BIAZA
BRITISH & IRISH ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

BROWSE magazine

October 2025

GD100

Marking the 100th birthday of the man who helped bring zoos to the modern era.

BEAR ESSENTIALS

Meet some of the newest ursine arrivals.

'ZOO & A'

With Dr Andrew Mooney.

PLUS:

BIAZA member feature, Awakening cicada research, What's to come Q4 2025.

BIAZA
BRITISH & IRISH ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

Welcome back!

We are thrilled to present our third issue of BIAZA Browse – our bespoke online magazine for both those within and outside our zoological community. It has been an immense summer, and year, for our sector (and we still have a few months to go!)

Current events are affecting the zoo and aquarium community in both beneficial and challenging ways. Only recently we have seen the loss of Dame Jane Goodall, whose pioneering work on primatology and welfare inspired so many of us.

It is perhaps pertinent that we mark the legacy of another conservation pioneer in this magazine - Gerald Durrell. Both Goodall and Durrell helped shape wildlife compassion and conservation as we know it today, and we are exceptionally grateful to them.

As for my past summer, it started brilliantly with the BIAZA Annual Conference wonderfully hosted by Jimmy's Farm and Wildlife Park. A highlight for me was awarding Dublin Zoo's Dr Andrew Mooney with the Rising Star award, and you can see an interview with Andrew on page 20.

Transmitting the voices of our association is crucial to us. If you work for a BIAZA member and would like to be featured in a future edition, you can get in touch via the links below.

From all of us here at BIAZA, We hope you enjoy another edition of this exclusive insight into the zoological world.

Dr Jo Judge,
CEO of BIAZA

Contents

2. The Headlines

6. Meet some new Zoo Bear Arrivals!

8. Education Highlights

10. Member highlight: the story of Sea Life Adventure

12. Marking Durrell's Legacy

16. Crowdfunding: a new go-to Tool for Charities

18. Soundscapes: Frontiers in Zoo Research

20. Zoo&A with Zoo Conservationist: Dr Andrew Mooney

23. Insect Conservation from Paultons Park

24. Cryopreservation: with Nature's Safe

25. Care sheet Highlight & What's On Q3 2025

Find us on social media:

British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA)

BIAZA

@OfficialBIAZA

BIAZA BiteSize:

BIAZA Members can Stay informed with our weekly e-newsletter, in your inbox every Friday.

BIAZA Browse: October 2025 edition.
Editors: Maria Carbin, Andy Hall.
Thank you to all contributors. Want to contribute to the next issue? Email maria.carbin@biaza.org.uk
Advertising is available to BIAZA corporate members.

biaza.org.uk

About the cover: Gerald Durrell, founder of the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and Jersey Zoo with the ambassador of the zoo's mission and logo - the dodo.

The Headlines

Historic Zooborns!

September 2025: History was made at Blackpool Zoo as the first female Asian elephant calf was born to a first-time mum. The team has been providing 24/7 monitoring and support, particularly due to calf having initial difficulties suckling.

"This achievement further reinforces our dedication to the conservation of all endangered species and I could not be prouder of our team."
- Darren Webster, Zoo Director.

The newborn, named Zaiya by keepers, represents an Endangered species which has declined by at least 50% over the last three generations, due to poaching and habitat loss. Blackpool is one of several zoos which support elephants in the wild alongside their conservation breeding programmes.

Other notable recent births from zoos include the UK's only bonobo baby at **Twycross Zoo**, a binturong at **Drusillas Park**, an Extinct-in-the-Wild socorro dove at **Whipsnade Zoo**, and the remarkable virgin hatching of an Eastern Casquehead Iguana at **Battersea Park Children's Zoo**, a result of the biological phenomenon known as parthenogenesis.

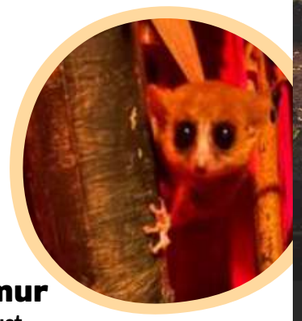
'History is made' as an endangered elephant calf is born at Blackpool Zoo

Crayfish Collaborators

2025 has been a monumental year for **Flamingo Land** and the Yorkshire Crayfish Hatchery as they reach a major milestone in the 'Claws for Thought' project.

Their hatchery is a response to the dramatic decline of the white-clawed crayfish. From safely housing numerous wild egg-bearing females, the total number of released crayfish has been over fifty in the hatchery's first operational year.

In the wild, only around 5% of crayfish typically survive to adulthood, but with expert care in the hatchery, the team hopes to boost that figure to an incredible 95%.

