

Case Study on Whipsnade Zoo by MJ Security Systems

ZSL Whipsnade Zoo rely on Vista cameras to monitor well-being of lioness and cubs.

Vista has supplied ZSL Whipsnade Zoo with cameras that have monitored the progress of a lioness through the stages of her pregnancy. Happily, the diligent monitoring and work of the staff has seen the birth of four happy and healthy cubs.

The birth of cubs in captivity is always a very special and important occasion for any zoo, and is an event Whipsnade hadn't witnessed in 30 years. So when Mashaka Lila the lioness became pregnant it was essential to monitor her progress closely and ensure her well-being and health at all times.

Having already installed a similar system in the elephant house and rhino enclosure, MJ Security Systems was called in to place a series of cameras throughout the den. IR bullet cameras were chosen for their small, discreet design and superior picture quality in the low light conditions. With this set-up, Whipsnade staff could view the activity of the lioness from a remote location. They were also able to look back on any events that occurred while the screen was unmonitored by using the Columbus 4 channel DVR.

“It was great working on this project as it was such a big event for everyone involved and there was so much excitement surrounding the births.”

“We took over the maintenance of the systems at Whipsnade a couple of years ago and have been improving them ever since,” says Mick James, managing director of MJ Security Systems. “It was great working on this project as it was such a big event for everyone involved and there was so much excitement surrounding the births.”

Because of the rather unusual application, installation of the equipment required special thought. The cameras had to be positioned in exactly the right way to ensure the best and most consistent coverage of the lioness. It was also important to make certain the cameras weren't accidentally damaged. Large cages were used to protect them and prevent them being knocked or pulled from their mounting.

As well as closely monitoring the sleeping area, one bullet camera was placed in each of the three gated pens in the enclosure. Each of these was mounted at head height to the lioness to ensure the best view.

Mr James has been very impressed with the level of service he's received from Norbain. “We have a very good relationship with Norbain and are in daily contact,” he says. “If ever we have a technical query or need help with the specification of a system they talk it through with us and give great advice. I really can't praise them highly enough.”

Mashaka Lila and her four cubs are all doing very well, and have now been integrated into the rest of the pride at Whipsnade's state of the art lion enclosure, the Lions of the Serengeti.



Photography by
Alison Evans
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