



Peak Wildlife Park Conservation Strategy

Summary

Zoos and wildlife parks attract millions of visitors every year. They play an important role in raising public interest in threatened species, as they provide opportunities for people to directly encounter different animal species. Peak Wildlife Park is home to 26 different species, 11 of which are categorised as threatened on the IUCN Red list. This makes it extremely important for the park to inform visitors about these species and how they can help conserve them. Visitors can engage with and support conservation programs by donating to programs related to animals at zoos. WAZA defines conservation as:

‘Securing populations of species in natural habitats for the long term’

At Peak Wildlife Park, the main focus is on reducing the rate of global biodiversity loss, with this in mind all species on display have a conservation role (outlined in full in the parks’ collection plan policy).

Vision Statement

A sustainable planet where the diversity of life on earth is cherished, respected and secured.

Mission Statement

To take and inspire action to protect wildlife and wild places.

Objectives

We aim to achieve our mission statement in three key ways:

1. Contributing to international captive breed programmes by housing endangered species such as Humboldt penguins and Visayan warty pigs.
2. Taking action in the wild by working closely with local charities to promote conservation locally.
3. Inspiring action. Visitor experiences are crucial to our mission, by allowing visitors to share large natural habitats with endangered animals living ‘wild-lives’ here at the park.

Methods of Completing Objectives

1. The Animal Collection

All species on display have a conservation role. These roles are outlined in full in our Collection Plan Policy and include but are not limited to the following: habitat management role, conservation assistant role and conservation insurance.

- The park will increase the captive populations of endangered EEP and ESB species, through successful breeding programmes and by working with BIAZA and EAZA.
- We create and maintain the correct conditions and habitat for the park’s endangered species (as specified by husbandry manuals).

- We regularly monitor young so they are given every chance of making it through to adulthood.
- We maintain the genetic diversity of populations to avoid inbreeding; the use of contraception when necessary and work on studbook recommendations.
- We make the public aware of breeding successes through daily talks, newsletters and website/social media updates.

2. Use of Signs

One of the most important tools the park uses is signage around the park on exhibits. These display, as a minimum: species name (common and scientific), natural habitat, biological characteristics and conservation status. In addition, information may include: diet, reproduction, life expectancy, conservation aspects.

3. Working with charities

- **Staffordshire Wildlife Trust**
 - Peak Wildlife Park works with local charities such as Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to help safeguard the future of group nesting birds through 'Operation Curlew'. Since the project started, the park has raised over 3600 which has gone towards the purchase of electric fences, as well as warden to locate and check nesting sites.
 - Multiple fundraising events take place to raise money in support of the trust.
- The park is home to a colony of Humboldt penguins, this species is classed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List and is therefore in need of protection and conservation. Here at the park, we support a charity called Sphenisco, who work hands on with the Humboldt penguin populations throughout Chile and Peru. Throughout the year Peak Wildlife Park carries out events to raise money and awareness about conservation and protection of the Humboldt penguin, the park also sells penguin adoption packs with £5 of every sale going directly to Sphenisco. A total of over £1500 has been donated to the charity so far.
- The park also supports the charity Lemur Love, a charity that aims to prevent lemur extinction through their programmes with wild lemurs. The park sells lemur adoption packs with £5 of every sale going directly towards Lemur Love, along with money from fundraising events throughout the year.
- **Red Squirrel Project** – As holders of red squirrels here at the park, 2020 saw us start supporting red squirrel charities here in the UK, beginning with the important surveying work carried out by the Red Squirrels Trust Wales. Through fundraising we managed to procure a camera trap for them to survey both red squirrels as well as some captive bred pine martens that have been released. We're also part of the Red Squirrel Focus group, and we currently breed squirrels on site with the possibility of some of our individuals being released back into the wild as part of ongoing projects with the focus group.

4. Education programme

Schools are encouraged to visit the zoo and are offered discounted rates for group visits. Schools can plan their own visits using the educational signage around the zoo, or opt for a guided tour. They can also choose to have informal educational sessions in the form of tailored talks which are linked with the National Curriculum and teachers can request certain topics or animals to link with what they are learning at school.