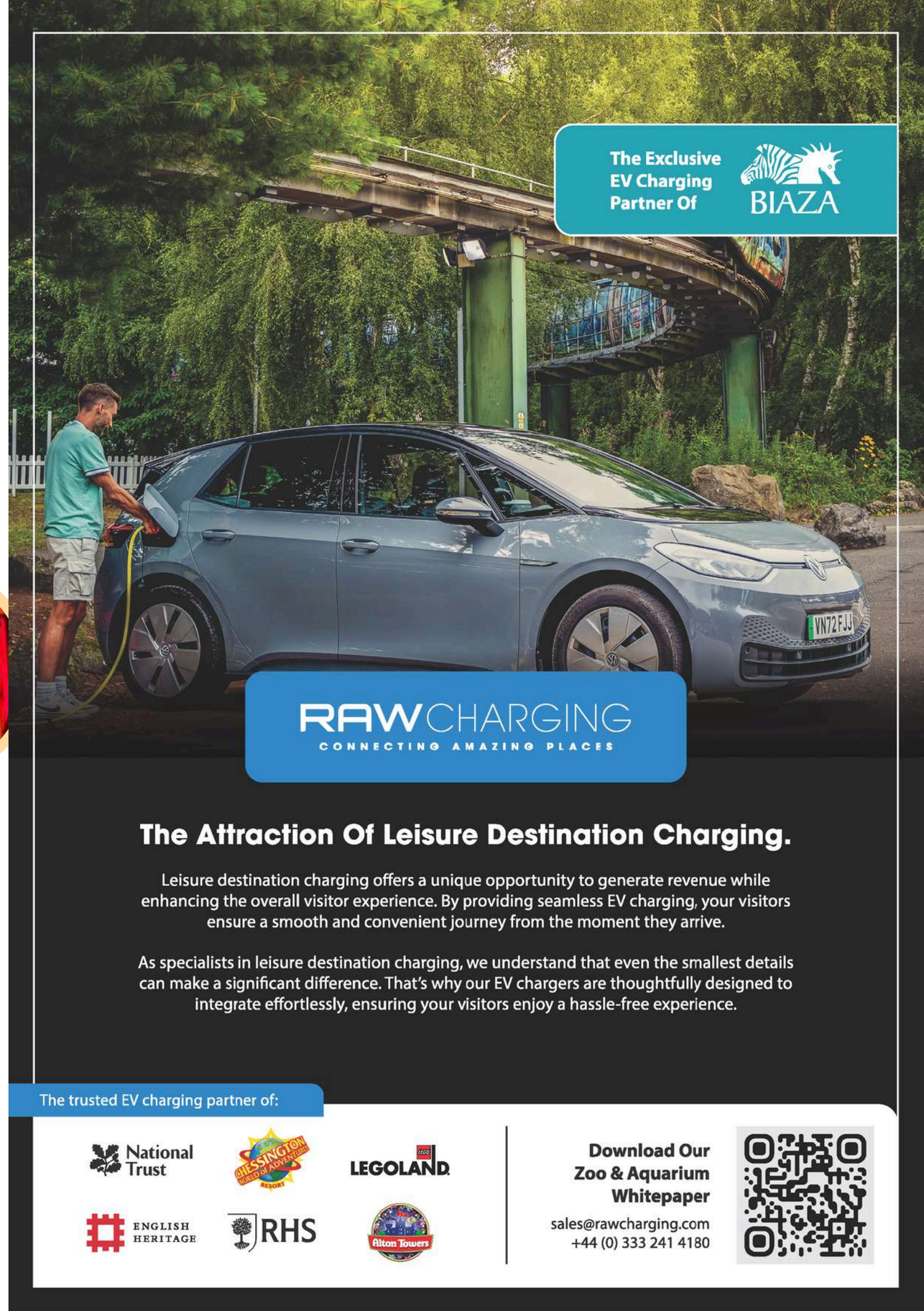


First UK zoo cares for rare mouse lemur

July 2025: Shaldon Wildlife Trust announced the arrival of two Goodman's mouse lemurs from Zoo Zurich, marking the first time this rare and elusive species has ever been housed in a UK zoo.

Native to Madagascar, the lemurs are among the smallest primates in the world, weighing just 60 grams.

The male and female have settled into a specially designed nocturnal habitat. Their addition reinforces the zoo's commitment to protecting the world's smallest and most endangered species as an "*exciting opportunity for conservation education, research, and species advocacy*" - Zoo Director Zak Showell.



Watatunga Wildlife Reserve

Rare calf is first in England

June saw a white-lipped deer born at Watatunga Wildlife Reserve – marking the first time this species has bred in England.

They are one of just fourteen facilities in Europe involved in the European Endangered Species Programme (EEP) and even more significantly, one of just three sites in the UK that currently hold the species.

Wild populations of this deer are sadly declining and they are classed as Vulnerable by the IUCN, making this birth even more special.

Where's Harvey?

Underdogs don't get much pluckier than the humble harvest mouse! Working with the UK Mammal Society, BIAZA are calling for essential conservation surveying to understand their wild populations.

BIAZA's Harvest Mouse Focus Group has therefore launched the *Where's Harvey* campaign to encourage members to survey for harvest mice nests like the one pictured above.

Woburn Safari's Catherine Doherty said: *"harvest mice can nest anywhere from the edges of car parks to wild spaces. Through Where's Harvey we are collecting valuable data to better understand the populations of this amazing native species."*

Overcoming social deprivation

BIAZA joined WWT and The Heritage Alliance to organise a special event at WWT London that brought together visitor attractions, poverty charities and policy makers to look at the barriers stopping every child being able to answer the question 'what did you do during the summer holiday?'

11 Million Postcards is calling for every family to be able to enjoy a brilliant day out whether that is at a zoo, aquarium or a castle or country park.

Signage by WWT from the event

Polling shows support for wildlife attractions

BIAZA's commissioned polling shows that seeing animals is still at the heart of the visitor motivations along with the opportunity to have a brilliant day out. The data is remarkably consistent with the polling conducted two years ago and shows the public remains firmly in support of wildlife attractions. However, the data, which is available for BIAZA members, shows that ticket costs are a growing factor in putting off visitors.

Mahiri the giraffe receives inhaler

September 2025: In an incredible story of perseverance and care, the Zoological Society of East Anglia's Banham Zoo have managed to train Mahiri the giraffe to receive an inhaler. After three years of work, this inhaler treats an ongoing nasal condition and allows Mahiri to reduce treatment via steroids.

Mahiri is a much-loved 16-year-old female reticulated giraffe, and her pioneering inhaler delivery system is the first ever used with a giraffe in the UK.

Mahari's chronic nasal condition is believed to be linked to an autoimmune disorder, this condition makes breathing through her nostrils difficult and causes persistent discomfort.

For the past three years, the zoo's dedicated animal care and veterinary teams have worked patiently, day after day, to gently train Mahiri to accept treatment voluntarily.

This extraordinary level of trust means Mahiri can now take part in her own healthcare calmly and willingly, without the need for sedation or restraint – ensuring her comfort and suiting her unique anatomy and clinical needs.

This achievement is more than a veterinary first – it is a reflection of the compassion, expertise, and commitment that their staff bring to every animal in their care. It also contributes to advancing knowledge in giraffe healthcare worldwide.

Keepers assembling the inhaler, and Marahi making use of it. (ZSEA Banham Zoo)

If you go down to the woods today...

Some of the biggest, hairiest and charismatic new arrivals at BIAZA zoos...

Zoo bears inspire awe in all those who see them. Did you know that BIAZA zoos are home to seven species of bear? Their care is paramount, which is why so many BIAZA zoos have become fantastic homes for them.

Just recently last summer, Martha, Irene, Gigi, and Coco – four female Asiatic black bears arrived at Pembrokeshire's **Manor House Wildlife Park**. Also known as moon bears and recognisable by the V-shaped chest markings and white patch on their chin.

