

Press Release

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The Top Ten Birds Benefitting from Zoos and Aquariums

A penguin that brays like a donkey, a vulture that can reach heights of over 20,000 feet and a parrot that is one of the best mimics of the human voice. These are just three of the species staving off extinction thanks to the help of zoos and aquariums.

The British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) has compiled a report detailing the top ten birds most reliant on zoos and aquariums for their survival.

The African penguin, the Ecuador Amazon parrot and the Oriental white-backed vulture have all made it on to the list, which highlights some of the best examples of how zoos and aquariums are safeguarding the future of our planet's wildlife and their habitats.

Dr Andrew Marshall, of BIAZA's Field Programmes Committee, coordinated the compilation of the list with input from conservation experts based at BIAZA collections. He commented:

"More than one in ten species of bird is globally threatened; and the work zoos and aquariums do in protecting these wonderful animals is integral to the survival of many bird species.

"Zoo conservation work includes research, education, management of habitats and protected areas, improving human livelihoods in developing countries, breeding, reintroduction, environmental sustainability, and engagement with policymakers.

"As we continue to produce these lists, it is becoming more and more evident that the world's zoos and aquariums are an essential source of funds and expertise for conservation of the natural world."

The top ten list demonstrates the importance of zoos and aquariums not only for conservation breeding of safety-net populations, but also for their contribution to funding and management of conservation projects in the field, including research, education and support for local communities, as well as protection of crucial wildlife habitats.

Strict criteria were used to select the top ten. All the birds proposed had to be associated with current field initiatives by zoos and/or essential conservation breeding in zoos. Particular importance was given to initiatives which included a management role in the species' conservation, rather than just providing funds. Priority was also given to species listed as threatened on the international IUCN Red List of threatened species.

BIAZA's top ten birds benefitting from zoos and aquariums are:

African penguin: Numbers are plummeting in the wild due to oil spills, overfishing, shifts in food availability and human disturbance.

Bali starling: These are seen as very desirable cage birds, and illegal trapping has brought them to virtual extinction in the wild.

Blue-crowned laughing thrush: The zoo population of this Chinese bird equates to 50% of the total global population.

Ecuador Amazon parrot: With fewer than 600 individuals left, its survival relies on the protection of remaining wild populations and their habitats.

Edwards's pheasant: There is a small captive population, but it has never been seen or studied by a scientist in the wild.

Madagascar pochard: Just 20-25 Madagascar pochard now survive in the wild.

Northern bald ibis: Pesticide poisoning has had a devastating effect on their numbers but BIAZA members have contributed birds to a successful release programme and populations are slowly increasing.

Oriental white-backed Vulture: Traces of a toxic veterinary drug in farm animal carcasses across Asia has decimated populations, but species restoration has been made possible by zoo-based expertise and funding.

Socorro dove: A classic island species, numbers have been devastated by man-introduced pests like rats, cats and goats. Captive breeding has saved it from total extinction.

Visayan tarctic hornbill: Two BIAZA zoos are actively supporting in-situ work to save and restore the wild habitat of this species.

(This list is in alphabetical order)

To find more information about all of these species, read the full report here:

www.biaza.org.uk/campaigns/top-ten

Download images available [here](#).

Photo opportunities at BIAZA zoos can also be arranged.

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Notes to Editors

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More information about the Top Ten:

Species	Supporting BIAZA Zoos/Aquariums (which keep the species &/or work with this species in the wild)
African penguin (<i>Spheniscus demersus</i>)	Amazon World, Banham Zoo, Birdworld, Bristol Zoo, Combe Martin Wildlife & Dinosaur Park, Curraghs Wildlife Park, Paradise Wildlife Park, SWEP Living Coasts, ZSL Whipsnade Zoo
Bali starling (<i>Leucopsar rothschildi</i>)	Amazon World, Banham Zoo, Battersea Park Zoo, Beale Park, Belfast Zoo, Birdworld, Bristol Zoo, Calderglen Country Park Zoo, Camperdown Wildlife Centre, Chester Zoo, Curraghs Wildlife Park, Dudley Zoo, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Exmoor Zoo, Linton Zoo, RZSS Edinburgh Zoo, SWEP Paignton Zoo, Thrigby Hall Wildlife Gardens, Tropical World, ZSL London Zoo
Blue-crowned laughing thrush (<i>Dryonastes courtoisi</i>)	Belfast Zoo, Birdworld, Bristol Zoo, Chester Zoo, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Lotherton Hall Bird Gardens, Marwell Wildlife, RZSS Edinburgh Zoo, SWEP Newquay Zoo, SWEP Paignton Zoo, ZSL Whipsnade Zoo
Ecuador Amazon parrot (<i>Amazona lilacina</i>)	Belfast Zoo, Bristol Zoo, Chessington Zoo, Chester Zoo, Curraghs Wildlife Park, Linton Zoo, SWEP Newquay Zoo
Edwards's pheasant (<i>Lophura edwardsi</i>)	Birdworld, Bristol Zoo, Chester Zoo, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Kirkley Hall Zoo, Lake District Wildlife Park, Lotherton Hall Bird Gardens, Sparsholt College, SWEP Paignton Zoo, Tayto Park, Tilgate Nature Centre, ZSL London Zoo
Madagascar pochard (<i>Aythya innotata</i>)	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, WWT
Northern bald ibis (<i>Geronticus eremita</i>)	Birdworld, Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park, Blackpool Zoo, Camperdown Wildlife Centre, Chester Zoo, Curraghs Wildlife Park, Dublin Zoo, Dudley Zoo, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Exmoor Zoo, Five Sisters Zoo, Kirkley Hall Zoo, Lakeland Wildlife Oasis, Lake District Wildlife Park, Lotherton Hall Bird Gardens, Marwell Wildlife, Pensthorpe, RZSS Edinburgh Zoo, Shepreth Wildlife Park, Tilgate Nature Centre, Tropical Butterfly House, Twycross Zoo, ZSL London Zoo
Oriental white-backed vulture (<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>)	Banham Zoo, Beale Park, Blair Drummond Safari Park, Colchester Zoo, Gauntlet Birds of Prey Centre, Hawk Conservancy Trust, International Centre for Birds of Prey, Longleat Safari Park, Zoological Society of London
Socorro dove (<i>Zenaida graysonii</i>)	Belfast Zoo, Birdworld, Bristol Zoo, Chester Zoo, RZSS Edinburgh Zoo, SWEP Paignton Zoo, ZSL London Zoo
Visayan tarictic hornbill (<i>Penelopides panini</i>)	Chester Zoo, Bristol Zoo, SWEP Paignton Zoo, ZSL Whipsnade Zoo

N.B The zoos listed here are just some of the BIAZA members that hold the species or carry out conservation work to help these species. This list may not be exhaustive. It is in alphabetical order.

BIAZA

The British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) is a conservation, education and wildlife charity (charity no. 248553). Founded in 1966, it represents over 100 member organisations including all the significant zoos and aquariums in Britain and Ireland. Its vision is 'to be a powerful force in the care and conservation of the natural world and its mission is to support and lead its members:

- to inspire people to help conserve the natural world
- to participate in effective co-operative conservation programmes
- to deliver the highest quality environmental education, training and research
- to achieve the highest standards of animal care and welfare in zoos, aquariums and in the wild

Field Programmes Committee

BIAZA's Field Programmes Committee encourages, facilitates and monitors the national and international field conservation work of BIAZA and its member collections, and promotes an environmentally sustainable approach. The top ten list was compiled by the committee with input from a number of experts across BIAZA zoos and aquariums.

Dr. Andrew R Marshall

Dr Marshall is a conservation biologist working for the University of York (www.york.ac.uk) and the UK's most visited zoo at Flamingo Land (<http://www.flamingoland.co.uk/zoo-and-conservation.html>). His research focuses on measuring ecosystem conservation success, through ecological and socio-economic survey. Dr Marshall established and directs CIRCLE, www.circle-conservation.org, with a mission to use scientific evidence to guide biodiversity conservation, animal welfare and environmental education. He also established and directs the Udzungwa Forest Project in Tanzania, which aims to protect tropical forests through ecological monitoring, habitat restoration, community education, and capacity building.