OUR

ZOO

CHESTER ZOO

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

START EXPLORING >

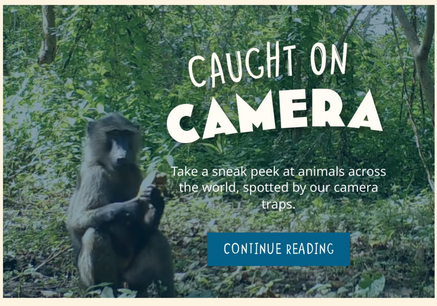
Highlights

There's been a flurry of **new arrivals at the zoo** as part of our ambitious conservation breeding programmes! Discover more about the **baby boom in this spring issue** and explore what's in store for Easter and beyond, with some **exciting member exclusives**.

WELCOME

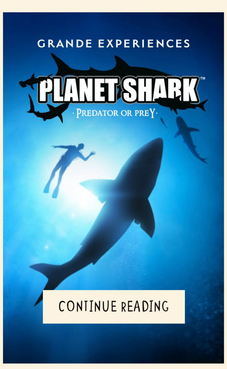
In our spring issue we're delighted to bring you news of our successful conservation breeding programmes...

CONTINUE READING



JUMPING FOR JOY

CONTINUE READING



Welcome to the SPRING issue of Our Zoo

We're delighted to bring you news of our **successful conservation** breeding programmes, which have led to a number of **important births** at the zoo in recent months.

COMMITTED
to preventing extinction

As a conservation charity committed to preventing extinction, our breeding programmes are a critical part of supporting endangered species and creating hope for the future.

Recently, a whole host of critically endangered species have been born at the zoo including **Sumatran tiger cubs**, a **Western chimpanzee**, and an endangered **Goodfellow's tree kangaroo**. We hope over the spring you'll be able to come and meet these new faces.

In this latest issue you can learn more about how much planning, skill and collaboration goes into running a **successful breeding programme**. From scientists and researchers, to habitat designers and zookeepers, it's a huge team effort to share knowledge and bring together specialist expertise to help give us the best possible chance of securing the **next generations** of the species in our care.

LANDMARK MOMENTS

We also throw a spotlight on the powerful work of the global zoo community. Our recent **breeding programmes** in Chester have been influenced and supported by our zoo partners across the world as we come together to maximise genetic diversity within the animal populations in our care, **sharing valuable knowledge and data** to give us the best chance to prevent extinction.

As always, the zoo is evolving and there are some other exciting new activities to explore over the coming months. If you're looking for an Easter adventure, our **Really Wild Egg Trail** will be popping up in April and we'll be launching an immersive new digital shark exhibition, **Planet Shark**, with an exclusive members preview for you to dive into in early May.

With one million species currently at risk of extinction, our support for wildlife is more critical now than ever. Working collaboratively with a global network of conservation-led organisations gives us the knowledge and support we'll need to reach our goals for the years ahead.

Jamie Christon, CEO

START EXPLORING >

CHESTER ZOO

JUMPING FOR JOY

The birth of our first baby tree kangaroo

A rare Goodfellow's tree kangaroo joey has joined us at the zoo, a first in our 91 year-long history!

This endangered species has one of the most complex birthing processes in the animal kingdom and our team has been there each step of the way to learn more about their fascinating breeding and birthing journey. We've recently seen the joey take its first peek out of mum's pouch, which is a major milestone in the baby's life.

From pairing up mum and dad, Kitawa and Kayjo, right through to monitoring the incredible transition from birth to the joey's first months in mum's pouch, find out more about the secret life of this joyful little joey.

GOODFELLOW'S TREE KANGAROO

The Goodfellow's tree kangaroo is much smaller than the Australian kangaroo species most of us picture when we hear 'kangaroo'. They are a tree-dwelling marsupial native to the mountainous rainforest of Papua New Guinea where sadly they are under threat.

In the wild they are hunted for their meat and their habitat is disapearing around them as forests are cleared for timber and to make way for coffee and rice plantations.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has listed the species as Endangered in the wild – with conservationists calling for more close monitoring of the animals in their native range as populations have declined by 50%.

WHAT'S A MARSUPIAL?

Marsupials are mammals whose offspring are not fully developed when born and are carried and suckled in a pouch on the mother's belly. They're mostly found in Australia, New Guinea and also in America.

LONG TAIL

This gives the kangaroo added balance when jumping distances of up to 9m!

