

# ZooLex News & design for July

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A Service of WAZA –  
World Association of  
Zoos and Aquariums



## NEWS

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 tapir exhibit gives visitors the opportunity to observe diving tapirs from a shelter with underwater viewing. Connections of the tapir exhibits with the adjacent binturong and otter exhibits allow for mixed species display. Check it out at <http://www.zoolex.org/zoolexcgi/view.py?id=987>

## RUSSIAN ZOOLEX CORRESPONDENT

We would like to welcome Andrei Kotkin as ZooLex translator and Russian correspondent: <http://www.zoolex.org/editors.html>

When you know somebody who would like to receive ZooLex newsletters in Russian, please offer to contact Andrei Kotkin at [akotkin@mail.ru](mailto:akotkin@mail.ru) or reply to this newsletter.

## SPANISH TRANSLATION

Thanks to Eduardo Diaz Garcia we are able to present Spanish translations of ZooLex presentations of all seven Asia Trail exhibits at the National Zoo in Washington, USA:

Asian Trail Sloth Bear Exhibit: <http://www.zoolex.org/zoolexcgi/view.py?id=991>;  
Asian Trail Clouded Leopard Exhibit: <http://www.zoolex.org/zoolexcgi/view.py?id=992>;  
Asia Trail Fishing Cat Exhibit: <http://www.zoolex.org/zoolexcgi/view.py?id=993>;  
Asia Trail Otter Exhibit: <http://www.zoolex.org/zoolexcgi/view.py?id=994>;  
Asia Trail Giant Panda Exhibit: <http://www.zoolex.org/zoolexcgi/view.py?id=995>;  
Asia Trail Red Panda Exhibit: <http://www.zoolex.org/zoolexcgi/view.py?id=996>;  
Asia Trail Salamander Exhibit <http://www.zoolex.org/zoolexcgi/view.py?id=966>

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>

## Design magazine

See the web version of this article with large, attractive photos at <http://www.zoolex.org/zoolexcgi/view.py?id=987>. Go to [www.zoolex.org](http://www.zoolex.org) click on "Gallery" and it is the first exhibit listed.

**Note for readers from Editor Emeritus: How to use this article ...** Quite a number of the articles we publish in ZOOS' PRINT magazine are available on the Web but people with busy schedules sometimes miss out. We try and include ZooLex's feature of the month in ZOOS' PRINT even knowing that you can't possibly benefit much from the black and white printed photos. This is just to give you an idea of what is offered and encourage you to go to your computer. If you are going to do that, you should look this up on the ZooLex website which has even more and bigger photos and more features.

Thanks. SRW.

## Wild Asia's Tapir Taronga Conservation Society, Australia

Monika Fiby (author for ZooLex)  
Nick de Graaff, Taronga Zoo  
(editor) Pub 2008-5-17



## LOCATION:

Bradleys Head Road, P.O.Box 20, Mosman,  
Sydney, NSW 2088, Australia Phone:0061-2-  
9969-2777

Fax: 9978-4613 URL:<http://www.zoo.nsw.gov.au/>



The location of the tapir exhibit is © Taronga Conservation Society Australia, 2007

**KEY WORDS:** rainforest, immersion

## ANIMALS:

Family	Species	Common Name	Capacity
Anatidae	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	Ruddy Shelduck	
Cyprinidae	<i>Cyprinus Carpio</i>	Koi Carp	
Tapiridae	<i>Tapirus indicus</i>	Malayan Tapir	1,0

**AWARDS:**

2006 Excellence in Construction Award

**DESCRIPTION:**

Wild Asia is a display of Asian rainforest animal species which 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



**Site Plan: The tapir exhibit**

hand and animal exhibits and immersion trails on the other hand. The animal exhibits surround the urban village terrace. This zone is densely landscaped to replicate a typical Asian rainforest.

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

One of the two tapir exhibits provides above ground viewing, the other one below water viewing. They are interconnected with each other and with the Binturong exhibit for mixed species display. The adjacent otter exhibit also has tunnel connection to one of the tapir exhibits for this purpose. All these exhibits are serviced by a central holding building that allows connections between holding areas as well. It is a multi-purpose holding area for various species.

**SIZE**

Wild Asia is a themed exhibit precinct of approximately 1.04 ha. There are 2 tapir outdoor exhib-



**Malayan Tapir. © Helen Pantenburg, 2007**



**Animal Space. © Monika Fiby, 2007**

its with 237 sqm (land area 170 sqm and water area 67 sqm) and 202 sqm (land area 122 sqm and water area 80 sqm) respectively and 3 pens, each 12 sqm (4 m x 3 m), as well as a multi-use area of 16 sqm.

**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 with CLRdesign (Jon Coe),

Melbourne, Victoria  
Landscape Architecture: Green & Dale Associates,  
Melbourne, Victoria  
Architecture: Jackson Teece Chesterman Willis Pty  
Ltd, Sydney, New South Wales

**CONSTRUCTION:**

Began: 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.

**FEATURES DEDICATED TO ANIMALS:**

All species in the Wild Asia precinct have a sched-  
uled, 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.



Tapir in Pool. © *Helen Pantenburg, 2007*

**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 hold-  
ing facilities able to cater for a diverse range of  
species from otters to tapir. A fully filtered system  
to maintain water bodies has 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.



Service Area in Holding Building. © *Taronga Conservation  
Society Australia, 2007*

**FEATURES DEDICATED TO VISITORS:**

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



Visitor path. © Monika Fiby, 2007

#### 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 land-

scaping 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.



Visitor Space. © Monika Fiby, 2007