

Statement in Support of BIAZA

The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) supports the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (BIAZA) extensive efforts to secure early flexibility for BIAZA member zoos and aquariums to open in the UK, many of which are WAZA members as well.

We are disappointed in the decision by the UK government to restrict zoos and aquariums from opening, when restrictions elsewhere on other businesses and similarly ticketed gardens are being eased. Zoos and aquariums rely on visitors in order to operate and the continued lockdown is having a detrimental impact which will not only affect zoos' ability to feed and ensure the highest standards of welfare for the animals in their care, but which will also have far-reaching, and disastrous consequences for local and global conservation efforts. BIAZA and WAZA members are vital contributors to conservation across the world, from saving species from extinction, to supporting *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation efforts, research and education.

In a time when humans' relationship with nature has become more critical than ever, we need zoos and aquariums to continue fostering connections between people and wildlife and to continue their vital work to save species, habitats and ecosystems. For many members of the public, a visit to the zoo is a nice, informative day out, but for these zoos it allows them to continue their work fighting extinction.

WAZA member zoos and aquariums in other regions around the world have started to reopen with extensive precautions in place and they have clearly demonstrated that it is possible and safe to do so. BIAZA members already have robust opening plans in place and have gone to extraordinary lengths to ensure that the safety of visitors and staff is paramount.

We sincerely hope the UK government will support allowing British and Irish zoos and aquariums to open as a matter of urgency.