STRONG, STOCKY ARMS

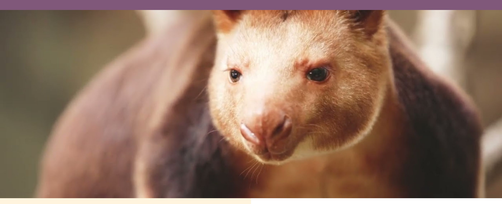
Help to power the kangaroo when climbing and are great for grasping tree trunks.

LONG CURVED CLAWS AND RUBBERY SOLES

These make sure the tree kangaroo can grip well when climbing.

CHAMBERED STOMACH

Perfect for breaking down and absorbing this herbivore's tough diet of flowers, grasses and leaves.



THE JOEY'S UNIQUE JOURNEY - FROM MATCHMAKING TO BIRTH

The journey to welcoming the joey saw a number of our teams join together to create the optimum environment for a healthy and happy family.

PHASE 1

Kitawa and Kayjo were mixed in our dedicated Conservation Breeding Management Area, where we can create the best possible environment to ensure breeding success. They started off in two separate areas where they could see each other and get used to the other's smell before gradually beginning to mix. Our Behaviour and Welfare Team also took this opportunity to set up a research project to investigate whether some behavioural cues could predict the various stages of Kitawa's reproductive cycle, such as self-scratching, body-shaking and the location of her poo.

PHASE 2

Having our own endocrinology (study of the hormonal system) lab meant that we could collect daily faecal (poo) samples to monitor Kitawa's hormones, so we knew when she was ready for breeding. We've been monitoring tree kangaroos since 2017 to get a clearer picture of their reproductive life. By pairing this with the behavioural cues seen, such as poo at the base of trees and a strong musty smell, we were able to time introductions to when Kitawa was most likely ready to mate. And it was a success with the birth taking place in July 2022!

PHASE 3

We then waited around 50 days and used a device called a borescope (a camera on the end of a long lead, which can be inserted into the mother's pouch) to check if a joey was in the pouch, and to our delight, there was.

HELLO WORLD!

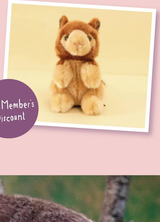
In January, we moved Kitawa into the tree kangaroo habitat in the zoo. This was when we started to see the joey peeking out of the pouch, intrigued by its new surroundings! The joey is growing in confidence and has started to get curious, poking its head and hands out when there is food around and having a nosey but not eating yet – at this point it is still feeding on the teat in the pouch. It will eventually start to fully leave the pouch for a short time to explore before jumping back in. Slowly but surely, it will start to venture further from mum's protection, exploring the trees and learning to fully fend for itself.

A HOPEFUL FUTURE

"The unique position we've been in to capture and document the whole process around the development of Kitawa's joey can help to inform better conservation action for this wonderful, but sadly endangered species, in the wild. Zoo conservationists are also working with our partners and local communities in areas of South East Asia to make sustainable farming practices normal practice, helping to prevent further deforestation across the region while protecting what's left of the precious forests – home to many of the world's most threatened species, like the Goodfellow's tree kangaroo."

Dora White, Twilight Team Manager, Chester Zoo.

Suitable for all ages, this super soft toy is completely bespoke to Chester Zoo. It's made with **sustainable materials** including recycled rPET filling and the plastic tag has been **replaced with cotton**. Our Zoo readers will get a **20% discount** by clicking the link below - valid until 9 March.



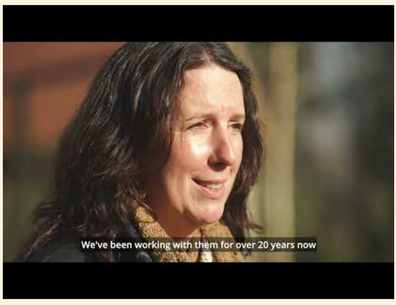
EXPEDITION Madagascar

THE WILDLIFE WONDERLAND

Madagascar's ecosystems are so unique that over 90% of its wildlife can't be found anywhere else in the world.

This includes over 100 lemur species and one of the rarest frogs on earth, the golden mantella. We're proud to lend our support both on the ground and from afar to preserve this unique land of endangered species.

In January 2023, 15 Chester Zoo staff travelled to Madagascar. This was our third Madagascar expedition, where we've been working in with Malagasy partner organisations for over 20 years, collaborating to prevent extinction through landscape restoration, species specific research and community empowerment.



Conservation Master PLAN

We caught up with **Charles Wheeler**, Project Officer for Madagascar and the Mascarenes at the zoo, to find out more about the expedition.

