

D U B L I N



# 2023-2031 SUSTAINABILITY MASTER PLAN

Our journey to becoming a sustainable zoo

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## FOREWORD

Objective 5 in our 10-year strategic plan 'Dublin Zoo 200: Vision 2021-2031' sets out our ambition to operate a sustainable visitor attraction. This Sustainability Master Plan is the first step on that journey. It is the fourth in our series of outline master plans to help us implement our 10-year strategy, following the Physical Master Plan for our site, the Conservation Master Plan and the Conservation Education Master Plan.

Being a sustainable organisation requires more than just looking after the environment. In addition to conserving natural resources and biodiversity, we are also committed to being socially and economically sustainable. For example, we have included actions that address the safety, health and wellbeing of our stakeholders, the impact of our purchasing decisions, diversity and inclusivity, and the sustainable funding of the Zoo's development plans.

Dublin Zoo is the fourth-oldest zoo in the world and, over its 192-year history, has evolved into a zoo that supports a significant amount of conservation work, both in Ireland and internationally. However, to become a zoo-based conservation organisation of global significance, as we have set out in our 10-year vision, we must be ambitious. Some of the targets we have set ourselves will be very challenging to achieve, but we know that the process of working towards them will stimulate innovation, new ways of working and new partnerships.

At a time of intense competition for the best employees, we are confident that this Plan will help the Zoo to attract and retain employees who rightly expect their employer to lead on sustainability.

As we implement the actions in this Sustainability Master Plan, we will communicate our progress to stakeholders and, in particular, engage with our over 1 million annual visitors. If our successes can inspire some of our visitors to act or change their behaviour, our local impact is multiplied to deliver global change and a more sustainable society.

**Dr Christoph Schwitzer**  
**Chief Executive,**  
**Dublin Zoo**

# INTRODUCTION TO DUBLIN ZOO

**Since its founding in 1831, Dublin Zoo has evolved and grown to its current size of 28 hectares in the Phoenix Park. The Zoo has over 100 employees, 90 volunteers and over 1.25 million visitors every year. More than 400 animals representing more than 70 species are cared for by the Zoo, with each species having its own requirements for nutrition, husbandry and care.**

Dublin Zoo is a city Zoo, situated within the Phoenix Park, one of the largest walled deer parks in Europe, with an 11 km wall enclosing 707 hectares with a mature treescape of lime, horse chestnut, oak, beech and sycamore. Around 450 fallow deer have almost free range within the park, which together with mowing and hay production keeps the park largely a mix of broadleaf trees and rough grassland.

The name Phoenix is an anglicised version of the Irish name for the area *fionn uisce*, meaning clear water, and Dublin Zoo benefits from this, as a natural surface water stream was dammed during famine times to create a series of lakes, with the two largest occupying around 5 of the Zoo's 28 hectares and forming a central part of the zoo landscape.

The Viceregal Stream feeds the Áras Pond and then flows through an underground pipe into the African Plains Pond, which in turn discharges into the Lower Lake Pond through underground culverts. The water continues through a short, steep channel out of the Zoo into the People's Garden Pond and via an underground culvert to the river Liffey.

At circa 2.6 hectares, the African Plains Pond is the largest water body in the Zoo and the Phoenix Park. The Lower Lake Pond has

undergone major modifications since 1997 when, to house several primate species, a series of islands and an artificial peninsula were constructed. It now occupies an area of circa 1.2 hectares.

Over the past 30 years, Dublin Zoo has, like many older zoos, undergone a radical change to how animals are kept, completely changing the old-style approach of keeping animals in functional and easily cleanable, but otherwise often bare and uninspiring enclosures. Our inspiration for new developments now always comes from the wild, and we try to imitate the natural habitat to stimulate not just the animals, but the Zoo visitors as well, immersing them in landscaped surroundings where our design screens buildings and fences, and our planting palette reflects the wild. Through an ecological approach to our Zoo habitats, we are able to educate our visitors about the importance of wild habitats, and how our animals are connected to it. This makes the Zoo a place of conservation, education, and diversity of exotic and native flora and fauna, as well as a place of connecting people to nature and the outdoors.

