OUR

ZOO

CHESTER ZOO

Bringing together exclusive videos, great new games and sneak peeks from our global conservation work.

START EXPLORING >



Highlights

Summer has arrived here at the zoo, **with new faces to meet** and **exciting experiences and openings** that are creating a real buzz for you to enjoy on your next visit! We also have our new and **exclusive Zoo Tales members podcast** to share with you, taking you on a Latin American adventure!



WELCOME

In our summer issue we're delighted to bring you news of our successful conservation breeding programmes...

CONTINUE READING



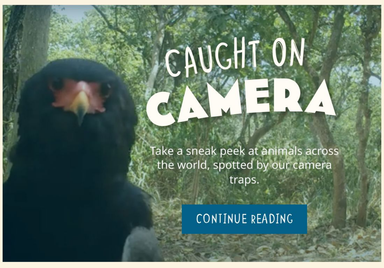






















Join us *as we* STEP *into the* SUMMER SEASON *here at* the zoo

This issue is filled with the latest animal arrivals, technology and exciting experiences that are a part of the zoo's ongoing evolution.

COMMITTED
to preventing extinction

Over recent months we've enjoyed many more more successes within the international conservation breeding programmes that we're a huge part of, with notable arrivals including Sumatran tiger cubs, Komodo dragon hatchlings and a giant anteater pup to the zoo over recent months.

Behind the scenes, our expert team of conservationists and scientists have also been studying our sleeping giants, the giraffes, alongside an ambitious new AI focused project with some of our smaller species, the bush dogs.

You can discover more about all of these wonderful stories in this issue.

We'll also bring you our new podcast, Zoo Tales, where you'll discover more about the work we're doing around the world - this time taking a trip to Latin America where our conservation action is helping species including the Andean bear, and the communities living alongside them.







ALWAYS BUILDING

To ensure we can continue to play a leading role within the conservation community long into the future, it's vital that we continue to evolve our zoo. We've seen The Square, our newly renovated luxury 200-capacity venue, open its doors following a three-year project to restore the Grade II listed stable block, which has stood at the heart of the zoo since it opened in 1931.

Many of the patterns and textures used throughout The Square draw inspiration from some of the endangered species we're working to protect and the income generated by every occasion held there will contribute to our conservation efforts to help nature to survive and thrive.

The major changes don't stop there and, true to our motto, we are 'Always Building' as work continues on our new Heart of Africa zone, our ambitious vision to bring an authentic African savannah with lodge-style accommodation to Chester. We're also delighted to see development on our state-of-the-art snow leopard habitat progress ahead of its opening in 2024.

It's thanks to you and your wonderful support that we're able to keep pushing the zoo forwards. Thank you for being part of the journey and here's to exciting times ahead.

To ensure we can continue to play a leading role within the conservation community long into the future, it's vital that we continue to evolve our zoo.

Jamie Christon, CEO

START EXPLORING >

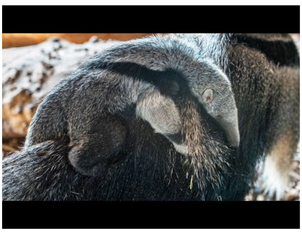




Welcoming A TINY GIANT

Clinging to mum's back is where you'll most likely find our giant anteater pup, who has been settling in here at the zoo!

Only the third successful giant anteater birth in our 92-year history, the birth was captured on hidden cameras in the den on March 11 and the pup has been inseparable from mum, Bliss, ever since.





The pup's birth was a result of an **international conservation breeding programme** for the species. Giant anteaters are currently listed as Vulnerable to extinction by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with **numbers continuing to decline in the wild**.

Coming all the way from Ramat Gan Safari Park in Tel Aviv, Israel, **Bliss joined us at the zoo in 2010** and was matched with **dad, Oso, who arrived from Cumbria in 2018.** It's likely that Bliss's pup will eventually move to another zoo as part of the conservation breeding programme. Giant anteaters are solitary animals and would usually leave mum once fully grown at around two years old out in the wild.

GIANT ANTEATERS are solitary animals *and would usually leave mum* once fully grown *at around two years old* out in **THE WILD.**

92

This is our third successful giant anteater birth in our 92-year history, the birth was captured on hidden cameras in the den.

190

The gestation period lasts 190 days and most giant anteaters are born solo, with multiple births a very rare occurrence.



Tongues & tails

Found in **Central and South America's** grasslands and rainforests, this rare and at-risk species can reach over two metres in length and **are the largest of the anteaters.**

Once they find an ant hill or termite mound, they rip it open using their claws and then vacuum up the ants through their cleverly designed long nose. **Feasting on up to 30,000 ants or termites in a day**, the giant anteater's tongue can be up to two feet in length and is covered in sticky saliva, perfect for gathering up ants. Extending and withdrawing **up to 150 times per minute**, their incredible tongue means there's no need for any teeth.

Taking it **slow and steady** most of the time, the giant anteater can run short distances, but **they do love their sleep** – using their hairy tail as a cosy blanket!

GROWING A GIANT

After observing Bliss and Oso mating, the keepers had their suspicions that **a pup could be on the way**. They were able to predict the pup's birth to the exact date **using data from Bliss's previous pregnancies** and watching patterns in her weight gain. Bliss was weighed weekly, tempted onto the scales with her favourite food – ants, of course!

After a **gestation period of 190 days**, most giant anteaters are born solo, with multiple births a very rare occurrence. Born with a full coat of hair, the pup will cling on to mum's fur and **hitch a ride for a lot of the first 10 months**. With their matching stripes, the pup is perfectly camouflaged from any dangers by mum **until they're ready to explore** and can find their own food.





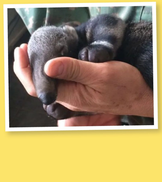
ROAD SAFETY

Sadly, giant anteater **numbers are in decline**, and they are commonly **reported in road-kill surveys**. Also considered a pest and hunted for food, they are one of the most threatened mammals in **Central America and in Brazil**. Much of the grassland they depend on to survive has been destroyed by agriculture.

Our teams have been working closely with our conservation partners the **Wild Animal Conservation Institute (ICAS)** to carry out research into the declining number of giant anteaters.

It's now believed that **collisions with motorists** is one of the main threats to the species, second only to habitat loss. **A staggering 12,400 wild animals affected by collisions** with vehicles were recorded in one of the largest highway surveys undertaken in **Brazil, 781** of which were dead giant anteaters.

Based on these new findings, there are a host of **road safety measures** being explored. Implementing road signs is just one measure alongside working with people directly, such as the Highway Heroes project, which aims to turn **stigmatised lorry drivers into citizen scientists** that survey the roads as they drive.



Orphaned anteater, **DUMBO** returned to the wild.

