

ZOOLOGY

Zoo Alters Animal Habits

► SCIENTISTS HAVE TURNED night into day for many of the animals at the London Zoo.

In a new small mammal house, which cost \$400,000, bats, bushbabies, pottos, lorises and other nocturnal animals have completely changed their bedtime. For the first time in a hundred years, visitors can see them awake during the day.

Instead of the bats being motionless hanging objects, they are now alert and their cage is large enough for flight.

Generally speaking, all zoos find it difficult to exhibit small mammals because they

are nocturnal, they burrow, or they just roll up into a ball and hide.

Dr. Desmond Morris, the curator of mammals, experimented for more than a year on the most effective combination of lights and colors to change the animals' sleep-waking habits. The results of his research have turned night into day and day into night, without the mammals being aware of it.

The animals' house, a jungle of climbing trees with plastic foliage, is now bathed throughout the day in a soft light of about full-moon intensity. It is sufficiently subdued to give the mammals the impression of nighttime, but strong enough for visitors to watch them.

From 5 p.m., the strip lighting gradually increases in intensity so that by 7 p.m., after the last visitor has left, the animal houses are flooded in bright artificial sunlight and the inmates are fast asleep.

Suggestions were made that it was cruel to interfere with nature. Dr. Morris was shocked.

"Nobody here would be associated with anything that remotely smacked of cruelty or caused the animals any discomfort," he better off: then can sleep undisturbed, better off: they can sleep without being disturbed by visitors."

In other parts of the new house, which has 134 cages in all, other methods are used to show off the creatures at their best.

Large numbers of small mammals can leap a long way, but those that cannot will be housed not behind the glass but behind a moat. It is the first time any zoo has used a moat to keep in this type of animal.

• Science News Letter, 85:270 April 25, 1964

ORNITHOLOGY

Bridge-Tunnel Sea Gulls Stalked With Cannon

► CAPTURING the 75 sea gulls used to mark the opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel April 15 was a feat nearly matching the building of the fabulous 17.5 mile structure itself.

Months ago bridge officials decided to supplement the traditional ribbon-cutting by releasing a mighty flutter of sea gulls.

Sea gulls, after all, had been watching the construction of the mammoth crossing over and under the open sea ever since September 1960 when the first pile was driven.

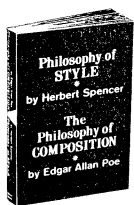
The job of catching the sea gulls, however, was not as easy as was thought. It represented three weeks of hard work for Robert H. Bain, U.S. game management agent of Richmond, Va.

Mr. Bain has caught and banded more than 40,000 ducks and geese in his career with the U.S. Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service. But he found the sea gull much wilier than geese.

He tried the baited wire trap with a V-shaped funnel which always worked with ducks and geese. But the gulls were so smart they found a way out of the trap and even took the bait along.

Aided by men from two national wildlife refuges in the area, Mr. Bain finally resorted to a cannon net to trap the birds. He lured about 50 gulls to Norfolk's garbage dump with pieces of bread. Three projectiles were then fired from three barrels placed in a triangle, throwing a nylon net over the gulls in an area 35 feet by 75 feet. The gulls were not harmed in the process, Mr. Bain said. The sea gull was chosen as the official symbol of the engineering wonder.

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BRIDGE SYMBOLS TRAPPED—The gulls for the opening ceremony of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel were harmlessly trapped by luring them with pieces of bread and throwing a nylon netting over them.