Classified as Vulnerable by IUCN due to habitat loss, poaching, and the illegal wildlife trade. More than 10,000 Asiatic black bears are still believed to be held in bile farms across eighteen countries.

The habitat at Manor House Wildlife Park has been innovatively designed including a bear-shaped pool and, in what is believed to be a world first for this species, two tunnels will link the new bears habitat to the Sumatran tigers', allowing species to swap spaces for enrichment.

Randhir at Lincoln Zoo

Lincoln Zoo and **RZSS Edinburgh Zoo** recently became home to sloth bears, named for their tree-climbing habits and shaggy coats.

Lincoln Zoo's Neil Mumby said: *"Randhir has been a fantastic addition to Lincoln Zoo. He's settled in quickly, and it's a real privilege to be part of the wider EEP effort to protect and conserve such a unique species."*

Asiatic black bear enjoying a climb at Manor House Wildlife Park

Where you can *bear witness* to some new arrivals in BIAZA zoos...

Lucy settling in at Drayton Manor

On the Isle of Wight, the **Wildheart Sanctuary** is the new home for two year old brown bears Benji and Balu. The bears were rescued after living for years in a small cage in Azerbaijan.

Rescuing the bears has been an enormous project involving the Azerbaijan Government, Four Paws, Bears in Mind among others. The story of Benji and Balu has captured the hearts and minds of the public, with the Wildheart Trust raising an incredible £216,000 to support their transportation, rehabilitation and care. Seven webcams around the bear habitat have also been a huge hit - enabling visitors to see Benji and Balu explore their purpose-built home.

The zoo at **Drayton Manor Resort** welcomed a new Andean bear in July. It marks the first time in the Park's history they have looked after the species, which is the only South American species of bear. Thirteen-year-old Lucy was born at Lisieux Zoo in France and later moved to Chester Zoo, before safely arriving at Drayton Manor.

The species faces decreasing wild population, sadly with only 2,500-10,000 individuals left in the wild.

Tim Rowlands, head of Zoo Operations at Drayton Manor said: *"Bringing bears into zoos isn't anything new for me...so, for me to try and help out the Bear TAG* [Taxon Advisory Group] *with working with one of these species is no surprise to people around me. Now she is settling in to her new home we look forward to designing a purpose-built habitat in the near future."*

BIAZA's Bear Focus Group is part of the Mammal Working Group, and aims to boost bear welfare and keeper expertise. BIAZA members can find bear husbandry guidelines here.

Benji & Balu playing in their pond at Wildheart Trust

The Fenn Bell School Nature Project

How the Fenn Bell Conservation Project brought nature to schools.

Many children today are alarmingly out-of-touch with nature, which is why the Fenn Bell School Nature Project is bringing native species education and resources straight to schools.

To begin, the team did initial survey for schools. This allowed them to assess what, if any, wildlife-friendly resources schools already had, and what habitats are found near schools.

Following this, the Fenn Bell Nature Project provided primary schools with a bespoke resource pack which contained detailed instructions on how to build, install and maintain multi-species bird boxes, swift boxes, bug hotels, mini-pond areas and hedgehog homes.

Throughout, the pack provided schools with curriculum-specific activities themed around their nature area - improving skills from art to numeracy.

In addition, they encouraged the schools to participate in citizen science schemes like the Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count or the BTO garden birdwatch.

Overall the pack has reached over 12,000 students across 30 primary schools, promoting native wildlife preservation in a mostly urban setting. This work strengthens the connection between education and conservation - essential for the ongoing protection of biodiversity.

The past and future of Generation Wild

WWT's multi-year project combining education, conservation and wellbeing.

Generation Wild is the Wildfowl & Wetland Trust (WWT)'s award-winning nature connection programme for schools, children and families in disadvantaged areas.

A 2024 report on Generation Wild programme has shown phenomenal results for the first phase of the project. And now, building from the report with the latest figures from year 4, a total of 62,000 children have taken part, completing over 240,000 nature activities in their school grounds, gardens and local nature spaces. An incredible milestone!

The 2024 survey reports that of the 605 participating schools, 413 (68%) were in the 30% most deprived areas of their nation.

Plus, 71% of teachers now do more nature-related activities with their classes.

In terms of research, an interdisciplinary team of staff and students at Cardiff University have conducted a series of studies with the children and teachers taking part in Generation Wild.

Evidence shows that connecting with nature makes children feel happier, increases their self-esteem, and improves their behaviour as well as their mental and physical health.

With the drive to create a brighter future for all, WWT are keen to share learning from the programme with others. To find out more, visit www.generationwild.org.uk

More than fish: the story of Sealife Adventure

Situated on the banks of the lower Thames Estuary, Sealife Adventure has long been a favourite with locals and holidaymakers visiting Southend-on-Sea.

Since opening its doors in 1993 under Vardon Attractions (later to become Merlin Entertainments), the aquarium has become a much-loved feature of the Essex coastline. In 2001, Sealife Adventure was acquired by the Stockvale Group, the family-run business best known for Southend's Adventure Island theme park and a range of exciting local businesses.

With Stockvale at the helm, Sealife Adventure went from strength to strength. What began as a traditional seaside aquarium soon evolved into a wide-ranging "zooquarium", securing adjacent land and broadening its collection.

Today, alongside our aquarium displays, visitors can meet otters, meerkats, and primates, as well as more unusual residents including mongoose and giant African tortoises. This blend of aquatic and terrestrial life makes Sealife Adventure a truly distinctive destination, showcasing the diversity of life in an engaging and family-friendly way.

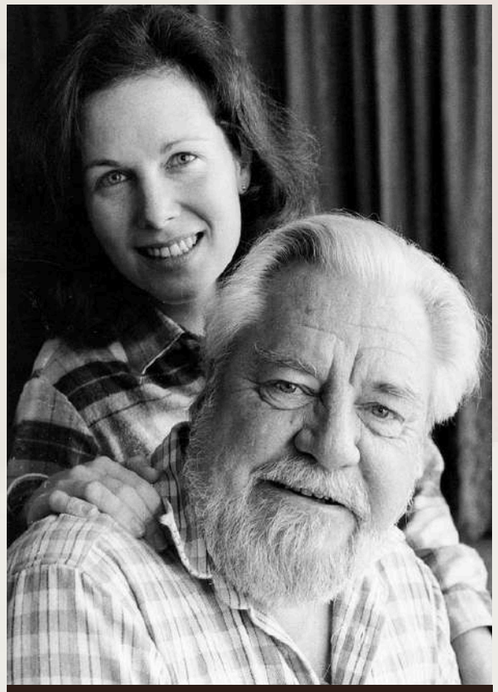
The last few years have been a particularly exciting chapter in their story. In 2025, Sealife Adventure became a fully accredited member of BIAZA, underlining their commitment to the highest standards of animal welfare, education, and conservation. This accreditation is a proud and important milestone for them, reflecting the dedication of our team, their determination to keep moving forwards as part of the zoological community, and a testament to the journey they've been on.