- EYFS – we provide education packs online which link to the national curriculum and animals we have here at the park. We also provide educational talks when they visit the park, which are relevant to their teaching and key subjects in their maths and literacy curriculum.
- KS1 – we provide both education sessions and worksheets which are relevant to their teaching and key subjects in their science curriculum.
- KS2 - we provide both education sessions and worksheets which are relevant to their teaching and key subjects in their science curriculum.
- KS3 and 4 – sessions will provide a conservation message and be relevant to the science curriculum, in addition a careers information will be provided detailing the job roles in the animal care/conservation industry.
- Special Needs and Disabled – No separate arrangements have been made. The whole educational program is fully inclusive and each session will be adjusted according to need.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic over the past year, whilst the zoo was closed to visitors, schools and groups had the opportunity to take part in free virtual talks. The groups had a choice of species to focus on as well as a key stage to aim the talk at.

5. Keeper knowledge and daily talks and feeds

Public talks at enclosures promote additional information and understanding of particular species. It is an opportunity for visitors to engage with our work and can promote a greater understanding of the efforts the park is making to conserve that species along with other institutions. The park hosts hourly talks and feeds for many of its animals. The talks cover a wide variety of topics including husbandry, conservation and diet as well as further information on the individuals kept within the collection.

6. Habitat Restoration

- Staff from Peak Wildlife Park have carried out habitat restoration projects, the most recently being at the Roaches Nature Reserve nearby to the park.
- Ponds for the future – In 2020, we increased our conservation work closer to home, with the launch of our ‘Ponds for the future’ initiative which focuses on the renewal and renovation of the park’s ponds and wetland areas. So far, we’ve renovated two large ponds on the site, these ponds will be regularly surveyed and will become vital tools as part of our education programme. The outlay for the project so far has been just over £10,000 and this investment will continue for at least the next three years, with surveying continuing well into the future.
- 2000 trees are being planted in February 2020 in order to restore hedgerows and habitats across the park and also decrease our carbon footprint.

7. Renewable Energy

The climate crisis poses a real and present danger to all of the world’s ecosystems and is something we have looked at intensively from both a moral and practical stand point as a business. Having reviewed our carbon emissions over the last few years, we decided that we as a conservation led wildlife park needed to do more to lower the impact we were having on the environment. This prompted us to make a £156,800 investment in a biomass boiler which will almost completely remove the park’s reliance on fossil fuels for its heating

requirements in guest areas and will save an estimated 168 tonnes of carbon every year, in line with point 12 of EAZA's Conservation offices, with plans to extend the scheme further.

8. Sustainability

The park is on its way to moving towards a more sustainable business model. Some examples of changes made are:

- The removal of all unsustainable palm oil products from the supply chain.
- Providing a discount to customers who bring their own hot drink containers.
- Providing compostable hot drinks cups, plates, napkins and straws.
- Buying locally wherever possible and fair-trade coffee.
- There are numerous recycling bins across the park and the park is almost zero waste to landfill.

We make our customers aware of how small changes they can make themselves at home, can have a massive impact on the future of our planet; we do this through signage and as part of our daily talks.

Evaluation of Conservation Strategy and Conclusion

Continuous evaluation of the conservation strategy is vital to ensure our goal is reached. Therefore, all methods within the conservation strategy are analysed in different ways. For example, teachers are given feedback forms to complete after their visits and responses from this are analysed and an annual report is created to ensure information is relevant and being received correctly.

The park had great success with many of its endangered species breeding programmes recently. In particular, we are pleased with the number of penguin chicks born, as the colony is still in its infancy. We are also pleased with the success of the new Red-squirrel walk-through enclosure, it has given us a greater capacity to house breeding males and engage the public with the species more as they can get closer and learn about conservation and breeding programmes through our daily talks and feeds in the walk-through enclosure.

This conservation strategy is designed to ensure every visitor to the park leaves with a greater understanding of the conservation roles the park has and what they as an individual can do to help as well. Continuous surveying of the parks' ponds and wetland areas is necessary in order to assess the success of the renovation and planting of new trees and as the park's collection plan changes over time, this conservation strategy will also alter in line with the change in animal species. Continual evaluation of all aspects of the strategy will allow the parks goal to be reached.