

1972

How we began

Marwell Zoological Park was opened by John Knowles on 22 May 1972. Admission was charged at 40p for adults & 25p for children with a reduction of 5p per head for groups of 20 or more.

Established as a conservation and breeding centre, the park planned to give visitors the opportunity to see rare and interesting animals in a unique setting.

Whilst the species were divided across four zones (Eurasia, America, Africa and Australia) Marwell was always intended to be an English park with exotic inhabitants and not an attempt to recreate the appearance of other parts of the world.

Amongst the most interesting animals were the Siberian Tigers - Boris and Lana. They were the very first animals purchased for the collection, having been hand reared at the Rare Feline Breeding Compound, Center Hill, Florida, NA.

These were joined by two young pairs of leopards, originally from East German zoos, a pair of young jaguars, a pair of cheetah (from Colchester Zoo) and a breeding pair of European lynx, originally from Bucharest Zoo, Romania.



MARWELL ZOOLOGICAL PARK



Opening Monday, May 22



The first ungulates to arrive at the park were equids (horses, zebras, asses). John's plan was to specialise initially on the breeding of rarer forms of hoofstock and larger cats, as well as maintaining a fairly comprehensive collection as a public exhibit and to this end he assembled Grevy's, Chapman and Hartmann zebra - all of which remain with the collection today. Przewalski's horses, mostly originating from Prague, were another key species within the initial collection.

The building programme for the park started during the summer of 1971 and the first permanent building to be erected was for 6 Rothschild giraffe - part of a consignment of 12 imported to this country from the wild. They were later joined by scimitar-horned oryx, common waterbuck, nyala and impala.

Whilst specialising in ungulates (hoofed animals) and felids (big cats), John also assembled a collection of birds and cranes to add variety as well as breeding and study opportunities. These included rheas, ostrich, emu, Kon bustards and a selection of crowned cranes.

1973

Miko - our first Siberian tiger cub - was born on 1 May to parents Kurtun (father) and Nimana. Known as Tigger or Tiggy to zoo staff he was soon adopted by HMS Tiger.

Marwell's children's zoo was opened towards the end of the year with the purpose of providing all visitors the opportunity to observe young and docile animals at close range, and in some cases to touch them as well.

The star attraction was Miko together with his new companion, Lara, from Rotterdam Zoo in Holland. In addition to these Siberian tigers the zoo also held sheep, pygmy goats, donkeys, ponies and highland cattle as well as Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs, pheasants, peacocks, guinea pigs, a white wallaby and coatimundis!



1975



Two female red pandas arrived from Whipsnade on 26 March and were joined the same year by a male.

Operation Snow Leopard was launched with the aim of helping to establish and breed snow leopards at Marwell and fund future conservation projects.

Our first Brazilian tapir was born.

A pair of addax antelope, from Hanover Zoo, joined the collection on 29 December marking our first step towards establishing a viable breeding group. They represented the first breeding pair in Britain.



1974

After several false alarms and much nail biting a male giraffe calf was born on 5 May to Dribbles - a first for Marwell.

We also welcomed our first ostrich chick!

Marwell Zoological Park was accepted by the Charity Commission as a registered charity.



1976

The Dangerous Wild Animal Act, designed to "restrict the keeping of potentially dangerous animals to those who have the knowledge and facilities to do so", received Royal Assent on July 22 1976.



1977

Vilkku – our first female snow leopard was collected by John Knowles from Helsinki Zoo on 13 May. She was joined on 9 November by a male, Pavel, from Chicago Zoo.



Victor the giraffe was found by keeping staff with his legs spread-eagled in September. When contact was made with the local fire brigade for assistance in helping to raise him up, the call was intercepted by members of the press.

Over the following 6 days the story grew to the point where it became a front page feature around the world with film reports being shown in every country with a television service. The BBC reported that they were inundated with phone calls. Sadly, Victor never regained his footing and eventually lost his life.



1979



Marwell staged its first ever national Wildlife Fair including a conservation treasure hunt, practical forestry and tree surgery demonstrations, rural crafts display and folk dancing!

Our first black jaguar cubs were born when Tunja, our black female jaguar gave birth to one male and two female cubs.

Congo buffalo joined the animal collection via Regents Park zoo.



1980

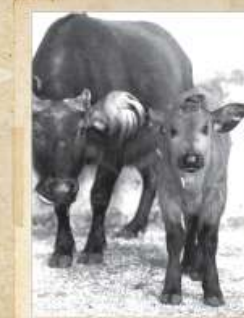


Our first Congo buffalo calf was born – the first such calf to be born in the UK.

Three Dama gazelle – two males and one female – joined us following a long quarantine period at Rotterdam Zoo.

