OUR ZOO

CHESTER ZOO

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

START EXPLORING >

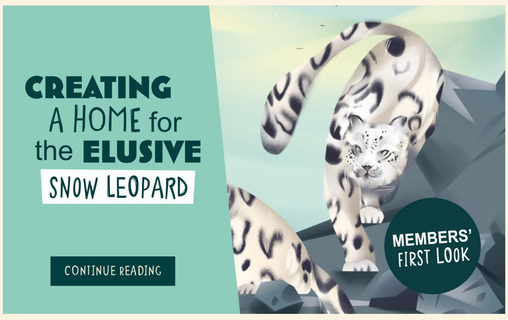
Highlights

Stepping into autumn here at the zoo brings a **new season of Halloween treats** and **exciting events and animal updates** for you to explore. Take a peek behind the scenes in our **top secret rare species area** and **discover all that's new at the zoo for you**.

WELCOME

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

CONTINUE READING



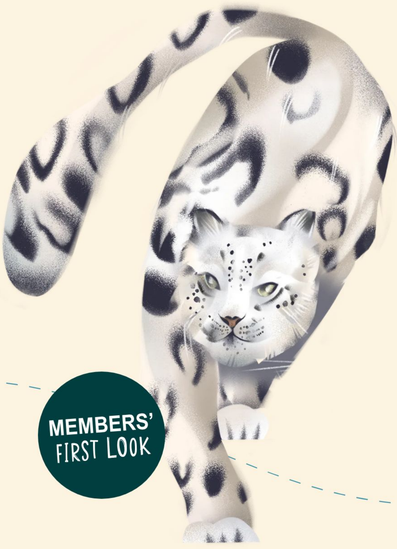
Join us *as we* ENTER into AUTUMN *here at* the zoo

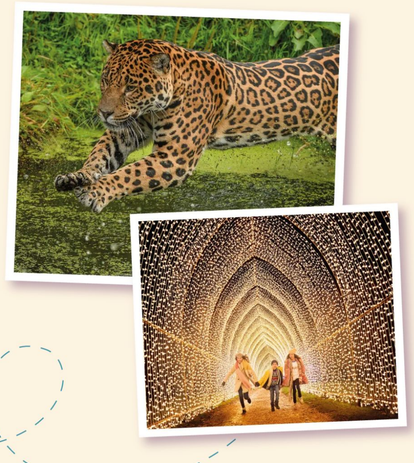
While there's always so much to discover and lots to enjoy during a visit to our zoo, not everyone may be aware of the incredible work that also takes place behind-the-scenes here – lots of which many people never get to see. In this issue of Our Zoo, we wanted to lift the curtain on just a few of these areas and projects, giving you a special glimpse of life outside of the zoo's public perimeter.

FOREFRONT *of* GLOBAL CONSERVATION

One particularly exciting project is the development of our new habitat for critically endangered **snow leopards, which is due to open in spring 2024**. Join us for an **exclusive in-depth look** at how the work to create the new habitat is progressing and find out about the special features we're incorporating to mimic the natural environment that this **spectacular species lives in**. We're also sharing a sneak peek into the secret world of some of the **rarest and most endangered species** we care for here at the zoo – weird and wonderful animals which can be found in an unlikely home inside a series of specially converted shipping containers. It's this variety of projects and species that ensure we're always at the forefront of global conservation, and we hope will **inspire the conservationist that lives inside each of you.**

There are so many great minds that contribute to our conservation efforts and the **care of the 27,000 animals** that the zoo is home to and you can meet a handful of them right here in this issue. In our latest **Zoo Tales podcast, hear from Dr Leah Williams**, one of our Lead Conservation Scientists, about the fascinating world of bioacoustics and the vital work we're carrying out in the field of population biology.





EXCLUSIVE STORIES

We also follow our resident vets as they share an **insider's look at Napo the jaguar's** recent emergency surgery and exactly what it takes to make it as a vet in one of the world's leading conservation zoos.

As we find ourselves entering autumn, **Halloween** is just around the corner and, as always, we'll be offering a spooky spin on your usual trip to the zoo with something for all ages to get involved with in our Luna's Legendary Creature trail. And looking forward to the Christmas festivities that are around the corner, we're delighted to share that our new and immersive **Lanterns and Light experience** is now open to book, with a host of brand-new light and sound installations that'll immerse you in festive magic.

I hope you enjoy the range of exclusive stories we've brought together for you and we look forward to **welcoming you back to the zoo** after what's been a busy and fun-filled summer.

It's this variety of projects and species that ensure we're always at the forefront of global conservation, and we hope will inspire the conservationist that lives inside each of you.

Jamie Christon DL, CEO

START EXPLORING >

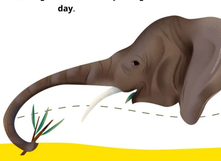
The next CHAPTER IN AUNG BO's STORY

After 11 years here with us at Chester Zoo, we'll soon be waving off Aung Bo, our 22-year-old male Asian elephant. In the wild, bull elephants naturally move between herds for breeding purposes, and the European Endangered Species Programme (EEP) we're part of replicate this.

We'll be able to reveal where Aung Bo is moving to in a future issue, as preparations are still being made. But before he heads off to his new home, we want to celebrate Aung Bo's life at the zoo, and let you in on what it takes to get such a big elephant from A to B.

JUST HOW BIG is he?

Asian elephants aren't called ***'Elephas maximus'*** for nothing! They're one of the largest land animals in the world. **Aung Bo** weighs **over 5,000kg**, and needs nearly **200kg of food a day**.



Getting to know the girls

AUNG BO'S LIFE SO FAR

Aung Bo has spent half his life with us at Chester Zoo, after moving here from an animal reserve in Seville in 2012. Since then, we've watched him grow up, and seen his personality shine. He's very calm, getting on amazingly with the elephants and keepers alike. The whole team feels lucky to be able to care for him.

Before coming to us, Aung Bo had been living with other bull elephants since he was seven years old, so it was a while since he'd been around females. He had to learn how to behave around them now that he was a male of breeding age, so he could establish his dominance. Some of the more experienced elephants stepped in to show him the ropes, letting him know when he wasn't getting it quite right and helping him feel comfortable around the herd.

