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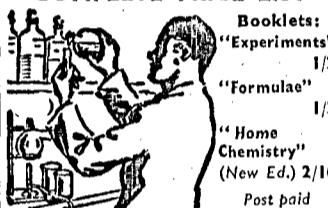
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WHO'S WHO AT THE ZOO

Keeping the crabs apart

GREAT efforts are being made at the London Zoo to prolong the life of the nine giant land crabs received a few months ago from Christmas Island. And so far only one of the crabs has died, and that from "natural causes."

"The problem is to prevent them fighting," Overseer George Ashby told me. "Of a previous consignment of a dozen, from British Guiana, we lost almost every one within a fairly short time. Conflict between the crabs nearly always results in the loss of the weaker specimen, the stronger one wrenching off the small feeding-claw of its rival, so that survival becomes impossible."

"We are keeping this latest consignment in two separate colonies, one in the insect house, the other in the laboratory, and keepers always stand by at feeding-time—the usual occasion for trouble—to ensure that no battles occur. We are anxious to prolong the lives of these crabs," Mr. Ashby added, "as they are not easily obtainable, and they never breed in captivity, it being impossible for them to go down to the sea once a year to spawn, as they normally do."

The husky makes a capture

One of the Zoo's handsomest game-birds, a Pallas's cared pheasant, a large, blue-plumaged bird with tall and impressive ear-tufts, has had the unique experience of being recaptured by another Zoo exhibit—the Arctic husky dog, Chappie.

"A valuable oriental species, the pheasant lives by itself in an open enclosure on the bank of Regent's Canal," said Mr. Jack Ward, the pheasantry headkeeper. "We keep its wings clipped so that it cannot normally stray. The bird escaped because some visitors, sitting on a seat against the pheasant's fence, kicked a hole in the wiring."

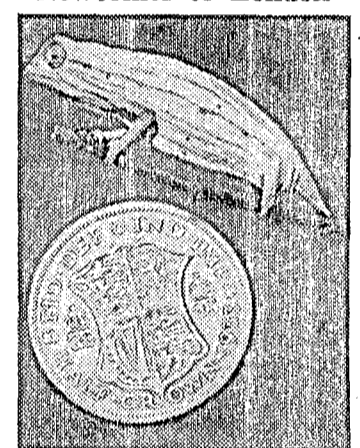
"The pheasant waited until the following morning; then, before visitors came in, it squeezed through the gap and went sauntering down the public pathway. Before it got very far, however, it met the husky Chappie, who was

being taken for an early-morning run by his keeper. The pheasant, whose paddock is just opposite Chappie's cage in the North Mammal House, must have seen the husky many times before. But it was so astonished to meet the dog out on the path that it turned and made a beeline back to its enclosure, with Chappie, on a lead, in hot pursuit! The bird has been transferred to the pheasantry and will remain there until the fence is repaired."

Excitement among the parakeets

The Zoo's colony of a dozen Quaker parakeets has been augmented by a solitary chick from the large communal nest hanging from the roof of the parakeets' aviary. The chick is the first of these South American birds to be hatched this season, and its appearance caused great excitement among the colony. All the baby's uncles and aunts, as well as its parents, gathered around the

Newcomer to London



A short-tailed chameleon, one of the smallest of its kind, was recently given to London Zoo by Armand and Michaela Denis, of TV fame. Unlike most chameleons, it does not live in a tree but on the ground.

youngster and shrieked their loudest.

"We hope there are other chicks inside the nest, but it is such a large one (several feet across), with small separate nests inside it, that we cannot possibly

examine it," Mr. John Yealland, curator of birds, told me. "The chick is green, just like its parents, and we have already had a number of inquiries from would-be purchasers. But it is not good business to sell them privately. They are so noisy that they seldom make good pets. The proper place for these raucous birds is in a zoo, not in somebody's private sitting-room."

Nocturne puts on weight

Officials at Whipsnade are delighted with the progress of Nocturne, the male baby born early in July to the common hippos, Henry and Belinda.

"Nocturne is fast putting on weight," one official told me. "At birth he weighed 70 lb; today he must be almost 90 lb. He spends most of the day swimming around by his mother's head, and he is swimming very well, which is a good thing as Belinda sometimes submerges and comes up beneath him, tipping him over. But so far as we can tell, Nocturne thoroughly enjoys these pranks. He seldom comes out of the water, but when he does, we estimate that he stands about 18 inches high and is well over 2½ feet long."

"Nocturne, incidentally, is one of our most valuable babies," the official added. "He is worth about £1000." CRAVEN HILL.



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JUST A FEW WORDS

HERE is an entertaining way to increase your knowledge of words. Each numbered sentence below is followed by three answers or comments you might make; but, in each case, only one is correct and shows that you have understood the meaning of the word in italics. To answer five or six correctly is very good.

Answers are given on page 11

- The culprits have *absconded*.
A—Given themselves up.
B—Done much damage.
C—Run away.
- My knowledge of algebra is *rudimentary*.
A—A great help.
B—In the early stages.
C—Thoroughly mastered.
- Rain fell *intermittently*.
A—From time to time.
B—Without a break.
C—Farther inland.
- His *scrutiny* upset me.
A—Too close a look.
B—An underhand attack.
C—Mean with his money.
- The details have been *verified*.
A—Changed around.
B—Copied out.
C—Proved true.
- The interruption was *inadvertent*.
A—Not generally noticed.
B—Spiteful opposition.
C—Just an accident.