



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Belfast Zoological Gardens – Lion-tailed Macaque escape and recapture</b>
<b>Date:</b>	5 December 2013
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mark Challis, Zoo Manager

<b>1.</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	The lion-tailed macaque is a primate species from India. Adult lion-tailed macaques have a head and body length of up to 60cm, and adult animals weigh between 5 – 10kg.
1.2	There are 22 species of macaques, and lion-tailed macaques are one of the smaller ones. The lion-tailed macaque is a relatively hardy species of monkey, which will eat a variety of foodstuffs and be somewhat tolerant of a variety of climatic conditions.
1.3	Lion-tailed macaques have been kept in the zoo for many years and the zoo recorded the first UK captive breeding of this species in 1962. The zoo currently has a group of 9 animals (4 males and 5 females).
1.4	The group of lion-tailed macaques in the zoo are accommodated in a large house with 5 different rooms and a large outside paddock surrounded by a 2m high chain link fence and on the inside of this, an electric fence rising to approximately 3m.
1.5	Such fences are used widely in the zoo for the containment of smaller primates and the blend of chain link fence and electric has proved to be an effective method of containing these animals and it is widely used by zoos.
1.6	On the morning of Monday 21 October, 6 of the zoo's lion-tailed macaques managed to escape from their outside enclosure. There had been no observed friction in the group and the electric fence was working,

	<p>though on observation by zoo staff the 6 escaped animals appeared somewhat wary and nervous. It is presumed that something had spooked the macaque group, to the extent that this provided enough of a stimulus for the escaped animals to climb the electric fence and leave the outside enclosure.</p>
1.7	<p>The 6 escaped animals were recaptured during the following days:</p> <p>Tuesday 22 October, one captured in the sun bear enclosure in the zoo;  Wednesday 23 October, one returned to macaque enclosure in the zoo of own accord;  Thursday 24 October, one returned to macaque enclosure in the zoo of own accord;  Thursday 24 October, one captured at the Belfast Castle;  Friday 25 October, one captured on Shore Road near the Abbey Centre;  Friday 1 November, one captured in garden of house in Ben Madigan Park, near to the zoo.</p>
1.8	<p>All of the animals have been remixed with the rest of the animals on the group. On veterinary examination, the escaped animals appeared fit and well.</p>
1.9	<p>Staff from the zoo were in regular contact with a range of individuals and agencies throughout the period. These included the PSNI, the PSNI corporate communications team, the Fire Service (who provided valuable assistance during the recapture of the macaque at the Shore Road), the NIEA, local schools, private individuals and the media. A communications team, made up of zoo, BCC corporate communications and PSNI communications staff, was particularly valuable as we managed the considerable general public and media interest in the story. We received significant help and support from people locally and the media.</p>

<b>2.</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	Six lion-tailed macaques escaped from their paddock in the zoo on Monday 21 October.
2.2	They were recaptured or returned to their enclosure of their own volition during the following ten days.
2.3	No macaques were injured or harmed during the incident and all appeared in good health on recapture.
2.4	The escape generated significant interest, from both the media and individuals locally. The vast majority of the coverage of the incident was positive.

<b>3.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	<u>Financial</u>

	<p>There were some costs associated with the recapture, including unanticipated additional veterinary costs, and some additional staff costs following the evening recapture of the macaque at the Abbey Centre.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>There are no immediate resource HR implications, though it is worth noting that the dedication and professionalism of the zoo team, in a variety of roles including animal keeping, veterinary care and communications, which was of huge significance during the period.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>A programme of routine maintenance is undertaken to ensure that enclosure boundaries continue to provide for the safe containment of the macaques.</p>
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<b>4.</b>	<b>Equality Implications</b>
4.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	The committee is asked to note the report.

<b>6.</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
6.1	None required.

<b>7.</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	PSNI = Police Service of Northern Ireland NIEA = Northern Ireland Environment Agency

<b>8.</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None