

Zoo Zebra in Co-op Car Park Caper



Molly the zebra safely back at the zoo last night

A runaway zebra caused chaos yesterday as it tried to avoid capture in the seaside town of Lindley in Dorset. The zebra had apparently escaped at dawn from the nearby children's zoo in Briarley Wood.

The beautiful stripy mare was first spotted in the car park of the Co-op supermarket in Westray Street where it came to the attention of two local women; the pair had set out early to do their regular Friday morning shop. "At one point the zebra was coming towards us," said retired nurse Sally Stern. "When it reared up on its hind legs, my friend and I were scared its hooves would hit us in the face."

Once supermarket staff realised the animal was on their site, they quickly contacted the local RSPCA, who traced the animal to Briarley Wood children's zoo. The RSPCA rescue squad were at the Co-op within ten minutes of taking the call – only to find that their stripy quarry had disappeared.

The next sighting of the zebra was outside Claire's Gift Shop. Eye-witnesses say the animal looked as if she wanted to go inside. However, the loud noise of a nearby drill frightened her away – this time towards the park.

It was in Lindley's Memorial Park that the zebra was finally captured by the RSPCA rescue squad. Children and parents in the park were alarmed at the sight of the now panic-stricken animal, but Police quickly sealed off the area so that RSPCA staff were able to sedate the zebra and return her to the zoo.

Local RSPCA Director Alf Crawley said that questions will be asked about the careless security arrangements at Briarley Wood zoo. He expressed surprise that, until the RSPCA informed them, staff at the zoo were unaware the zebra had escaped. A spokesperson for the zoo was unavailable for comment.