

**Exmoor Zoo Conservation strategy:** version2: 2/22/2023

## **Strategic plan and annual review**

### *Working document:*

#### **Requirements:**

The legal requirements under the SSSMZP 2012 section 7:2 & 7:3 state that a zoo must comply with one or more of the following options:

1. Participate in research that benefits accrue to the conservation of species
2. Train in relevant conservation skills
3. Exchange information relating to species conservation
4. Participate in captive breeding
5. Re-population or reintroduction of species to the wild

The undertaking should be proportionate to the size and type of zoo.

#### **Mission statement:**

The mission statement of Exmoor Zoological & Conservation Centre Charity is:

“Active conservation through education and preservation”.

#### **Ethos:**

The ethos of the zoo since its initiation in 1993 has been “Naturally” attempting to incorporate the local and indigenous wildlife and flora into the awareness of visitors as well as those animals that are not native.

#### **Location:**

Exmoor zoo is a protected island (fully fenced against livestock intrusion and some native animals) under the EC BALAI directive and is full of natural native plants, insects and smaller animals from the surrounding locale.

The zoo is situated next to the Exmoor National Park, adjacent to a designated Area of National Beauty (the northern Devon and Cornish coastlines) and within the UNESCO North Devon Biosphere.

#### **Rationale:**

The conservation strategy has developed historically focusing on “in-house” native education programmes. These have been ad-hoc and some more effective than others. This should still be the primary and correct option for conservation due to the type of visitor; of which over 60% are holiday visitors to the area and most importantly the location of the zoo. The charity have decided to help support ex-situ field conservation projects that compliment some of the species exhibited in the centre.

***Aims:***

The zoo must engage the visitors not only in world-wide conservation issues but also in those that effect the area we are located within. Each visitor must be made aware and encouraged in how they can support these such as the Exmoor Wild-watch campaign and the Devon Wildlife Trust Horseshoe bat project.

The zoo must also educate via our out-reach these same issues that need to be linked to this conservation strategy.

The aim will be over a five-year period to try and achieve the 3% net of VAT that WAZA suggest each zoo should strive to achieve.

The aims of the conservation strategy for the zoo will be:

1. To develop and support conservation projects in locations that zoo animals are exhibited from
2. To improve our native in-house conservation
3. To establish a link and become involved with the native reintroduction work carried out by local conservation bodies.
4. To maintain and exhibit species that are threatened or endangered whenever possible
5. To hold and become involved in captive breeding species capacity for some species programs
6. To develop a means of assessing the cost and effectiveness of doing the above
7. To identify all native species of flora and fauna currently using the zoo grounds and plan to benefit the habitat for the most endemic of these relative to our location or the those that are most are.

***Objectives:***

The zoo runs monthly quizzes throughout the year these can be orientated to achieve these aims and changed annually. An educational awareness campaign will run for the 2 months of the summer and will support one of the above aims and evaluate it.

The zoo can become involved in a local natural conservation project and link with Exmoor National Park to achieve this along with the butterfly conservation trust.

The zoo can select, with understanding of the species we specialise in several non-indigenous ex-situ conservation projects from across the world. The money raised to support these can come as a percentage from the keeper animal experiences and fund raising from the education department.

We can create, restore and improve the educational ability of our nature reserve to achieve an improvement in our visitor's native natural understanding in relation to our local conservation issues.

We can survey native species on site, report, document and try and improve targeted important species and tell our visitors.

We can promote our solar array for electrical energy production more effectively and combine this with the wild Devon grassland/culm surrounding this.

Potentially we can highlight recycling uses and incorporate recycling waste bins into the zoo.

We can develop “fair trade policies” in the cafeteria and promote ecologically viable & sustainable food items. For example, we can develop a sustainable Palm oil policy and source accordingly.

**Targets:**

To help in the monitoring and develop trained personnel to survey native species with Exmoor. *Begun April 2017* and to continue this support ad infinitum.

To select and deliberately monitor throughout the year certain native animal and plant species on site. Beginning early summer 2017. Emphasis on bees as well as butterflies, moths and birds. Attempt to locate the champion moth due to the plentiful feed plants. Potentially integrate a project with Quince Honey Farm and add bee hives to the solar panel array field area.

The native species monitoring to be split into;

1. The general zoo area
2. The nature trail and stream/woodland
3. The wild natural potential culm/old meadow grassland around the solar array

To maintain summer buddleia for day time butterflies. To grow cotoneaster, ivy and bugle (*ajuga reptans*) for early nectar bees. To ensure stinging nettle and briar patches exist on site for insects.

*Continuing*

Allow the Yupukari river turtle head start program in Guyana to be superseded as the in-situ project leaders are no longer in the field.

To select and continue to help annually potentially 4 conservation policies world-wide that reflect the species we keep and specialise in. To be decided by keeper discussion, management and trustees.

To reinvest in the functional and educationally orientated nature reserve and walk at the zoo in *3 years*.

To provide nesting habitat for hole nesting birds (nest boxes) specifically for *Cyanistes and Passer domesticus*.