"Madagascar is an incredible island with unique biodiversity which ultimately faces its own challenges. We're part of several different projects across the island, conducting research and supporting the establishment of long-term conservation projects that tackle these unique challenges.

One of our in-country partners is **Madagasikara Voakajy**, who use conservation science and community participation to protect endemic Malagasy species and their habitats. Through years of rigorous research, their team has developed a deep understanding of the endemic treasure trove of species found in Mangabe – a 27,346 hectare protected area of Madagascar intended to save threatened species from extinction.

The projects we support in Madagascar work towards achieving our own goals within our Conservation Master Plan. The Mangabe Landscape project encompasses all our key areas of focus within conservation and science: **Populations**, **Places for wildlife**, **People and Policy**. Because of this, the Mangabe protected area is a perfect project site to host our staff expedition."

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15
strong team of Chester Zoo staff travelled to Madagascar.

100+
lemur species and one of the rarest frogs on earth, the golden mantella.

FOCUS ON FIVE

The trip had five areas of focus which were identified by Madgasikara Voakajy as elements that would aid their long-term goal for Mangabe to become a community managed protected area with an eco-tourism enterprise.

MARKETING MASTERPLAN

Helen Dean, our Head of Marketing, and Jennifer Kelly, our Head of Sustainability worked together with Madagasikara Voakajy's communications team to create a marketing and strategic development plan for a Managabe eco-tourism initiative.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Alongside this work, our Community Education and Engagement Team held multiple guide training workshops with Madagasikara Voakajy staff and Mangabe community members to build a strong and engaging team of wildlife tour guides. These workshops included sessions focusing on storytelling, body language, and managing tourist expectations.

INFRASTRUCTURE & MAINTENANCE

In order to host eco-tourist groups, the Mangabe camp site needs to be able to accommodate people and their needs. We supported the construction of a water well, solar panels and water pumps to provide fresh drinking water, electricity, and water for the toilet and shower blocks. Leading this work was Madagasikara Vokaly's internal engineers, who were supported by members of our maintenance and plumbing team.

FRESHWATER SURVEYING

On the biodiversity side, we took members of our aquarium and gardens teams to support the delivery of freshwater fish surveys and habitat restoration. Our focus for the freshwater surveys was to identify the presence or absence of two critically endangered fish species and to confirm the presence and prevalence of the Edible Frog species (Hoplobatrachus tigerinus). The results from the surveys showed an abundance of invasive fish species and the presence of only one critically endangered fish. This work will continue in our absence to fully determine the habitat range of these species.

HABITAT RESTORATION & NURSERY TRAINING

One day on the expedition we participated in a tree planting event alongside the Mangabe people, community based organisations, and Madagascar Voakajy in which 3,150 trees were planted across a 2 hectare area. Staff from our Gardens Team participated in an exchange of training with the nursery staff at Mangabe, sharing knowledge from both sides that will benefit each party with their efforts to grow specific and endangered species.

Overall, our expedition was a huge success. We managed to fulfil all of our objectives in our focus areas due to the hard work from our core team activity leaders who put in many hours of preparation work, but also due to the incredible volunteers we had from across the zoo staff. All of the volunteers got stuck in with every activity, had such enthusiasm to be a part of the conservation work in Mangabe, and it was a pleasure to work with them all.

CHESTER ZOO

TWIN TIGERS

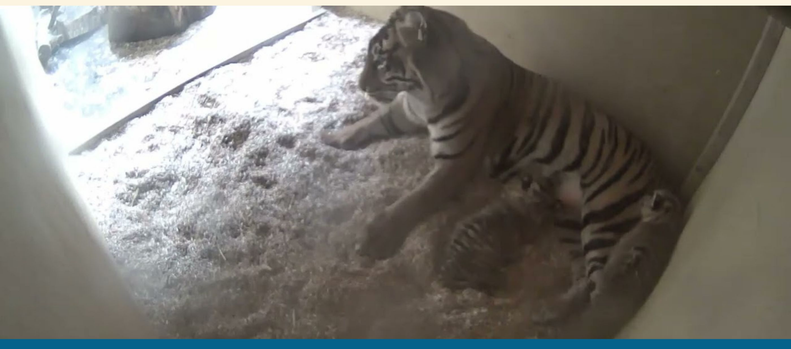
Catch a glimpse of the new arrivals on our cub cam

CCTV cameras have captured the precious early moments between Sumatran tiger Kasarna and her two newborn cubs

The **tiny twins were born** to first time parents Kasarna and Dash on 7 January and the new family has since been bonding in their den – with all of their adorable **early life antics caught by our CCTV cameras**.