Our red panda gave birth to her first cub – a female – on 1 June.

Construction started on our rhino house and paddock.



1978

Marwell Zoo came under the ownership of a charitable trust – The Marwell Preservation Trust.

In transferring the ownership of the park to the trust, John Knowles and his wife released the estate from the threat of having to pay death duties in the event of their untimely death.

In creating a conservation charity they also opened up alternative routes of income outside of park admission.

Visitor numbers soared to 300,000.



Country park zoo is haven for threatened species

1981



A pair of African black rhino arrived – the male coming from London Zoo and the female from Whipsnade.

As one of the most impressive and endangered families of wild animals, they were a popular addition to the collection.

On the 16 June our pair of snow leopards – Pavel, the male, and Vanda – produced our (and their) – first cub – a male later named Pavan.



1982

Footage for the TVS quiz programme – "On Safari" – starring Christopher Biggins and Gillian Telford was shot at Marwell.

We celebrated our 10th birthday in style with a carnival like event including pony rides, majorettes, a model train and cowboys!

Our first Malayan tapirs, born in Antwerp and Heidelberg, joined the collection.



1983

Our first meerkats arrived from Rotterdam Zoo and we celebrated the birth of two maned wolf cubs – a male and female – the first such cubs born in the UK.

Arabian oryx joined the collection, fulfilling a personal dream of John Knowles to have all the living, endangered representatives of the Hippotraginae in the collection.



1984



Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent, opened the semi-aquatic mammal (SAM) house on 3 October. Following a tour of both the new building and the park, she concluded her visit by viewing an exhibition of our conservation work in the hall and then taking tea with invited guests on the back lawn. A young Speke's sitatunga calf was named Katharine in her honour.

Holly – our first pygmy hippopotamus – arrived from Edinburgh Zoo in mid-December and showed a particular fondness for her new bath in the SAM house. Dropping the pool's temperature was often the only way we could incentivise her to get out when the water needed to be changed.

Dusky, our female cheetah, gave birth to her first litter of cubs – five in total – on September 13th.

After 12 years, our pair of East African crowned cranes produced their first 2 chicks. This, together with the arrival of our first okapi marked a couple of milestones for Marwell.



1985

Golden lion tamarins were exhibited for the first time.

Marwell opened its first Winter Wonderland, attracting 3300 visitors. Santa's spare sleigh was parked outside the hall and two of his trainee reindeer were in residence nearby to greet young visitors.

Heavy snowflakes in the "Red Corridor" and "Blue Room" encouraged an almost overnight growth of young fir trees. Santa's helpers decorated the area with pretty lights and tinsel and even built an igloo for Santa to keep himself warm and dry just opposite the penguin colony which had come to stay from Toyland.



1986

Marwell mourned the loss of its two black rhino – Kes and Katie – but welcomed two new white rhino from Whipsnade.



1988

Marwell enjoyed the first hatching and rearing of a secretary bird in the UK (a second chick hatched at the Falconry Centre, Newent in Gloucestershire three weeks later!) Marwell was the first zoo to hatch such a chick under the care of a domestic hen.



1987

The event of the year was undoubtedly The Princess Royal's visit to Marwell when we hosted a Silver & Royal Day to mark the 25th anniversary of the Home Farm Trust - a charity which provides homes and care for people with special needs. The Princess Royal is a patron of the trust.

Apart from the dismal weather, the day could not have been better with Her Royal Highness showing a genuine interest in our animals and conservation work and enthusiastically undertaking all that we asked her to do - including driving our new rail train.

The storms on 15 October created extensive damage - breaking boughs off trees, felling both an oak and lime tree; lifting the roof off the camel house and flattening a visitor shelter near to the ankole paddock.



The Marwell Preservation Trust became a member of the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) - a union of member states, government agencies and NGOs concerned with the development, promotion and implementation of scientifically-based action towards conservation and sustainable use of the world's living resources.



1990

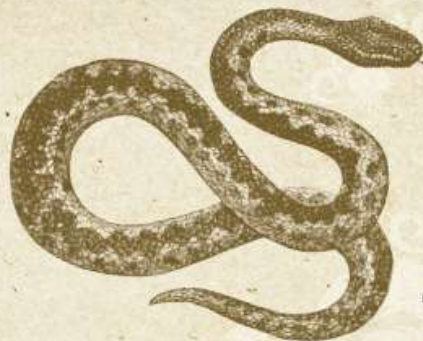
African bongo joined the collection



1991

John Knowles was awarded an OBE for services to conservation.

Male and female Siberian tiger cubs were born in October. The female was named Sheya and the male Sym.



1993

Small wild ass joined the collection.