There are over 50 individual buildings in Dublin Zoo, some dating back almost 200 years, with many unique structures to meet specific animal needs. The Zoo continually invests in new buildings and animal habitats, and in the redevelopment and upgrading of existing facilities. Recent projects include 'Wolves in the Woods' (2019), the 'Himalayan Hills' habitats for snow leopards and red pandas (2022), and a nocturnal house for aye-ayes (2023). Society House (1868) is currently being restored as a state-of-the-art hub for conservation and research activities. Planned future developments include a new Zoo restaurant with an attached habitat, an Aquarium, a house for invertebrates, as well as new ecoregions for Australian animals and for native Irish species.

Dublin Zoo is a registered charity, receiving all its regular income from entrance fees, annual passes, retailing, catering and sponsors. In addition to the day-to-day operational costs, the Zoo funds conservation projects in Ireland and around the world, and has developed ambitious Conservation and Conservation Education Master Plans to fulfil its purpose.

This Plan supports our ambition of demonstrating sustainability leadership and supports Dublin Zoo's vision of becoming a conservation organisation of national and global significance.



# OUR APPROACH TO BEING A SUSTAINABLE ZOO

**More than just a Zoo that pursues great sustainability, we aspire to being a great, sustainable zoo.**

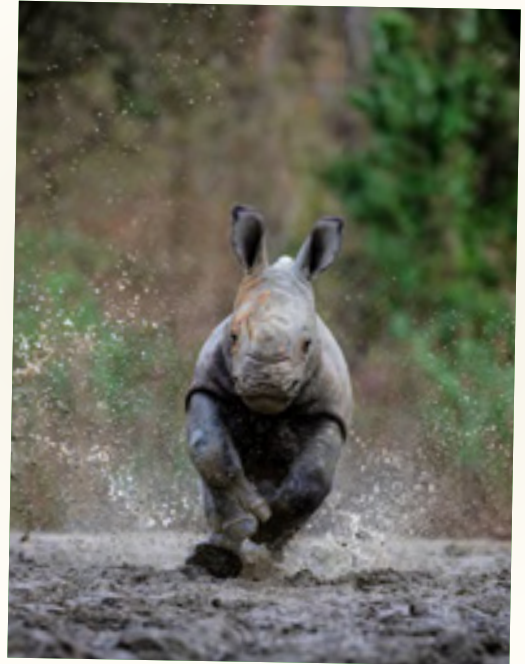
In the development of this Plan, a cross-departmental group identified the environmental, social and economic themes that are materially important to the Zoo over the long term. This process highlighted the existing activities and processes that already contribute to being a sustainable Zoo, and the opportunities to strengthen them further.

Our approach to being a sustainable Zoo is based on three principles:

- 1. Holistic** – environmental, social and economic impacts that are upstream and downstream of our own immediate operations are included in how we assess and improve our performance.
- 2. Ambitious** – we set challenging goals where the pathway to achieving them may not yet be clear. This will require us to be innovative, open to new ideas, and work in partnership with stakeholders to find solutions.
- 3. Integrated** – all departments and individuals have a role in creating a sustainable Zoo. Sustainability is not a standalone department but is viewed as an integral part of all departments' planning and decision-making processes.

This Sustainability Master Plan sets out a programme of actions to ensure the Zoo is creating net positive economic, environmental and social impacts, and that the Zoo itself is resilient and financially sustainable in the long term.

At its core are eight themes underpinned by a set of clear actions and aligned with the actions included in the Conservation Master Plan, the Physical Master Plan and the Conservation Education Master Plan for Dublin Zoo.