ICAS have also established a **rescue and rehabilitation centre** that has seen orphaned anteaters from **road traffic collisions returned to the wild**, such as little Dumbo pictured here. These stories of baby anteaters saved from the roads are powerful, helping to shift public opinion and **raise hopes for a healthy respect of anteaters on the road.**

"GPS collars fitted to **giant anteaters** are giving *us an insight on when and how they cross roads* to that **hotspots can be identified**, and strategies can be *put in place to help reduce the high numbers* of **anteaters falling victim** to collisions."

Paul Bamford, Field Conservation Manager for *South and Central America*

PLAY YOUR PART

You can support our conservation work and get involved by adopting a giant anteater. We'll also send you an exclusive adoption pack and your name will proudly be displayed on a plaque outside of the giant anteater habitat.

Adopt a giant anteater >

Latin American **ADVENTURE**

Come along on our **Latin American Adventure** *where you can meet the* **giant anteater up close**, *alongside our* **two land sloths** *and* **capybara!**

BOOK NOW >

You can also look out for the **giant anteaters** and their ***looooooooong tongues*** at the zoo alongside their native neighbours, the capybara.



Curious cubs COME OUT to PLAY

Come and meet our curious cubs as they start to explore and discover the joys of play fighting!

Since the twin tigers Raya and Alif made their appearance in January this year, they have slowly been gaining confidence and coming out of their baby bubble with mum, Kasarna. Now there's **no stopping them** as they explore their habitat and keep mum and dad busy with **their playful antics**.



UNIQUE FEATURES

Sumatran tigers are currently listed as **Critically Endangered** by the International Union for Conservation (IUCN), with **only 400 remaining in the wild**. Of the six subspecies of tigers, three are already extinct. Sumatran tigers are the smallest of the remaining subspecies, with some **unique features** that stand out from the crowd.



They have *white spots* on the **rear** of their ears which imitate the **white** of a tiger's **eyes** - this makes it difficult to tell which way they are facing and **deters attacks from behind**.



Reduced manes make Sumatran tigers **brilliant swimmers** – perfect for their **swampy habitat** in the wild!



Unique to the Indonesian island of Sumatra the tigers are **at home in tropical or evergreen forests** and the grasslands and mangrove swamps of *their native home*.



FAMILY TREE

The birth of the cubs is a real landmark moment for us here at the zoo, as Kasarna herself was born here in 2015 (pictured on the right as a young cub). Kasarna's brothers, Jaya and Topan, are now at Parc Zoo du Reynou in France and Manor Wildlife Park in South Wales, having moved as part of the European endangered species breeding programme.

START to LIFE

As first-time parents, Dash and Kasarna are both settling into family life and getting used to their new roles. At the moment we're leaving them to their own devices as much as possible so the cubs have the **most natural start to life**.

The cubs will continue suckling for a little longer but are already **eating some red meat**, with mum tearing off small pieces and bringing them to the cubs before going back for her own. In a few months the whole family will be eating just meat, living up to their name as the **largest land carnivores in the world**.

Dad would normally leave mum in the wild after mating, but as Dash will be living with the family here at the zoo **he was in the den for the birth** of the cubs. **Dash was then separated** until the cubs were ready to start exploring outside of the den and could start mixing safely with him again.

Introducing Dash to the cubs again was a gradual process, starting in a **secure environment using mesh slides** in the den. This way Dash could see, hear and smell the cubs and get to know them without any physical interaction. **The keepers were on hand**, looking out for positive interactions and vocalisations before the big meeting could take place.





Tiger SOUNDS

Looking out for positive vocalisations was a key part of the process to introducing Dash to the cubs. Chuffing is a unique noise made by tigers, sort of like the friendly, **contented sound of a cat's purr**. It's used as a form of greeting or positive interaction, so the keepers were very happy to hear this.

Another sound you may hear if you go to the tiger habitat on Islands is a **screeching noise**. This is the cubs starting to find their voice, with vocalisations to call out to Kasarna **when they can't see her**.

PLAYFUL CHARACTERS

Dash was a **little cautious at first**, however it wasn't long before he was joining in and even jumping in for some **rough and tumble play fighting** – with mum always on hand to give a gentle swipe if things go a little too far! Play fighting is such an important part of a tiger cub's life as they learn to develop their hunting behaviours. As well as play fighting, they've started practising stalking through their habitat, and have even been spotted **trying to sneak up on Dash** a couple of times.

The cubs have a **large, expansive habitat to explore** which closely resembles the type of habitat they'd grow up in in the wild. There's lots of bamboo which gives the tigers the perfect coverage they'd **experience in the wild**. Their markings mean they can disguise themselves from their prey of choice in their native habitat. Their bright orange colour might stand out to us, but their typical prey see in a different colour spectrum, so the tiger's outline is **well disguised in this kind of foliage**. The habitat also contains a large mound in the middle for the **tigers to climb up** and get the best view of their territory.

Click on the markers on the cubs to see how we tell them apart



Raya and Alif *can be tricky to* **TELL APART** *due to their* **extremely similar markings**. *However* **OUR KEEPERS** *(and some eagle-eyed members!) have spotted a couple of ways of differentiating* **THE CUBS.**

CHANGING LANDSCAPE



The growing area of unsustainable palm oil and coffee plantations has seen more than **90% of the Sumatran tiger's habitat wiped out** and brought them into close conflict with the human population. Sadly, the carnivores are **more exposed and often killed when they come into contact with villagers, farmers or livestock**. The species is also heavily poached for its skin, bones and canine teeth, which are sold illegally on the traditional Asian medicine markets.

You can do your bit by checking your **favourite products' barcodes** to see how major manufacturers are **sourcing their palm oil ingredients**. It also gives you the opportunity to alert companies that you're checking out their scores and may be **changing your buying habits as a result!**

CHECK IT OUT ›



See if you can **SPOT THE CUBS** and get to know the family on your next visit at the **TIGER HABITAT** on Islands.

CHESTER ZOO

CHESTER ZOO

PRESENTS

ZOO TALES

Discover the science and the stories behind the scenes and meet the incredible people that make Chester Zoo the leading conservation and wildlife charity it is today.



Regional Field Programme Manager, Paul Bamford, will be taking us across the world to Latin America and introducing us to the incredible wildlife that calls this region home for our first episode! At just seven years old, Paul's family relocated to Chile and his fascination with wildlife and the impact we have on the natural world was sparked.

Out in the field, our conservation work is a huge part of the work we do and Paul shares with us some of the incredible projects we've been working on to protect the Andean bears and shines a spotlight on our amazing partner organisations that help to make it all happen on the ground.

