



STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 -2026



Join us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/biazaofficial



Follow us on @BIAZA

Regent's Park, London, NW1 4RY . Email: admin@biaza.org.uk . Tel: 00 44 (0)207449 6599 . Fax: 00 44 20 7449 6359

The British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales number 6789783. Registered Office Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY. Registered Charity Number 1128168 and SC040783 (Scotland).

Published by **Coast Agency** www.coast.agency

www.biaza.org.uk

Our Purpose

BIAZA's purpose is to bring together the best zoos and aquariums in Britain and Ireland to create a better future for the planet and its inhabitants. We drive excellence in animal welfare, conservation, education and research, demonstrate our members' value to society, and use our collective expertise and voice to influence policy and champion positive behaviours.

About BIAZA

BIAZA is a membership organization of zoos and aquariums in Britain and Ireland who are committed to making a difference to the natural world. Our members range from small farm parks who care for a few exotic species, through educational establishments teaching the next generation to care for and conserve wildlife and responsible private keepers, to world renowned zoos and aquariums. The diversity of our members provides us with opportunities and challenges; however, they are united in their dedication to providing the highest standards of animal welfare and delivering impactful conservation, education and research.

BIAZA started as the Federation of Zoological Gardens of Great Britain and Ireland in 1966 with just nine zoos and bird gardens. The Federation aimed to standardise principles and practices adopted in animal management in the British Isles, whilst ensuring members achieved and maintained high standards which were monitored through an inspection procedure. The Federation became BIAZA in 2005, widened its membership to include aquariums and its remit to encompass the modern concept of zoos, with members required to be engaged in meaningful conservation, education and research.



We drive excellence in
animal welfare, conservation,
education and research.





At BIAZA we work collaboratively with our members to:

- Drive excellence in zoo and aquarium animal welfare, conservation, education and research
- Demonstrate the value of good zoos and aquariums to society
- Influence policies on animal welfare, conservation, education and the environment
- Champion behaviours that have positive outcomes for the planet and its inhabitants

Through these actions we, and our members, play a vital role in conserving the natural world and bringing nature to people, to engage and inspire them to do the same.

Context for this strategy

This strategy is being written in, what we hope is, the aftermath of two of the most difficult years zoos and aquariums, and the world, have experienced since BIAZA (then the Federation) was founded. The Covid-19 pandemic meant our members closed their doors completely for months and, as the majority rely on the income from their visitors to fund not only the care and welfare of their animals but also the vital conservation, education and research work they do, this had a severe impact on their activities. Funds were rightly diverted to ensure that the standards of animal care did not drop, but this meant that for many, conservation and research projects had to be scaled back or halted completely. It was, however, education that bore the brunt with an 80% reduction in spending on education and the greatest staff redundancies. It will take many of our members years to recover from the pandemic.

However, we should be proud of our members' resilience and heartened by the response of the public to our plight. None of our members had to close permanently purely as a result of the pandemic and they found novel and innovative ways of keeping up engagement with the public. Many becoming social media aficionados, bringing zoos and aquariums into people's homes and providing much needed educational content and entertainment for kids and adults alike. Zoos and aquariums were in turn rewarded for their work and engagement with their local communities and supporters further afield. Unprecedented levels of public support were shown through the fundraising efforts of children, adults, organisations and staff. In the most difficult times this demonstrated the love and appreciation the British and Irish public have for the vital work our zoos and aquariums do and the value they place on them.

BIAZA threw open our resources and support to all in the zoo and aquarium community, providing daily updates and guidance to help the sector navigate the rapidly changing regulations and advice from governments across all the nations in which we have representation. The Office team built, or strengthened existing, relationships with the relevant government departments, which will improve our ability to work with them for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

And there are both opportunities and challenges ahead. The legislation relating to zoos and aquariums is being amended for the first time in over 40 years. We fully support the government's ambition to ensure all those with a zoo licence contribute meaningfully to conservation and making the Secretary of State's Standards for Modern Zoo Practice statutory requirements. This can only improve animal welfare across the more than 400 Zoo Licence holders in England, Scotland and Wales. There is still work to be done, however, to ensure that the full breadth of zoo and aquarium conservation is recognised in these standards and that full consultation with the sector is guaranteed for any future changes.

As a planet we are living through a time of unprecedented loss of biodiversity and changes in climate, which threatens nature, human lives, livelihoods and well-being . Biodiversity loss and climate change are inextricably linked, climate change is undoubtedly causing biodiversity loss and biodiversity loss, driven by habitat loss and degradation, invasive species and pollution, is deepening the climate crisis.

Zoos and aquariums are a beacon of hope in the vital fight against biodiversity loss and climate change. They conserve and preserve species threatened with extinction through their captive breeding programmes, have staff with a wealth of scientific expertise in in-situ and ex-situ conservation and researchers and educators highly skilled in inspiring and training the next generation of conservationists. They are also at the forefront of leading behaviour change in their millions of visitors and supporters.