1992

Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, officially opened the World of Lemurs on St. George's Day - 23 April. This marked the culmination of much hard work and fundraising through our "Lemur Lifeline".

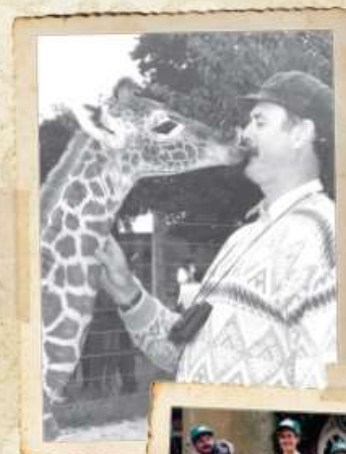
The Princess Royal met its new inhabitants - the red ruffed; ring-tailed and black and white lemurs - and enjoyed a quick walkabout on east section.

Marwell achieved an important milestone when it passed 5 million visitors. Graham and Patricia Buckell with their two sons, David and Andrew, from Freshwater, Isle of Wight were the 5 millionth guests when they walked through the gates on the 19th August. Thanks to Air UK they enjoyed return flights to Jersey and a trip to Durrell Zoo as a special prize.



1995

Filming for Fierce Creatures starring John Cleese, Michael Palin, Ronnie Corbett, Robert Lindsay, Kevin Kline and Jamie Lee Curtis took place during summer.



1996

Another British first was enjoyed when our Somali wild ass delivered a foal. In 1996 Marwell was the only zoo in the UK to hold this critically endangered equid - and there were only 62 across 17 collections around the world. The foal was called Berber, meaning "native of Africa"



Howie Watkins - presenter of BBC's "The Really Wild Show" officially opened Tropical World - This marked the fulfilment of a project begun in 1995 and represented a valuable addition to the park, a wonderful educational resource and a place where visitors could be immersed in the richness and variety of a tropical rainforest.



Our first penguins - macaronis - arrived from Birdland, Gloucestershire on 15 October. Throughout November they were joined by separate groups of captive bred African (black-footed) penguins from Paignton, Banham and Amsterdam zoos.

HRH the Princess Royal opened Penguin World on 8 May.



The ARK gift shop opened towards the end of the year.



1999



Our new education centre was opened by Chris Packham on 8 July. The building was constructed in the most energy efficient, sustainable way using low emissivity double glazing, auto turn-off taps and lighting plus renewable energy via photo-voltaic solar cells.



Marwell welcomed its first baby white rhino - Bhasela, a male calf - on 8 February. The name means "gift" in Xhosa.



2000



HRH the Princess Royal opened "Into Africa" our new African animal complex on 6 April - her fourth official visit.

Marwell Zoological Society celebrated the Millenium in the knowledge that it had raised £1M for conservation and education projects since 1974 - having funded projects ranging from outreach work for Przewalski horses to the construction of Penguin World

The fossa exhibit was opened in January by David Gower OBE. It was the first in a series - of projects to bring more small carnivores to Marwell.

A new veterinary surgery was also opened in November of this year.



1997



2001

Following the foot and mouth outbreak, Marwell was closed completely for 5 weeks. The severe disruption led to a significant loss of income. However, the subsequent press interest created a huge wave of public support and sympathy resulting in donations of over £140k. The Marwell Hotel held a fundraising event generating \$6000 in donations and there were numerous gifts from local schools and businesses.

Councillor Ken Thornber, Leader of Hampshire County Council, opened our new tiger enclosure which incorporated 500 tonnes of limestone rock from Somerset as well as 700 cubic metres of soil and 300 metres of underground pipework.



2003

Plans for the official opening of the Amur leopard enclosure on 27 September were halted by a tragic sequence of events that occurred during the introduction of the female leopard, Jade, to the enclosure before the park opened. Jade took fright, climbed a tree and forced her way through a hole in the mesh. The park's escape procedure was put into effect and Jade was immobilised but unfortunately never recovered from the anaesthesia.

Sula gave birth to a second rhino calf - Shaka, named after a Zulu warrior king - on New Year's eve. Wendy and Antone our pygmy hippos, became the proud parents of Taiama on 6 December.



2002

The Desert Carnivores house was officially opened by Dr John Knowles OBE, founder of Marwell Zoological Park. The new house was entirely funded by Marwell Zoological Society as part of its ongoing "Captivating Carnivores" Campaign

Our lovely bronze hippo, created by Hampshire sculptor Kenneth Robertson, was installed.



2004

The Snow Leopard Appeal was launched to raise £75k to fund the construction of a new snow leopard enclosure and to increase awareness of the plight of the snow leopard and the need to conserve it in the wild.

Yenna, our Amur tiger, gave birth to three cubs on 14 October.



