



Reaseheath Mini Zoo Conservation policy

Preamble

Reaseheath Mini Zoo as BIAZA members are committed to conserving the natural world and educating and inspiring their students and visitors to do the same.

Introduction

Reaseheath Mini Zoo's contribution to conservation is varied and includes activities such as population management of threatened species, research, conservation education, managing habitats and promoting public awareness, behaviour change and engagement in sustainability issues.

This policy is based on conservation requirements laid out for BIAZA members and has been written in conjunction with BIAZA policies and guidelines: Conservation translocations, ethical acquisitions, surplus animals, field conservation and conservation education guidelines. It has also been written in conjunction with the IUCN guidelines.

Natural habitat protection or management

- Working alongside the college's countryside department, zoo staff and animal management students are working to improve biodiversity across the zoo and surrounding campus. This involves habitat creation and habitat management in the form of tree planting, wildflower areas, bug hotel creation, bird box transects, pond maintenance etc

Financial resources or staff time project contribution

- Our head keeper and members of the HE department perform yearly Great Crested Newt (GCN) survey's on campus and zoo ponds. These survey's are undertaken to help improve ponds across the site for Great crested newt habitat. This has also been done alongside eDNA testing of water for GCN on varies ponds onsite to assess presence or absence.
- RMZ staff have set up a toad patrol crossing onsite and recruited volunteers to monitor a stretch of road onsite that toads have to cross to reach their breeding pond for spring. This volunteer scheme runs from the end of January- April.

Conservation breeding programmes

At the zoo we are currently not involved in any EEP breeding programmes but are in the application process for Pygmy Marmosets and Bush dogs via EAZA.

We do however hold a number of species involved in conservation breeding programmes that could be called up to become part of a breeding group to increase the genetic diversity of populations these species include:

EEP Species

- African Pancake tortoise
- Cotton-top tamarins
- Pygmy Marmosets
- Roti island snake-necked turtle
- Bush dog
- Ring-tailed Lemur
- Rock Hyrax
- Lowland Tapir

ESB species

- Fiji banded iguana
- Savu island python

BIAZA and Taxon Working groups

- Three of our staff attend the Reptile and Amphibian Working Group and our Head keeper is the Native species liaison officer for RAWG.

Conservation Interpretation

- Throughout the zoo we have conservation themed interpretation. This highlights the IUCN Red List, threats to wildlife and habitats and conservation actions being taken. These are aimed at visitors and students. This interpretation is under regular review and renewal.
- On our website we have an education resources section. This contains free video and activity book resources for schools and members of the public to use. These include information on conservation of certain species.

Conservation Education

- Please see conservation education plan for more in depth information.
- We run a number of informal school holiday club sessions, throughout these the zoo education team link back to conservation messaging of the species these groups work with during their time at the zoo. They also do activities such as making bug houses, seed bombs, bird boxes etc which promotes improving habitat in their garden environment once the sessions have finished.
- We have developed a curriculum linked offer for schools to visit the zoo. This has a specific endangered species themed session but also conservation projects and threats to wildlife are highlighted throughout to increase awareness and promote behaviour change.

- Our social media channels are used to raise awareness of specific species we house in the zoo as well as promoting BIAZA and other conservation charity campaigns for example, the RSPB big garden bird watch etc.
- Throughout the year we try to host themed events based on world awareness days such as World Lemur Day, World Tapir Day, World Habitat Day, World Animal Day and Endangered Species Day. These days usually have a social media campaign linked to extra educational activities we put on in the Zoo when we are open to the public.

Sustainability

- Reaseheath Mini Zoo contributes to Reaseheath College's wider sustainability policy which can be found here: [Sustainability Policy \(reaseheath.ac.uk\)](https://reaseheath.ac.uk/sustainability-policy) This in turn is linked to a more in depth sustainability strategy.
- In the Zoo we have water bottle refill stations, we promote these to visitors and highlight them during their visit. We also stock refillable water bottles in our kiosk shop.
- When procuring stock for the Zoo kiosk shop we try to source sustainably for example recycled plastic cuddly toys.
- The Zoo building itself collects rainwater and the water is use this water for the toilets.

Nature's SAFE

Nature's SAFE (Saving **A**nimals **F**rom **E**xtingtion) is one of Europe's largest living biobanks dedicated to preserving and regenerating cells from the world's most endangered species. They've been using state-of-the-art technologies to cryopreserve cells in tissues such as ovaries, testicles and ears at freezing temperatures (-196°C / -320°F) using liquid nitrogen. It's possible that in the future, when advances in technology arrive, these viable tissues may be thawed and used to further conserve thousands of species globally.

We have teamed up with Nature's SAFE and contribute biological samples to the biobank from the collection at Reaseheath Mini Zoo to help protect species in the future.

Future direction

- Fundraising linked to species project in-situ
- Eco trail round the zoo promoting what we do at Reaseheath and ideas on how visitors can be sustainable at home.
- Schools sustainability competition
- Involvement in more EEPs
- Allocate more time for staff to visit BIAZA working group meetings