

# Capuchins at the Zoo

✘ Edinburgh Zoo's brown capuchin monkeys have had a record breeding season with six new infants joining the two groups. The youngest, born on 29 July 2010, is now just over a month old and was born to first-time mum Penelope.

The capuchins live with common squirrel monkeys in two mixed communities in the East and West sections of the Zoo's Living Links Centre. Three youngsters were born to the group on the East and three to the group on the West. The new youngsters join a further 18 capuchin adults and juveniles in the Centre and all are still to be sexed. This will be confirmed as the new arrivals become independent and start coming off their mums' backs.

Charlotte MacDonald, Head Keeper of Primates at Edinburgh Zoo said:

"This has been a really exciting time for our brown capuchin groups – not only have we seen more births than ever but also new first time mums too. For the capuchin community it is also good for other members to see the rearing of young in the group setting which is very important for social primates. As a curious species, and just like our visitors seeing these new additions for the first time, other members of the group can't fail to be interested in the youngsters."

✘ Living Links is a field station and research centre for the study of primates, developed by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (the charity that owns Edinburgh Zoo and the Highland Wildlife Park), and the University of St. Andrews. Living Links is home to over 50 brown capuchins and squirrel monkeys, which often associate in the wild. The Centre opened in 2008. These species of monkeys are very curious and inquisitive, making them ideal subjects to support studies about primate communication, intelligence and behaviour. As well as their indoor enclosure, the brown

capuchins and common squirrel monkeys at Living Links have extensive outdoor areas where visitors can enjoy great views of them frolicking and playing on rope structures.

Found mainly in Guyana and nearby regions, brown capuchins scent mark by rubbing or "washing" their fur with their own urine. They are omnivorous, eating mostly fruits, seeds, and insects, and sometimes small lizards, frogs, or birds. They are diurnal, meaning they are active during the day, and spend most of their time in the understory and mid-canopy of the forest. Typically weighing between 2 – 5 kg, males are larger than females.

After a gestation period of 6 months, capuchin monkeys give birth to a single baby and in rare situations twins. Young males leave their group once they reach sexual maturity. Male brown capuchin monkeys are considered sexually mature at 7 years of age. Females mature earlier and may give birth to their first offspring as early as 4 years old.

Although widespread, they are hunted for food by humans, and are often illegally captured to be sold as pets. They are also threatened by habitat destruction and populations have declined in some parts of the brown capuchins' range.