

12.03.2024

ZOO LAB Experience

To coincide with and celebrate National Science week, (something we tend to celebrate with fun activities in the summer term after the exams,) ZooLab were invited into school to bring us a new set of animals to learn more about.



Student groups were rearranged so everyone could be involved in the three separate sessions, meaning that we had larger than normal mixed groups and the audience further swelled by additional staff from all sectors who were able to join and be part of the experience. All students coped with these changes really well, which I am sure was partly due to the excellent presenter Anna, whose infectious enthusiasm really drew the students in.



Firstly, we were introduced to a giant African Land Snail who enjoyed being passed around the group and held by all who were still keen after being informed that this species had the largest number of teeth of any animal, having several thousand, which is more than a shark.

Then there was a large Chilean rose tarantula and although as she grows older, her pink colouration would develop, she was shown to all in the safety of her travelling box, but even though she was very calm, arachnophobes did not want to see her up close!

Next to be discussed was a small tortoise who was just becoming active after a period of 'brumation' – a new word for many, meaning the condition of inactivity during the cold winter months, but not quite the full state of hibernation. The tortoise seemed to like being stroked and responded very well to the students.



Then it was the turn of the white Australian tree frog. Students liked to see the effect of his 'sticky feet' enabling him to climb up the wall, but although very calm in the first session, in subsequent lessons he proved very active and demonstrated particularly good jumping skills as he tried to evade capture and return to his travelling box. Needless to say, this provided much excitement and enjoyment for many of the audience.

Finally, it was the turn of the fully grown corn snake, which brought smiles of delight to many faces as he twisted around arms exploring his environment. Those who have not handled snakes before were surprised that although cold to the touch, the skin is dry and quite smooth and they enjoyed holding him, as he twisted around arms and explored the environment with his tongue.



What a successful morning and so lovely for staff to see students so happily engaged, and some so knowledgeable, throughout the sessions.

The good news is that we have a provisional booking for next year with the promise of getting to know a different set of animals. Many students can't wait!