

## A MISCELLANY OF AVIARIES OF THE WORLD

An aviary, the *Raven Cage*, dating from 1829, is regarded as one of the oldest structures at the London Zoo.

The first large aviary inside a zoological garden was established in 1880 in the setting of the Rotterdam Zoo.

In 1902, a flying cage was completed in the setting of the National Zoological Park of the Smithsonian Institution. A new *Great Flying Cage* was built in 1964.

The Saint Louis Zoo is home to the 1904 World's Fair Flight Cage. It is one of only two permanent structures built for the World's Fair which still remain (the other is the Saint Louis Art Museum's Cass Gilbert building). In 1904, it was the largest bird cage ever built. It remains one of the world's largest free-flight aviaries. The 69m (228 feet) long, 26m (84 feet) wide, and 15m (50 feet) high cage was built by the Smithsonian Institution specifically for the St. Louis World's Fair. Local pride in the giant cage motivated St. Louis to finally establish a zoo in 1910.

With the Antwerp cage system (1948), birds are only separated from public by a light system used inside the *Bird Building* at Antwerp Zoo.

At the Frankfurt Zoo, the bird house was built in 1961. Its *Bird Halls* presented birds for the first time in large glassed miniature habitats. In diving exhibits Darters and Kingfishers could be seen hunting under water, and in the free-flight hall visitors walk amongst tropical birds in dense vegetation. In 1963, the same principle was used outdoors to construct the *Bird Thicket*, ten aviaries surrounded by dense bushes and designed in various habitat settings, which visitors can enter through wire netted doors and curtains of cords.

The Bronx Zoo's *World of Birds*, a two-story bird house completed in 1972, is a huge, landscaped, indoor free-flight exhibit. The one-way flow pattern in the exhibit moves the visitors through twenty-five birds habitats, ranging from desert to tropical forest. Each setting recreates with impressive fidelity the micro-culture of the birds that fly happily about within their diorama world, complete with living plants. Five of the aviaries are completely open, in two of the largest the uncaged public walks through the habitat with birds freely overhead.

The Henry Doorly Zoo's *Simmons Aviary* opened in 1983 and is one of the world's largest free-flight aviaries. About 500 birds from all parts of the world occupy the area of the aviary. In this 16,000m<sup>2</sup> (4 acre) exhibit, visitors see Flamingos, Ducks, Swans, Storks, Cranes, Spoonbills, Ibis and Egrets. The Aviary is 240m (800 feet) long and rises to 23 m (75 feet) at the centre. The structure of 50mm (2 inch) nylon mesh is supported by a system of cables and poles.

Birds of Eden bird sanctuary, located in the Western Cape of South Africa, is possibly the largest free-flight aviary in the world. The aviary opened in 2005 and covers an area of 21,761m<sup>2</sup> (234,230 sq feet) with a total volume of 375,372 cubic metres (13,256,100 cu ft). It is home to around 3000 individual birds of 200 species.