Read more about PAUL ›

Our **HOSTS**



FRASER

Fraser Montgomerie is a Zoo Ranger at Chester, spending his days talking to visitors about all things animals and plants! From delivering animal talks and touch-table sessions, and running the bat and lemur walkthroughs, to running educational clubs for toddlers to teenagers. He has an immense love for dinosaurs, and in his spare time he enjoys walking his dog, watching films/TV, and playing video games.



CHRIS

Chris Deputy is the Internal Communications Manager here at Chester Zoo, ensuring staff around the zoo are informed, engaged, and entertained. He was previously a science communicator and lecturer at the University of Liverpool, a stand-up comedian, an events co-ordinator and PR officer at the BBC, and now a podcast host! He loves everything about the natural world and is the biggest supporter of Chester Zoo's mission of preventing extinction.

CHESTER ZOO



Tracking the PACK

Tagging technology *is just one way we're* innovating and evolving our **animal care and insights** here at the zoo.

It can be tricky to visually identify individuals within the pack of bush dogs at the zoo. This is where our latest radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology project has been bringing fresh insights.

Bush dogs are **great communicators and stick together** to hunt much larger prey in the wild than they could manage alone, including capybaras, armadillos and even rhea which can grow up to five feet tall! They've been a fascinating subject for **Lisa Holmes, our Lead Scientist for Behaviour and Welfare** and **Alice Clark, our Conservation Scholar,** who has been focusing on the species for her PhD studies. Earlier this year, she embarked on a three-month project she's been running to trial RFID technology and to see what else we can discover about these small but mighty characters.



HAPPY *FAMILIES*

The social bonds between bush dogs is **such a big part of their lives** and we witness a lot of these bonding behaviours among the pack. They love to snuggle in for sleep time, feed together without fighting and **communally rear their pups as one big family**. Very little is known about the behaviour of bush dogs in the wild as sightings are extremely rare, so the information we've been gathering through RFID is **invaluable in understanding and protecting the species.**



BUSH DOGS *are found throughout* Central and South America. They're currently listed as **NEAR THREATENED** by the IUCN and populations have declined by **25% IN JUST 12 YEARS**, mainly due to HABITAT LOSS *from farming and* the loss of prey species.



RFID technology involves small devices that use radio frequencies to record and transfer data, mainly to **track and identify objects, animals and people**. The tags are often implanted into domestic and zoo animals for identification purposes. More recently, they have also been used in laboratory and field settings to **track the movements of animals** using specially designed scanners and software to automate the analysis of video recordings such as CCTV footage.

Monitoring behaviour is really important to **making the best decisions for our animals here at the zoo**. It can be a time-consuming process when we're looking at interactions, the way habitats are used and the activity levels of individuals within a group, so any steps forward to **give our teams a helping hand** are always welcomed.

By using RFID technologies, we can make the **process quicker and smoother**, giving our animal managers information much more easily which can be life-changing for animals who may have more immediate needs.

The surveillance SETUP

The project involved installing a custom-designed RFID tag reader *at one of the bush* DOG DEN entrances which was used to record the identity of the individual animals passing through the tunnel entrance.

OPTICAL SENORS within the reader detected the direction of *movement of the animals*, allowing us to record entry or exit from the den area onto a memory card.

THE TEAM could then monitor which individuals *in the pack were* spending time with each other, helping us to learn more *about these all* important social dynamics that keep the GROUP UNITED.



All of these technical updates mean **better monitoring without having to interfere** in the animals' daily lives and make sure we're getting the most natural picture of what's happening. Lisa and her team have also been testing out free-to-access vision-based tracking software using video clips taken from the cameras installed inside the habitat. This has been **a breakthrough in successfully identifying individual animals** through the process of machine learning individuals' body shapes and other physical characteristics.

With more pilot tests planned, **this is just the start of our journey** with the possibilities of what our teams and visitors can learn from the technology. Utilising Bluetooth or Wi-Fi connectivity with multiple sensors could unlock live location tracking around an animal's habitat, which can help not only our keepers during animal checks, but gives visitors like you the power to locate some of our more secretive species and **learn more about their social worlds!**

SLEEPING GIANTS

Nothing quite beats that feeling of a good night's sleep and a happy, healthy life in the animal kingdom is no different!



Whether it's the towering giraffes or amazing anteaters, studying and optimising sleep is a big part of caring for our animals here at the zoo.



Our latest **SLEEP STUDY** is investigating the habits of the Rothschild's Giraffe and how we can best understand and support these slumbering **GIANTS** to get the sleep they need.

You might be wondering **how a giraffe gets its long neck and legs to curl up for a comfy sleep**, and you'd be right in thinking that it looks like a bit of a pain in the neck! With predators like lions around, giraffes rarely lie down in the wild as **it can be a difficult process for them** to get up again and make a quick escape.

Sleeping and drinking water both **cause problems because their long necks** are too short to reach the ground, which means they get most of their water from all the plants they munch on. To drink from the ground, they need to spread their legs and bend down in an awkward position that **makes them vulnerable to predators.**

As a young calf, **a giraffe will often lay down with their legs tucked under their body** and rest their head on their rumps to sleep. As they grow older in the wild, adult giraffes will sometimes sleep like this, but rarely for more than a few minutes at a time. **Always on alert for predators, they almost never sleep for longer than five-minute stretches**, often getting by in their native habitat with just half an hour of sleep in a day.

30

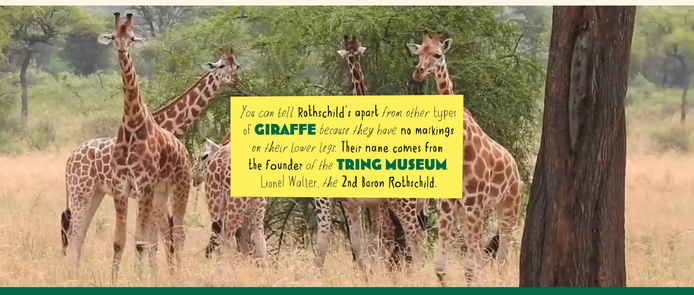
In their native habitat they get by with just 30 minutes of sleep per day – the shortest sleep requirement of all animals!

100

With over 100 observation hours we found some fascinating stats about how much quality sleep our individual giraffes are clocking up.

25

After being declared extinct in the region for over 25 years giraffes were reintroduced back to Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve in Uganda.



You can tell Rothschild's apart from other types of **GIRAFFE** because they have no markings on their lower legs. Their name comes from the founder of the **TRING MUSEUM** Lionel Walter, the 2nd Baron Rothschild.