The birth of these rare twins is hailed as a **'significant step forward'** for the conservation of the critically endangered species as only 350 remain in the wild – making them one of the world's rarest tigers. Habitat loss, poaching and conflict with humans could see the carnivores become extinct. They are **listed as critically endangered** by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) - the most severe conservation category and highest priority.

Our carnivore zookeepers have not yet been able to determine the sexes of the new arrivals, meaning they're still to be named. But watch this space for updates as they start to gain in confidence and venture outside, which our experts estimate will be in early April.



A HOPEFUL FUTURE

The expansion of **unsustainable palm oil and coffee plantations** has seen more than **90% of the Sumatran tigers habitat wiped out**, bringing tigers into close conflict with the human population.

As a result, 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.**

"Kasarna's two cubs are absolutely crucial to the survival of the species. They are the latest additions to an insurance population in conservation zoos that will be the driving force in preventing the Sumatran tiger from enduring the same fate as the Javan, Caspian and Balinese tigers, which have all sadly been wiped out forever.

The arrival of the cubs is a real testament to the expertise and scientific work of our teams who, only last year, paired up female tigress, Kasarna, with a male Sumatran tiger, named Dash. They were coupled together based on their genetic make-up, age and character and this news is cause for real celebration among the global conservation community."

Mike Jordan
Director of Animals and Plants, Chester Zoo

SIGNIFICANT *STEP* FORWARD

In India and Nepal, our conservationists are fighting to control illegal poaching and mitigate conflict between humans and tigers to improve the outlook for another subspecies, the Bengal tiger.

We look forward *to welcoming you in* **APRIL** when we hope THE TWINS will be exploring outdoors, *just in time for the* **EASTER HOLIDAYS!**

CHESTER ZOO

BABY JOY as Jeff joins the FAMILY

The Western chimpanzee troop has welcomed a new addition – baby boy, Jeff!

Jeff (Beck) joins a long line of Western chimpanzees who've been named after famous rock and popstars here at the zoo in a bid to raise the profile of this critically endangered subspecies. Mum ZeeZee (Top) has been a star at raising Jeff since he was born in December 2022, with sister Stevie (Nicks) also stepping in to care for her baby brother in this extended family affair.

With a 98% genetic match to humans, chimpanzees are our closest living relatives. Just like many of us, family life and socialising are at the heart of life for the 20-strong chimp troop who continue to teach us just how important social status and bonding is for this species.

Chimps each have individual features, including skin colour, hair cover and facial shapes. They also have opposable thumbs and toes so they can grip and use tools.

FAMILY LIFE

Chimpanzees are close relatives of humans, and they too lead complex and constantly shifting social lives. Chimpanzees in the wild live in large social groups in a hierarchical structure, with alpha males and females at the top and various sub-groups underneath them. They show a range of emotions and bond, learn from each other, play, and occasionally fall out just like us!

Our team works very hard to provide a varied environment to encourage behaviours you might see in the wild. Monitoring and understanding the social bonds of our group enables us to learn more about how hierarchy and personality plays a role in forming and maintaining social relationships in chimpanzees.

A new birth will always have an impact on the social dynamics of chimpanzees, and it's been fascinating observing how the group has reacted to the birth of Jeff. Mum ZeeZee instantly bonded with her new arrival and she's been doing a great job of cradling him closely and caring for him. Jeff's birth has also really brought the rest of the group closer together, and we've seen maternal behaviours emerging in other individuals. For example Stevie, born to ZeeZee in 2018, has been giving her mum a much-needed rest by taking care of Jeff along with other females in the group.

This is the fourth baby in five years following on from a spell of no births in the group - this was while a detailed genetic study was carried out across all EAZA zoos (EAZA is the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria). We're now steadily getting back to a vibrant multi-generational social group.

Western **CHIMPANZEES** are the *MOST HIGHLY* threatened of the four subspecies.

Currently four subspecies of chimpanzee are recognised; all four are threatened due to habitat loss and destruction, the illegal trade for bushmeat and live animals, and infectious diseases.

As few as just 18,000 Western chimpanzees can still be found across Africa and it is the first subspecies of chimpanzee to ever be declared Critically Endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Small populations of the Western chimpanzee can still be found ranging from Senegal to Ghana in West Africa – but have already become extinct in Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo.

You can make a big difference

ADOPT A CHIMPANZEE! ›

FIELD **WORK**

Our teams have worked on the ground in Uganda, Nigeria and Gabon in Africa to help protect wild chimpanzee populations and their forest homes. This work, paired with the endangered species breeding programme in conservation zoos, will help play a key role in protecting this species from being lost forever.

