

## Conservation Policy

At Northumberland Zoo, we exist only because we recognise that there is a need for conserving the natural world and all the biodiversity within it. With added pressures from the increasing human population adding to the extinction crisis, we must act now.

*“No one will protect what they don’t care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced”. – David Attenborough*

With this in mind, Northumberland Zoo strives to be a hub for conservation in our area and a place where animals represent their species as ambassadors. It is a place where people of all ages can visit and experience, in real life, the wonders of the natural world. We aim to shine a light on the issues species are facing and be a place where people can learn and be inspired to make changes for a positive impact on biodiversity and conservation.

### Northumberland Zoo Conservation Mission:

- *Participate in conservation breeding programmes*
- *Develop our role as a hub for conservation education and research*
- *Promote sustainability and lead by example*
- *Protect and restore native, natural environments and protect species at risk*
- *Support in-situ conservation projects*
- *Contribute towards the international efforts to conserve endangered species and improve animal welfare*

### Conservation Education

For us, conservation education is one of the most important strategies we can implement as we aim to be a hub for conservation in our part of the country. With 1000’s of people visiting our collection and potentially millions via social media and outreach, we can spread the messages of biodiversity loss and human impact.

At Northumberland Zoo, we are promoting conservation education through signage and interpretation located around our zoo as well as delivering engaging and informative talks. We present an opportunity for further engagement by having a number of walkthrough enclosures, animal encounters and animal displays that allow visitors to have unforgettable experiences with animals. Studies have shown that these types of experiences encourage people to care more about the natural world and make changes.

In addition to this, more formal educational visits, outreach, artefacts and collaboration with local wildlife NGO’s provide both theoretical and practical learning strategies.

The future of the world's species is in the hands of our young people and it is important that they understand the interdependence of human beings, the animal world and the natural environment. Developing an education programme for all ages of visitors visiting our collection is a necessity to ensure that people learn about wildlife from a young age. This may lead to a developing lifestyle which will be more positive and empathise with the environment and its inhabitants as they grow older.

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### Breeding Programmes

For some species, a vital part of ensuring their survival is building up a sustainable insurance population through breeding programmes. We currently hold species from 8 EEP's & ESB's.

- *Livingstone's fruit bat*
- *Lowland tapir*
- *Snow leopard*
- *Asian short clawed otter*
- *Ring tailed lemur*
- *European wildcat*
- *Grey mouse lemur*
- *Long-nose potoroo*

We house one of only 2 breeding colonies of Livingstone's fruit bats in the world. This species is at risk of imminent extinction due to deforestation and climate change. We also have a breeding programme for harvest mice and white-clawed crayfish with the intention of reintroduction of offspring into the wild in the local area to help bolster native populations in association with the Northumberland Wildlife Trust & Northumberland Rivers Trust.

### Native Species

Native species is a very important focus for us as there is an exciting array of species just on our doorstep that local people can appreciate.

We aim to collaborate with as many local NGO's as possible to promote native wildlife and environment conservation. Currently, we are working with the Northumberland Rivers Trust and Northumberland Wildlife Trust to carry out surveys, protect natural habitats & biodiversity and develop reintroduction programmes for native species.

### Creating Environments for Nature

Being in a rural location, Northumberland Zoo is situated amongst woodland, rivers, natural springs and wetlands. Within this environment we are promoting the upkeep of natural environments for native species to utilise. This has included the development of wetlands, planting trees and wildflowers and leaving protected spaces for plants to grow wild. We have also created an apiary with European honeybees to allow for natural pollination on-site.

In 2022, we joined the iNaturalist network which allows our visitors and staff the opportunity to report any wildlife that they spot on site. This helps contribute data to the national biodiversity network, helping to build a bigger picture of the health of our ecosystems.

### Sustainability

Being sustainable is key to help stop or even reverse some of the human impacts which are affecting the natural world. We have thought out every process at the Zoo to ensure that it is as sustainable as possible. All of our heating is powered by biomass boilers, which are run on sustainably sourced

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wood. We obtain all of the wood slabs from our local sawmill, season the wood and then woodchip on-site when ready. We have a biomass boiler which can also burn older wood from enclosures, recycling it and repurposing for heat.

We have a 200kW Solar Panel bank and are looking to increase this in the near future to prevent us from drawing as much electricity from the national grid.

We aim to eliminate single use plastic as much as possible and this is something that is evident in our cafe and gift shop. Sourcing merchandise made from recycled materials and items that promote conservation and biodiversity is a priority. We also have a recycling scheme within the zoo to ensure as little waste as possible goes to landfill. This includes a sorting system in the cafe, cardboard bailing, aluminium can crushing, compostable waste, plastic and glass collection.

### Online Resources

At Northumberland zoo we understand that a vast audience can be reached via online resources and that we should use this platform to push our mission efforts to a global audience. We have a purpose-built zoo app, active social media channels including Youtube & Tiktok as well as a website dedicated to sharing messages and efforts made by the zoo.

### Campaigns and Projects we Support

Being part of the British & Irish Association of Zoos & Aquaria, we have recently taken part in some of their campaigns such as 'love your zoo' week and 'spotted on site' in association with iNaturalist.

The in-situ conservation projects we support are:

#### White clawed crayfish



In collaboration with the Northumberland Rivers Trust, Environment agency and Bristol Zoological society, we have created an 'ark-site' for white clawed crayfish. This will be of benefit in the future if there are waterways in need of re-population.

#### Harvest mice



We have an on-site breeding facility at the zoo, to breed stock for local release to sites along the Northumberland coast. We are working in partnership with other zoos and Wildlife Trusts. Surveys have also been carried out on habitat within the zoo site to determine suitability for the species.

#### Snow Leopard Trust



The Snow Leopard Trust aims to better understand the endangered snow leopard and to protect the species in partnership with the communities that share its habitat. Northumberland Zoo has been supporting the Snow Leopard Trust financially since 2021, when snow leopards joined our collection.

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### Near Future Conservation Plans

The future is bright for Northumberland Zoo conservation projects, with many different projects on the horizon. The partnerships already established with Northumberland Wildlife Trust & Northumberland Rivers Trust show promise to create more opportunities for collaborations in the near future with other native species already lined up.

We will be collaborating with the Carnivore Working Group, which is a Zoological committee focused on carnivores in Zoos, with regards to their 'SerVival' campaign on the 18<sup>th</sup> March. They have a new campaign which is highlighting the current threats of increasing social media presence on the keeping of Savannah Cats/Servals and their hybrid counterparts as pets.

In 2023, we aim to set up a native species water vole breeding programme. We are planning to create an off-show breeding facility at the zoo with the aim of releasing water voles into local release sites that have been identified by the Northumberland Wildlife Trust.

Livingstone's fruit bat in-situ conservation – we have started networking with Dahari Comores, an NGO concerned with protecting biodiversity and creating sustainable and productive landscapes with communities on the Comoros islands.

We will also continue to develop the wetlands and area of undisturbed natural habitat within the zoo boundaries to encourage biodiversity and potentially repopulate with native species.

As we grow, we will develop the captive collection to include more species involved in EEP/ESB, with Vositse being a species we are working on introducing to the collection in the near future.

We will continue to work with local wildlife NGO's to promote conservation education and work to restore and protect ecosystems in our local area.