Studying Sleep ZZZ

With no predators to keep watch for, sleep looks a little different at the zoo. **Giraffes average around 4.6 hours each day**, mostly at night, and this is usually lying down. The main aim of our latest study with the giraffes was to **investigate if we are providing good-quality sleep opportunities** and the environmental factors that may be influencing the animals. **After over 100 observation hours we found some interesting stats** about how much quality sleep time each of our individual giraffes is clocking up.





The average **total rest and REM sleep** (Rapid Eye Movement phase which isn't as deep) fall within a previously published time, helping us to see there are **good levels of welfare within the herd.**

Our boys, **Albert and Mbuto**, have the **highest average total REM sleep per night**, compared to the girls.

It looks like the average REM sleep per hour changes quite a lot across each of the giraffes within the herd, **showing how sleep is highly individual** and affected by so many factors, including sex, age and life events.

On average, individuals have **around 2-3 good stretches of sleep** through the night.

Studies show that the length of these stretches of sleep are thought to be **really important for an animal's welfare**, but lots of research on human behaviour also shows that total sleep each night has a massive impact on health and wellbeing.

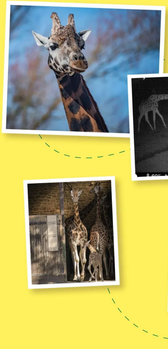
IN THE FIELD

There are now fewer than 2,000 Rothschild's giraffes left in the wild.

We're collaborating with the **Giraffe Conservation Foundation** (GCF) and **Ugandan wildlife authority** (UWA) to help protect them, including funding the development of the first national strategy for giraffe conservation in Uganda.

In 2019 and 2020, after being declared extinct in the region for over 25 years, GCF and UWA **reintroduced giraffes back to Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve in Uganda**, where a growing population of over 30 giraffes can now be seen wandering this vast and beautiful wilderness.

We're also monitoring numbers in Kidepo Valley National Park in Uganda, where an annual census has shown **giraffe numbers to be steadily increasing**, with several successful births in the park since 2015.

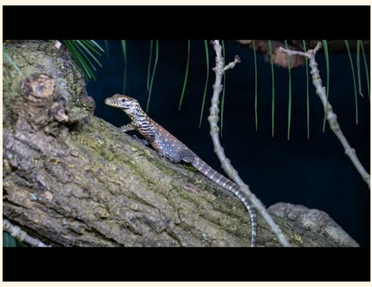


We're also **HELPING** to fund the development of the first national strategy for **GIRAFFE** conservation in Uganda.

HOUSE of the dragons

Dragons aren't just mythical beasts that feature in top TV shows. We have our very own family of Komodo dragons here at the zoo, with two new hatchlings who're recently joined us.

Mezcal and Satali, our Komodo dragons, were matched as part of the European Breeding Programme, which is managed by conservation experts here at the zoo. Their precious hatchlings are currently exploring their home, which mirrors the tropical surroundings of their native Indonesian habitat as closely as possible.



No average LIZARDS

The hatchlings may look small now but **these are no average lizards**. With a venomous killer bite, they are the **largest lizards on the planet**, growing up to three metres long, with a diet mainly made up of large mammals, reptiles and birds. Classed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, the two new arrivals are a vital part of understanding and **protecting these elusive lizards for the future**.





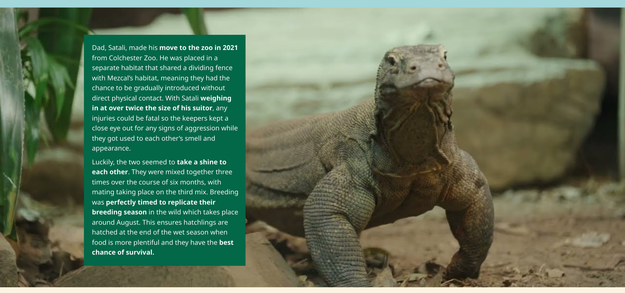
The Komodo dragon uses serrated teeth to bite its prey, then **oozes venom into the wound**. More often than not Komodo dragons kill their prey quickly through blood loss, but this venom ensures that any larger prey that escapes is eventually killed.



Currently the hatchlings are fed insects like **locusts, crickets, and small grubs**, as well as **quail eggs and small pieces of meat.**



Adult Komodo dragons can eat **80% of their own body weight in just 30 minutes!** This incredible carnivore eats only once a month and they can devour quite the feast!



Dad, Satali, made his **move to the zoo in 2021** from Colchester Zoo. He was placed in a separate habitat that shared a dividing fence with Mezcal's habitat, meaning they had the chance to be gradually introduced without direct physical contact. With Satali **weighing in at over twice the size of his suitor**, any injuries could be fatal so the keepers kept a close eye out for any signs of aggression while they got used to each other's smell and appearance.

Luckily, the two seemed to **take a shine to each other**. They were mixed together three times over the course of six months, with mating taking place on the third mix. Breeding was **perfectly timed to replicate their breeding season** in the wild which takes place around August. This ensures hatchlings are hatched at the end of the wet season when food is more plentiful and they have the **best chance of survival.**



Nesting TIME

Around a month after mating we started to **spot some signs that Mezcal was ready to lay her eggs**, as she was starting to do a lot of digging around the habitat. Komodo dragons know a thing or two about building nests and will dig some test holes **to find the perfect spot**. Mum is checking for the right temperature levels and the quality of the substrate (layers of ground) to give her eggs the best chance of hatching.

Once Mezcal had found her chosen spot, she spent considerable time digging the eggs - **24 hours with hardly a break**! We then left her to guard them for a couple of days. After this, Mezcal was fed in one of our separate habitats behind the scenes, while we **carefully dug and extracted the eggs from the main habitat**. We then placed the eggs in incubators so that the expert team could closely monitor them and guarantee the best chance of hatching. The eggs were **incubated for six and a half months**, and we were overjoyed to see the babies begin the hatching process.

The eggs were **incubated for 6 and a half months**, and we were **OVERJOYED** to see the **BABIES** begin the hatching process.

First, we noticed the babies 'pipping' which is when they **make a slit in the egg with a special 'egg tooth'**. After this they emerged through the opening they'd created. The vets gave each of them a **thorough health screen** where they were weighed, measured and checked over.

Komodo dragons are **solitary animals in the wild** which is why you will normally only see one of them in their habitat. Mezcal won't interact with the hatchlings, which again replicates wild behaviour as closely as possible. In the wild, **mum will leave the hatchlings after a few months of guarding the nest**. The two babies are growing up in a specially designed habitat in one of our 'behind the scenes' areas. Full of floor-to-ceiling trees and tropical plants to replicate the environment the hatchlings would find themselves exploring in Indonesia, the space allows them to live in the trees which is where they would **climb to straight away in the wild to avoid being eaten** by adult Komodo dragons!





