Improving the Garden's exhibitions and appearance: the building momentum continues!

If you have happened to visit the Garden lately you will surely have noticed the construction and renovation momentum that started a few months ago. New exhibitions are being built and inhabited; animals are being moved to renovated and improved enclosures; and many enrichment devices are being installed in order to improve animal welfare. We are happy to share with you some of the changes that have recently taken place in the Garden.

🌳 The new beech marten exhibition has been successfully populated. The enclosure is divided into two spaces: one of them is home to two brothers that get along with one another; the other is home to the marten that had previously lived near the fennec foxes and displayed stereotypic behavior. We hope that now, in its new and spacious home, it will feel more comfortable and display much less stereotypy. Another marten was moved to the enclosure of the
otters and the mongooses. Part of the enclosure roof was removed, in order to provide it with more sun and light. Because it is difficult to see the martens in their new homes, since they are nocturnal, we are now planning to feed them during daylight hours so that the visitors will be able to enjoy them.

The enclosure where the stereotyping marten used to live will now be home to several adult fennec foxes that live in the research area of the Garden. We hope that we will soon be able to connect the two fennec groups, so they can enjoy the spacious new area that will be available to them.

Our two *white-tailed sea-eagles* have been returned to the Garden following the renovation to their exhibition. As part of the renovation new perching rods were installed as well as a partition that will enable their keeper to enter the enclosure safely during the breeding season, when the female is especially aggressive. The partition will also allow us to separate the male from the female if necessary.

The *vulture* exhibition has also been renovated: the flight area has been enlarged and nesting areas built. The four vultures that now share the enclosure are new in our Garden. They comprise two pairs that we hope will breed here.
The **porcupine** exhibition has also been renovated. The porcupines are currently being gradually accustomed to eating during daylight hours so that the visitors will be able to see them.

**Large, thick brushes** have been installed in some of the exhibitions (wolves, jackals, wild boars, and more), as enrichment devices for the animals, who enjoy rubbing against them. Pruned branches are also used for enrichment, for the Persian fellow deer, for example.

The **restroom** building near the gate to the Botanical Garden, and which had not been used for many years, is being renovated. Two cabins are been built; one of them with wheelchair access. In front of the building a large assembly area will be built. In addition, the northern path of the Garden is been rebuilt.
The amphibian exhibitions are open!

Our new amphibian exhibitions are finally open. Four exhibitions have been built, two of which are already populated with eastern spadefoot toads, Levant water frogs, and European green toads. Construction of the fifth exhibition, in the middle of the room, will start soon. The exhibitions were built by Shimon Gvily from "Animal House" in Kfar HaNagid, and Asaf Moran, a PhD. student, under the supervision of Prof. Arnon Lotem, from the School of Zoology at Tel Aviv University. We were very happy to discover that shortly after our amphibians arrived in their new homes, they started breeding!

1. Two water frogs in the exhibition, photo: Naama Schor;
2. One of the exhibitions from a distance, photo: Ilil Pratt;
3. Water frog eggs, photo: Asaf Moran;
4. Spadefoot toad eggs, photo: Asaf Moran

Garden news are also available at our website
On nestlings, chicks and nesting boxes

Six barn owls eggs have hatched in our incubator. After the nestlings have grown a little they will be transferred to a new enclosure that will be built especially for them.

Hawaiian goose chicks have also hatched in our incubator. This year, in order to enhance the geese breeding, some of the eggs that had been laid in the open grass were taken to be incubated in the incubator, so that the parents would be encouraged to lay replacement eggs.

Dr. Gal Ribak received three pairs of Mandarin ducks for his research into swimming and diving. The research area that is being built for them in the northern part of the Garden is not yet ready, so the ducks are being housed meanwhile in the big bird yard in the research area. Several small water ponds have been built for them, as well as nesting boxes, with the hope that they will breed here successfully.
Short news items

One of our animal keepers, Barak Levy, has completed a course in snake catching. The course was organized by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority and was taught by Aviad Bar and Osnat Azulay. The course took place in the Sherman building and was based on the snake collection of the Zoological Garden. At the end of the course Barak received a permit for catching snakes.

At the end of December we said goodbye to our Bonelli's eagles (*Aquila fasciata*), after the Israel Nature and Parks Authority found them a more suitable place for their needs. In their new home they will have a much more spacious flight area than we were able to give them here. We wish them a fast and easy acclimation.

Shosha, our female wolf, has recently undergone several veterinary procedures: about two months ago she had surgery due to a uterine infection; a month later she underwent surgery to remove a tumor from her udder. After she has fully recovered from these she will undergo one more surgery, for eyelid lifting. The reason for this last operation is of course not cosmetic: the drooping eyelid is the cause of her repeated eye infections.

The Tristram's starling has a new home. It is now sharing the hyrax exhibition, near the ibexes. Although you can easily see and hear the starling, it much more difficult to see the shy hyraxes…

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At the beginning of the winter we partly covered the thicket aviary with a big nylon sheet in order to prevent too much rain from getting in.

Flowering throughout the Garden: Don't be confused, we are still in the Zoological Garden News, but we also have some wonderful flowering! The thicket aviary is blooming, as is the wild plants garden at the entrance to the Garden. In front of the kitchen and near the doors of the aviary we have planted almond trees, which are now in bloom.

Our Bedouin goats are beginning to feel more and more at home on the open grass, so it's much easier to see them. Their pen is permanently open, allowing them to go in and out as they please.

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One of our two European badgers has shown up and posed for a picture...

The children's birding group of The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, who visit the Zoological Garden and the Botanical Garden during the year, visited the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History this winter and greatly enjoyed it.