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. Watch a giant anteater carrying her pup and a baboon enjoying a snack, **there's a bit of everything** here, from **Africa** to the local wildlife of the **UK!**

Lionesses

Two lionesses pay a late night visit to a watering hole, captured by one of our camera traps in Uganda. Despite their deadly reputation, these carnivores can be seen affectionately nuzzling each other - a behaviour commonly seen in lions to maintain social bonds.

Baboon

A baboon takes a break to enjoy a tasty snack in Uganda. Baboons will commonly snack on foraged foods like this including fruit, nuts, and vegetables, but they are omnivores and will also happily eat meat from insects, small rodents and birds.

Leopard cubs

A pair of leopard cubs take a stroll along a trail in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, where we operate our Terai Tiger Project alongside the Wildlife Trust of India. Young leopards will tend to stay with their mother and siblings until they are around two years old, when they have learned to live and hunt independently.

Video credit: Wildlife Trust of India

Giant anteaters

Deep in the tropical wetlands of the Pantanal region of South America, an adult giant anteater can be seen carrying her offspring past a giant armadillo's burrow. Notice how the black and white band of the cub aligns perfectly with its mother's, camouflaging it, and allowing the mother to look bigger and deter predators more easily!

Video credit: © ICAS - Wild Animal Conservation Institute

Chimpanzee Family

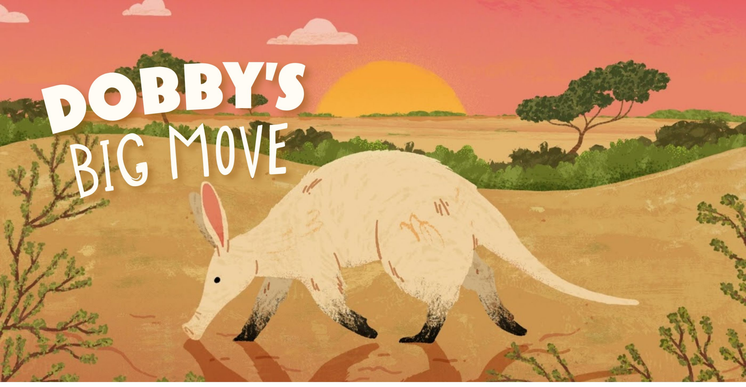
This video of a chimpanzee family was captured by the team working on our Gabon project, with the help of local communities and our partner the Ferna vaz Gorilla Project. We're carrying out surveys of Central chimpanzees in coastal Gabon, and protecting local landscapes to benefit all wildlife.

Kingfishers

Two kingfishers perch on a rock overlooking the largest pond on Chester zoo's Nature Reserve. It's fantastic to see kingfishers active on our nature reserve. Kingfishers tend to stick to territories of around 1-3 miles and mainly eat fish and aquatic insects.

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.



DOBBY'S BIG MOVE

After just *under a year* with us at **CHESTER ZOO** the INTERNET SENSATION **DOBBY** *the aardvark has left us for* **PASTURES NEW.**

She's now settling in with her new matches, Terry and Nacho at Whipsnade Zoo. Although it's always sad to say goodbye, animal moves like this are critical to the species cared for by conservation zoos like ours, ensuring the population remains healthy and maintains genetic diversity for the future.

"Dobby has settled in really well at Whipsnade and lives here with our resident aardvarks Terry and Nacho. Her confident, inquisitive and energetic nature has made her a firm favourite with both zookeepers and our visitors!"

Sarah McGregor,
Team Leader at Whipsnade.

The word *aardvark* translates to **'EARTH PIG'** *in the language* of Afrikaans.

In the wild aardvarks are found in sub-Saharan Africa where they are threatened by habitat loss as a result of agricultural development and they are also hunted for their meat. The nocturnal (coming out at night) animals use their long noses and keen sense of smell to sniff out ants and termites, which they lap up with a long sticky tongue measuring up to 25cm! Aardvarks use their powerful claws to tear open termite mounds, as well as to dig underground burrows in which they sleep.

Dobby's birth back in January 2022 to mum Oni and dad Koos, was a first in Chester Zoo's 91-year history. Breeding species involves a network of hundreds of zoos across the globe and this birth was a collaboration with Burgers' Zoo in the Netherlands who run the aardvark breeding programme and matched Dobby's parents as a breeding pair.