Making a MARK

You'll notice that the hatchlings have some distinctive, colourful markings at the moment – perfect for keeping them camouflaged in their treetop canopy home. When they grow up and move towards the ground, the colour will fade into the more muted tones of the adult Komodo dragons which help them blend in while waiting to pounce on their prey.

Groundbreaking history

While these are the first two Komodo dragons to breed at the zoo, Mezcal is not the first Komodo dragon to lay eggs at the zoo. In 2006, a Komodo dragon named Flora became a global star when she lay a clutch of eggs without the involvement of a mate. This was through a rare process called parthenogenesis – a term combining the Greek words for virgin and birth – in which a female Komodo dragon acts as both the mother and the father of offspring. It was a groundbreaking discovery and only occurs in some insects such as bees, and a limited number of vertebrates.

FIELD work

As well as leading on the vitally important breeding programme for Komodo dragons, we also work with our partners to protect Komodo dragons in the wild. We've taken part in multiple Komodo dragon surveys on the Indonesian islands aimed at tracking population levels, monitoring the health of the population, and observing more about these giants in their native home.



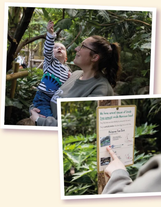
MEMBERS Hidden Gems

We know that, as members, you all have traditions, must-sees and special memories at the zoo. In this brand-new feature, we follow members as they explore the zoo and let us in on their hidden gems and recommendations! This time we met the O'Hanlon family, parents Chris and Laura, and kids, Ethan and Aiden, who have been members since 2019.

"Every time we visit the zoo, our first stop is always **MONSOON FOREST** *Today we HEADED STRAIGHT THERE and managed to* **beat the crowds.***"*

"It's the perfect area for toddlers as we can let them run about and still keep a watchful eye. They love exploring the tropical plants and wildlife. Ethan was searching for the jewel wasps, although I don't think he is ready to learn about what they do to cockroaches just yet!"

"We had loads of fun trying to spot the lizards roaming free along the branches of the trees!"





It's always AMAZING seeing the **SUNDA GHARIAL**, *the KIDS were really EXCITED that we got such a* **GOOD VIEW** *TODAY."*



Lunchtime VISITORS!

"12pm came around and it was time for some lunch. With the boys being young, we are always equipped with plenty of sandwiches and snacks. We sat in Manado Street Kitchen and enjoyed some sunshine, however, I'm not sure Aiden was happy with his lunchtime visitors!"

"After lunch, we watched the boats for a while on the Lazy River and then headed out of Islands. We ventured towards the elephants and watched them playing in the water. The elephants are always a must-see when we come to the zoo!"

"The **ELEPHANTS** *are always a MUST-SEE when we come to* **THE ZOO!"**

Hidden Gems



FIRM Favourite

"We then went over the hill and visited the giraffes. The giraffes will always hold a special m[illegible] we first brought Ethan to see them, he was so amazed by them. They are still a firm favourite

"Ethan made us race through the willow tunnel near the chimpanzees. It's great that there are like this at the zoo, it means that even walking between the animals brings a bit of extra fun[illegible] kids.



It's GREAT *that there are* LITTLE HIDDEN SPOTS *like this* AT THE ZOO

Willow tunnel







"The projections were **INCREDIBLE** *and the KIDS LOVED seeing the* **3D MODELS***"*



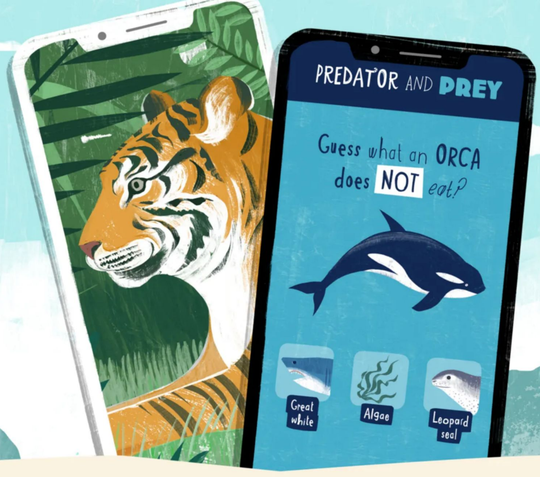
PLANET SHARK

"As members, we got a sneak peek at the new experience, Planet Shark. The projections were incredible and the kids loved seeing the 3D models. Planet Shark is definitely something we will visit more often!"

"We had a wonderful day as always, and are already looking forward to our next visit!"

If you would like to take part *in the next* **HIDDEN GEMS** *feature* CLICK HERE >

FUN & GAMES



PREDATOR AND PREY GAME >

SCREENSAVERS >

If you enjoyed the quizzes and games in our previous issue, we're sure you'll love the new ones we've created for the kids amongst you and the big kids too!

Start by guessing which PREY these PREDATORS do NOT eat and reveal the ones they do, then download one of the wallpapers for your desktop or mobile to enjoy our animals wherever you go.

Download Wallpapers
for desktop & mobile

TIGER CUBS



DESKTOP

MOBILE

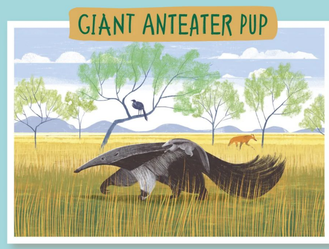
BUSH DOGS



DESKTOP

MOBILE

GIANT ANTEATER PUP



DESKTOP

MOBILE

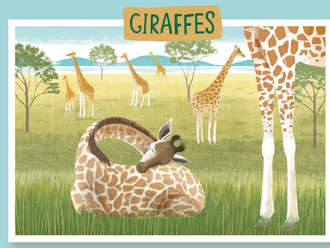
KOMODO DRAGON



DESKTOP

MOBILE

GIRAFFES



DESKTOP

MOBILE

TIGER CUBS



DESKTOP

MOBILE



CAUGHT ON CAMERA

Take a **sneak peek** at **animals across the world**, spotted by camera traps set up by the zoo and our conservation partners. Meet some playful **Andean bear cubs** and a very curious **bateleur eagle**. **There's a bit of everything** here, from **Africa** to the local wildlife of the **UK!**



Andean bear cubs

Hidden deep within the last inter-Andean dry forests in the world, these young Andean bear cubs were seen playing peacefully with their mum! Andean bears were only discovered to be living in this part of Bolivia by the camera traps setup as part of our Andean Bear Project. We're now working hard with our partners to help secure their future.



Bateleur

A magnificent (and curious) bateleur eagle! The word 'bateleour' is French for 'acrobat', and was given to these impressive birds because of their spectacular aerial displays, which can be seen across Africa. Despite this, these winged wonders were recently declared to be endangered as their numbers are dropping throughout their range. As a result, our conservationists are always thrilled to see one on a camera trap like this!



