Admitting our failures

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BRITISH & IRISH ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

Who is BIAZA

- The Association for Zoos and Aquariums - >130 members
- The very best zoos and aquariums in UK & Ireland
- Educating, inspiring and creating connections to nature is a core part of our member's propositions while providing brilliant days out.
- A leading voice on nature access/education
- Convening experts

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ALLIES FOR WILDLIFE

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132 BIAZA Zoos & Aquariums

represent a network of expertise both within the community, and through countless partnerships on a local, national and global basis. All with the singular objective of **protecting nature.**

1236 CONSERVATION PROJECTS

in 2024, from rewilding lost species to rejuvenating essential habitats.

1.13 MILLION EDUCATION VISITS

in 2024, creating new generations of nature's allies.

1280 RESEARCH PROJECTS

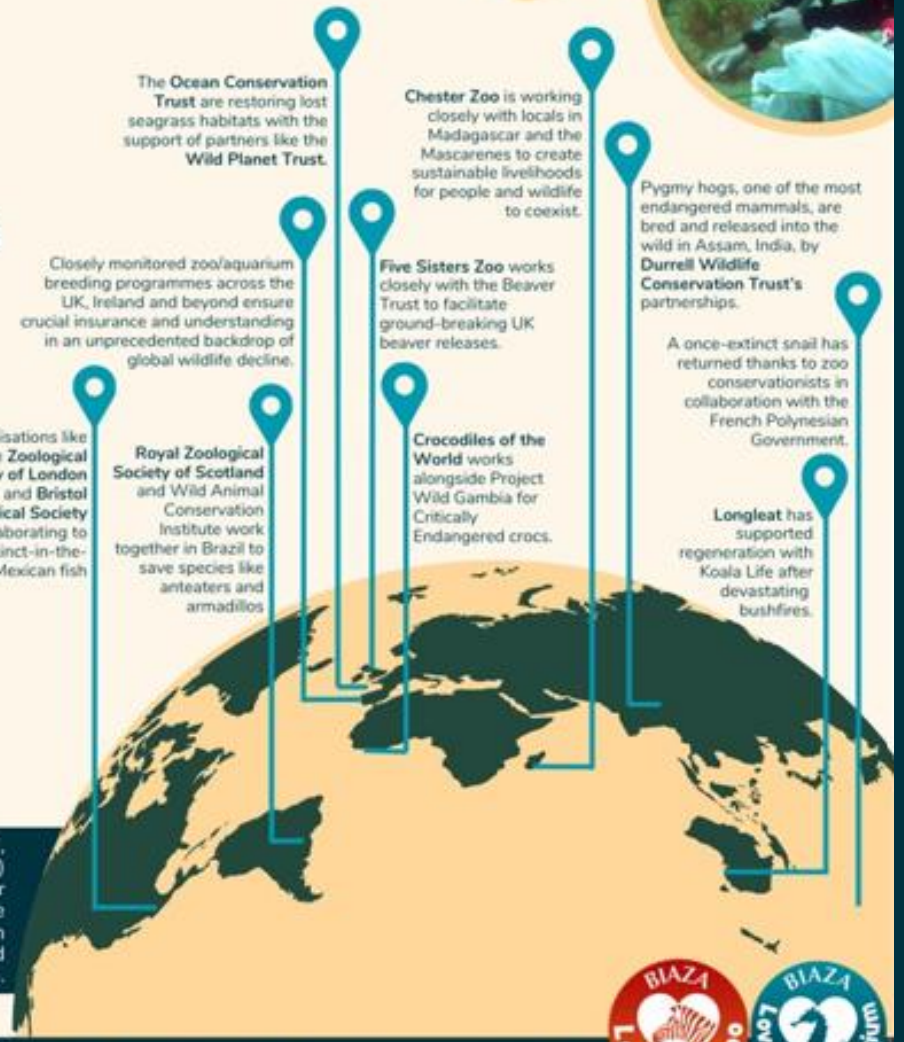
In the last year alone, ever-studying the natural world in order to save it.

£153 MILLION SPENT ON CONSERVATION

since 2020. Igniting conservation both locally and around the world.