The ocean tunnel was refurbished in 2024 and is home to species like zebra sharks and cow nose rays.

To lay the groundwork for this next phase, they've continued to invest in their people. The recent appointment of a Registrar and Science Officer has enabled them to sharpen their focus on animal records, research, and conservation initiatives, while also aligning more closely with sector best practice. Looking ahead, they're actively working to expand their involvement in field research projects and weave more active conservation into their exhibits. Their aim is that every visitor leaves not only entertained, but also inspired, and with a deeper understanding of the natural world and the role they can play in protecting it.

They're also exploring innovative ways to connect with their community. From fresh interactive experiences to new partnerships, Sealife Adventure is much more than a visitor attraction: they're part of Southend's cultural fabric, and they're proud to share what we do.

More than three decades on from opening, Sealife Adventure continues to reinvent itself while staying true to its roots: providing memorable days out by the sea, championing the incredible diversity of life on Earth, and inspiring the next generation of animal lovers. With exciting plans in motion and a passionate team driving them forward, the future looks brighter – and wilder – than ever.



Lee and Gerald (Estate of Gerald Durrell)

Gerald and Lee Durrell training students at Durrell Conservation Academy, early 80s

Gerald Durrell and Trumpy, a grey-winged trumpeter, ~1963

Marking Durrell's Legacy

Gerald Durrell was a foundational conservationist, bringing zoos and aquariums to the modern era.

2025 saw his 100th birthday, and we spoke to Durrell's Honorary Director Lee Durrell about this extraordinary legacy:

It's been a huge year for the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, how have you marked the occasion?

We've marked the 100th birthday year of our founder, Gerald Durrell, in many ways, and I think he would have enjoyed all of them. First, on his birthday, 7th January, we placed a commmeorative plaque on a prominent wall of Les Augrès Manor, which lies in the heart of Jersey Zoo. Gerry lived in the Manor from the time he started the zoo in 1959 until his death in 1995.

Then we offered a Founder's Trek in India from Gerry's birthplace in Jamshedpur towards the foothills of Assam, where we have one of our most successful conservation programmes – the recovery of the pygmy hog. This little suid became one of Gerry's favourite animals after he visited Assam in 1972, just after it was re-discovered.

We opened an art installation in the grounds of Jersey Zoo in the springtime which will run until the end of September. Called 'Bloom', it is a colourful meadow of thousands of Gerry's favourite flowers sculpted out of eco-friendly materials by the artist Stuart Semple.

We're hosting the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition in September. When this competition first began, many years ago, there was a 'Gerald Durrell Prize' for the best image of an endangered species!

At the end of September we're having a grand, gala fundraising ball, the star turn being the incomparable Lulu, and in November the annual Durrell Lecture will be held in Jersey in the presence of our Patron, HRH The Princess Royal. The theme will focus on the outcomes of our 2018-2025 conservation strategy, Rewild Our World.

Throughout the year I was invited to take part in many literary festivals and other events to celebrate the centenary, from India to Greece to the UK.

I also took the centenary to Corfu, where as a boy Gerry discovered his great passion for animals. In May we hosted a concert of The Durrell Suite, composed by the late Derek Lawrence and performed brilliantly by the Corfu Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra and the Children's-Youth Choir of St Spyridon.

In September, we hosted two performances of the stage play that was based on Gerry's famous book, My Family and Other Animals, by the Jersey Arts Centre. The play is in English, of course, but we arranged a huge screen with subtitles in Greek, which was very much appreciated by our Greek audience, especially the children. Throughout the summer in Corfu, there ware many small events celebrating the centenary put on by a very active group called Corfu Butterfly Conservation, of which I am Ambassador.

I think I am going to take next year off!

Tell us a little about your background with Durrell?

I had done research for my doctoral dissertation in Madagascar in the mid 1970s and, on returning to my university (Duke University in the USA) to write up, my profs asked me if I had ever heard of an author called Gerald Durrell. 'Heard of him', I said, 'He's my hero!' They then asked me to come to a dinner party where he was the guest of honour……the rest is history!

We married in 1979, and spent the next 15 years travelling to see the Trust's conservation projects, collaborating on books and television series, doing lecture tours or relaxing at our little farmhouse in France ▶

Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust is an international charity headquartered at Jersey Zoo. Established by author and conservationist Gerald Durrell in 1959, Durrell has been working for over 60 years to not only prevent extinctions but recover populations of threatened species and drive the restoration of ecosystems.

DURRELL

25th anniversary of Jersey Zoo with Gerald & Lee Durrell, 1984.

Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust

One of Gerald's favourite animals, the pygmy hog.

Flowers from Jersey Zoo's 2025 'Bloom' installation, part of GD100.

Early Jersey Zoo entrance building with dodo sign

Tributes from Industry Leaders:

"Gerald Durrell's vision reshaped what zoos could and should be: centres of conservation, education, and deep respect for wildlife. His pioneering work inspired generations of conservationists and influenced institutions like Chester Zoo to put species survival and habitat protection at the heart of our mission. In his centenary year , we celebrate his extraordinary global impact—saving species from the brink and setting standards for ethical, purpose-driven zoos worldwide. Chester Zoo stands proudly alongside Durrell in this shared journey, continuing to build a future where wildlife thrives and people are inspired to protect it."

- Jamie Christon, Chester Zoo CEO and BIAZA Chair

"Gerald Durrell's vision transformed the role of zoos and aquariums, showing the world that they could be agents of species conservation. His leadership continues to inspire our community globally, and WAZA was proud to celebrate that legacy by granting the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust the very first WAZA Conservation Award in 2016. Since then, the award has stood as a symbol of excellence in conservation action, reflecting the path Durrell paved for us - one of measurable impact, responsibility, and hope for wildlife."

