



Our Conservation Strategy (2024-2027)

DZC/JW December 2023

CONTEXT:

This document outlines the 2024-2027 Conservation Strategy for Dudley Zoo & Castle (DZC), owned and operated by The Dudley & West Midlands Zoological Society.

Through this strategy, we aim to achieve our charitable mission statement, vision and objectives, while also ensuring that DZC surpasses the requirements of its governing legislation and regulations. This includes, but is not limited to; the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 (and accompanying guidance documents such as the Secretary of State's Standards of Modern Zoo Practice 2012 and Updates), BIAZA/EAZA policy and strategy, IUCN conservation guidelines and the suggestions of the World Zoo Conservation Strategy, Committing to Conservation (WAZA 2015) and World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Education Strategy (IZE/WAZA 2020).

Developed with the site's unique history and structure in mind, we aim to continue building upon;

- Our rich history and heritage;
- Our connection with Dudley & Black Country communities;
- Our passion for engagement and education.

Led by heart, this new strategy is focused primarily on 'doing what is fundamentally right to do.'

Our resultant action plans will require significant input from various departments site-wide, with the aim of ensuring that conservation is the silver thread that runs through all of our operations.

DEFINITIONS:

- ✓ Strategy: *'A blueprint, layout, design, or idea used to accomplish a specific goal that is open for adaptation and change when needed.'*
- ✓ Plan: *'A plan is a programme or scheme for a definite purpose.'*
- ✓ Goal: *'An achievable outcome that is generally broad and longer term.'*
- ✓ Objective: *'A shorter term and defines measurable actions to achieve an overall goal.'*
- ✓ UN SDG: *'United Nations Sustainable Development Goal.'*

OUR MISSION:

- ✓ ***"To inspire and excite people in the natural world, in the history and geology of the site on Castle Hill, and to encourage and promote a better understanding of and support for the conservation of nature and our heritage."***

OUR VISION:

- ✓ ***"To connect people with the natural world, and to engage people in conservation."***

WIDER SIGNIFICANCE:

DZC is located within the Castle Hill Conservation Area, which was first designated in February 1975 in recognition of the area's 'special architectural and historic interest.'. It is primarily an area of open space and woodland stretching north-south and is located upon a large outcrop of much Wenlock limestone formation strata deposited in the Silurian period 428-429 million years ago.

The imposing ruins and earthworks of the medieval Castle dominates the southern end of the hill and is surrounded by the landscape and buildings of DZC, which contains the listed collection of early 20th century art-deco structures constructed by the Tecton Partnership. The north of Castle Hill is dense woodland which contains rock face exposures and ravines, and providing a potentially valuable recreational resource as well as evidence of the Earl of Dudley's network of carriage drives developed over the earlier mineral railways associated with the late 18th century limestone workings. It is the starting point for the borough's 'Limestone Way' which starts at Castle Hill and runs to Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve and Sedgley Beacon.

The geological interest of Castle Hill is internationally renowned and there is a unique legacy of a well-preserved limestone quarrying landscape of national significance, designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument in 2004. Accordingly, the area is of strategic importance to the Black County Geopark proposals whilst also being a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

OUR FOCUS AREAS:

We will achieve our mission and vision through committing fully to a series of goals, objectives and actions relevant to five focus areas:



1. OUR SPECIES

Captive species for the benefit of in-situ & ex-situ conservation.



2. OUR COMMUNITY

Community programming that promotes engagement and wellbeing.



3. OUR KNOWLEDGE

Education programming, capacity building/training and research.



4. OUR PAST

Celebrating the rich history and heritage of the site and surrounding areas.



5. OUR FUTURE

Ensuring sustainable operation and responsible consumption throughout our site.

OUR VALUES:

Our actions, throughout this strategy, will be guided by three key values;



HEALTH

We will act for the benefit of individual, population, community or ecosystem health.



HEART

We will be led by passion and heart. Our actions are fundamentally rooted in 'doing what is right to do.'



PARTNERSHIP

Our actions will be collaborative, utilising expertise from within the organisation and further afield.

OUR STRATEGIC ROADMAP:

A series of additional action plan documents will feed into this strategy, ensuring that our impact is evaluated against measurable objectives;



OUR GOALS & ACTION PLANS:

OUR SPECIES:

Goal 1: *“We will maintain and manage both individuals and populations of threatened species, through the One Plan Approach, highlighting the importance of integrated species conservation planning. We will seek out opportunities to engage with and, where possible, participate in species conservation action plans. Through this, we will promote biodiversity conservation both in the UK and further afield.”*

Relevant UN SDG's:



Relevant standards and legislation:

ZLA/ SSSMZP	
Global Biodiversity Framework	2, 3, 4, 6, 9 & 19
WAZA Conservation Strategy	Inspire; rec. 1, 3, 5, Hope; rec. 6-8, 10, Collaborate; rec. 11, 12, Engage; 20, Preserve, rec. 21- 25, Care, rec. 26-30

*See Conservation Policy & Plan 2024-25.

