**Curraghs Wildlife Park Conservation Strategy**

This strategy is set out in terms of;

1. Conservation breeding and connection to other zoos
2. Connecting the community to conservation
3. Research and capacity building
4. Conservation projects ‘in-situ’
5. Conservation education
6. Our conservation fund
7. Future goals for conservation work
8. **Conservation breeding and connection to other zoos**

The Curraghs Wildlife Park are members of the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquaria (BIAZA) and European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA). We participate in the captive breeding programs of EAZA (EEPs), follow the one plan approach and guidance of the regional collection plans of EAZA Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs). In layman’s terms this means we donate, swap and loan animals between a network of membership zoos and endorsed collections for the purpose of ensuring a genetically healthy ‘back-up’ population of species classed as endangered or vulnerable to extinction. These species are also linked to conservation projects in the wild (in-situ) – see point 4. We work with many zoos in the UK, Europe and even beyond, sharing expertise and working together to save species.

1. **Connecting community to conservation**

Engaging and giving opportunities for the wider public to get involved in actions for wildlife and species is one of our key objectives. People want to take action, get involved and by doing so we educate and build a community that cares. Volunteering opportunities are available for the community to be part of our ‘Discovery Team’, educating and engaging our visitors. We also offer the chance to join the charity ‘Supporters of the Curraghs Wildlife Park’ to fundraise to support the Park and conservation efforts. The Supporters organise corporate make a difference days that engages the business community. Visitors also contribute to conservation funding by volunteering a £1 donation on each gate fee or £3 on a membership which is an opt-out donation and the vast majority of our community and visitors do not opt out - by visiting the Park they are also directly involved in raising funds for in-situ conservation work.

1. **Research and capacity building**

Zoos are involved in research – behavioural, veterinary, animal welfare, visitor behavioural and more. The Park will facilitate where practically possible requests from researchers and students from any level. As the Isle of Man does not have a university or college that runs the type of academic courses that would normally be associated with a zoological collection these requests are less than most ‘main-land’ zoos. However we participate where we can in sending samples, providing data and records, filling out survey requests and contributing to Species 360 (ZIMS) record keeping system which is seen as the largest exotic animal database in the world and frequently used for research. We provide as many opportunities for staff and volunteers to engage with the wider zoo community, sending staff to zoo workshops, events, training and networking to share and gain expertise and knowledge. We offer placements for young people from Duke of Edinburgh to post grad Uni level to gain practical knowledge to further their careers in conservation, animal welfare, veterinary and other associated fields.

1. **Conservation projects ‘in-situ’**

Our conservation fund was set up with the specific purpose of funding effective conservation work in the field (in-situ). These projects are mostly through our BIAZA and EAZA membership supporting projects that are endorsed by the TAGs. Some projects are entirely by one other zoo or a number of zoos. Some projects are run by other trusted conservation organisations. The Curraghs Wildlife Park Conservation Fund also supports conservation of native species and areas in and around the Isle of Man, our conservation work in not necessarily always connected to exotic species we keep in our collection.

1. **Conservation Education**

Education in conservation and diversity of Species is a key principal of all member zoos. The Curraghs Wildlife Park runs workshops directly linked to schools curriculums and can adapt many upon request. The Discovery team do talks and engagement activities to educate the general visitor. Social media is also used to get conservation education across. Currently the Park is without a school room or adequate indoor teaching space while it fundraises to replace a condemned facility. Our Education facilities and resources require more funding.

1. **Our conservation fund**

The Curraghs Wildlife Park Conservation fund gathers money entirely by donations – most of these donations are through the voluntary contribution on the gate fee and membership however individuals and companies will make specific donations to the fund. Some activities such as crafts or quiz sheets have raised funds, as well as collection boxes like the gibbon coin drop. The conservation fund is administered by the conservation committee made up of staff, volunteers and supporters, it meets at least 4 times a year. Projects are supported in line with EAZAs policy on ‘Conservation Definition’, the conservation work must be ‘in-situ’ and does not include the captive population held on site. The conservation work must be effective and in line with EAZAs ethos and scientific approach. EAZA zoos are expected to link support to species in the wild that are kept in their captive population, and chose conservation projects that align to the zoos mission – however it is also expected that zoos will work with local species and habitats – where it is the case that it is not an endorsed TAG project the zoo would be expected to run its own local project or partner with a local trusted NGO – for example in our case Manx Wildlife Trust. To see the projects that the Curraghs Wildlife Park has funded click the link here to the website <https://www.curraghswildlifepark.im/education-conservation/conservation-fund/>

1. **Future goals for conservation work**

It is clear to all that to save nature, save species and wild spaces we ALL need to do more and quicker. The planet has lost biodiversity faster than ever and we are at a dangerous tipping point. The Curraghs Wildlife Park is a small team, with limited resources however we are proud that the conservation fund has grown and the engagement from staff and visitors. We look to keep expanding our conservation work and look to form longer and affective partnerships where we can multiply our support over the longer term, rather than just a ‘one off donation’ to different charities. Although this past approach has given some projects a great boost, or filled a specific need at the time – such as bush fire disaster appeal or the need for yellow fever vaccinations in Golden lion tamarin. Conservation is most successful when it is sustained and has secure funding and the Curraghs Wildlife Park hopes to build on that connected partnership approach.