DAD to the RESCUE

Aung Bo has since become a dad five times! Sadly, two of his calves passed away from a virus called EEHV, which is a real threat for elephants all over the world. Work on a vaccine is still ongoing, so when Indali, one of Aung Bo's daughters, also fell ill with EEHV, everyone at the zoo was worried. But, experts were able to save her life with Aung Bo's help. As his blood type matched Indali's, he could give blood plasma transfusions to help her fight the virus. Her recovery is a rare miracle, and Aung Bo played a big part in this.

SO, WHY THE MOVE?

Herds change as elephants grow up. Aung Bo's oldest daughter is now showing signs of hormonal activity, and when this happens we need to keep them separate. It's important for our commitment to the EEP, and preserving the broad genetic variation of Asian elephants living in conservation zoos.

Some of our eagle-eyed visitors may have already spotted AUNG BO's crate.

2023 CHESTER ZOO DEPARTURE

MOVING such a HUGE ELEPHANT is no SMALL FEAT

A lot of prep has to happen before Aung Bo is ready to move.

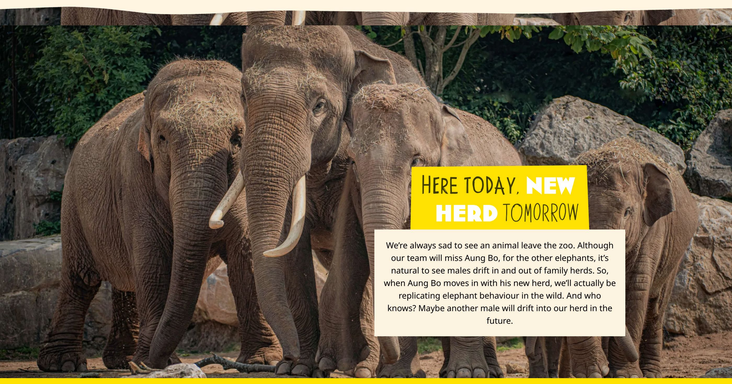
He'll make the journey in a special crate to keep him safe. So he's used to it when the big day comes, Aung Bo has already been getting to know his crate here at the zoo, enjoying some of his favourite foods inside. He's a very confident and inquisitive elephant, so was quick to start exploring!

We'll also train him on the whole moving process, making sure he's comfortable with each step when the time comes.

Members of the team at his new zoo will also spend time at Chester to learn all things Aung Bo, from his likes right down to his subtlest tells.

THE BIG DAY

The **whole Chester Zoo elephant team** will muck in when Aung Bo is ready to make his move, with one of our keepers by his side **all the way to his new home**. They'll also stay a few days, making sure he has a familiar face around while he **settles in with his new family.**



HERE TODAY, NEW HERD TOMORROW

We're always sad to see an animal leave the zoo. Although our team will miss Aung Bo, for the other elephants, it's natural to see males drift in and out of family herds. So, when Aung Bo moves in with his new herd, we'll actually be replicating elephant behaviour in the wild. And who knows? Maybe another male will drift into our herd in the future.

CREATING A HOME for the ELUSIVE SNOW LEOPARD

MEMBERS' FIRST LOOK

The countdown is well and truly on as work continues to create our much-anticipated snow leopard habitat here at the zoo, where you'll be able to come nose-to-nose with these majestic, mysterious predators for the first time.

The ambitious Himalayan-themed habitat is due to open in spring 2024 and our design and construction teams are busy bringing the rugged, mountainous home of the snow leopard to life. Two of these striking cats will be joining us as part of the vital global conservation breeding programme, focused on protecting the species from extinction for future generations.

POWER PREDATORS

The snow leopard's habitat range extends across the mountainous regions of 12 countries across Asia, from Afghanistan to Russia. The total range covers an area of close to 772,204 square miles, with 60% of the habitat found in China.

Snow leopards have evolved to live and hunt in some of the harshest conditions on the planet. Their thick white-grey coat is spotted with large black rosettes which blend in perfectly with Asia's steep, mountainous terrain. They are sometimes referred to as the "ghost of the mountains" because of their incredible natural camouflage. These top carnivores ambush their prey from above before pursuing them in steep mountain chases.

Their extra-long tails help the big cats balance as they descend rugged terrain, hunting animals such as sheep and ibex or smaller catches like voles and hares. Their super strong shorter front limbs and long hind legs can launch them up to six times the length of their own body, making them the most powerful predators around.

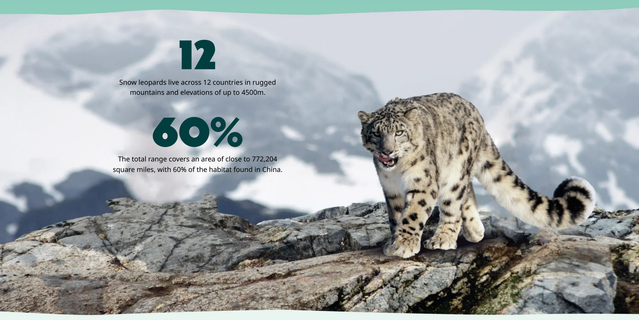
They are also a tactile and affectionate species who love to take part in social licking, greeting ceremonies and close contact. Like other cats, mothers and their young cubs can often be found sharing head rubs, licks and plenty of nuzzles. The cubs will stay close to mum up until they are around 18-22 months old, which means female snow leopards will only mate every other year. This extended time together compared to other big cats helps mum to protect her young in some of the harshest living conditions on the planet.

12

Snow leopards live across 12 countries in rugged mountains and elevations of up to 4500m.

60%

The total range covers an area of close to 772,204 square miles, with 60% of the habitat found in China.



DESIGN DETAILS

Recreating the **snow leopard's Himalayan home** here at the zoo has been years in the planning, with many of our teams collaborating to create an **authentic and wild experience for the new residents**. Their native home is under threat from a range of factors, including climate change as their snow-covered habitat in the Himalayas warms at three times the global average. Through the new habitat and experience, **with the help of interactive displays**, we want to educate and empower everyone on how we can all reduce our personal impact on climate change and **help the species to thrive in the wild** once again.