Our Conservation Policy & Action Plan will establish measurable objectives towards this goal. Through this action plan, we will;

- Ensure that our Institutional Collection Plan (ICP) is aligned with EAZA RCP's and global ICAP/conservation planning documents.
- Pursue opportunities to utilise the existing (and proposed) collection within ex-situ education, research and bio-banking.

- Pursue opportunities to utilise the existing (and proposed) collection as ambassador individuals for in-situ conservation programming. Through our internal assessment criteria, we will ensure that our support of in-situ programming is maximised to its full potential.

Relevant teams: Senior Management Team, Animal Welfare Team(s), Conservation-Education Team

OUR COMMUNITY:

Goal 2: *“We will develop an intimate relationship with the local community, utilising our zoo as a unique green space. We will promote connection with nature, wellbeing and improving accessibility for all. This in turn will strengthen the attractions position within Dudley, and encourage pro-environmental behaviours within our community.”*

Relevant UN SDG's:



Relevant standards and legislation:

ZLA/ SSSMZP	
Global Biodiversity Framework	11 & 12
WAZA Conservation Strategy	Inspire, rec. 1-3, 4, Hope; rec. 6, Engage, rec. 16-17, 19.

Our Conservation-Education and Engagement Policy & Action Plan will establish measurable objectives towards this goal. Through this action plan we will;

- Implement a range of community programmes which promote wellbeing and a connection with nature.
- Continue to develop our Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility (EDAI) Policy & Plan, ensuring that our zoo and its programming is accessible to all.
- Pursue relationships with partners that have expertise within the field of wellbeing and nature connectedness.

Relevant teams: Senior Management Team, Conservation-Education Team, Visitors Services Team, Grounds & Gardens Team, Marketing Team

OUR KNOWLEDGE:

Goal 3: *“We will invest in programmes and facilities that encourage learning and enable behaviour change in which conservation benefits accrue. We will pursue the development of new knowledge through research. We will ensure that our workforce is positioned to conserve wildlife through investment in continued professional development.”*

Relevant UN SDG's:



Relevant standards and legislation:

ZLA/ SSSMZP	
Global Biodiversity Framework	16 & 21
WAZA Conservation Strategy	Inspire; rec. 1-3, 5, Hope; 6, 8, Collaborate; rec. 11-15, Engage; rec. 16-20.

Our Conservation-Education and Engagement Policy & Action Plan and our Research Policy & Action Plan will establish measurable objectives towards this goal. Through these action plans we will;

- Develop informal and formal education programming, designed to engage and inform a diverse range of audiences.
- Develop target-group specific activities and programming, aimed at facilitating and enabling behaviour change.
- Support and facilitate research priorities, linking to wider community demands and strengthening partnerships with higher education bodies.
- Develop staff, work experience and volunteer skillsets via a range of in-house training and external courses.

Relevant teams: Senior Management Team, Conservation-Education Team, Animal Welfare Team(s)

OUR PAST:

Goal 4: *“We will protect and promote the rich history of the site, including both our human-made heritage (i.e., the Castle & Lubetkin (Tecton) architecture) and our natural heritage (native flora and fauna) on-site.”*

Relevant UN SDG's:



Relevant standards and legislation:

ZLA/ SSSMZP	
Global Biodiversity Framework	
WAZA Conservation Strategy	Inspire; rec. 1-2, Hope; rec. 6, 8.

Through this goal, will continue to repair, restore and celebrate the range of human-made heritage on-site. We will seek out opportunities to engage our visitors with our man-made heritage via the development of the Historic Monument & Heritage Action Plan, encouraging a range of outcomes linking to the rich history of the landmarks on-site.

Our Native Species Biodiversity Action Plan will establish measurable objectives towards the goal ensuring our commitment to native flora and fauna on-site.

Relevant teams: Senior Management Team, Conservation-Education Team, Grounds & Gardens Team, Marketing Team

5. OUR FUTURE:

Goal 5: *“We will continue to develop our zoo, with the aim of improving animal welfare, visitor experience and financial stability. We will champion sustainability through responsible*

and sustainable practises, setting a standard for local communities, businesses and the wider zoo community.”

Relevant UN SDG's:



Relevant standards and legislation:

<i>ZLA/ SSSMZP</i>	
<i>Global Biodiversity Framework</i>	
<i>WAZA Conservation Strategy</i>	<i>Inspire, rec. 1-2, Hope; 6.</i>

Our Sustainability Policy & Action Plan will establish measurable objectives towards this goal. Through this action plan we will;

- Develop an internal Sustainability Policy, meeting BIAZA/EAZA policy requirements.
- Undertake a full internal review of our consumption and efficiency.
- Seek our opportunities to develop sustainable behaviours in Dudley and the Black Country, through initiatives such as Chester Zoo's Sustainable Palm Oil City.