Oni was a first-time mum, and although a bit hesitant at first, her maternal instincts soon kicked in. However due to Dobby's low birth weight – just half the average at 1.1kg – and the low temperatures in January, our keepers had to provide some extra care.

Dobby was taken home in a special incubator by a rotation of keepers every night and was fed milk every few hours for the first five weeks of her life. This was also due to the fact aardvarks are notoriously clumsy parents, and due to their size can cause accidental injuries. In the wild young aardvarks would be left in a special enclosed chamber in the burrow to keep them safe while the mother goes out to forage.

1kg

Due to Dobby's low birth weight – just half the average at 1.1kg – our keepers had to provide some extra care.

25cm

Aardvarks have a long sticky tongue measuring up to 25cm!

91

Dobby's birth back in January was a first in Chester Zoo's 91-year history.

TINY CUB BIG PERSONALITY

Dobby had bags of personality for such a tiny cub, and before long she was very independent! At three months she was weaned off milk and gradually introduced to the feed that the other aardvarks ate. This is a challenging process as the timing is crucial and keepers have to begin by mixing in milk with the feed, slowly reducing the amount of milk over time until she was fully on the feed, whilst detailed diaries were kept on her weight, and the ratios of milk and feed she was given every day.

"It was actually my kids who gave Dobby her name. One night when I'd taken her home for feeding they commented on her resemblance to the Harry Potter character."

Dave White, Twilight Team Manager, Chester Zoo

THE BIG MOVE

We again collaborated with Burgers' Zoo who identified Whipsnade Zoo as a potential move for Dobby as she moves closer to her mature breeding age at two years old. By making the move in December 2022, Dobby has already begun to settle into her new environment ahead of breeding – aardvarks tend to be quite relaxed so the move was a smooth one and her independent nature saw her take it all in her stride!

The move to a different zoo also replicates the natural behaviour aardvarks would exhibit in the wild – as they grow up they would tend to leave the family unit and become independent before they are one year old so this is another positive part of her making the move now.

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. 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).

By **MOVING DAY**, **DOBBY** *was* WEIGHING *IN AT A* **HEALTHY 41kg!**

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.

WILD PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

This half term, we welcomed wildlife cameraman, presenter and Strictly star Hamza Yassin to the zoo!

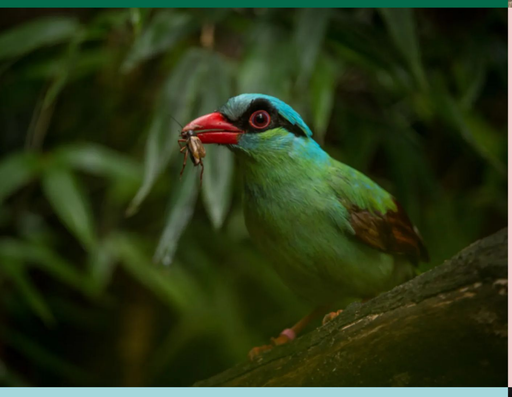
Hamza kicked off our Wild Science season with some incredible talks about his adventures from around the globe and shared some of his secrets on how to capture the best wildlife images.

If you would like to develop your wildlife photography skills next time you visit the zoo...

Here are some top tips!

Elephant

Tip: Look closely - animals share their habitats with unexpected wild guests. Even the plants, trees and running water make good photos. What can you see in the elephant habitat?

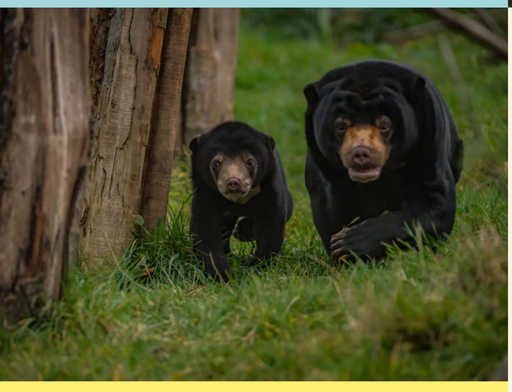


Asian songbirds

Tip: Anticipate what's happening around you - don't always rely on your eyes. Sometimes you can hear the most amazing species before you even see them. What can you hear around you?

Anteaters

Tip: Go low - you are far less noticeable than standing up and can capture your subject before they become aware of you.



Sun bears

Tip: Get to know your subject - studying animal behaviours over time means you can position yourself in the right place at the right time to take the perfect picture.

Blend in with your surroundings

Tip: Consider your clothing - avoid wearing bright colours or reflective items. Instead, wear neutral colours such as greys, browns and dark greens.