IN THE WORKS

As part of the ambitious designs here at the zoo, there will be **two large outdoor areas** featuring rocky outcrops, shallow cave retreats, ledges and steep rugged features, **representative of their Himalayan home.**

Having overhangs under which the **snow leopards** can mark their scent is key to recreating the wild experience. In their native home, upper surfaces are often covered with snow and using the **underside of a ledge helps to preserve the scent message** for much longer.

Air-cooled caves will **bring you nose-to-nose** with the snow leopards while providing shelter and a cool place for the big cats when the weather is warm outside. The cooler temperatures in these caves are designed to **replicate the climate of their high, mountainous habitat** as closely as possible.

A huge thank you to **Wienerberger UK** who have kindly donated over 600 tonnes of scree and rocks to build this unique habitat. This generous donation is essential to creating an **authentic** and **enriching** space for these magnificent animals.

A WILD WELCOME

NUBRA

Female snow leopard will be joining us from **Krefeld Zoo** in Germany.

YASHIN

Male snow leopard and will be making the short trip from **Highland Wildlife Park** in Scotland.

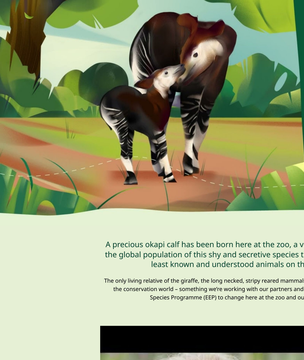
EVERY VISIT COUNTS towards CONSERVATION

Snow leopards are threatened with extinction, with their population rapidly declining. Right now the IUCN estimates there are only between 2,710 and 3,386 snow leopards left in the wild.

By caring for snow leopards here in our new habitat, we will be helping to preserve the future of this species. Our teams are also investigating the best ways we can champion projects that support snow leopard populations in the wild, helping the species not only to survive but to thrive in the future.

You can keep your **EYES PEELED** for MORE UPDATES in future issues and over on our website as we GET CLOSER to the **BIG REVEAL** next year!

CHESTER ZOO



‘FOREST GIRAFFE’ *joins the* FAMILY

A precious okapi calf has been born here at the zoo, a vital new milestone for the global population of this shy and secretive species that are still one of the least known and understood animals on the planet.

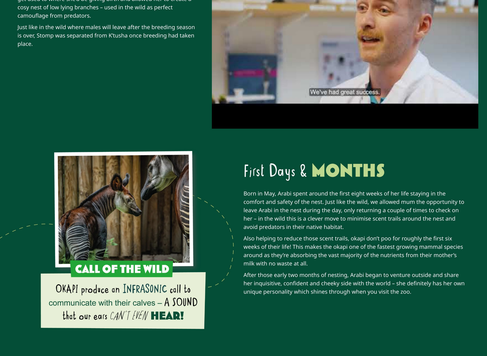
The only living relative of the giraffe, the long necked, stripy reared mammals are still much of a mystery in the conservation world – something we’re working with our partners and the European Endangered Species Programme (EEP) to change here at the zoo and out in the field.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE...

The calf is called Arabi after a village located in the Okapi Wildlife Reserve in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in central Africa. This reserve is where our conservation partners are working hard to preserve the species in the only country on the planet where they can be found.

Found deep in the DRC, for years the okapi baffled animal experts who couldn’t figure out the animal they are closely related to. Their velvety fur and stripes meant when okapi skins were sent back to the British Museum in the early twentieth century they were wrongly identified as a new species of zebra.

Officially discovered in **1901**, *they were only finally* linked to the GIRAFFE FAMILY because of their elongated necks, long tongues and distinctive ossicones found on **MALE OKAPI** *(the covered BONE on their HEAD).*



PREGNANCY FACT

OKAPI have long pregnancies lasting for up to **450 DAYS**, with mothers *giving birth to a* SINGLE CALF.

THE MATING GAME

Mum K’tusha (10) and dad Stomp (20) were picked out as a match for breeding by Antwerp Zoo who coordinate the European Endangered Species breeding Programme (**EEP**) for all okapi.

The pair live separately here at the zoo throughout the year and then come together during the breeding season in the hope of new offspring. They can communicate with each other through a fence, and this is how the team can look out for behaviours and vital clues that K’tusha may be ready to mate.

Stomp could be seen confidently patrolling on the other side of the fence, with lots of chuffing going on! This is a type of vocalisation that okapis use to communicate with each other and is also heard when a mum wants to interact with her calf.

Poo samples and testing from our EXPERT endocrinology team *can also help us to* identify the best times for BREEDING *and increase the chances of a* **SUCCESSFUL** season.

Once the team were confident that the timing was right and K’tusha was ready, the two were then brought together to mate! When K’tusha’s pregnancy was confirmed she was moved into her own nesting habitat in the main okapi house, where she could settle in and stay safely until she gave birth. This gave her plenty of time to get used to where she’d be giving birth and allowed her to create a cosy nest of low lying branches – used in the wild as perfect camouflage from predators.

Just like in the wild where males will leave after the breeding season is over, Stomp was separated from K’tusha once breeding had taken place.

CALL OF THE WILD

OKAPI produce an INFRASONIC call to communicate with their calves – A SOUND that our ears *CAN’T EVEN* **HEAR!**

First Days & MONTHS

Born in May, Arabi spent around the first eight weeks of her life staying in the comfort and safety of the nest. Just like the wild, we allowed mum the opportunity to leave Arabi in the nest during the day, only returning a couple of times to check on her – in the wild this is a clever move to minimise scent trails around the nest and avoid predators in their native habitat.

Also helping to reduce those scent trails, okapi don’t poo for roughly the first six weeks of their life! This makes the okapi one of the fastest growing mammal species around as they’re absorbing the vast majority of the nutrients from their mother’s milk with no waste at all.

After those early two months of nesting, Arabi began to venture outside and share her inquisitive, confident and cheeky side with the world – she definitely has her own unique personality which shines through when you visit the zoo.

FIELD WORK

“The okapi is the national symbol for the DRC and is ***protected under Congolese law****. However, habitat loss, hunting for their meat and prolonged periods of conflict in the country make* ***conservation initiatives in the wild incredibly challenging*** *and dangerous. But despite that, we’ve been supporting okapi conservation in the region for nearly 20 years and are now part of a global 10-year long project, in collaboration with the IUCN, to develop an action plan and investigate ways that* ***we can help the last remaining populations thrive.***

“We’ve been a long-term funder of the Okapi Conservation Foundation Project, located in the Ituri Forest in the DRC, which is ***refreshing important okapi habitat*** *and helping to protect the existing populations and ensure their continued survival.”*

Mike Jordan Animal and Plant Director

OKAPI EXPERIENCE!