To provide summer bat roosts and identify species on site and then annually monitor.

To hold and breed white stork for UK reintroduction see the appendix

To become involved in the holding and breeding of Scottish wild cat for release within the UK?

To hold a mixed flock of yellow shouldered amazon for potential re-release on Bonaire in the Caribbean.

To encourage and plant local orchids to be re-introduced into the wet marsh land areas of the zoo. Heath spotted, southern marsh & lesser butterfly orchids.

To encourage the growth of devils-bit scabious the food plant for the marsh fritillary and other culm related plants such as ragged robin, marsh cinquefoil, whorled caraway, sharp flowered rush, marsh bedstraw, meadowsweet, angelica, tormentil, saw-wort, meadow thistle & sedges.

To maintain the grassland around the solar array as native culm grassland with restricted grazing.

To endeavor to locate and attract the key culm insects: narrow bordered bee moth, double line moth and the keeled skimmer dragonfly. Also, to monitor and attract other key culm insects such as small pearl bordered fritillary, wood white, marbled white, dingy skipper and small heath. This will require low bog/pond creation and timed access for low level grazing. <http://www.northerndevonnia.org/culm-grassland>

**Goals:**

*In-house conservation:*

To create the following in-house conservation education programs allowing for the following:

1. Apply to local species and habitats within the zoo grounds
2. Improve wild numbers or survival

Therefore, we can:

1. Establish, manage and monitor a small area of culm grassland (old meadow) around the solar arrays giving public access and educational display material.
2. To record and identify the native wildlife and plants on the zoo site in relation to the 3-separate key areas within the zoo
3. Promote, preserve and increase the numbers of certain selected key target species within the zoo grounds
4. Establish and maintain a nature trail that is fully educational functional and relative to the habitat
5. Develop and adhere to a maintenance policy that ensures plant & wildlife biodiversity compatible with culm, Devon grasslands and hedgerows within the zoo.

*Ex-situ native conservation:*

1. Become involved in capacity breeding (early stages of the program) of certain native species for re-introduction in their UK region of origin such as; white stork \* see appendix 1, Scottish wild cat, European Spoonbill.
2. Provide funds for the Devon Wildlife Trust
3. Raise money through charity donations for the Exmoor National Park "Caremoor" biodiversity program

*In-house non-indigenous conservation:*

1. Become involved in capacity breeding of certain species for re-introduction in their country of origin such as; Yellow shouldered amazon, Blue throated macaw & Bali starling
2. Attempt to exhibit and hold IUCN endangered and threatened species within breeding programs wherever possible.

*Ex-situ non- indigenous conservation:*

1. Select 4 non-native exhibited species from the zoo (or very similar) that represent us and provide financial grant aid in the way of donations raised through the Exmoor Zoo animal experiences for their conservation through recognized bodies.

This includes the Cheetah Conservation Foundation, The Stitching Wild Dog Foundation. The Begawan Foundation as of 2023.

**General:**

Conservation costs for any project include:

1. Direct financial grants
2. Time spent on the project
3. Cost of vehicle use fuel etc. for attending meetings or general use for the project
4. Cost of staff being trained to recognise and identify target species for recording
5. Materials or equipment donated
6. "In-kind" costs, office space, making available existing materials, knowledge sharing
7. Time and travel costs spent on conservation meetings
8. Membership fees when related to conservation organisations

In-house conservation education programmes must:

3. Apply to local species and habitats within the zoo grounds
4. Improve wild numbers or survival

Costs would be;

1. Restoration
2. Creation of the habitat
3. Monitoring targeted species
4. Educational signage
5. Any materials, time etc.,

Re-introduction native species projects;

1. White stork
2. Black crowned night heron, spoonbill and glossy Ibis are currently being translocated to The Derek Gow Consultancy Ltd [Derek Gow Consultancy | Specialists in water vole conservation \(watervoles.com\)](http://www.derekgow.com) (specialists in UK reintroduction) after breeding.
3. Scottish wild cat. <http://www.scottishwildcattaction.org>

Costs would be:

1. Food, housing, health management, transport, husbandry, veterinary care

Species capacity building in captivity for translocation and release:

1. Yellow shouldered amazon as of 2023 this program initiated by the World Parrot Trust has been "put on hold" ... Stocks are being dispersed to other European Zoos.
2. White stork
3. Black crowned Night heron
4. European Spoonbill
5. Glossy ibis

Measuring the effectiveness of a campaign or project could include the following parameters:

One off campaigns:

1. Total number of people that walked the exhibit or took part in the activity linked to this
2. An awareness questionnaire on leaving the zoo
3. The number of reads/hits/replies to an email/social campaign related to this
4. The number of handed in returns from the activity as a percentage of those visited on the day

Running policies:

1. The increase in target species for locale related endemic and or rare species from annual survey comparison
2. The awareness of visitors about the zoo conservation policies on the zoo questionnaire survey
- 3.

Attached appendices:

1. White stork Feasibility reintroduction study as part of rewilding England