



## **Margot Marsh Biodiversity Primate Action Fund**

### **Reporting July -December 2019**

Refurbishment of the Endangered Primate Breeding Centre, housing two CE primates - the white-naped mangabey (*Cercocebus lunulatus*) and the Roloway monkey (*Cercopithecus roloway*), to enhance welfare, educational impact and research opportunities.

#### **Introduction**

The West African Primate Conservation Action (WAPCA) is a Ghana based NGO, working to safeguard the Endangered primates of West Africa, primarily the Roloway monkey (*Cercopithecus roloway*), the white-naped mangabey (*Cercocebus lunulatus*), Miss Waldrons colobus (*Procolobus waldroni*) and the white-thighed colobus (*Procolobus vellerosus*).

WAPCA, an initiative of Heidelberg Zoo in Germany and supported by 18 other Zoological Collections has been operating in Ghana since 2007 and has developed three key pillars of action – in situ community-led conservation around the wild primate habitat, ex-situ captive breeding programmes at two zoos as part of the European breeding programme and research & education with both urban and rural communities.

The Endangered Primate Breeding Centre at the Achimota Zoo lies in the capital of Ghana – Accra. Its original structures were built in 2007 and housed rescued white-naped mangabeys and Roloway monkeys which had been confiscated from traders or rural communities holding them as pets. The population in this facility has grown exponentially, enabling WAPCA to exchange individuals with Europe significantly contributing to the genetic viability and diversity of the captive population, which may provide a vital resource to any reintroduction programme.

The EPBC equally plays a key role in education as countless Ghanaian school children visit. The children can observe and learn about different species of monkeys and the important role they play in biodiversity. This engaging experience will hopefully inspire the younger generation to make environmentally conscious decisions as they become adults.

Lastly the Centre provides an opportunity for both local and international students to observe these otherwise secretive monkeys close up. The data that is collected not only allows us to constantly improve the wellbeing of our captive population but also inform our conservation actions for their wild counterparts.

However, the EPBC had become tired, the energetic nature of the monkeys combined with the relentless African sun had caused the original structures to deteriorate compromising the safety of the keepers, the wellbeing of the monkeys and the enjoyment of the visitors. Therefore, it was decided that funding should be sought to refurbish the EPBC.

#### **Methods**

The original EPBC is made up of two chain-link enclosures, each enclosure can be divided in half by a solid brick wall down the centre with connecting slides. As the enclosures still housed the monkeys during the refurbishment it was necessary to work in two stages, completing one half of each enclosure, transferring the monkeys across and then completing the other half ensuring the security of the animals at all times.

The chain-link was removed from one half exposing the metal frame. The paint was scrapped from the frame revealing a well-preserved metal structure. Using galvanised pipe



an extension of 4ft was added the existing frame work and masonry was required to equally extend the concrete dividing wall.

Paint was applied to the frame work and to the wall.

Galvanised iron flat-bars were threaded through the chain link at each end, which was cut to the length of each enclosure side. The flat-bar had holes drilled into them which corresponded to welded brackets on the vertical frames of the enclosure, and where they would be bolted on to.

At the bolt points were also attached metal strainers, a pair, one at each end of the enclosure side. Straining wire runs between the strainers to ensure the chain link is sufficiently taut.

For smaller areas such as doorways and keeper's areas, the chain link was fixed using plastic coated binding wire. The roof was attached using plastic coated binding wire and metal zip ties.

The slides connecting enclosures and den areas were either refurbished or completely replaced.

The furniture in the enclosure was completely removed and replaced with branches reaching the highest points of the enclosure.

## **Materials**

Materials used were:

- Galvanised chain link fence
- Galvanised binding wire
- Galvanised strainer clips
- Galvanised straining wire
- 2" galvanised pipe
- 1" galvanised pipe
- Galvanised square plate
- Galvanised Flat bar – 3mm
- Green paint
- Concrete blocks
- Cement
- Metal zip ties
- Branches

## **Results**

All the original enclosures were fully refurbished, and height increased by 4 ft, where necessary new slides were made and installed and all branch work replaced. The photos below detail the results comparing the old enclosures with the new:



## ENCLOSURE ONE







(Not furnished)











## ENCLOSURE TWO

















## SLIDES







## Conclusion

The refurbishment has overall been a success, completing the task we set out to do. The animals immediately used the higher branches and seem to have a preference for the higher areas of the enclosure where they can gain an extra sense of security and opportunities to see further across the Achimota Forest where they are situated. At the beginning of 2019, we also had a new arrival to Enclosure One – Accra our breeding female gave birth to a healthy boy.

In the coming months we wish to add more furniture to the enclosures such as tyres, rope bridges, hessian sacking to enrich the daily lives of the primates in our care. We will also increase the roofing cover of the enclosures as we head into dry season and the sun becomes particularly hot at midday.

We have also been able to improve our signage around the enclosures, one sign gives details on WAPCA, one on threats to biodiversity and one on the Centre itself (pictured). We have also updated our primate information signs so that visitors get the most out of seeing the animals.

Over the past months we have been conducting interviews with visitors about their experience and we are expecting positive feedback from the new enclosures.



WAPCA wishes to sincerely thank all at Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation Primate Action Fund for supporting this project and making a significant difference to the captive care of these Endangered primates enabling them to play their vital role in the conservation of the flora and fauna of West Africa.