Get even closer to OUR OKAPI!

Join our okapi experts for feeding time with the ‘forest giraffe’ in our Okapi Experience! Watch up close as they use their prehensile tongue just like a monkey uses its tail, and learn all about the work we do in the field to conserve this endangered species.

At the end of your Experience, you’ll leave with an exclusive gift, a personalised certificate and memories to last a lifetime!

BOOK NOW ›

CHESTER ZOO

NAPO'S LIFE SAVING OPERATION

80KG POWER predator NAPO

From a delicate dart frog check up to treating a five-tonne Asian elephant, no two days are the same for our resident zoo vets. When Napo the jaguar recently had a health emergency, the team were called in for a big cat rescue mission that put their fast-acting skills to the test.

We spoke to our resident vets about exactly what it takes to become part of the team and how they overcame the on-the-ground challenges of treating an 80kg power predator like Napo!

Resident male jaguar Napo began to seem off-colour and uncomfortable, so the keepers immediately brought in the vets to investigate further. Napo was anaesthetised so that X-rays could be performed, which showed that his abdomen was full of gas and fluid, with food blocking his digestive tract and an obvious twist in his stomach that needed expert attention.

"The main **logistical consideration** *was how to get an ANAESTHETISED* **80kg JAGUAR** *from his home in* **Spirit of the Jaguar** *area and into the Animal Health Centre* **SAFELY WITHOUT HIM WAKING UP.***"*

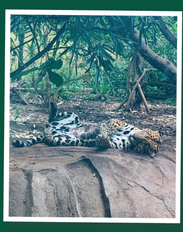
Ian Ashpole – Veterinary Officer

EXPERTS *at* WORK

The team knew that Napo had a serious surgical condition that needed treatment and a plan was made for abdominal surgery. His intestine was opened up to remove the obstruction and then his stomach could be untwisted. There was also a lot of gas and fluid to be removed which was a big part of why Napo had become so sick and uncomfortable.

The surgery itself took around an hour and a half, but with the diagnostic tests and the logistics of moving Napo to and from his habitat, he was under anaesthetic for four hours. A huge team effort kept him safely asleep throughout!

It took four vets and a nurse working on Napo to bring him through the surgery, including a specialist animal surgeon from the University of Liverpool. This level of expertise allowed the team to perform the procedure as quickly as possible to minimise the anaesthetic time and give him the best chance of a smooth recovery.



ROAD *to* RECOVERY

Thanks to our team of super vets and nurses, Napo made a speedy return to normal life. After a couple of weeks of softer food, along with pain relief and antibiotics, he was back to his usual self, and was even showing off his scar to visitors with some tummy rolls just days after the surgery!

"We kept him in his den initially, so he did not put too much strain on the abdominal incision. We then gradually increased the space he had once he was more mobile and the keepers tried to keep him busy and distracted to stop him licking his wound and causing a problem."

Gabby Drake – Veterinary Officer

BECOMING A ZOO VET

There are a few ways to become a zoo vet, and they all take hard work and a good dose of perseverance. The most recognised way is to graduate from university veterinary school and then take on further training and exams to become a recognised specialist in zoo medicine. The competition can be fierce and full-time vet jobs at large international zoos are in short supply, so most aspiring zoo vets spend lots of time volunteering at zoos to gain experience before applying for internships and residency programmes, such as the European College of Zoological Medicine programme which we run here at Chester Zoo.

Vets' Daily To-Do List

Discuss active cases and make a rough plan of the animals we're planning to see and what needs doing. These best laid plans often change throughout the day due to new cases cropping up or unexpected challenges like Napo that we can't predict!

Oversee any animal moves in and out of the zoo.

Review pathology records.

Carry out research projects.

Assist with the zoo's field programme partners.

DEALING WITH DANGER

When it comes to some of the more dangerous or larger zoo residents, our vets have to think on their feet and figure out different ways of doing what they need to do for everyone's safety and wellbeing. Our keeping staff are trained to safely handle venomous snakes and when it comes to large animals like elephants and rhinos, they are usually handled in protected contact areas which reduce our vets' direct contact with the conscious animals. Lions and great apes, for example, can only be examined properly when they're fully anaesthetised for obvious reasons! Quite a lot of check ups are also carried out visually or even with binoculars to avoid upsetting some of the more delicate animals.

As you can see, no two days are ever the same for our resident vets, and with such a variety of animals to take care of, they really are the behind-the-scenes heroes that keep all of our residents, great and small, thriving!

Keep your eyes peeled next time you visit the zoo for our newest addition, a rare black jaguar, Inka. The two-year-old female joined us from The Big Cat Sanctuary in Kent having been carefully selected as a fitting companion for Napo. She's also helping us to support the European-wide programme that's working to ensure a genetically healthy insurance population of jaguars for the future.

INKA a rare BLACK JAGUAR

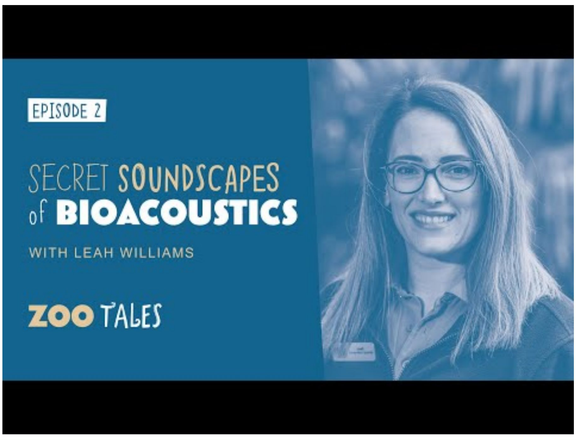
CHESTER ZOO

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.



EPISODE 2

Lead Conservation Scientist, Dr Leah Willams, joins us for the second episode of the Zoo Tales podcast. We dive behind the scenes at the zoo as we discover all about the fascinating world of **population biology** and the secret soundscapes of bioacoustics.

