



Willkommen in Berlin visits Berlin Zoo

Director Dr Knieriem gives a tour of Berlin Zoo

Dr Andreas Knieriem knew he wanted to study veterinary medicine at the age of 15. He found his calling when he took over as director of Berlin Zoo and Tierpark in 2014. On 25 June 2024, he led a WIB group through the Berlin Zoo. The tour, which lasted about three and a half hours, had been organised by the management of the WIB group for science, research and medicine. The theme: 'Are old animals a sign of a good zoo? What are the reasons and conditions for the long life of zoo animals?' The group learnt much more, including how a zoo is developed and managed, how much passion and expertise goes into newly built animal houses and enclosures, and that Berlin's Zoological Garden, the world's most species-rich zoo and Germany's oldest zoo still in existence (opened in 1844), is a jewel worth visiting and supporting.

The tour began at the Rhino Pyramid, which opened in mid-2023 as a flagship for species conservation. The Berlin Zoological Gardens support the majority of international conservation breeding programmes. By building up stable reserve populations outside their natural habitats and supporting translocation and reintroduction projects, zoos make a significant contribution to the long-term conservation of endangered species. At the heart of the Rhino Pagoda is one of conservation's greatest success stories: the rescue of the Indian rhino. At 25 metres high, the Rhino Pagoda is an architecturally complex and modern homage to the historic buildings of the Berlin Zoo. Around the Rhino Pagoda, rhinos, tapirs and pygmy hippos graze in the shade of mature trees, among grasses and idyllic watercourses modelled on their swampy habitat. For the first time it is possible to watch these giants, which can weigh more than two tonnes, bathing underwater. Director Dr Knieriem, who is usually the last to leave the zoo after his evening tour, enthusiastically reported how he was able to create the best possible environment for the zoo inhabitants with the lovingly planned new buildings and renovations. Good examples of this are the rhinoceros pagoda and the panda enclosure with its stone stream and rock pool,

climbing trees, caves and swings. The first German panda offspring were born here in the summer of 2019; a fact that is rightly cause for pride.

There are several reasons why zoo animals often live three times as long as their conspecifics in the wild: they live in a protected environment, do not have to undertake strenuous hunts to obtain food and there is a lack of the usual conflicts within the pack. The intelligent management at the zoo also helps the animals to age well. This includes the prevention of infections, good care, good nutrition and undisturbed sleep. The exciting excursion into the world of zoo animals came to a cosy conclusion at the Waldschänke, where Dr Knieriem answered questions from the audience. ■

TEXT Gundula Beyer-Zouboulis

WIB goes Filmfestival Bad Saarow



The WIB cinema group travelled to the International Film Festival 'Film ohne Grenzen' in Bad Saarow for two days in mid-September to kick off the club year. The cinema group enjoyed films, exciting discussions and readings in the presence of, among others, Ludwig Blochberger, film director Andreas Dresen, Liv Lisa Fries, Sina Martens, Hanna Schygulla, Michel Friedman and Knut Elstermann. Special highlights: evening discussions around the campfire and night-time bathing in Lake Scharmützel. ■ TEXT WIB