30 MILLION VISITS

Were hosted by a BIAZA member zoo or aquarium last year, making the wonder of nature accessible for all.



From the UK and Ireland, **BIAZA members** (in bold) collaborate with one another and beyond to produce cutting-edge developments in wildlife welfare and conservation.

BIAZA Love Your Zoo

BIAZA Love Your Aquarium

Photos L-R: Paignton Zoo, Whipsnade Zoo, Five Sisters Zoo, Ocean Conservation Trust | Data from BIAZA Annual Questionnaire 2020 - 2024
BIAZA Love Your Zoo and Love Your Aquarium is celebrated every May Half Term, find out more at www.biaza.org.uk

Inspire & Change

Promoting	Guiding	Engaging	Championing
Promoting sustainability within BIAZA, our members and through them zoo and aquarium visitors	Providing guidance and support to members on how they can inspire behaviour change in others	Taking action to assist members with increasing engagement with under-served communities	Championing increasing diversity, equality, accessibility and inclusion within the sector, including promoting diverse routes into the professions available within the zoo and aquarium sector

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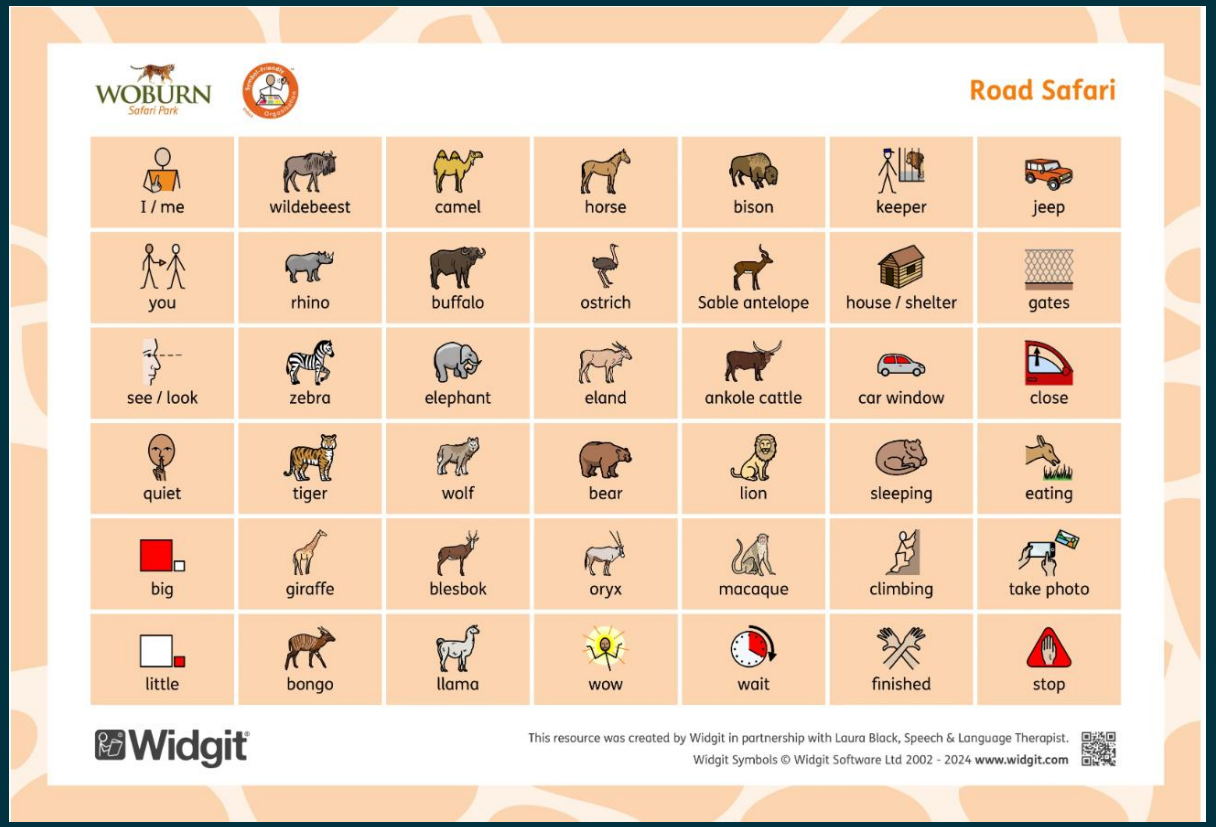

Example 1:

Blackpool Zoo

Rebecca Reynolds | Head of Education, Conservation and Research

At Blackpool Zoo, we temporarily closed our doors to host an exclusive event for *The A World UK*, a fantastic organisation dedicated to supporting the autistic community. As a Zoo for All, we are committed to accessibility and inclusion, and this event was a true reflection of that mission.