Leah shares just how closely linked the work of zoos is to wild populations around the world, which we are working to protect for the future. So grab a brew and brush up your knowledge before your next trip to the zoo!

Read more about LEAH ›

OUR HOSTS

ASH

Ashleigh Marshall is our Assistant Team Manager for Visitor Engagement, managing the Zoo Ranger team and ensuring there is a range of talks, activities and games for our visitors to get involved in. Ashleigh was previously a Zoo Ranger herself and has worked in conservation education in different UK zoos since 2014. She is passionate about science conservation and loves sharing the zoos amazing science stories with the world.

EMMA

Emma Myers is one of our Zoo Rangers, engaging our visitors with the zoo's animal and plant collection through a range of talks and activities. Emma previously worked as a lecturer in animal management at Reaseheath College and also worked in Blackpool Zoo's education department before this. She has recently completed her MSc in Conservation Biology, and particularly enjoys talking to visitors about Chester Zoo's science and conservation work around the world.

EPISODE 1

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.

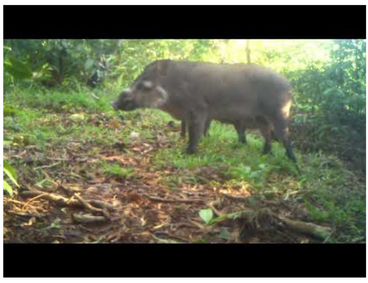
CHRIS

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

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. Take a trip with us to **Southeast Asia** where we **meet the rarest pig in the world** and bump into a wonderful little family of **Sunda porcupines**.



Bawean warty pig

You're looking at perhaps the world's most threatened pig species. Previously thought to be the Javan warty pig, our scientists recently helped to show that the Bawean warty pig is a unique species. It's only found on the small island of Bawean, and experts believe there are fewer than 500 in the wild, making it one of the rarest pigs in the world.

Sunda pangolin

These rare, armoured mammals have incredibly long tongues, reaching up to 16 inches (40 cm) long, that they use to slurp up ants and termites like these along the forest floor! Their unique scales are made of keratin, the same protein as that in our hair and nails. Despite this, international demand for their scales has resulted in them being the world's most traded group of mammals.

Javan chevrotain

Say hello to the world's smallest hoofed animal! This is the Javan chevrotain, also known as the "mouse deer". Although not actually a deer, they represent an ancient lineage of hoofed mammals, and are so tiny that they could even fit in the palm of your hand. Javan chevrotain are also known for their unique feeding behaviour: despite being a herbivore, they occasionally indulge in insects and even small vertebrates!

Sunda porcupine

A wonderful little family of Sunda porcupines! Did you know that they stomp their feet to create warning sounds and are skilled climbers? Despite their size and quills, they use their sharp claws and prehensile tail to navigate through the treetops with surprising agility. This unique ability not only helps to avoid waterlogged paths like this, but also helps them find food and escape predators.

Birders paradise

Southeast Asia is a birders paradise, filled with numerous unique and fascinating species. The rainforests support a stunning diversity of birds, including the colourful Asian Pittas, elusive and camouflaged pheasants like the Malay Peacock-Pheasant, and a variety of kingfisher species, each with vibrant plumage, such as the Azure Kingfisher, with its brilliant blue feathers. Consequently, many areas are now popular destinations for birdwatchers, which can contribute significant income to local economies while emphasising the importance of conservation.

Asian small-clawed otter

The Asian short-clawed otter holds the title for the world's smallest otter species! They have special tactile hairs on their paws for underwater sensing and are superb swimmers, equipped with webbed feet and a streamlined body. They spend much of their time in water, foraging for aquatic prey like fish, crustaceans, and molluscs.

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.

TOP SECRET SPECIES

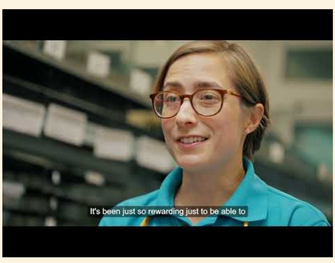
Hidden away in the middle of an unassuming car park here at the zoo are **six specially-adapted shipping containers** that are the unlikely home to some of the world's rarest, most **critically endangered species** you've probably never heard of!

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

8,000+

ANIMALS AND 26 SPECIES

Our expert team is working at the forefront of science to bring these species back from the brink of extinction. Ranging from tiny invertebrates (animals without a back bone or bony skeleton) to amphibians and reptiles, many of which are the only populations under human care you'll find on the planet.



As one of the **world's go-to conservation zoos**, our experts have been brought in by governments around the world to collect the very last surviving individuals of certain species. We can then bring them back to the zoo to breed and hopefully release them **back into their wild home to save populations from extinction**.

Let's meet some of the **species we're bringing back from the brink** inside our top-secret shipping containers.

The greater Bermuda LAND SNAIL

(Poecilozonites bermudensis)

IUCN Critically Endangered

After not being seen alive since the 1990s, the Bermudan Government called on our team to help bring this species back from the brink of extinction, following a chance discovery. It was in 2014, down an everyday alleyway in Bermuda's capital city, that the snails were luckily rediscovered by a savvy, snail spotting passer-by, who recognised the rare species and called in the experts.

Through intricate, expert work, we've been able to breed the snails on mass here at Chester Zoo, recently leading perhaps the world's largest reintroduction of 103,000 snails back into the wild. The breeding programme continues here in Chester and may help us to save other species, all starting from that one chance encounter.

Lake Patzcuaro SALAMANDER

(Ambystoma dumerilii)

IUCN Critically Endangered

In an unlikely partnership in Mexico, we've teamed up with a convent of nuns, Michoacán University of Saint Nicholas of Hidalgo, and the Mexican government fisheries to save this critically endangered salamander. Our team is providing husbandry (care and breeding) advice and expertise with wider amphibians to help with their own breeding programme. The species had almost been entirely wiped out from pollution and over-fishing of their home, Lake Patzcuaro. Incredibly, they represent the first vertebrates to move on to land with the ability to regenerate almost any part of their body, from their heart to their brain!