## OUR SUSTAINABILITY MASTER PLAN:

**1** ENERGY AND  
CLIMATE CHANGE

**2** RESOURCE  
STEWARDSHIP  
AND THE CIRCULAR  
ECONOMY

**3** EDUCATION,  
TRAINING  
AND PUBLIC  
ENGAGEMENT

**4** DIVERSITY,  
EQUALITY,  
ACCESSIBILITY  
AND INCLUSIVITY

**5** HEALTH, SAFETY  
AND WELLBEING

**6** BIODIVERSITY

**7** SUPPLY CHAIN  
ENGAGEMENT

**8** SUSTAINABLE  
FINANCES





# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

**1** NO POVERTY

**2** ZERO HUNGER

**3** GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

**4** QUALITY EDUCATION

**5** GENDER EQUALITY

**6** CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

**7** AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

**8** DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**10** REDUCED INEQUALITIES

**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

**12** RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

**13** CLIMATE ACTION

**14** LIFE BELOW WATER

**15** LIFE ON LAND

**16** PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

**17** PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

# 1 ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In addition to the standard energy requirements of offices, restaurants and storage facilities, Dublin Zoo also has numerous animal buildings. These have very specific energy requirements to meet the welfare needs of a wide variety of species. Energy efficiency initiatives (e.g., for lighting and temperature controls) are continually being assessed, and in 2023/24, a programme to gather detailed energy usage data will further support these initiatives.

The Zoo purchases renewably sourced electricity and has two back-up generators that are powered by hydro-treated vegetable oil (HVO, a renewable biodiesel produced from waste sources), which can take the entire electrical load of the site in case of a power cut. In 2022, the Zoo used HVO in the generators to provide the electrical capacity for its annual winter lantern festival, Wild Lights.

The Zoo recognises its responsibility to reduce its own operational Scope 1 & 2 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which are generated from the fuels used on site (primarily natural gas) and from electricity. In addition, we are committed to addressing the significant indirect Scope 3 GHG emissions outside of our operations and associated with the supply, use and disposal of products and services by the Zoo.

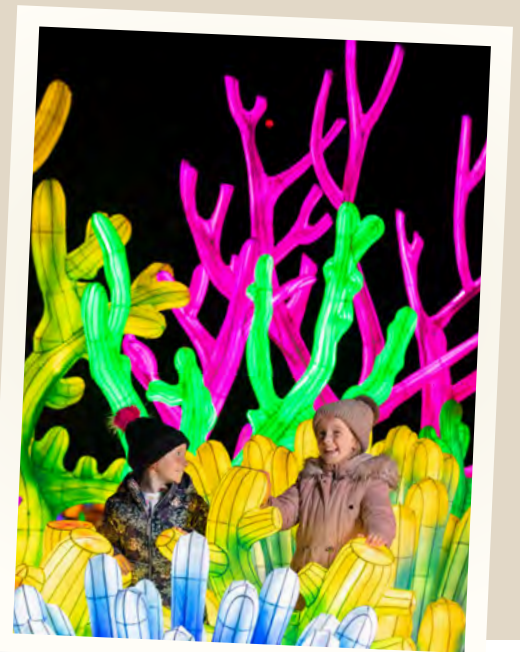
## VISION

Dublin Zoo will be an exemplary site for energy management in our sector, demonstrating best practice in energy efficiency and on-site energy generation.

The Zoo is committed to significantly reducing GHG emissions, both operationally and across its value chain, and has set two ambitious targets:

1. A 50% reduction of Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030.
2. Net Zero by 2040 at the latest, where Net Zero is defined by the Science Based Target Initiative.