FUN & GAMES

GUESS THE EGG GAME >

SCREENSAVERS >

If you enjoyed the quizzes and games in our first 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 putting your eggs skills to the test and see how many you can tick off, then download one of the wallpapers for your desktop or mobile to enjoy our animals wherever you go.

Download Wallpapers

for desktop & mobile

SIFAKA

DESKTOP

MOBILE

TREE KANGAROO

DESKTOP

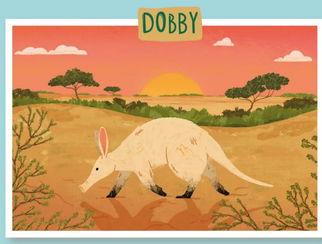
MOBILE

ASIAN ELEPHANTS

DESKTOP

MOBILE

DOBBY



DESKTOP

MOBILE

RING-TAILED LEMURS

DESKTOP

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MADAGASCAR

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MOBILE

MEMBERS UDATES

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:

Butterflies theme

FRIDAY 10 MARCH 2023

Giraffes theme

SUNDAY 25 JUNE 2023

Plus we're delighted to reveal that our September Members Day will be on **Friday 22** September with an exciting theme that we'll announce in the next issue of Our Zoo.

Zoo Ranger TALKS

Have you met our knowledgeable team of Zoo Rangers?

Our Zoo Rangers are at the zoo every day to share an exciting programme of talks and activities for adults and kids alike! Check out some of our current favourites below.

Discover bugs

10:30am on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Join us for these drop in sessions to discover a whole host of small creatures in our butterfly habitat.

Elephant talk

11:10am daily

Join us at the elephant habitat to find out more about the Asian elephant family.

Penguin talk

2:40pm daily

Did you know that penguins have spiky tongues? There's plenty more to discover about these fascinating birds at our penguin talk.

Fruit Bat Forest

We're based in Fruit Bat Forest every day during zoo opening hours. Pop in and speak to the Zoo Rangers about our nocturnal residents and why we need to protect them.

Lemur walkthrough

You can find us in the lemur walkthrough every day during zoo opening hours. Find out more about these animals with our Zoo Rangers.

SINK YOUR TEETH INTO AN AMAZING "OUT OF WATER" SHARK EXPERIENCE

Join us this May for an exclusive member preview in our new immersive exhibition space.

As a member, you'll get exclusive early access to **Planet Shark: Predator or Prey** for five days in early May. You'll have the opportunity to explore our brand new immersive exhibition space before it opens to all zoo visitors later in the month. Just show your membership card to gain entry and sink your teeth into an amazing 'out of water' shark experience!

Leave the outside world behind as you dive into the mysterious underwater world of sharks – without even getting your feet wet! You'll be surrounded by **incredible underwater projections** featuring stunning footage that tells the story of how important sharks are to our oceans, and the planet.

As well as the huge immersive gallery, you can marvel at awe-inspiring life size shark models, an extraordinary collection of real teeth and jaws, and extremely old and rare fossils – some up to **370 million years old**. Trace millions of years of evolution, come face-to-face with the great white shark, and gain a whole new level of respect for the ocean's oldest and most effective predator.

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

TUNIOR 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 one 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 Easter Camp 10:30am-12:30pm
Choose from 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 OR 13 April

BOOK NOW >

Hold the date for our Mini Ranger Christmas Camps 16, 17, 18 or 19 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.

Club 1: 30 May – 1 June

Club 2: 25 – 27 July

Club 3: 8 – 10 August

Club 4: 22 – 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:

Junior Ranger Easter Camp 1:45pm-3:45pm
Choose from 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 OR 13 April

BOOK NOW >

Hold the date for our Junior Ranger Christmas Camps 16, 17, 18 or 19 December – on sale in September 2023

Junior Ranger Camp

MEMBER EXCLUSIVE

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 2 5 March – 2 April

BOOK NOW >

Camp 3 23 April – 21 May

BOOK NOW >

Camp 4 11 June – 9 July

BOOK NOW >

Junior Ranger Holiday Club

Our three day holiday activity club is perfect for young animal lovers and future conservationists. We've got four dates to choose from.
Club 1 30 May – 1 June
Club 2 25 – 27 July
Club 3 8 – 10 August
Club 4 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.

Conservation Technology

Date: Every Saturday for three weeks:
11 March – 25 March 10:30am-12:30pm

BOOK NOW >

Filed Skills and Ecology

Date: Every Saturday for three weeks:
6 May – 20 May 10:30am-12:30pm

BOOK NOW >

Hormones and Genetics

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

BOOK NOW >

Junior Conservationists Holiday Course

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

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

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.