We're currently researching the husbandry of these regenerating wonders to help the ongoing reintroduction efforts in Mexico, while also managing the EEP (European conservation Programme) for this fascinating species.

Bermuda SKINK

(Plestiodon longirostris)

IUCN Critically Endangered

These skinks (a kind of lizard) live in a 'Big Brother' style pod with cameras monitoring their each and every move, helping us to discover as much as possible about their behaviour. Little is known about this critically endangered species because they're so secretive – experts can't even tell the difference between males and females!

This is another government partnership where we were brought in because of our conservation skills to breed the last remaining skinks in the world here in Chester. We'll be doing a second release into the wild soon, equipping the latest cohort with a tiny radio antenna belt around their waist so we can track where they go and how they choose to live back on Trunk Island in Bermuda.

Mountain CHICKEN

(Leptodactylus fallax)

IUCN Critically Endangered

Mountain chickens are teetering on the brink of extinction, with fewer than 50 left in the wild. There are several theories for how they got their slightly confusing name considering they're actually frogs. It could be a reference to their large size (growing up to 20cm) or that they were previously the unofficial national dish on the Caribbean island of Dominica until 2016. It could also be due to their chicken-like, squawking alarm call.

Until hunting bans came into force on both Montserrat and Dominica, it's estimated that 18,000-36,000 mountain chickens were caught per year on Dominica alone. The arrival of Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis (Bd), a chytrid fungus that is causing catastrophic losses in amphibians worldwide, also started the rapid decline of mountain chicken frogs in their island homes. Our team is working towards understanding how breeding mountain chickens with genetic resistance to the fungus could give us hope for a resilient future generation of this unique species.

Play our **MATCHING PAIRS** game and see if you can MATCH UP some of our **TOP SECRET SPECIES!**

PLAY NOW ›

MEMBERS hidden gems

We know that, as members, you all have traditions, must-sees and special memories. In this feature, we follow members as they explore the zoo and let us in on their hidden gems and recommendations. This time we meet Dorothy and learn about her incredible history and connections to the zoo.

How long have you been visiting the zoo?

I've been coming to the zoo for a little over sixty years. Back in the 1950s, I lived on the road opposite the original zoo entrance. Over the years my visits have been for a variety of reasons, including bringing my little girl and visiting each September before the new school year began. My mother used to come along too, and we would bring a picnic, it was an annual tradition. During my university years, I did seasonal work in the cash office and on the admission gates. I did my thesis at the zoo, studying chimpanzee behaviour, not to mention the various events and talks attended over the years.

So, the zoo has been a part of my life for over six decades. Nowadays, as a member, I visit the zoo once a month.

I did my thesis at the **ZOO**, studying **CHIMPANZEE** behaviour

The **ZOO** has been a part of **MY LIFE** for over **SIX DECADES**

How has the zoo changed since you first visited?

There have been many changes since the 1950s, it's much bigger. There are now larger habitats that are designed to give the animals more of a naturalistic home. There are lots of things for children to do now which I would have loved back in the day. But the biggest change, I think, over the decades is the emphasis nowadays on conservation and education.

What are your first memories of the zoo?

I vividly remember crawling under the turnstile when I was a child and heading straight to the elephant house to see these enormous animals. Very naughty I know!

I remember passing an exhibit that fascinated me, it was a jawbone of a blue whale - it must have measured 18 feet. I couldn't believe an animal could have a tongue that big and I wondered just how big the whole whale was.

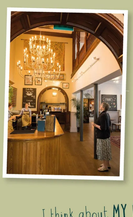
"I **ENJOY** exploring the GARDENS and WILDLIFE areas. I get lots of INSPIRATION for my own **GARDEN!"**

Hidden Gems

Do you have a special memory that took place at the zoo?

I can't pick out one as there are a couple of special memories. One was meeting the ethologist and conservationist Jane Goodall, who was at the zoo to do a talk. She is well known for her long-term research on chimpanzees. It was meeting her and listening to her that inspired me to do research with the Chester Zoo chimps for my university thesis as part of my degree, observing maternal behaviour in chimpanzees.

The Oakfield also holds a special memory. Before the zoo existed, the house and land were owned by a family with whom my father's family were friends. This is going back in time to the Roaring Twenties. My father was 64 when I was born in 1952, so he would have been a young man and was often a house guest. So, when I go to The Oakfield and settle down in a cosy armchair with my pot of tea, I think about my dad and the fun he would have had during his visits. I imagine him coming down the oak staircase to breakfast.



I think about **MY DAD** and the **FUN** he would have had during **HIS VISITS**

The Oakfield

Sometimes I bring a **BOOK** and a PICNIC to spend an afternoon **RELAXING** and READING.

LIONS >

What does your typical day at the zoo look like?

The first thing is a visit to the lions, then it depends on what I have planned for the day. It might be a latte in the Jaguar Coffee House or there may be a new arrival or baby to see.

Sometimes I bring a book and a picnic to spend an afternoon relaxing and reading. One of my favourite places to relax is around The Oakfield and sit in one of the gardens with an ice cream.

As well as visiting the animals, I enjoy exploring the gardens and wildlife areas - I get lots of inspiration for my own garden!

Which is your favourite animal at the zoo?

My favourite animals at the zoo are the lions, Iblis and his ladies Kumari and Kiburi. Iblis is such a character!

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

CHESTER ZOO

FUN & GAMES

MATCHING PAIRS GAME ›

SCREENSAVERS ›

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

Start by testing your memory skills with our Matching Pairs game, then download one of the wallpapers for your desktop or mobile to enjoy our animals wherever you go.

Download Wallpapers
for desktop & mobile

ELEPHANT

DESKTOP

MOBILE

JAGUAR

DESKTOP

MOBILE

SNOW LEOPARD

DESKTOP

MOBILE

BARN OWL

DESKTOP

MOBILE

OKAPI

DESKTOP

MOBILE

MOUNTAIN CHICKEN

DESKTOP

MOBILE

CHESTER ZOO

LUNA'S LEGENDARY CREATURE

HALLOWEEN TRAIL

1-31 OCTOBER 2023

WILDLIFE CONNECTIONS FESTIVAL 2023

Get closer to nature than ever before at our **Free** annual **Wildlife Connections Festival!**

We have two jam-packed days filled with wild activities, enthralling performances and amazing speakers that will have you captivated by the wildlife found right on our doorstep, all set in our stunning Nature Reserve.