Fox

The crafty fox! Unfortunately for this rabbit, foxes are fantastic hunters and have a deadly combination of speed, intelligence, patience and adaptability. They often hunt using ambush tactics and will chase prey like rabbits in a zigzag pattern to make it harder for them to escape. During the spring, this little rabbit will provide vital food for a fox's growing cubs.



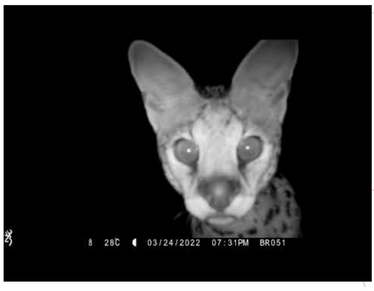
Baby badgers

It's a baby badger bonanza! How many can you spot?? It's so wonderful to see these animals thriving on the Chester Zoo estate. Our conservationists are helping to create and manage habitats for native wildlife like badgers on our estate and across the UK!



Leopard

Stalking through Murchison Falls National Park in Uganda, this magnificent leopard was likely on the lookout for its next meal before purrfectly posing in front of our camera trap. Our camera trapping work across Uganda is providing vital information on this incredible country's wildlife, and the diversity and beauty of animals there never ceases to amaze!



Serval

Check out those ears! This serval's huge ears will help to precisely pinpoint its prey, even on the darkest of nights like this one in Murchison Falls National Park. They also have the longest legs in proportion to body size among all cats, meaning they can jump up to a massive 10 feet to catch their prey!

Camera Trap Fact

Despite the name, there's no trapping involved! The cameras are simply left in a secret spot and sense when there's some movement or animal action in the surrounding area, helping us capture magic little moments like these.



WILD & WONDERFUL UK

As a major conservation charity with projects all over the globe, we wanted to shine a spotlight on the incredible work our teams and local community are doing right here on our doorstep!

With the UK being one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, connecting people with their patch of the planet and inspiring activism to protect our natural world has never been more important.

From reintroducing rare native plants to adding some augmented reality rambles to the Chester landscape, here's a roundup of our wild work, right here on home soil!

Nature Recovery CORRIDOR

Wild Wander is our exciting new app that has been designed to connect people with nature through the digital world. The app allows users to explore four trails in the zoo's Nature Recovery Corridor like never before: thriving with beautifully animated local species in augmented reality – think Pokémon Go for the great outdoors.

Working closely with a vast array of local people, community groups, schools, and fellow wildlife charities, the Nature Recovery Corridor has so far successfully brought a 15 square mile area – that's 25,000 football pitches – across Chester back to life: creating, restoring, and managing habitats, clearing invasive species and adding homes for our precious native wildlife.

The project is just entering a new phase, with the team aiming to eventually rewild across an astonishing 60 square mile area in Chester. That's over half the size of Edinburgh worth of improved landscape for people and wildlife to enjoy!



You can **DOWNLOAD** the app *from the* App Store or Google Play store today and take a walk on the **WILD SIDE** – you never know what hidden wild gems you might discover!

Download from Apple Store >

Download from Google Play >



Water Works

The floating water plantain (Luronium natans) is a rare native plant found in shallow waters which has sadly disappeared from the Rochdale Canal network over the years. It's a vital piece of the ecosystem as it reduces the impact of climate change and together with the Canal and River Trust we've been working to propagate and reintroduce this aquatic super species back to the canal network.

Alongside our work in Rochdale, we're also trialling the restoration of sea holly on the Dee Estuary, in partnership with the Cheshire Wildlife Trust. Sea holly is a critical food plant for the small grayling butterfly, a species which has experienced a rapid decline in population over the years and will hopefully begin to flourish again.



Hedgehog WATCH

Across Cheshire, people are joining our team of Citizen Scientists, installing their very own garden camera traps to document species and help with our hedgehog watch. The project has so far shown a hedgehog sighting rate of about 50% in 2021 and 38% in 2022. Hedgehogs are declining across the UK because of many different problems – destruction and damaging of their habitat and intense farming are two of the main culprits.

Chester Zoo Conservation Scholar and PhD student, Kelly Hitchcock, is using this vital citizen science data to predict where hedgehogs, foxes, and badgers are found and how they spend their time to help protect these charismatic mammals and identify small-scale garden features that can encourage and support hedgehogs and other wildlife to thrive again!

Discover more and become a citizen scientist >





Harvest MICE

These tiny mammals weigh less than a 2p coin and are one of the most elusive creatures around! Despite their tiny size they play a major role in the ecosystem, primarily as a food source for many native predators. They are a conservation concern in the UK as the species has continued to undergo significant declines in recent years, due to habitat loss and intensive agriculture.

Conservationists at Chester Zoo setup an experimental breed and release programme for harvest mice back at the turn of the millennium to help reintroduce 960 harvest mice between 2002–2004 to help save the vulnerable species from extinction.

Now, 20 years later, new data has confirmed the descendants of those harvest mice are now thriving in and around the zoo's nature reserve, with their descendants bucking the national declining trends. In and around the zoo's 14 hectacre nature corridor, harvest mice breeding nests have been found up to 1.5 km away from where they were reintroduced back in 2002 which is a huge win for these little local treasures.

INTO THE NIGHT

Exclusive after-hours access, thrilling live entertainment and delicious food and drink

Select dates June, July & August

Find out more >





Adult Only Evenings

Experience the zoo in a whole new light and enjoy a relaxed, child-free atmosphere!

BOOK NOW



Family Evenings

Join us for a fun-filled evening for all the family and get full after-hours access to the zoo.

BOOK NOW



The Luna Cinema

For the first time ever, all your favourite animals and movies in one place.

BOOK NOW

CHESTER ZOO



MEMBERS UPDATES

During 2023 our popular Members Days will have an added twist, with each one having its own theme. Coinciding with wildlife awareness days, there will be some extra surprises waiting for you and your guests! The next three upcoming Members Days are:

Giraffes theme



Elephant theme



Islands theme



FREE for members and bring up to four non members for 50% off

Book now ›

Zoo Ranger TALKS

Have you met our knowledgeable team of Zoo Rangers?

Our Zoo Ranger are at the zoo every day to share an exciting programme of talks and activities for adults and kids alike! Our programme changes throughout the year so check the website for the latest timetable. Did you know we also have extra activities running to celebrate world animal days? Check out our upcoming dates below!

World Giraffe Day

21 June

Join us at the giraffe habitat throughout the day to learn more about our tallest residents!

World Snake Day

16 July

We'll be slithering over to our snake habitats across the zoo to share fascinating facts about snakes from across the world!

World Elephant Day

12 August

We'll be spending the day at our elephant habitat to celebrate World Elephant Day.