Young Conservationists taster sessions

Our introductory courses are one-off courses lasting two hours, designed as a taster for future conservationists to try their hand at different conservation skills.

Introduction to Preventing Extinction
Date: Saturday 22 April

BOOK NOW >

Introduction to bird watching
Date: Saturday 10 June

BOOK NOW >

Introduction to butterfly and moth identification
Date: Saturday 8 July

BOOK NOW >

Careers in Conservation

Join our virtual Careers in Conservation event to learn more about careers at the zoo.

Book your FREE space here

SEE YOU THERE!

CHESTER ZOO

THE EASTER BUNNY HAS GOT NOTHING ON US!

Join us for an Easter Trail like no other! Will you be able to find our giant flamingo egg? Uncover the hidden world of seahorse eggs? And discover how a butterfly hatches? Plus there's a free Nat Geo Kids magazine for everyone that completes the trail! There's so much to see and do this Easter, don't miss out.

Included in zoo entry, members go free.

FIND OUT MORE >

The POWER of *partnerships*

Working together to create a lasting impact

"Great to be with LIKE-MINDED people and to now have more skills to have an impact within the community"

There are so many opportunities to help us in our mission to prevent extinction. Our partners are key to our mission, and their support has a real impact on the future of our planet. We are so grateful to everyone who has contributed and donated to help us act for wildlife all over the world.

We want to celebrate the benefits of being connected with UK wildlife and nature right here on our doorstep with a throwback to our annual Wildlife Connections Festival in partnership with corporate supporters, Darwin Escapes.

Darwin Escapes, a holiday destination specialist in North Wales, have been proudly partnering with us for five years. Their teams work closely with our conservation specialists to encourage new ways to connect with nature across their holiday resorts.

Taking this one step further, Darwin Escapes also sponsor our Wildlife Connections event. This is a free family-friendly event positively promoting how we can prevent the extinction of UK wildlife by creating new areas of high-quality habitat in gardens, parklands, and community spaces.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Wildlife Connections throughout the years.

Wildlife Connections Festival is part of our Nature Recovery Corridor project, aiming to improve spaces for nature across our entire local region, and connect more people to the benefits of nature.

This project has been made possible through the government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund, developed by Defra, delivered by the Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England, the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission.

"I enjoyed identifying water INSECTS, building a BIRD BOX and SUN MAPPING"

Set yourself a challenge for wildlife

A huge thank you from us to everyone who has taken part in fundraising activities over the past year to support our critical work in preventing extinction. We are so proud that so many of you continue to help us in this way, and hopefully have a bit of fun along the way!

So, to anyone who is thinking of challenging themselves in 2023, why not use it as a chance to help wildlife both here in Chester and around the world? From marathons to bake sales, we would love to hear from you and give you all our support along the way.

Set up your fundraising page and start making a difference today.

FIND OUT MORE >

Ever wanted to take part in a 10k run?

Thinking of setting yourself a new running goal for 2023 and need a bit of inspiration to do it? Sunday 24 September here at Chester Zoo may just be a day to remember… Watch this space for further details!

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

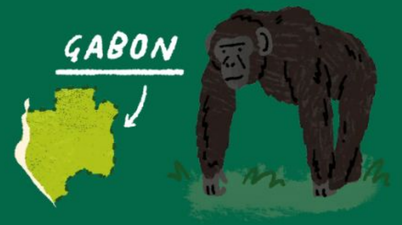
THANKS TO YOU

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

Over the last few years we've been working closely with the Uganda Wildlife Authority, pioneering camera trapping techniques targeted at giant pangolin in several sites across Uganda. These surveys also provide valuable information on a range of species, and the eastern chimpanzee (Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii) occurs frequently as a flagship species in several survey areas. Currently we are developing our work in Uganda into a major landscape project focussed around Murchison National Park that will work closely with government, local communities and partner organisations to take conservation action.

Our initial biodiversity surveys on selected sites of coastal forest around the Fernan Vaz lagoon have shown significant populations of threatened species such as central chimpanzees (Pan troglodytes troglodytes), western lowland gorillas and forest elephants. Future activities will include working with communities and local agencies to implement plans for these highly important areas of unprotected forest.



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The Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee (Pan troglodytes ellioti) is the most threatened chimp subspecies. Through the Gashaka Primate Project, and later the Gashaka Biodiversity Project, Chester Zoo have been a major partner protecting one of the most significant populations of this chimp subspecies in Gashaka-Gumti National Park.

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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