DZC Drone Policy

Dudley Zoo and Castle does not authorise the launching and landing of drone aircraft on any land leased by Dudley and West Midland Zoological Society. For the purpose of this policy, the term "drone" collectively refers to all unmanned aircraft, model aircraft, gliders, rockets and other aerial devices.

The Zoo has taken this stance on the use of drones due to the distress caused to the Zoo's animals and the concerns of staff and visitors regarding invasion of privacy.

The Zoo recognises that it has no jurisdiction over land outside the zoo perimeter, meaning that drones can be launched from and landed in areas outside of the zoo premises. Drone users must consider that other businesses will uphold their own policies regarding the use of drones on their premises. Prior to flying drones, users should consult the UK Civil Aviation Authority website for further information regarding restricted areas and "no-fly zones".

The following important points have been written with reference to: www.register-drones.caa.co.uk/drone-code/where-you-can-fly

- There is an enforced legal flight height limit of 120m (400 feet). Keep in mind that emergency and military aircraft may fly below 120m.
- The Zoo is classed as a recreational ground, therefore, drones weighing more than 250g cannot legally be flown anywhere on or above the Zoo premises.
- Drones weighing over 250g cannot be flown within 50m of people (without specific certification).
- Drones weighing under 250g can be flown within 50m of people but still cannot legally be flown over crowds of people.
- It is the drone user's responsibility to fly safely. They must consider the environment, weather conditions and the amount of people in that area.

Lost Drones

In the event that a drone lands, becomes lost or crashes on zoo grounds, the drone will be returned to the owner if possible. However, the user must consider that if the drone enters an animal habitat, it is entirely possible that the device may be destroyed by animals, could be damaged by a zoo vehicle or could become lost in the woodland and vegetation inside and surrounding the zoo grounds. There are no guarantees that a lost drone can be returned to the user. The user must consider this outcome when planning the use of drones. The Zoo is not liable for the damage to any drone flown over and within its premises.

Exceptions

There may be occasions when Zoo representatives or Zoo employed contractors wish to use drone devices to complete building or area surveys within the Zoo grounds. In this instance, the task will be subject to approval and will be carefully planned and controlled to minimise disruption. Animals will be confined to indoor areas if possible and the task will be completed whilst the site is closed to visitors. Flight paths will be planned to avoid animal habitats that have unrestricted access to outdoor areas. In the unlikely event that a drone device is being used by the Zoo or their representatives whilst the site is open to visitors, warning and information signs will be posted at the Zoo entrance.