On a global scale these actions and the expertise within our zoos and aquariums contribute towards the Convention on Biological Diversity's 2030 mission "To take urgent action across society to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ensure the fair and

equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetics resources, to put biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of planet and people." They also play their part in moving us towards delivering on the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

In Britain and Ireland, new environmental legislation and policies provide us with opportunities to use our expertise to contribute to transformational changes in how biodiversity loss and climate change are tackled at a national level. These include the Environment Bill and the 25 Year Environment Plan in England, Scotland's proposed Natural Environment Bill, Northern Ireland's first Environment Strategy, the Welsh Parliament's commitment to introducing legally binding requirements to reverse biodiversity loss and, in Ireland, the EU's Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. Similarly, there are exciting opportunities ahead to influence and shape how these issues are taught in our schools and colleges. Good zoos and aquariums contribute to our understanding of animals and their habitats. They explain the threats they face and how we can care for and conserve them. They are integral to connecting people to nature, especially in our ever more urbanized world, and that connection is essential if people are to be inspired to protect and restore nature.

BIAZA zoos and aquariums have a wider societal value. The connection to nature also benefits us humans. Zoos and aquariums provide access to green and blue spaces, which are known to have positive effects on both short and long-term mental health, quality of life, perceived stress and subjective well-being. It is also well reported that spending time with animals reduces stress and loneliness and increases feelings of happiness. Zoos and aquariums are also major local employers and make a substantial contribution to the local and national economy.

BIAZA's role will be to ensure that our members are continually striving to be the best, to use our collective experience and knowledge to push the boundaries of what is required and expected of a modern zoo or aquarium. To ensure they are contributing meaningfully to dealing with the issues that face our world, be that in animal welfare, conservation or inclusion and accessibility. The strategic goals set out below will help us to achieve those ambitions.

We have identified four strategic goals for the next five years. These goals are interlinked, with equal emphasis and will enable BIAZA to deliver positive outcomes for conservation and the zoo and aquarium sector.



Promote and Champion

Our sector plays a crucial role in conserving species and habitats within our zoos and aquariums, our own countries and abroad. They do this through a range of activities including conservation projects, education and research. They also provide green and blue spaces that have a positive impact on people's wellbeing and are continually striving to ensure animals within their care have the highest possible welfare. It is our ambition that these varied roles are understood throughout government and wider society, and that society values zoos and aquariums as vital conservation, research, education and welfare organisations.

We will achieve this by:

- a) Increasing awareness and understanding of the contribution zoos and aquariums make to conservation, education, research and societal well-being
- b) Empowering our members to deliver impactful conservation, education and research
- c) Communicating the high standards and animal care expertise held by our members
- d) Championing zoos and aquariums' critical role in tackling climate change and halting biodiversity loss

Our sector provides green and blue spaces that have a positive impact on people's wellbeing.

Improve and Strengthen

BIAZA members are already at the forefront of world leading animal welfare standards, ensuring that all species have the highest possible levels of care. Our standards also ensure that our members undertake impactful conservation, education and research. We have an obligation to ensure our standards are continuously evolving, informed by the latest evidence. Similarly, we need to ensure that the latest research is shared, disseminated and implemented across our membership through further improving our internal communication and knowledge sharing. We will also encourage and provide signposting and guidance to best practice in the care of and conditions for staff. We also need to ensure that BIAZA itself continues to grow and is adaptable to whatever the future may bring.

We will achieve this by:

- a) Implementing an accreditation system for BIAZA zoos and aquariums
- b) Setting, promoting and upholding sector specific standards
- c) Continuously advancing standards for animal welfare
- d) Celebrating best practice and encouraging knowledge sharing amongst members
- e) Developing resilience within BIAZA through horizon scanning and investigating options for diversifying income streams



Influence and Shape

At this time of political uncertainties and new opportunities within Britain and Europe it is essential that the voice of the zoo and aquarium sector, with its skilled experts in animal welfare, conservation, education and research, is heard by government and the public. It is vital that BIAZA uses this expertise to influence policy and decision makers on issues surrounding animal welfare, conservation and the environment.

We will achieve this by:

- a) Harnessing the expertise, evidence and enthusiasm of our members to inform our policy work
- b) Building a reputation for robust, evidence-based advice and briefings with key external stakeholders and partners
- c) Influencing the animal welfare, conservation, education and environmental policy and legislation agenda in Britain and Ireland to deliver better outcomes for wildlife and biodiversity
- d) Forging stronger links and building partnerships with other animal welfare, conservation and environmental NGOs and professional sectors

We ensure our members undertake impactful conservation, education & research.



Inspire and Change

As the body representing the best zoos and aquariums in Britain and Ireland, BIAZA has an important leadership role to drive positive and lasting change within BIAZA, our member organisations and wider society. We will lead by example and facilitate improvements and change in others through providing guidance, signposting to relevant resources and championing good practice. This encompasses a range of factors including sustainability and environmental awareness and diversity, equality, accessibility and inclusion.

We will achieve this by:

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



How strategy will be delivered

The goals and ambitions set out in this strategy can only be delivered through collaboration. BIAZA's committees, working groups and members will all have to play their part in driving BIAZA and the sector forward. Greater partnership working with external stakeholders will also be required to ensure the best outcomes for nature.

Implementation of this strategic plan will be supported by annual work plans setting out the activities the BIAZA Office, our committees and working groups will undertake each year to deliver our goals.

BIAZA has an important leadership role to drive positive and lasting change.