- Martín Zordan, WAZA CEO

"Gerald Durrell's work conserving some of the least known and most threatened species on the planet through ex-situ conservation at Jersey Zoo was a major inspiration for me when I grew up. I was always particularly fascinated by lemurs. When Durrell brought back the aye-ayes and Lake Alaotran gentle lemurs from Madagascar (a mission immortalised in his 1992 book "The aye-aye and I"), I remember pestering my dad, who had a pilot's licence, until he flew me to Jersey in a four-seater plane to see them (which was quite a trip, as we were living in Germany!). It was a wonderful day, which I will never forget in my life, and confirmed me in my wish to pursue a career in zoo-based conservation!"

- Dr Christoph Schwitzer, Dublin Zoo Director and EAZA Chair

"Gerald Durrell has achieved so much with critically endangered fauna and flora, reintroductions and being a leader in in-situ and ex-situ conservation. Durrell Wildlife Trust and Jersey Zoo have had a lasting impact on the zoo and conservation world with Gerald leaving a legacy that will continue to live long into the future."

- Lynn Whitnall, Hertfordshire Zoo CEO

"The work of Gerald Durrell provides a clear example to us all of the conservation value of zoos, and the direct benefits we can have globally to species and people. Successful conservation of species and ecosystems takes hundreds of years, and the clear and evidenced positive impacts that Jersey Zoo can now be so proud of, is testament to the long-term vision that Gerald Durrell had. I am inspired by the strong focus on capacity building that shines through in all Durrell's projects and the number of people who have been encouraged, trained, and supported to contribute to species conservation over the last 100 years!"

- Dr Rebecca Biddle, Twycross Zoo Chief Conservation Officer

I became more and more involved in the Trust's work in an advisory capacity, except in Madagascar where I started the recovery programme for the ploughshare tortoise in the mid 1980s. I attended Board meetings and became a full member of the Board when I succeeded Gerry as Honorary Director upon his passing in 1995.

Is there some wisdom from Gerald Durrell you wish more people could hear?

I think his wisdom is very simple – that the human species is but one of millions on this planet, part of the community of living beings in which the actions of one has consequences for the others. Gerry says it so much better: "The world is as delicate and as complicated as a spider's web. If you touch one thread you send shudders running through all the other threads. We are not just touching the web; we are tearing great holes in it." I feel that people 'hear' this, but don't really listen to it! If they did, the planet would not be in the dire state it is today in terms of biodiversity, ecology and climate.

Do you have an amazing animal-related memory, whether at Jersey Zoo or otherwise, you'd like to share?

It was in Madagascar when we were filming To the Island of the Aye-Aye in late 1990. We were there to capture the rare and elusive nocturnal lemur, the aye-aye, to start a breeding colony at Jersey Zoo. We set up camp on the banks of the Mananara River in northeast Madagascar, and I had been given the duty of feeding the aye-ayes while they were waiting in large holding cages until we had enough to send back to Jersey. The first night with the first animal we collected was magical! I had made 'honey balls', a mix of bread, honey and minced beef, to tempt the shy animal from the back of her cage. I held the honey ball in my fingers, and she came slowly and warily towards me and took a tentative nibble, then another, and another and then started feasting. Later, we were able to provide juicy grubs collected by children from the nearby village, but for me it was thrilling that this wild animal took her first meal with us from my hand!

Thank you for writing for BIAZA, are there any final takeaways you would like to impart to our audience?

I am glad that people are remembering and reminiscing about Gerry in this centenary year, but more importantly, I hope they keep his legacy alive for decades to come.

It will take a superhuman effort to keep our planet in some sort of ecological balance in the future, but if Gerry's work can inspire and motivate such an effort, maybe we'll succeed.

Crowdfunding: a new go-to tool for charities

BIAZA teams up with Navigate to discuss Crowdfunding with impact - and how BIAZA zoos and aquariums can build lasting support for themselves.

Crowdfunding has become increasingly ubiquitous for charities, community groups, and small businesses looking to raise money and awareness. Done well, it's not just a way to bring in funds, it's a way to grow a strong and engaged community around your cause.

But, a great campaign is not as simple as setting up a page and waiting for the donations to roll in. To dig into what makes a campaign work, we've brought together two perspectives:
From BIAZA, the view from organisations ("fundees") who run campaigns: what do you need before, during, and after?
And from Navigate, a partner that works with cultural and charitable attractions on strategy and marketing: how do you tell your story, get buy-in across your team, and make sure your plan runs like clockwork? Here's a practical recipe for success.

Before You Launch: Getting the Foundations Right

The best campaigns start long before you hit "publish." That means really nailing down your "why." What is the problem you're tackling? Why does it matter? What will happen if you don't act and, crucially, why should people support it right now? Urgency makes people more likely to act. It also means being realistic. Don't pluck a target out of the air, break it down and show exactly what people's money will do. Saying "We're raising £5,000 for harvest mouse habitat" is fine, but saying "£20 pays for five metres of wildflower planting that will give harvest mice cover to nest" is far more powerful. People want to see the link between their donation and a living, breathing result.

From Crowdfunder's perspective, early momentum is everything. Campaigns that succeed usually hit 25–30% of their target in the first week because they've already lined up early backers before the campaign begins. Cold starts rarely succeed. Keep the message human, simple, and focused on impact.

The Navigate view: Story, buy-in, and strategy

A crowdfunding campaign lives or dies on three things: the story you tell, the team behind it, and the plan you follow.

A good story is non-negotiable. People don't give to spreadsheets, they give to stories addressing questions like; why does this matter now? Who will it help? What will change because of the support?

But a story alone isn't enough. You need buy-in from across your organisation. Trustees who will champion the cause, staff who'll share it in their networks, and volunteers who will spread the word on the ground. If it's just one person pushing, the campaign will feel like a side project. When everyone is invested, it becomes part of your organisation's voice.

Finally, you need a plan. The best campaigns don't rely on enthusiasm alone - they're scheduled. That means mapping out every channel (social media, email, press, posters, onsite touchpoints), drafting content in advance, setting clear dates for updates, and preparing emails before you go live. When the campaign is in full swing, you'll be busy keeping momentum up, having assets ready ensures you can respond quickly while staying consistent.

