

ZooLex *News & design from January issue*

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Hello ZooLex Friend,

We have worked for your enjoyment!

NEW EXHIBIT PRESENTATION

In 2005 the Taronga Conservation Society Australia opened Wild Asia, an exhibit area for the display of Asian rainforest animal species. The fishing cat exhibit gives visitors the opportunity to observe these cats from a shelter with under water viewing. The fishing cat exhibit is next to the tapir exhibit in order to represent how the species share similar habitats. <http://www.zoolex.org/zoolexcgi/view.py?id=881>

ZOOLEX EDITORS

ZOOLEX is pleased to introduce a new ZooLex editor: David McGuire, Vice President, Architecture and Planning, Saint Louis Zoo, Missouri, United States of America.

The quality of ZooLex publications is ensured by our editorial board whose members edit and comment on all newsletters, gallery presentations and papers prior to publication and dissemination. We wish to thank all our editors for this valuable support. <http://www.zoolex.org/editors.html>

We keep working on ZooLex ...

The ZooLex Zoo Design Organization is a non-profit organization registered in Austria (ZVR-Zahl 933849053). ZooLex runs a professional zoo design website and distributes this newsletter. More information and contact: <http://www.zoolex.org/about.html>

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Taronga Conservation Society Australia Wild Asia's Fishing Cat

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Published 2009-1-17

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KEY WORDS:

rainforest, immersion



ANIMALS:

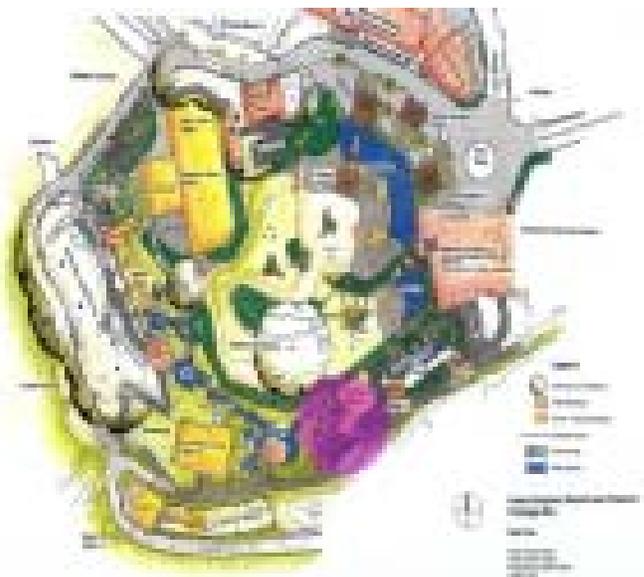
Family:	Species:	Common Name:	Capacity:
Adrianichthyidae	<i>Oryzias latipes</i>	Medaka	
Cyprinidae	<i>Puntius conchoni</i>	Rosy Barb	
Cyprinidae	<i>Tanichthys albonubes</i>	White Cloud Mountain Minnow	
Felidae	<i>Prionailurus viverrinus</i>	Fishing Cat	1,1,young

AWARDS:

2005 John Holland Pty Ltd. was awarded for excellence in Environmental Management during construction of Wild Asia by the Master Builders Association of NSW (MBA)

DESCRIPTION:

Wild Asia is a display of Asian rainforest animal species that comprises 10 animal exhibit areas, 7 animal holding facilities, and 15 public visitor facilities. The precinct simulates an Asian rainforest setting, featuring both plants and animals typical of the region. Wild Asia is home to more than 24,000 plants, Malayan tapir, small-clawed otter, binturong, chital, silvery gibbon, Francois langur, fishing cat, 45 bird species in two aviaries and elephants. The design reflects an Asian style rural village situated on the edge of the rainforest. Wild Asia is divided into two distinct thematic zones, namely the urban village and terraces on one hand and animal exhibits and immersion trails on the other hand. The animal exhibits surround the urban village terrace.



Site Plan - The fishing cat exhibit is marked in pink.
©Taronga Conservation Society Australia, 2003



Fishing Cat. ©Helen Pantenburg, 2007

This zone is densely landscaped to replicate a typical Asian rainforest.

Complementing both zones is an interpretive storyline, which informs visitors about the animals and the importance of conserving their natural habitats in South East Asia.

The fishing cat exhibit is next to the tapir exhibit in order to represent how the species share similar habitats for different reasons - the tapirs for swimming and the fishing cats to prey on fish. Although the water systems in the two exhibits are separate, the intended perception is that of one river system flowing through a typical Southeast Asian rainforest.

SIZE:

Wild Asia is a themed exhibit precinct of approximately 1.04 hectar. The fishing cat facilities cover an area of about 135 m².