Action Indonesia Day

13 August

On 13 August we celebrate not one, but four fantastic animals – banteng, babirusa, anoa and the Sumatran tiger!

International Orangutan Day

19 August

Did you know we have two species of orangutan at the zoo? Join us in Realm of the Red Ape and Monsoon Forest to find out more about them.

Whale Shark Day

30 August

We're shining a spotlight on the world's largest shark for Whale Shark Day! Join us at Planet Shark: Predator or Prey, our brand new 'out of water' shark experience!

WILDLIFE CONNECTIONS FESTIVAL

Get closer to nature than ever before at our FREE **Wildlife Connections Festival** on **16 and 17 September 2023**. We have two jam-packed days filled with amazing activities that will have you enthralled by the wildlife found right on our doorstep, all set in our stunning Nature Reserve.

JOIN US for nature walks, craft activities, children's shows, special guests and much, much **MORE!**



CHESTER ZOO



experiences at CHESTER ZOO

As a **member**, we know **you love exploring the zoo!** Now, get closer than **ever before** with a **Chester Zoo Experience!**

There's an Experience for everybody, but we've handpicked four of our favourites to share with you in this edition of Our Zoo.

Islands Adventure



You've explored Monsoon Forest from the ground, now experience the jungles of South East Asia from *high up* in its rooftop canopy!

You'll get to watch from the best view in the zoo as you join our zoo keepers for enrichment time with the Sumatran orangutans. You'll continue your adventure by meeting the Goodfellow's tree kangaroo before feeding the Visayan warty pigs, and Prevost's squirrels their lunch.

£425 for 2 people (£500 for non members)
Suitable for ages 16+

Book now >



Fruit Bat Experience

If you enjoy visiting Fruit Bat Forest, you'll love our new Fruit Bat Experience.

You'll see our bats in a whole new light with your own handheld red light to illuminate all the action. This is practically invisible to the bats but will give you a perfect view as you hand feed our Seba's short-tailed fruit bats their favourite meal, a ripe banana!

£63 each (£75 for non members)
Maximum of 4 people per Experience
Suitable for ages 8+

Book now >

SECRET LIFE OF THE ZOO TOUR

Start your day in a truly unique way as you explore the zoo on a private guided tour. You'll be the first visitors in the zoo as you board our electric tour bus and enjoy 90 minutes of the zoo all to yourself! Our zoo experts will ensure your tour is jam-packed with stops at your favourite animals.

You might even bump into some of the stars from the show (animal and human)!

£55.25 per adult, £46.75 per child (£65 and £55 for non members)
Maximum of 20 people per Tour
Suitable for ages 4+

Book now >





Giraffe Experience

Meet the world's tallest land animal, the Rothschild's giraffe at head height in this once in a lifetime Giraffe Experience. Join a zoo keeper on an exclusive viewing platform to feed the giraffes their favourite food: browse!

Our giraffe experts will share exciting updates about this gentle giant from both here at the zoo and from our teams in the field, plus you'll be able to ask them any questions you have too.

£165.75 each (£195 for non members)
Maximum of 3 people per Experience
Suitable for ages 11+

Book now >

experiences at CHESTER ZOO

Thanks for helping us to prevent extinction!

We're working to prevent extinction through our conservation, education and research work – here at the zoo, across the UK and in 19 countries around the world. The funds from all Chester Zoo Experiences help us to make this work possible. Thank you!

Zoo members now **get 15% off** all Chester Zoo Experiences.

Email our Experiences Team today to book.

CHESTER ZOO



In May we were delighted to officially open The Square, our brand new luxury venue here at the zoo. This was the culmination of a three-year project to restore the Grade II listed stable block, which has stood at the heart of the zoo since it opened in 1931.



Steeped in zoo history, the original structures that make up The Square once housed some of the first animals brought here by our founder George Mottershead, including lions, bears and chimpanzees. Now, the historic building offers a unique setting for weddings, corporate events and meetings.

Check out the exclusive video below, as our **CEO Jamie Christon** shares a fascinating look inside this stunning space.

THE SQUARE





To book, find out more or to enquire about a wedding or event at The Square visit:

www.chesterzoo.org/thesquare

CHESTER ZOO



Junior Programme

Discover, explore, share and learn

We've got a jam-packed programme of clubs and activities to suit every future conservationist!

BOOK YOUR PLACE >

Places are limited and often get snapped up fast, so make sure you book soon to avoid disappointment!

2023 PROGRAMME

We've got a huge programme of events for 2023. With activities for ages 0 – 17, there is something for every future conservationist.

CONSERVATION TOTS under 5's

MINI RANGERS school years 1-3

JUNIOR RANGERS school years 4-6

JUNIOR CONSERVATIONISTS school years 7-9

YOUNG CONSERVATIONISTS school years 10-12



Conservation Tots

Conservation Tots Mornings – under 5's

Calling mums, dads, grannies, grandads, families and little tot minders – bring your little tot to the zoo to play games, explore and have messy fun! Join us for our conservation tots sessions for lots of EXCITING activities on Wednesday mornings.

Tiny Tots (up to 1 year old) >

Toddler Tots (1-5 years old) >



Mini Rangers – school years 1-3

Do you know a trainee conservationist in primary school years 1-3?
Join in with our Mini Rangers as we explore and learn at the zoo!

Mini Ranger Explorer Camps

Our themed Mini Ranger Explorer Camps last two hours and are packed full of fun, games and adventure:

BOOKING OPENING SOON

Hold the date for our Mini Ranger Winter Comps 17 or 18 December – on sale in September 2023*

Mini Ranger Holiday Clubs

Our three day holiday activity club is perfect for young animal lovers and conservationists of the future. We've got four dates to choose from:

25 – 27 July SOLD OUT

8 – 10 August

21 – 24 August

Junior Rangers – school years 4-6

Our Junior Ranger activities are perfect for children who are currently in primary school years 4-6.

Junior Ranger Explorer Camps

Join us for a mini adventure into seasonal topics. Each one-off session lasts two hours and is packed full of fun, games and activities:

BOOKING OPENING SOON

Hold the date for our Junior Ranger Christmas Camp 17 or 18 December – on sale in September 2023*



Junior Ranger Camp

Do you love wildlife? Are you a member of the zoo? If so, Junior Rangers will be perfect for you!

Junior Ranger Camps run every Sunday for FIVE weeks. Each week we explore different parts of the zoo and learn about our amazing animals and incredible conservation work.

Camp 4 11 June - 9 July

BOOK NOW >

Camp 5 24 September - 22 October

BOOK NOW >

Camp 6 5 November - 3 December

BOOK NOW >

Junior Ranger Holiday Club

Our 3 day holiday activity club is perfect for young animal lovers and future conservationists. We've got 3 dates to choose from.