To ensure a welcoming and comfortable experience, we:

- Provided a sensory map, social story, and information leaflet
- Ensured a barrier-free, low-sensory entry
- Provided a quiet space for those who needed it
- Installed extra sensory signage to identify areas with sudden noises or potential sensory sensitivities
- Switched off background music and recorded sounds throughout the park
- Limited Tannoy and radio announcements
- Adjusted our talks programme to allow for smaller quieter talks even including a silent sea lion demonstration with visual prompts and sign language
- Offered a quiet train ride, which was a huge hit!

The response from guests was truly moving:

- *"We've come away on a high having made the most magical memories"*
- *"The venue, the staff the way it was organised was fantastic we had a lovely stress free day"*
- *" I felt my little boy was free to be himself"*
- *"The extra touches didn't go unnoticed!"*

Blackpool Zoo's efforts have led them to be honoured with two prestigious awards at the Lancashire Tourism Awards; 'Accessibility and Inclusive Tourism' and 'Large Visitor Attraction' recognising their contribution to education, sustainability, and social impact. Congratulations!

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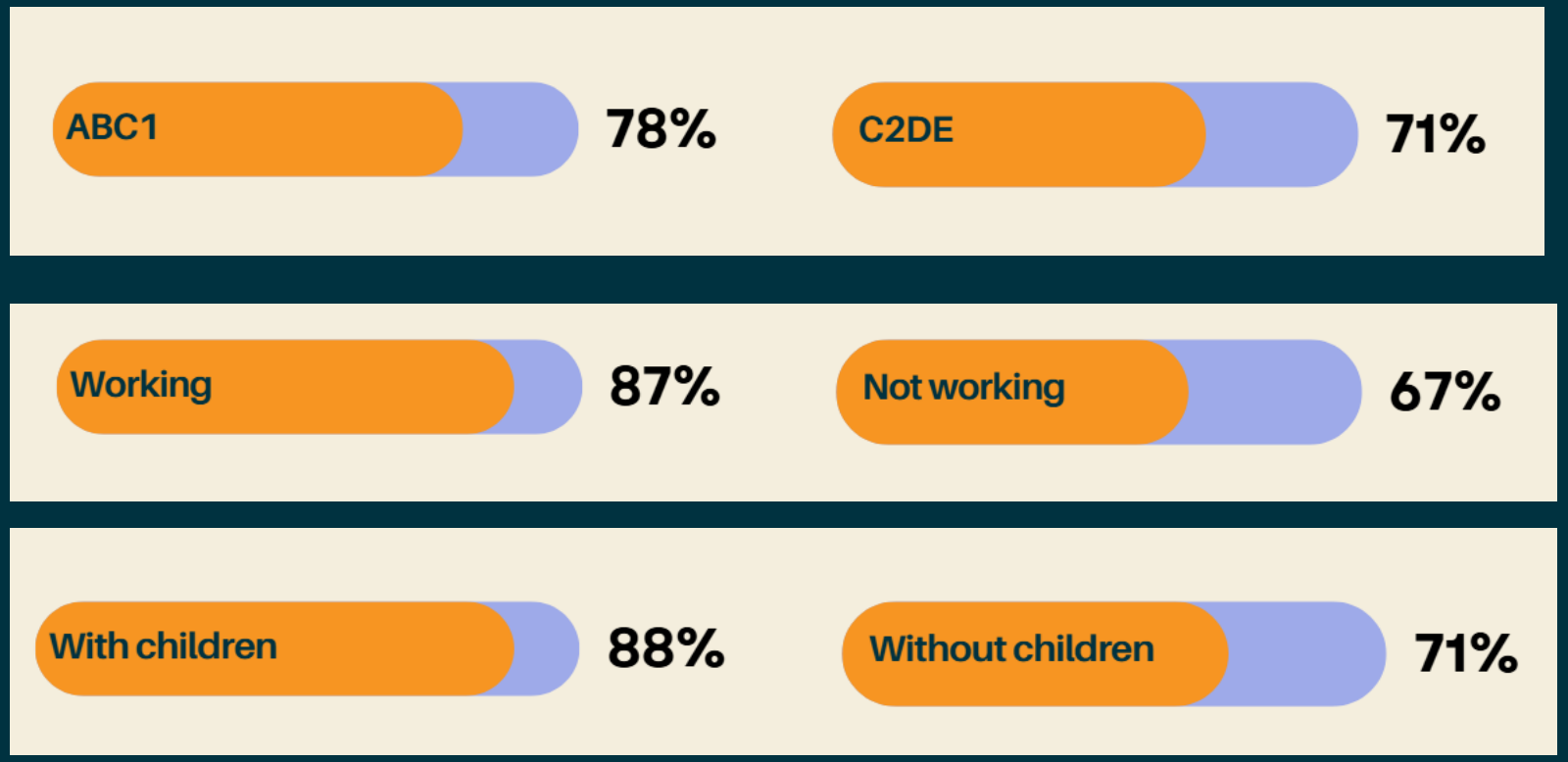
Who is visiting the zoo?