Relevant teams: Senior Management Team, Conservation-Education Team, Visitors Services Team, Grounds & Gardens Team, Marketing Team. Finance Team

OUR OBJECTIVES (2024-27):

What We Will Do	Leadership	Key Performance Indicator	Actual (23)	Target (24-27)
OUR SPECIES				
1. Increase capacity on-site for ex-situ populations of non-native species which are threatened with extinction.	Senior Management Team, Curatorial Team, Animal Keeping Teams	# and/or % of species under our care that are classified VU-EW by the IUCN Red List.	57 species (33% of those under our care).	~34% (2024) >37% (2027)
2. Increase capacity on-site for ex-situ populations of native species which are threatened with extinction.	Senior Management Team, Curatorial Team, Conservation Education Team, Animal Keeping Teams	# of native species under our care that are classified as regionally/nationally threatened.	One proposed (Glutinous snail, <i>Myxas glutinosa</i>)	3 species (2027)
3. Increase capacity on-site for EAZA EEP programming.	Senior Management Team, Curatorial Team, Animal Keeping Teams	# and/or % of species under our care that are managed through EAZA ex-situ programmes.	54 species (31% of those under our care).	~33% (2024) ~40% (2027)
4. Increase capacity for staff to contribute to EAZA programming through voluntary advisory/working group roles and/or the development of resources.	Senior Management Team, Curatorial Team, Animal Keeping Team	# of staff participating in BIAZA/EAZA working groups, committees and advisory groups. # of supporting documents authored and/or edited by DZC staff.	4 staff members under 4 roles.	6 staff members under 6 roles (2027).
5. Increase conservation support of genetic diversity through initiatives such as the Frozen Ark/EAZA Biobank	Senior Management Team, Animal Keeping Team, Veterinary Team	# of samples donated	PENDING	PENDING
6. Identify opportunities to further utilise animals under our care within ex-situ education and research programming.	Conservation Education Team, Animal Keeping Teams	. Development of bespoke assessment model, assessing species against external species action plans and (EAZA) regional collection plans.	See relevant action plan document.	See relevant action plan document.
7. Identify opportunities to further utilise animals under our care as ambassadors for in-situ conservation.	Conservation Education Team, Animal Keeping Teams	Development of bespoke assessment model, assessing species against external species action plans and (EAZA) regional collection plans.	See relevant action plan document.	See relevant action plan document.
8. Increase spends on in-situ conservation programming (that has worthwhile, measurable outcomes).	Senior Management Team, Finance Team, Conservation Education Team, Animal Keeping Teams	£ of finances and/or materials donated to in-situ conservation programming.	£46,000	£50,000 (2024) OR 3% operational budget (£120K) (WAZA rec).
OUR COMMUNITY				
1. Seek funding for the construction of a new Visitor & Education Centre (VEC) on the perimeter of the zoo.	Senior Management Team, Head of Education & Conservation	Progression towards/confirmation of external funding for new VEC.	Planning permission approved; dependent on external funding.	Secure external funding (2024).
2. Continue to develop and implement DZC EDIA Policy & Plan, spearheaded by an EDIA Champion.	Senior Management Team, Marketing Team, Conservation Education Team	See separate EDIA Policy & Action Plan document.	See relevant action plan document.	See relevant action plan document.
3. Pursue external funding/grants, enabling improved accessibility to DZC through targeted schemes and offers.	Senior Management Team, Marketing Team, Conservation Education Team	# of individuals/participants benefiting from scheme. % of overall visitors benefiting from scheme.	PENDING	PENDING
4. Enable our community to engage in action benefiting wildlife conservation (through initiatives such as a Bat Box	Conservation Education Team	# of schemes. # of individuals/participants engaged in schemes.	N/A	1 (2024) 1000 individuals (2024) 2 (2025)

	Scheme).				2000 individuals (2025)
5.	Expand our Education & Engagement Volunteer programme, and pursue opportunities to expand the role and responsibilities of the volunteer position.	Conservation Education Team, Marketing Team, Grounds & Gardens Team	# of volunteer inductions/active volunteers. # of hours donated	20 inductions. 701 hours donated. 8878 engagements.	60 inductions 2000 hours donated 30,000 engagements (2024)
6.	Pursue opportunities to enhance nature connectedness and wellness in nature through our site.	Conservation Education Team, Marketing Team, University of Birmingham (Partner)	To be confirmed.	PENDING	PENDING

