of the Delawares from the Ústí nad Labem Zoo.

Men then stayed at the fireplace to eat roasted bison meat (roasted pork sausages), drink firewater and talk about important things. In the meantime, the Indian women set out on a night competition trail. Marcela Sládková of the Mohave tribe (Dvůr Králové Zoo) became the bravest, fastest and smartest squaw in the dark forest, where ghosts lurked. Collective gathering at the fireplace lasted far into the night.

The Indians woke up tired on Saturday morning, but still they started competing right after the breakfast. At first they had to rescue an eagle egg. They were delivering it to a hatchery on a horse without a saddle, but some of them were surprised by the horseback riding – the horses didn't have a steering wheel. Arapacs from the Plzeň Zoo were the best riders. The sun was merciless and our throats became parched. So the next competition – running with prey – started after a refreshment break. Each team member had to bring a potato on two sticks to a goal. It was not that easy, the potato was quite disobedient. The Mohegans from the Děčín Zoo reached the best time. A whaling competition in a pool followed, which the competitors went through in pairs. Vašek and Petr of the Cheyenne tribe from the Zlín-Lešná Zoo became the best hunters. Other games came after a good lunch cooked by Marek Mlaskač. The Indians threw themselves into squaw hunting, javelin throw against a smoking bison, tug-of-war and a knowledge test. The hardest thing was to catch a squaw; many of the hunters finished up in the arms of a nurse. MVDr. Lukáš Pavlačík of the Mohave

tribe (Dvůr Králové Zoo) won in the javelin throw. The tug-of-war was the most dramatic competition. There were two tribes in the final duel: the Naskapi (Prague Zoo) and the Haida (Brno Zoo). In the end the Naskapi won, because they outweighed our team. The Cheyenne tribe from Zlín-Lešná and the Haida tribe from Brno were lucky in the final knowledge test – they shared the first place. The test consisted of a worksheet for pupils of lower secondary schools called „Our Mammals“.

All 107 satisfied competitors said good-bye to each other on Sunday 17th June and went home.

Mgr. Světlá Vítková,

Brno Zoo free time educator
and a member of the Zoogames organizing team

Logo of the Zoogames

First Rearing of Saker Falcon

The Brno Zoo managed to rear a Saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*) for the first time. The Saker falcon is the biggest kite nesting in the Czech Republic. We firstly observed the young one in the nest on 13th May; the parents – otherwise very shy and fearful – took care about it perfectly and they raised a lovely and healthy specimen.

The Brno Zoo had a pair of Saker falcons so far: female Giba was born in April 1999 and male Marco in April 1998. I placed a nest table (50 × 30 cm) under a shelter in their aviary in the end of January; it was bound with 5 cm high edge, so that the eggs couldn't scatter. I spilled a bit of litterfall onto this "nest". There was another possibility of nesting: on one of the two stone pillars that are in the aviary and the birds like to sit on them.

Loud squeals announced the mating call in the beginning of February. The falcons became even shier and they were wild during feeding. I didn't observe the mating, but it could be seen that the female tried to nest – she was staying on the nest table. I saw the first egg on 8th March. Both the birds were watchful and followed my every move, whether during feeding or just walking along the aviary. The male sometimes warningly announced my approach. I reduced cleaning not to disturb the birds and I also didn't visit the aviary without a good reason, of course. More eggs appeared after several days. It wasn't possible to determine their number and date of their laying, because the female was sitting on them and watching them all the time. I saw maximally five eggs. However, one day the nest was empty and there were rests of shells on the ground. Probably a marten visited the aviary.

After frustration of the first egg-laying, birds of prey sometimes lay eggs for the second time. That's why I made another nesting place, this time in the shape of cube with an open entry with an edge on one side. I fastened it to the back side of the aviary and left enough space between the new and the old nest.



Adolescent Saker falcon ▲ ▼ ►



It took a while until the birds got used to the box, but they understood its sense. The female started to lay eggs for the second time in the beginning of April. Before that we took some protection measures: we laid four traps and arranged tiger droppings around the aviary to confuse the scents. The female had not left the nest this time and carefully watched it with her eggs hidden below her. We could identify four eggs. The male was guarding in the branches and when I came near, he was immediately loudly squealing. We closed the aviary entry and we were feeding the birds through the meshes of the front side, so that the birds could have as much peace as possible.

A white downy little bird was firstly seen on 13th May. The female was covering it with whole her body and she was ruffling her feathers to



hide it. She hissed angrily now and then and behaved aggressively. I didn't try to control the situation in the nest, I left space for the parents and it was worth it. They reared a lovely and healthy little bird in two months.

We fed the Saker falcons daily during the rearing. They always got a few pieces more, so that there were some smaller pieces left; these leftovers proved that all three have enough food. One-day-old poult, quails and pheasants were the main part of the food.

The young falcon left the box on about 13th June and it has been flying around the aviary with its parents since that time. At the time of the rearing, we managed to catch a marten in a trap. Maybe that's one of the reasons of the successful rearing. The aviary should be rebuilt; let's hope there will be more little Saker falcons in a new breeding facility.

Simona Blahoňovská,

Beasts and Birds of Prey Section foreman

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Ing. Andrea Čuperová,
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