All our **EXCITING** performances, activities and workshops are **FREE!**

We will have cold refreshments available to purchase at the festival. Please note our festival refreshment stand is cash only.

STAGE

Enjoy live music throughout the day from local artists!

Saturday 16 September

TIME	ACT
11:30 – 12:25	Castel Alun
12:30 – 13:00	QPHS
13.15 – 14:00	Chester Rock Choir
14:00 – 14:30	Upton Heath Choir
15:15 – 16:00	Max and Adam
16:00 – 16:30	Chester Catholic High

Sunday 17 September

TIME	ACT
11:30 – 12:25	St Bernards school
12:30 – 13:00	Amasing club
13.15 – 14:00	Chester Wind Band
14:00 – 14:30	Evolution Dance Academy
15:15 – 16:00	Chester Scouts
16:00 – 16:30	Chester Big Band

NATURE RESERVE

We have lots of fun, creative and inspiring activities in our beautiful nature reserve!
Drop-in sessions all day!

Hands-on activities exploring the fascinating wildlife that lives here including:

Mammal Detectives

Do mammals visit your garden? Come and learn about the tracks and signs they leave behind and the ways you can help these rarely seen visitors.

Brilliant Birds

Use our binoculars and guides to identify some of the 80 different bird species that can be found on our nature reserve then make a bird feeder to help the birds that visit your garden

Pond Life

The Chester Zoo site is home to several ponds brimming with interesting specimens. Visit this stall to see some of them live and in person.

Bug Basecamp

What better place to go on a bug hunt that Chester zoo's nature reserve. Come and join our experts to hunt for and record the vast variety of invertebrate species that call the nature reserve home.

Marvelous Meadows

What is a bee's favourite flower? Discover the importance of pollinators and how you can encourage them to visit your garden and speak to our experts about composting

AMPHITHEATRE

Copyright Rob Scott

Join Naomi Wilkinson for an interactive talk as she shares how we can all help our beautiful British wildlife survive and thrive.

Naomi is one of the UK's best known children's TV presenters, recognised for her upbeat persona and daredevil attitude. She is the proud longstanding president of the Young Peoples Trust for the Environment, and supports many other causes that have the welfare of children, care for the environment and protection of wildlife at their centre.

Saturday 16 September

TIME	ACT
12:00 – 12:30	Storytime with Chester Zoo Rangers
12:30 – 13:15	Zoo Ranger Show: What's this thing?
13:30 – 14:00	Join **Naomi Wilkinson** for an interactive talks as she share's how we can all help our beautiful British Wildlife survive and thrive.
14:00 – 15:00	**Naomi Wilkinson** - Meet & Greet
15:30 – 16:00	Pollinator Parade! - come dressed as your favourite pollinator and join our pollinator parade!

Sunday 17 September

TIME	ACT
12:00 – 12:30	Storytime with Chester Zoo Rangers
12:30 – 13:15	Zoo Ranger Show: What's this thing?
13:30 – 14:00	Join **Naomi Wilkinson** for an interactive talks as she share's how we can all help our beautiful British Wildlife survive and thrive.
14:00 – 15:00	**Naomi Wilkinson** - Meet & Greet
15:30 – 16:00	Pollinator Parade! - come dressed as your favourite pollinator and join our pollinator parade!

ACTIONS ARENA

Join our Zoo Rangers in the Action Arena, where throughout the day you can take part in a variety of cool crafts that you can do at home with a few simple materials! There are a ton of ways to reuse commonly thrown out items for a new purpose – come and discover some of these ways with us!

ORIGAMI ANIMALS

11:30 - 13:00

Come join us for the Japanese art of 'folding paper' with an animal twist. Learn how to fold things like birds, butterflies and plants, then give them your own creative flourish with a variety of colours to bring your creations to life! Paper is a very versatile material, before disposing of your scrap paper – why not see what other purposes you can use it for?

BEE & BUTTERFLY HEADBANDS

13:15 – 14:45

Live a day as a bee or butterfly by creating your own antennae headbands! Discover the importance of pollinators in nature while using materials found around the home, and inspire others by taking part in the festival Pollinator Parade!

NEWSPAPER PLANT POTS

15:00 – 16:15

Whether you're a green thumb or budding beginner, these easy to make plant pots are a great way to introduce more plants to your home and garden. Includes your choice of UK wildflower seed to plant! Using old newspaper and a plastic cup or empty jar is an easy way to make a simple pot that can then be planted.

WELLBEING AND WILDLIFE

12:30pm Mindful Nature Meditation at the Nature Reserve
1:30pm Animal Yoga
2:30pm Animal Yoga
3:30pm Mindful Nature Meditation at the Nature Reserve

CONNECTIONS CORNER

Get stuck into a wider range of activities from local wildlife partners

Drop-in sessions all day

FACEPAINTING AND WINGS

Transform yourself into a beautiful butterfly and flutter around our festival field.

Drop-in sessions all day

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 1-9

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:

Mini Ranger Shark Camp 23 September

BOOK NOW >

Mini Ranger Festive Camp 16, 17, 18 or 19 December

BOOK NOW >

Mini Ranger Holiday Clubs

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

24-26 October

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:

Junior Ranger Shark Camp 23 September

BOOK NOW >

Junior Ranger Festive Camp 16, 17, 18 or 19 December

BOOK NOW >

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 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.

24-26 October

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.

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 >

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 has sold out for 2023. Keep an eye on our website for 2024 dates which will be released in December.

BOOKING OPENING SOON

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

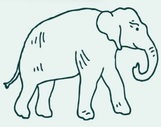
CHESTER ZOO

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 two upcoming Members Days are:

Elephant theme

FRIDAY 22 SEPTEMBER



Islands theme

SATURDAY 25 NOVEMBER

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!

DISCOVER SHARKS

This autumn you can also find us inside **Planet Shark** every day where we'll be sharing fascinating facts about the incredible world of sharks, and highlighting simple steps we can all take to **support shark species around the world** – pop in to find out more!

DISCOVER SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL

Here at Chester Zoo we're passionate about **sustainable palm oil**. In this discovery session we share the importance of palm oil, the effect it is **having on endangered species** in South-East Asia and some of our conservation success stories.