Space allocation in square meters:

use	indoors		outdoors		total exhibit
	accessible	total	accessible	total	
animals	25		60	60	85
visitors			25	25	25
others	25				25
total	50	50	84	84	135

COSTS:

AUD 31,800,000 including 6 % for design. The Wild Asia Precinct cost 31.8 million Australian Dollar (excluding taxes, zoo operational expenses etc.).

OPENING DATE:

9 July 2005

DESIGN:

Beginning:

- Preliminary Design: Hassell Architects and Landscape Architects, Sydney, New South Wales
- Preliminary Design: CLRdesign (Jon Coe), Healesville, Victoria
- Landscape Architecture: Green & Dale Associates, Melbourne, Victoria
- Architecture: Jackson Teece Chesterman Willis Pty Ltd, Sydney, New South Wales

CONSTRUCTION:

Beginning: March 2003

- Construction: John Holland, Sydney, New South Wales

PLANTS:

The creation of the South East Asian rainforest in Taronga Zoo involved the planting of over 24.000 plants on 1.8 ha.



Diverse environment - The exhibit provides various types of substrate, plants and rest places on different heights. ©Monika Fiby, 2007

FEATURES DEDICATED TO ANIMALS:

All species in the Wild Asia precinct have a scheduled, documented and supervised enrichment program. Introduction plans were developed for all species to ensure animal health and wellbeing during translocation and settling into the new facilities. Pre and post occupancy observation studies were carried out for most species to gain an understanding of exhibit use and future enrichment needs.

FEATURES DEDICATED TO KEEPERS:

Attention has been paid to the ease of draining and filling pools remotely, floors drain easily and all animal areas have special finishes that allow cleaning to be undertaken with a minimum of manual scrubbing. The facilities have included an ability to easily load and unload animal crates, provide access for major exhibit furniture and the flexible use across a range of species with holding facilities able to cater for a diverse range of species from otters to tapir. A fully filtered system to maintain water bodies has



Visitor approach. ©Monika Fiby, 2007

eliminated the need to drop and manually clean all major water bodies - a significant move forward in the elimination of manual handling duties for keeping staff.

FEATURES DEDICATED TO VISITORS:

Visitors to Wild Asia are immersed within a landscape that captures the essence of the Asian rainforest. Pathways replicate the feeling of walking through a natural landscape. Entry gateways, vegetation, pathway surfacing, structures and signage form an amalgamation of styles that reinforce the mixture of rich cultural expression, intimate animal viewing, secretive pathways, fun surprises and rewarding educational experiences.

Wild Asia includes formal 'Learning Spots' where exhibit space can easily be converted to a formal or informal class room and educational artefacts can be stored.

INTERPRETATION:

The majority of the animal exhibits in Wild Asia can be viewed from vantage points that allow for several species to be seen at once (e.g. elephants and tapirs) thus reinforcing the interpretive messages of the interconnectedness of wild animals in the rainforest and the ecological niche each fills.

Overall, there are 48 individual interpretive installations in addition to species information labels and way-finding signage.

MANAGEMENT:

The Hillside Link building is an adjunct to the Wild Asia precinct. It includes a building for the water treatment equipment and services associated with the Wild Asia precinct, offices and retail areas and an essential access route between the two adjoining precincts, Wild Asia and the Great Southern Ocean.

Many of the animal exhibits link to each other via management facilities allowing for a change of species or for mixing species such as tapirs and otters for behavioural enrichment or exhibit purposes.

This feature will also allow Taronga Zoo to respond to future needs of South East Asian endangered species and provide spaces for breeding in Wild Asia for those species most in need of captive propagation.

RESEARCH:

A formal evaluation of the visitor experience was undertaken by Environmetrics during October 2005. The majority of visitors indicated that they were satisfied with their Wild Asia experience overall, having found it larger and containing a greater variety of animals than expected. At least 79% of visitors rated aspects of Wild Asia favourably, with the quality of building and landscaping most favourably rated. Around three quarters of visitors said they would visit Wild Asia again, and 71% indicated that they would recommend it to others.

CONSERVATION:

Crushed concrete was used for drainage layers. Retaining walls in many locations were built from recycled rubber tyres. Water for moat filling and irrigation is recycled to reduce runoff. Several balustrades were made from bamboo.

The Wild Asia exhibit has links to a number of in-situ conservation programs through fundraising, education and in-kind support. These are: Asian turtle crisis, elephant conservation in Thailand, silvery gibbon project. The development of formal links to Francois leaf-monkey in-situ conservation programs are in progress.

LOCAL RESOURCES:

Cost effectiveness was achieved by putting together a multi-skilled in-house team comprised of engineers, husbandry staff, interpretation staff, educators, horticulture staff etc who were able to respond quickly to contractor's questions, which was demonstrated by minimal work stoppages and delays during construction.



Lower pond - The water of the pond in front of the first viewing hide is recirculated after running into a lower pond. ©Monika Fiby, 2007