2005

David Gower returned to Marwell to open the "Roof of the World" exhibit for our pair of snow leopards. The impressive enclosure was designed to simulate a Himalayan ravine with naturalistic rock outcrops, a waterfall and stream, and replaced an original enclosure built in 1975.



James Cretney, Marwell's current Chief Executive, joined the charity.



2007

James E. Braithwaite, CBE, Chairman of SEEDA (South East Development Agency) opened the new Encounter Village and Australian Bush Walk on 6 April, giving our guests the opportunity to get closer to wallabies and a range of reptiles and amphibians.



HRH, The Princess Royal gave our new gibbon home, "Life in the Trees" the royal seal of approval when she formally opened it on 17 September. This was the fourth exhibit that she had officially opened at Marwell.



Kiska, a female Amur leopard cub, was born to mum Ascha and dad Akin on 18 November. Her birth made a significant contribution to the European Endangered Species (EEP) programme.



2006

Best selling author, Wilbur Smith, opened "Heart of Africa" in April.



2008

Wendy and Antone, our pygmy hippos, became the proud parents of a baby girl - Lola - on 13 November.



Café Graze opened in October. The new restaurant incorporated a raft of sustainability features including rainwater harvesting for use in the toilets; sun pipes to supply natural daylight; low energy light bulbs plus an air handling installation to reclaim the heat generated from the kitchen and use it to heat air required for ventilation.





Marwell Wildlife



The motivation behind the change was to develop a creative style and identity which better reflected the breadth of our work as both an international conservation charity working predominantly in Africa and a regional tourist attraction.

Our brand promise of **"Connecting people with nature"**, not only provided the inspiration for our new logo but also underlined the focus for everything we do, both here in Hampshire and overseas. In the same year we were also proud to achieve IIP status.



SPRINT – our cheetah fundraising campaign was launched with a target of £225k to fund the construction of a new cheetah home in the park and our conservation programmes with cheetah in Africa.



His Excellency, Mr Joseph Muchemi, the Kenyan High Commissioner, officially opened our African Valley at the start of April. The Valley provided a new home for some of our African plain animals including the Ellipsen waterbuck; Grevy's zebra; ostrich and giraffe.



Humboldt penguins usually moult for between four to six weeks every year. However, Ralph, a ten year old Humboldt penguin, lost all of his feathers in one day, exposing his pale pink skin to the sun.

Concerned that he needed protection against sunburn, his keepers designed and made him a special wetsuit from the leg of an adult wetsuit donated by a member of staff. The stretchy material was the perfect choice since it let Ralph move around normally and continue to swim around in the penguin pool. It not only protected Ralph's sensitive skin until his new feathers grew but also made him an international star with the world's media.



2010

Indeever & Irina

Our breeding pair of snow leopards – Indeever (from Zurich Zoo) and Irina (from Nordens Ark in Sweden) – joined the animal collection.



Formal Garden

In summer we opened our Formal Garden next to Marwell Hall which includes a representation of three garden styles of the 16th and 17th centuries – the 'knot', 'parterre' and 'kitchen' gardens. The area gives an insight into both the garden styles and plants of that era as well as some of their culinary and medicinal uses.



flight

12 February saw the launch of our FLIGHT campaign, aimed at raising funds for the restoration of Marwell's woodlands, to encourage native wildlife, and the reintroduction of ostrich in Niger in partnership with the Sahara Conservation Fund.



Christmas at Marwell... ...be enchanted

Christmas returned to Marwell with the staging of our new event "Christmas at Marwell...be enchanted" which proved to add a touch of magic to the festive period.



2011

Savannah Tracks

Following the success of our *SPRINT* fundraising campaign, our new cheetah home - Savannah Tracks - was officially opened by Scott Mills in April. With its mix of graphics, visual media and artefacts the exhibit was designed to give an overview of the cheetah's adaptation to speed and our conservation programmes in Africa.



Snow leopard cubs

Our breeding pair of snow leopards, Irina and Indeever, successfully conceived three cubs - Kitana, Khan and Kadhira - who drew the crowds during the August bank holiday.



1st flamingo chick

In an effort to encourage our flamingos to mate, we introduced sound (flamingo noises) and mirrors. Our efforts were rewarded with the arrival of our first ever flamingo chick.



Capitalising on the strong public interest in meerkats Marwell opened a new meerkat enclosure in July and subsequently enjoyed the arrival of 3 new cubs.



Macaque study centre

Marwell Wildlife and the University of Portsmouth joined forces to open the world's first cognitive study centre for rare Sulawesi crested macaques. In a real life example of science in action the animals are invited to operate computer touch screens allowing scientists to investigate fundamental aspects of their cognition such as memory, communication and emotion.