DISCOVER WILDLIFE CONNECTIONS

We love to **celebrate the amazing wildlife** found right here in the UK. Join us for discover wildlife connections to learn more about the wildlife on your doorstep and how you can **make your neighbourhood a friendlier** place for wildlife.

CHESTER ZOO

Our much-loved Lanterns event is back for its twelfth year and is bigger, better and brighter than ever before. This time with a new name, Lanterns and Light!

BOOK YOUR TICKETS

This winter, you'll discover brand new light and sound installations that'll immerse you in festive magic. Wander through a towering Winter Cathedral – the *perfect* photo opportunity. Experience flickering fire gardens and larger than life, pea-lit animal statues.

We haven't forgotten about your familiar favourites either. Enjoy interactive experiences with our stunning puppets including lions, elephants and zebra. Plus, you might even catch a glimpse of Father Christmas in his sleigh.

You'll also enjoy a sweet outdoor tradition, mouth-watering marshmallow toasting. Plus, fairground rides for the young, and young at heart!

Lanterns and Light is produced and managed by **Sony Music/RGL and Culture Creative**, in partnership with **Chester Zoo.**

CHESTER ZOO

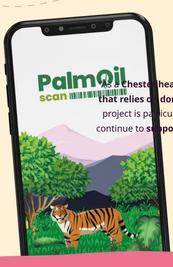
Creating CLIMATE connections for YOUNG PEOPLE

The Chester Zoo Climate Connection Programme, generously sponsored by MBNA, offers young individuals their first opportunity to engage with and gain insights into the natural world. This programme aims to inspire action on climate change and sustainability.

Workshops are conducted with young people between the ages of 10 and 14, from primary and secondary schools in the North West region. Participants in the programme receive family tickets, enabling them to involve their families in wildlife engagement and conservation efforts.

"We're delighted to partner with **MBNA** on a vital sustainability project, as we continue to champion young people to help us protect our planet. Many young people are already aware of the environmental impact on **EARTH** but may not know how to make a difference. This project aims to inspire the participants by making the sessions relevant to their **DAILY LIVES.**"

Charlotte Smith
Director of Conservation Education
at Chester Zoo



As Chester's **headquartered business**, we've always been proud to work with **CHESTER ZOO**, an organisation **that relies on donations and funding** to deliver some truly world-leading **CONSERVATION PROJECTS**. This project is particularly special for us as it supports what we're ***striving to achieve as a business***. We're really keen to continue to **support the programme as it grows, and are proud to be backing such an IMPORTANT CAUSE."**

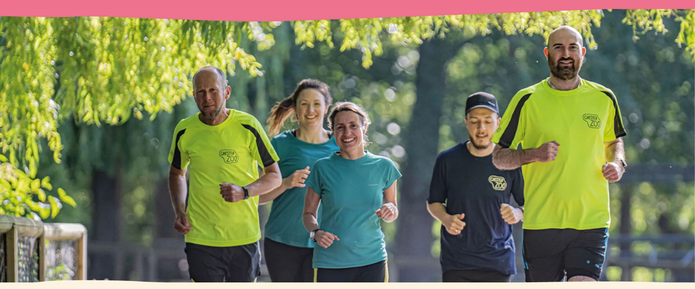
Victoria Dowd
Sponsorships Manager at MBNA

RUN FOR NATURE AT CHESTER ZOO

We had a great day at our first ever Run for Nature in September! With over 1,200 runners taking part, the race was a HUGE success raising £75,000 for our mission to develop a vaccine for EEHV.

Every pound raised will go towards ground-breaking work so that we can continue to save the lives of Asian elephants in all zoos and in the wild.

A big well done and thank you to any of you who took part and keep an eye out for the date of Run for Nature 2024!



PASS ON A WILD LEGACY

In line with 'Remember a Charity in your Will week', which runs from 11 September, we are asking members and supporters to consider leaving Chester Zoo a gift in their will.

Legacies come in all shapes and sizes and every single one is very special to us, enabling us to continue our vital conservation work, both in the UK and around the world; we are very proud to be supported in this way.

So, what does it mean to leave a gift in your will to Chester Zoo?

Jan's late sister Terri recently left a legacy to be used for work here in the zoo; it will be used in the construction of our new Snow leopard habitat.

Jan told us what this MEANS TO HIM

"When my sister died, I took responsibility for ensuring her last wishes were followed and, in the process, began to realise why she had been so intent on supporting the zoo. We all knew of her love for wildlife, especially big cats and in particular snow leopards. We all understood her fond memories of visiting the zoo in her childhood and had listened when she explained that she had followed and supported the zoo in its endless efforts to help conserve endangered species.

"What none of us had really appreciated was that this was going to be her legacy, a way of leaving the world a footnote about who she was and what she believed in. I have been to the zoo many times in the last few months, but one thing has become clear in my mind: my sister's gift isn't really to the zoo. It's a gift to the millions of people who will go there with their loved ones over the forthcoming years. Everyone who visits the snow leopards will be experiencing part of what my sister experienced so many years ago and that experience will live with them throughout their lives and those of their children and their grandchildren. I can't think of a more impactful testament to her life."

If you would like to discuss LEAVING A GIFT to **CHESTER ZOO** in YOUR WILL please GET IN TOUCH with the fundraising team at fundraising@chesterzoo.org. They will be pleased to **TALK ABOUT** this with you and advise on the best way forward. Alternatively, you can visit our website and follow the link to create your **FREE WILL.**

FIND OUT MORE >

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

NATIVE

THE INCREDIBLE WORLD
OF BRITISH WILDLIFE

Native is a breath-taking new experience **coming to Chester Zoo this winter.**

This extraordinary 360-degree audio and visual journey offers visitors the chance to get to know some of the **most iconic species native to the British Isles.** Giant projections and interactive floor coverings will immerse guests. From **coasts, grasslands, wetlands and woodlands this brand-new attraction**, exclusive to Chester Zoo, offers a truly transformative experience of the natural world right on our doorstep.

Members will be **given special early access for a first glance** of our exciting new experience opening in December.

Sign up to our newsletter for more updates.

SIGN UP >

THANKS TO YOU

It’s thanks to your support that 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