...our visitors are more likely to be affluent families with young children with the parents in employment

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
68%	83%	86%	81%	67%

Failure or success?

- **75%** of the UK public are visitors – but a higher percentage is supportive of the work of zoos and aquariums
- In 2023 just **4%** of non-visitors said it was because the sites aren't accessible enough
- But …**8%** of non-visitors aid it was because sites aren't accessible by public transport

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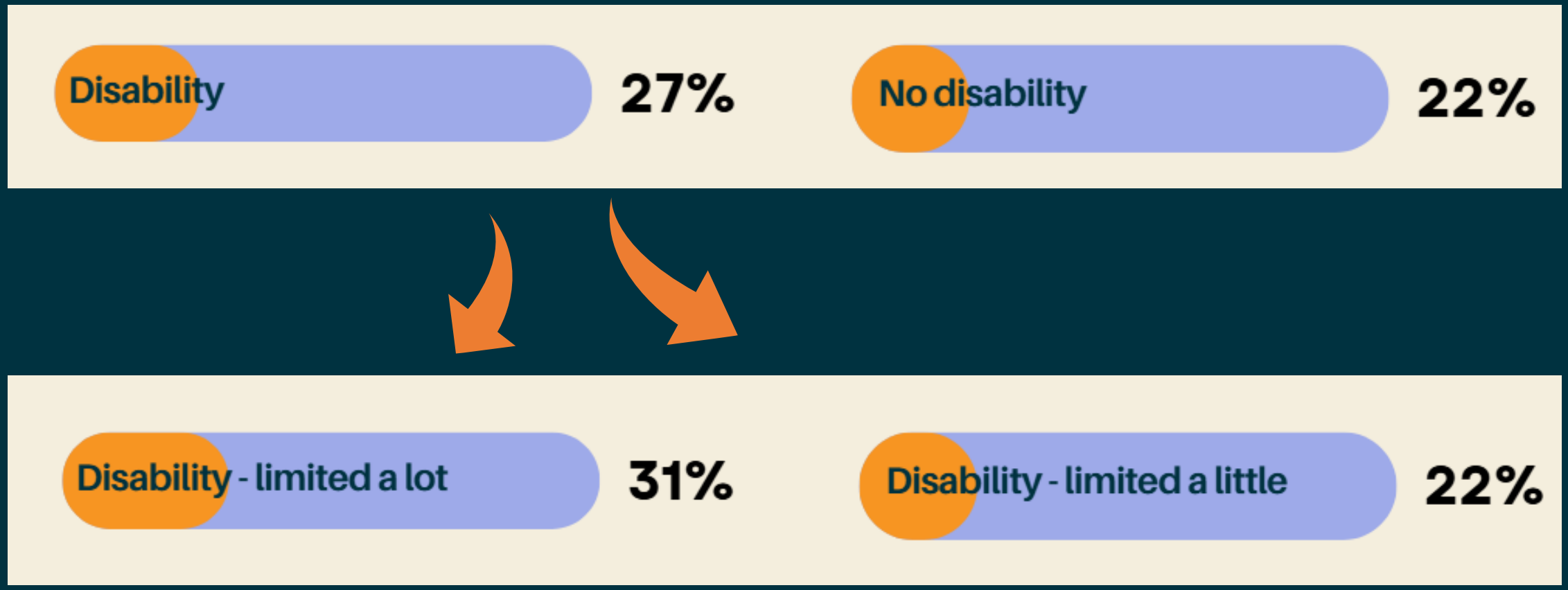
% of non-visitors:



We asked all respondents (visitors and non-visitors) - To what extent would each of the following reasons influence you to NOT visit wildlife attractions such as zoos, farm parks, safari parks, aquariums and animal sanctuaries...

38% said lack of public transport would influence a decision not too visit

29% said the site not being accessible enough.

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- In 2023 …**20%** of non visitors said it was too expensive

- In 2025 **73%** of all respondents said costs influenced their decision not to visit a wildlife attraction – the top influence on decision making

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The 2025 and 2023 YouGov polling are not directly comparable, however similar questions were asked and general changes can be observed....

TOP FACTORS DETERRING VISITATION

UK POLLING - 2023

1. Not liking captivity
2. Not interested
3. Welfare concerns
4. Too expensive

UK POLLING - 2025

1. Too expensive
2. Welfare concerns
3. Not liking captivity
4. Preferring other attractions

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Huge Disappointment

May 2025 • Family

I visited the zoo with my adult daughter wife and granddaughter to repeat our lovely experience when we visited with our children 30 years ago. We had built this experience up to our 5 year old re the huge and rare animals she would see in the flesh.

We live in the Cotswolds, so however we travelled it was going to ex... used a blue peter badge to gain entry for one child and was shocked to be told the remainer was a ... to book online like I would normally do. ... steep cost.

for the train. ... get a break.

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Expensive and disappointing day

Aug 2025 • Family

... this.

I agree with most of the reviews the walking to the different areas is not adequate enough we ended up going around the same areas. Also, I was highly disappointed with the boat ride not worth the 40 minute que to see absolutley nothing except for overgrown bushes and reeds. There were a large amount of enclosures empty which when you have walked to these areas is quite disappointing ... med ok.

... at 1pm. We have rang the wildlife park as soon as we was given the information (rang 29th of july) to see if we could rearrange the tickets for ... funeral we need/want to attend as a family which fall on the same ... before (6th of August) ... and costing just under £90. (Expensive)

The lady on the phone ... d it was possible to change the tickets but at a ... hat we already paid. Disgusted in the ... ady replied if you'd of paid for the flexi ticket...

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RIP off

Aug 2024 • Family

Rubbish for small children. There was no elephants which is one of the main reasons we went. All the animals are sparse and very limited and a lot of the enclosures are empty. It cost us £70 and our child was free at that total rip off!

Where is this most felt?

- Wales (80%) comes out as the strongest UK reason where expense influences decision making, compared to Scotland (68%)
- Its being felt across economic groups both ABC1 (74%) & C2DE (70%) groups

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
83%	75%	72%	73%	69%

Visitors

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
68%	83%	86%	81%	67%

Influenced by ‘expensive’

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
83%	75%	72%	73%	69%

Sense of value

- Over 60% of UK households entered this year with less disposable income.
- 74% of families have <£200 a month for leisure & 62% spend >£100 on a typical day out
- Traditional "family tickets" only work for 41% of families

- Wildlife attractions are aspirational days out – zoos are top choice for an ‘ideal family day out’ more than less expensive options

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- Cost is a major influencing factor on family days out & accessibility of zoos and aquariums to all
- There are small but significant gains still to be made on site accessibility & public transport

What’s missing?

Other diversity metrics – ethnicity!

Representation within the sector

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