25 – 27 July

8 – 10 August

22 – 24 August

BOOK NOW >



Junior Conservationists – school years 7-9

Is your trainee conservationist in secondary school years 7-9? Join us for our Junior Conservationist activities to learn how we prevent extinction!

Junior Conservationists Skills Courses

Our skills courses are the perfect opportunity to gain practical insight into different methods, tools and skills used in the field and in the zoo.

Hormonal and Genetics Skills Course

Learn the theory and explore the use of science at the zoo.

Date: Every Saturday for three weeks:
17 June – 1 July 10:30am-12:30pm

BOOK NOW >

Conservation Presenter Skills Course

Learn new skills, increase your confidence, build your animal knowledge and have the chance to present your own animal talk to zoo visitors!

Date: Every Saturday for three weeks:
30 September – 14 October 1.30pm-3.30pm

BOOK NOW >

Junior Conservationists Holiday Course

Perfect for Junior Conservationists with an interest in learning more about how we prevent extinction around the world and those considering a career in conservation! During our three day Junior Conservationists Holiday Course, we'll be mixing games and activities with deeper exploration of conservation topics.

Our holiday course will be running twice! Choose from 1-3 August OR 15- 17 August

BOOK NOW >

Young Conservationists – school years 10-12

Our Young Conservationists activities for secondary school years 10-12 are great for future conservationists that are interested in learning more about the work of the zoo and exploring conservation careers.

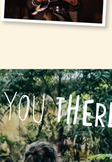
Zoo Keeper Career Day

Our popular Zoo Keeper Career Day is returning in 2023! Are you thinking about becoming a Zoo Keeper? This event is a unique opportunity for young people aged 14-17 to get hands on at the zoo, build skills and hear fascinating talks and insights from our zoo experts.

2 June OR 27 October

BOOK NOW >

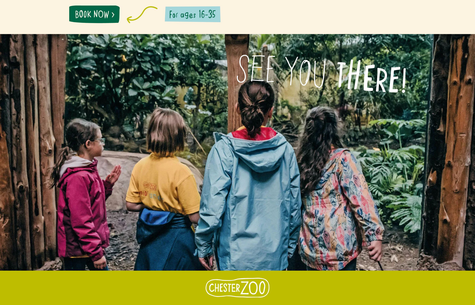




Chester Zoo Youth Symposium

The Chester Zoo Youth Symposium will be returning again this year on Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 October 2023. Once again, we are inviting young people (aged 16-35) from across the country to share their experiences, knowledge and passion for conservation!

BOOK NOW > for ages 16-35



CHESTER ZOO

Lanterns and Light

WILD WORLDS
BROUGHT TO LIFE

CHESTER ZOO

PRODUCED BY SONY MUSIC

17 NOVEMBER - 31 DECEMBER

TICKETS ON SALE EXCLUSIVELY FOR MEMBERS FROM 28 JUNE



Unlocking the POWER of collaboration

A NEW FRONTIER

At Chester Zoo, we believe that working together is the key to making a real difference for wildlife and conservation.

That's why we are thrilled to partner with Frontier Developments, the creators of the popular zoo simulation video game, Planet Zoo, to help raise funds and awareness for our conservation efforts.

To celebrate the launch of their new Tropical pack, which features species we care for here at the zoo, **PLANET ZOO** hosted a charity livestream. Why not take a look?

WATCH THE LIVESTREAM >

The livestream showcased exclusive footage of red river hogs and fossas here at the zoo, alongside a live interview with Chester Zoo conservation experts Zoë White, Reporting Officer & Conservation Scholar, and Sam Davies, Giraffe Keeper.

The Planet Zoo team were able to educate, inspire and engage their digital and gaming communities by giving them access to our zoo expertise, behind the scenes footage and conservation insights. This was a unique opportunity for us to connect with a new and diverse audience, and to engage them in our mission to prevent extinction. Thanks to the support of Planet Zoo and their community, we were able to raise vital funds to help protect some of the most threatened species on the planet.

We are proud and thrilled that the live stream helped spread awareness about the critical work we do both at the zoo and our conservation projects around the world. This event was a testament to the power of collaboration, and the positive impact it can have on important causes.

If you work for, or know of a business that might want to have a chat about unlocking innovative ways to fundraise with us, please get in touch with us.



Pass on a wild legacy

As a charity, we rely on kind donations and gifts in wills to enable us to carry out our vital conservation work. Leaving Chester Zoo a gift in your will is a great way to ensure that wildlife around the world continues to thrive and survive. You are truly helping to make a difference for future generations - a legacy in all senses of the word.

We have teamed up with a free will writing service, Guardian Angel, to offer you the chance to create a will. While you don't have to include a gift to Chester Zoo, we hope that as supporters of our work, it's something that you may consider. Please contact our fundraising team if it is something you would like to discuss or click here to create your will today.



Thank you to all our corporate partners

Only by working together as one big community can we make positive changes, and we're excited to see what the future brings as we work to prevent extinction all over the world.

CHESTER ZOO

THANKS TO YOU

It’s thanks to your support, we’re able to work ALL over the world to protect endangered wildlife and we’re delighted to share more of the great work we do through Our Zoo. We’re always looking for ways to improve how we deliver you exciting behind the scenes content and stories. If there is anything you would like to see featured in Our Zoo or for general membership and adoption enquiries we’d love to hear from you.

GET IN TOUCH

PREVIOUS ISSUES







Alif’s upper eye markings are more joined together.



Raya has three distinctive vertical lines above each eye.



Dr Leah Williams

Lead Conservation Scientist

The animals and plants we care for here at Chester Zoo contribute to the conservation of their species in many different ways. The one you might be most familiar with is as an ‘insurance’ population. By keeping the species alive and well across zoos and aquariums ensures they continue to exist even if the worst happens, and their wild counterparts become extinct. Therefore, it is important to ensure that these zoo populations can sustain themselves and thrive into the future. To do this, we carefully manage conservation breeding programmes across zoos in Europe through endangered species breeding programmes (known as EEPs) which are coordinated through EAZA (the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria).

Each breeding programme has a coordinator, who along with a team of experts, maintains the population of their species by communicating regularly with each zoo giving recommendations for who should breed with who, and which animals should move between zoos, like Dobby just has. Zoos don’t ‘own’ these animals, they follow the instructions of the coordinator to breed, maintain, or move them, this is part of a huge collaborative effort involving over 300 zoos across Europe. Here at Chester Zoo our staff coordinate over 15 conservation breeding programmes and the animals at the zoo contribute to over 100 more. We’re confident that Dobby will go on to play an important role in the future of the aardvark conservation breeding programme.

CLOSE