During the Campaign: Keep the Momentum Up

Once you're live, the job is to keep energy and attention flowing. That means regular updates (once a week at least), making those updates interesting - photos, stories from behind the scenes, quick thank-yous, and exciting progress milestones. It's not about broadcasting once and forgetting, it's about building a consistent and positive narrative.

Social media is your best friend here, but don't overlook word of mouth, direct mailing lists, or even posters around the zoo or aquarium. And don't be shy about asking your staff, trustees, and volunteers to share. Every share counts.

From Crowdfunder's view, campaigns often fail because they "flatline" in the middle. The best way to avoid that is to set mini-goals. Instead of just "help us raise £20,000," break it down: "This week we're aiming for £2,000 to buy survey kits for local volunteers." It keeps people motivated, and it gives you something new to shout about.

And remember: say thank you. Publicly. It not only makes your donors feel great, it nudges others to join in.

After the Campaign: It Doesn't Stop at the Finish Line

One of the biggest mistakes people make is thinking it's over once they hit their target. In fact, this is where you can really shine.

Send out updates. Show donors what their money achieved. Share photos, progress reports, and small wins. If you offered rewards, send them out promptly and with a personal touch.

From Crowdfunder's side, the most successful organisations see campaigns as the start of a relationship, not a one-off. These supporters have already raised their hand to say "I care." They're potentially interested in deeper involvement, whether that's another donation down the line, volunteering, or simply being an ambassador for your cause.

Avoiding the Traps

A few common pitfalls to watch out for:

- **Over-ambition.** Setting a target way beyond your supporter base.
- **Underestimating the work.** Crowdfunding is hands-on fundraising, not passive income.
- **Silence.** If you don't update people, they lose interest.
- **Jargon.** Nobody gets inspired by "capacity building for stakeholder engagement." They want real stories, real animals, real impact.

Final Thoughts

At its best, crowdfunding is exciting. It's fast-moving, social, and it brings people closer to your work. But more than that, it's a chance to show there's public backing for what you do.

The recipe for success is simple - a clear story, genuine buy-in from your team, and a plan that keeps the campaign alive across all your channels. Add Crowdfunder's golden rules, build early momentum, stay authentic, and keep talking to your supporters, and you have a framework that works.

Do this well, and the money raised is only part of the outcome. What you'll really build is a community of supporters who've chosen to walk with you, not just once, but into the future. That's when crowdfunding stops being a fundraiser and starts being part of your long-term impact.

- Clare Pennington, BIAZA Grants & Fundraising Manager and Olly Reed, Marketing Director at Naviate, BIAZA's marketing partner.

The Sound of Science: new frontiers in zoo research

Rebecca Lewis, a scientist at Chester Zoo, using bioacoustics research equipment.

Studies show an untapped frontier in zoo research which has implications in welfare monitoring, assessments, and habitat design:

New studies, including Hullabaloo at the zoo: aligning acoustic research with the goals of the conservation zoo, published in Bioacoustics, suggest the untapped science behind zoo soundscapes.

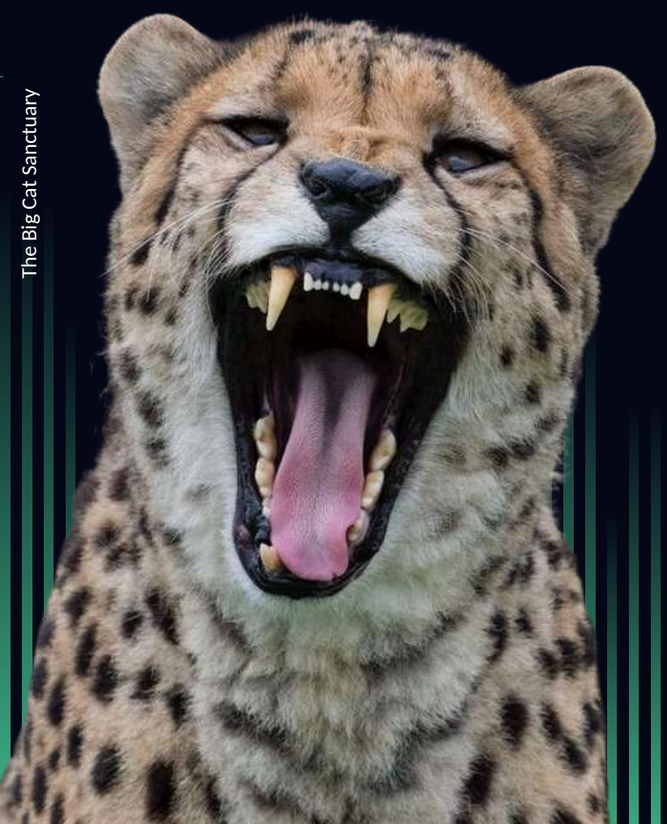
The article, written by Rebecca Lewis, Conservation Scientist: Population Biology, and Leah Williams, Lead Conservation Scientist: Population Biology at Chester Zoo, looked at more than 30 years of bioacoustics work.

Leah said: "*Zoo soundscapes have real implications for visitor and animal welfare and on conservation practices, and they offer a rich and unique environment for inquiry.*"

"...We would invite researchers in any acoustic discipline to consider zoos as an arena of study."

Key findings:

- Visitor noise is the most researched aspect of sounds in zoos
- Zoo bioacoustics impact studies most often focus on non-human primates, with relatively few visitor sound studies focusing on birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish
- Consistent noise, like generators, is less studied than acute noise, (e.g. from construction projects)
- More research is needed into how environmental noise affects the way animals communicate and behave



The Big Cat Sanctuary

Published in September, the paper Stakeholder Perspectives on Zoo Sound Environments and Associated Impacts on Captive Animal Behaviour, Management and Welfare published in JZBG by Dr Paul Rose and Tom Rice notes that the influence of sound is varied and context specific.

As the paper states, *"The zoo's sound environment is influenced by the animals, the built environment, vegetation, climatic, temporal and seasonal factors, equipment use, husbandry practices, and human presence."*

The study also noted that routine operational sounds, such as closing gates or doors, could inadvertently cause stress to animals, suggesting the need to consider sound in designing new habitats and husbandry schedules.

Outputs also stated that sound, when carefully managed, can act as enrichment through (for example) structured auditory cues or naturalistic sounds if ecologically relevant.