OUR KNOWLEDGE

1.	Increase our formal education programming and output both on-site and off-site. Review existing workshops and resources.	Conservation Education Team, Marketing Team, Finance Team	# of learners engaged in on-site and off-site education programming. Programme specific evaluation.	17,423 learners on-site 436 learners off-site 17,859 learners total	20,000 learners on-site 2,000 learners off-site 22,000 learners on-site (2024)
2.	Pursue opportunities to assist secondary schools with the delivery of the Natural History GCSE.	Conservation Education Team, Marketing Team	# of secondary schools engaged with offer of support. Programme specific evaluation.	N/A	10 secondary schools
3.	Increase engagement with visitors through our informal education programming and output both on-site and off-site. Review existing provisions.	Conservation Education Team, Education & Engagement Volunteers	# of engagements through animal talks, touch tables and events. Programme specific evaluation.	71,739 engagements	100,000 engagements (2024)
4.	Increase digital engagement through the development of online resources (via the DZC website).	Conservation Education Team, Animal Keeping Teams, Marketing Team	# of digital resources available. # of engagements and 'clicks'.	PENDING	PENDING
5.	Increase our research output through facilitating undergraduate and post-graduate projects, via partnerships with HE bodies.	Conservation Education Team; Research Coordinator	# of partnering HE bodies. # of undergraduate and postgraduate projects supported. # of long-term project partnerships.	12 HE partners. 28 projects supported. 1 long-term project proposal (EDME).	PENDING
6.	Pursue opportunities and partnerships with the FE sector, and assist with the delivery of T-levels.	Senior Management Team, Conservation Education Team, Finance Team	# of formal partnerships with FE sector. # of further education facilities engaged Programme specific evaluation.	1 existing, 1 proposed.	PENDING
7.	Pursue formal partnerships with HE sector.	Senior Management Team, Conservation Education Team, Finance Team	# of formal partnerships with HE sector.	1 proposed.	PENDING
8.	Enhance staff skillsets through a range of continued professional development (CPD) including conference/workshop delivery and attendance.	Senior Management Team, Curatorial Team, Conservation Education Team, Animal Keeping Teams, Marketing Teams	# of conferences/workshops attended and/or hosted. # of internal initiatives pursued including; training courses, workshops and apprenticeships.	See relevant action plan document (to be confirmed).	See relevant action plan document (to be confirmed).

OUR PAST

1.	Development of a Historic Monument & Heritage Action Plan which celebrates, and engages visitors with, the site's man-made heritage.	Senior Management Team, Conservation Education Team, Marketing Team	# of programmes, activities and events delivered. # of engagements and participants.	N/A	See relevant action plan document (to be confirmed).
2.	Development of a Native Species Biodiversity Action Plan which celebrates the site's natural heritage and pursues an	Senior Management Team, Conservation Education Team, Grounds & Gardens Team,	# of species recorded on-site. % increase of individuals/populations of (target) species on-site.	N/A	See relevant action plan document (to be confirmed).

	overall biodiversity net gain.	Animal Keeping Teams (NS Ambassadors)	Overall biodiversity net gain.		
3.	Repair and restoration of the water gardens/newt ponds, including the development of an accessible pond dipping area.	Senior Management Team, Conservation Education Team, Grounds & Gardens Team	# of species recorded in newly developed habitat. % increase in biodiversity. # of participants engaged in pond dipping activities.	Initial surveys undertaken in Summer 2023.	Repair and construction of ponds and public access area (2025).
4.	Development of an in-house conservation plan focusing on native bat species in the Dudley & Black Country area (Batergy).	Senior Management Team, Conservation Education Team, Grounds & Gardens Team	See separate NS BAP document.	Routine surveys undertaken in 2023.	See relevant action plan document (to be confirmed).

OUR FUTURE

1.	Development of a Sustainability Policy & Plan which aligns with the BIAZA and EAZA policies/position statements on sustainability.	Senior Management Team, Conservation Education Team, Visitor Services Team, Marketing Team, Catering Team, Maintenance Team, Animal Keeping Teams	To be confirmed.	N/A	By Dec 2024 - see relevant action plan document.
2.	Undertake a full audit of consumption and energy usage/waste production in order to establish base lines for targets.	Senior Management Team, Conservation Education Team, Visitor Services Team, Catering Team, Maintenance Team	To be confirmed.	N/A	By Dec 2024 - see relevant action plan document.
3.	Establish achievable sustainability targets, progressing the site towards more sustainable operations.	Senior Management Team, Conservation Education Team, Visitor Services Team, Catering Team, Maintenance Team	To be confirmed.	N/A	By Dec 2024 – see relevant action plan document.
4.	Ensure conservation and education is embedded into all proposed upcoming developments.	Senior Management Team, Development Team, Conservation Education Team, Marketing Team	To be confirmed.	PENDING	PENDING