Research into these varied soundscapes is crucial in the continual development of optimal welfare conditions among good modern zoos and aquariums. The authors suggest integrating sound measurement into broader welfare assessment frameworks.

Meanwhile, future research should include a wider range of species (especially understudied taxa), consider the experiences of a wider stakeholder demographic, and evaluate how sound is management in complex or high-traffic areas of the zoo.

LEISURE TIME IS YOUR BUSINESS. PROTECTING IT IS OURS.

Lycetts has over 30 years' experience arranging insurance cover for businesses like yours. From zoos and farm parks to arcades and bowling alleys, your protection is our priority.

Get in touch to find out more.

0191 227 5685
david.still@lycetts.co.uk
lycetts.co.uk

Lycetts | Insurance Brokers and Financial Services

Proudly part of the BENEFACT GROUP

Lycetts Insurance Brokers and Lycetts Financial Services are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

'Zoo&A' with zoo conservationist: Dr Andrew Mooney

We interviewed Andrew Mooney, Dublin Zoo conservationist and and winner of the BIAZA Rising Star Award 2025:

Tell us about what you do at Dublin Zoo

I'm the Senior Conservation and Science Officer at Dublin Zoo, and I joined the team in 2021. I lead our growing Conservation and Science team, and my biggest responsibility is overseeing the implementation of Dublin Zoo's first-ever Conservation Master Plan, a 10-year roadmap that guides everything we do for wildlife, both in Ireland and around the world.

Day-to-day, that means a mix of strategic planning and hands-on work, whether it's coordinating our conservation efforts, managing research projects, supervising students, and sometimes even getting out into the field. I also work closely with our keepers, educators, and various other teams to ensure that conservation is an integral part of everything we do.

Dublin Zoo is the fourth oldest zoo in the world, and in 2031 we'll celebrate our 200th birthday. Our Vision 200 will see us become a true "zoo-based conservation organisation" by 2031, where every animal, every visitor and every decision plays a role in protecting nature. I see my job as making sure that this vision isn't just a slogan, but a plan with real, lasting impact.

The IUCN Centre for Species Survival in Dublin Zoo

What is the IUCN Centre for Species Survival and why is it so valuable?

The Centre for Species Survival: Ireland is an official partnership between Dublin Zoo and the IUCN Species Survival Commission. It launched in 2023 and is part of a global network of over 20 centres, all working together with IUCN SSC Specialist Groups to support species conservation efforts.

CSS: Ireland is dedicated to protecting Ireland's native wildlife, and it focuses on everything from policy-level biodiversity planning to hands-on conservation for threatened species. Our work follows the IUCN's "Assess, Plan, Act, Network, Communicate" cycle, an approach that ensures each project has strong evidence, a clear plan, the right partnerships, and measurable results.

In my opinion the Centre provides a unique platform to extend the conservation reach of a zoo or aquarium, opening new dialogues with conservation partners, politicians and scientists.

Already, the Centre has helped shape Ireland's National Biodiversity Action Plan, with several actions in this plan now directly attributed to Dublin Zoo. The Centre has also allowed us to build a formal partnership with the National Parks & Wildlife Service, and contribute to national policy development, such as the National Invasive Species Management Plan.

Our biggest success to date has been our involvement in the Breeding Waders EIP (European Innovation Partnership), a €25 million initiative aimed at protecting and restoring breeding wader populations across Ireland.

Between Dublin Zoo, the IUCN CSS, and contributing to BIAZA and EAZA, how do you balance so many roles?

The secret is that they're all connected!

Each role feeds into the others and helps me be more effective overall. Whether it's coordinating a European breeding programme for the Critically Endangered citron-crested cockatoo, shaping cryopreservation strategies with EAZA, or supporting research across BIAZA as Vice Chair or the BIAZA Research Committee, they're all strands of the same web in my eyes.

I think of it as wearing different hats for the same cause. These roles allow me to share what we're doing in Ireland with the wider zoo and aquarium community, while also learning from some of the most talented and dedicated people from around the world.

Ireland might be small, but that gives us a unique advantage in that we can be nimble, collaborative, and set examples that other small nations can follow.

Are there any conservation or research projects we should be keeping an eye on?

I think the next big frontier for zoos and aquariums is understanding people just as much as wildlife. Social science, and understanding things like what motivates visitors, how they connect to nature, and how that connection can translate into real conservation action, are going to be critical as we move forward.

I'm particularly excited about the recent Zoo Sphere of Influence Model, which is helping our community map and measure the full extent of our impact. It's not just about what happens inside our gates, but also how we influence policy, inspire change, and support wider ecosystems.

Finally, one of the hardest but most important things we need do as a community is better measure our conservation success. Recovery takes decades, which makes impact harder to track, but without it we can't be sure we're making the difference we aspire to. That's a challenge I'm eager to see us tackle.

> **Conservation is a marathon, and if you're always looking to the next mountain without stopping to enjoy the view from the one you've just climbed, you risk burning out.**

Any final thoughts for our readers?

Zoos and aquariums have incredible power to help nature, but only if we work together, hold ourselves to high standards, and aren't afraid to measure our impact honestly.

Collaboration isn't just nice to have; it's the only way we can meet the scale of the challenges we face. One thing I've learned (and am still learning) is the importance of celebrating the small wins. Conservation is a marathon, and if you're always looking to the next mountain without stopping to enjoy the view from the one you've just climbed, you risk burning out. Those moments of celebration keep the momentum going.

I'm incredibly proud to represent Dublin Zoo and Ireland in the global zoo and aquarium community. We might be a small country, but we can make a big impact, and that's what is continuing to inspire me.

Andrew was awarded the BIAZA Rising Star Award in June 2025.

Uniform for EVERY ROLE

- Premium branded uniform
- Quick delivery to UK zoos
- PPE workwear
- Layering up
- Branded merchandise
- 24/7/365 online ordering
- Stock holding & fulfilment
- Speedy name badge printing
- Sustainable fabrics
- *All seasons, all departments*

TaylorMadeDesigns
Made with Care
EST • 1993

+44 (0) 1202 473 311
hello@taylormadedesigns.co.uk
www.taylormadedesigns.co.uk

Musical Insect Conservation off to a resounding start

Paultons Park on bringing back the musical cicadas which went extinct in the UK.

The New Forest cicada, *Cicadetta montana*, was once found across the New Forest National Park, but there have been no confirmed sightings since the 1990s.

As of 2023, Paultons Park is a project partner of the Species Recovery Trust (SRT) New Forest Cicada project. After assessing the habitat, management is in place for an attempt at, very excitingly, reintroduction.

As the New Forest is already at the northern edge of the species' natural range, climate change could make the area more habitable for the cicadas.

To prepare, the team at Paultons Park are leading the zoo breeding and management elements of the project and have constructed several rearing habitats for housing adult cicadas and nymphs.

These large, netted plant pots contain local plant species, like hazel and hawthorn saplings to provide suitable foraging, shelter and egg-laying opportunities for the arriving cicadas.

"To be part of a project involving a local species is really exciting. We have hopefully created a suitable environment to allow the cicadas to thrive, and it will be fascinating for us to see the project progress.

We have our fingers crossed that the cicadas will successfully hatch."

-Jack Williams, Assistant Zoo Manager.

Pete Hughes

"This project represents a remarkable achievement, showcasing the dedication, innovation and teamwork that made it possible.
After years of absence, we finally have New Forest cicadas on English shores again."

- Graham Horton, Acting Deputy Director for the Thames Solent Area Team at Natural England.

Cicadas currently in specially designed habitats have successfully laid eggs, which the Paultons Park team are focused on monitoring.

Any cicada nymphs which hatch this year will spend at least four years underground feeding on plant roots. It will therefore be impossible to know whether the first step of the reintroduction has been successful until **2029 at the earliest.**

Paultons Park and the SRT hope to release any emerging adults at secret locations in the New Forest. The first-of-its-kind project has been funded by Natural England, the Swire Charitable Trust and the Valentine Charitable Trust.

Cryopreservation: A Tool for Conservation

Nature's SAFE on biobanking as a version of conservation that is both groundbreaking and accessible:

With biodiversity loss accelerating, innovative strategies are essential to safeguard the genetic diversity and future viability of threatened species. Cryopreservation, **the process of preserving cells and tissues in a living state at ultra-low temperatures,** has emerged as a key tool for conservation.

By storing biological material in a living state, cryo-biobanks are creating genetic reserves to protect wildlife at risk of extinction.

Zoos play a vital role in conservation through ex-situ breeding programmes, which aim to minimise inbreeding and maximise genetic diversity.

However, practical challenges such as breeding failures, ageing animals, and infertility can hinder these efforts. Cryopreservation technologies can enhance ex-situ breeding programmes by allowing the genetic material of individuals to be utilised long after death, ensuring their genes can contribute to managed populations.

Cryopreserving cells and tissues in a living state effectively safeguards the genetic diversity of a species in case of severe population decline.

Restoration of genetically healthy animal populations in this way (known as genetic rescue) can be achieved through the preservation and future regeneration of sperm cells, reproductive tissues, or even skin cells. In mice, it has been shown that under the right conditions, skin cells can be turned into induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) which can then be directed to grow into reproductive cells. These reproductive cells can then be used to establish live pregnancies through techniques such as in vitro fertilization (IVF).

Although this technology is still in development for other species, banking biological material now affords us the possibility of its use in the future.

This approach also addresses some logistical challenges. Multiple time consuming hurdles can present themselves when moving live animals. Transporting cryopreserved material (such as live sperm) offers a practical alternative option for collaborative breeding programmes across regions.

Accessible Biobanking for UK Zoos

Biobanking services are currently available to UK zoos through Nature's SAFE, the EAZA Biobank's UK-based cryopreservation partner. After an animal passes, or during routine veterinary procedures such as castration, Nature's SAFE works alongside veterinarians to secure cells and tissues to store in their biobank.

As a charity, Nature's SAFE provides sample storage at its state-of-the-art facilities in the UK free of charge. As a third-party service provider, each institution also maintains ownership of all samples they have stored in the biobank.

Biobanking Strategies

Gaining consensus on the conservation priorities for global wildlife cryo-biobanks is a continual process. Collaboration between institutions and the formation of specialist groups are vitally important for this.

Strategic biobanking practices may prioritise factors such as the threat level to a species, its ecological role within the environment or evolutionary distinctness. While cryo-biobanking priorities often focus on highly threatened species, preserving samples from Least Concern species, in addition to those under threat, allows for proactive safeguarding and research development. Larger populations harbour greater genetic diversity, offering the best opportunity to secure comprehensive genetic representation of a species before severe declines occur.

This broader approach to biobanking centres on safeguarding a wide range of species to help maintain ecosystem function and resilience.

In fact, it can be preferable to utilise samples from lesser threatened species to conduct innovative research to ensure that different tissue types can be safely thawed and cultured.

Third-party service providers such as Nature's SAFE enable institutions to bank samples in alignment with their own conservation strategies. They can also work with EAZA Ex-situ Programme (EEP) coordinators to align efforts between institutions to enhance specific breeding programmes. For example, Nature's SAFE is currently collaborating with the clouded leopard EEP coordinator to cryopreserve biological material from the entire living collection of clouded leopards in the UK.

A Future for Wildlife

Wildlife cryopreservation is a rapidly developing field which holds huge potential for global conservation. By freezing extinction in its tracks, cryopreservation offers a tangible means of supporting the protection and restoration of our planet's biodiversity for future generations.

Alice Carroll | Wingham Wildlife Park

biaza.org.uk/events

WHAT'S ON: Q4 2025

Follow the links to find out more.

Oct – Mar	**Where's Harvey?** Campaign for harvest mouse nest surveying
16 – 17 Oct	**Big Cat Workshop** Wildheart Animal Sanctuary
20 – 22 Oct	**Conservation Conference** Yorkshire Wildlife Park
28 Oct	**Livefood Husbandry Workshop** London Zoo
5 – 6 Nov	**Communications Conference** Yorkshire Wildlife Park
6 – 8 Nov	**National Aquarium Conference** SEA LIFE London Aquarium
11 – 13 Nov	**Conservation Education Conference** Hertfordshire Zoo
13 – 14 Nov	**Bird Working Group Conference** Birdworld
28 Nov	**Nocturnal Mammal Workshop** London Zoo
Dec	**BIAZA Secret Santa!**

Care sheet highlight for BIAZA members:

Patagonian mara

Dolichotis patagonum

BIAZA Members can Download here

Sarah Parbery | ZSL London Zoo