## ALIGNMENT

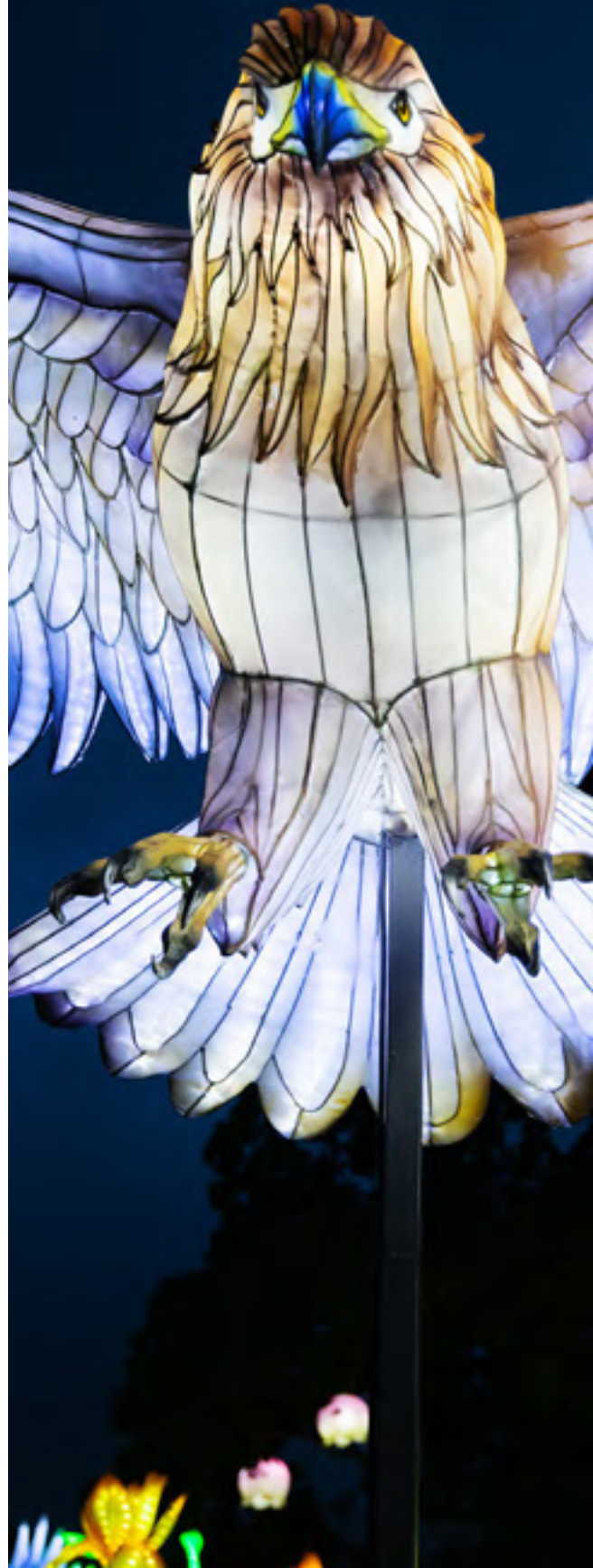


## PRIORITIES

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### We will:

1. Invest in site-wide energy management infrastructure and software to monitor and manage energy use.
2. Implement targeted energy efficiency initiatives to reduce on-site energy demand.
3. Install solar PV on suitable buildings to generate on-site renewable electricity.
4. Assess the potential for the installation of additional renewable energy generation on site.
5. Establish energy efficiency and/or design specifications for all new plant, equipment and buildings.
6. Complete an analysis of Scope 3 GHG emissions to identify the significant sources of upstream and downstream GHG emissions, and work in partnership with suppliers and visitors to reduce these emissions, in line with our 2040 target.





## 2 RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

As a conservation organisation, Dublin Zoo understands how the natural world uses and recycles resources in a continuous, sustainable cycle. We will apply this understanding to our own operations, taking inspiration from the natural world to guide our approach from a linear waste mindset to a circular resource mindset. This applies to our use of water, organic material and the creation, use and end-of-life treatment of products.

Drinking water is provided free of charge at water refill stations around the Zoo, and visitors are encouraged to bring reusable water bottles.

The Zoo has invested in infrastructure and processes to compost used animal bedding and garden waste. Currently, approximately 30% of suitable organic waste (385 tonnes per annum) is composted on site into a valuable resource for the Zoo's horticultural team, resulting in significant cost savings. In addition, a further 1,200 tonnes of organic material are retrieved for off-site processing into a natural compost.

The new restaurant, planned for 2025, is proposed to be built to LEED Silver standard, which is equivalent to a Building Energy Rating of A3. The design includes two large arrays of solar panels to generate a significant proportion of the building's energy consumption, as well as tanks to harvest rainwater that can be used in adjacent animal habitats.

## VISION

Dublin Zoo's ambition is to achieve 100% circularity – mimicking cyclical ecosystems in the natural world where resources are carefully used, and nothing is wasted. This includes a goal to minimise, reuse and recycle all wastes, with zero disposal to landfill or incineration by 2030.

New builds and redevelopments of existing infrastructure will be completed to the LEED Silver standard or higher, where a LEED standard is available for the building type.

## ALIGNMENT



## PRIORITIES

### We will:

1. Develop and implement a resource management plan for the site to identify opportunities to eliminate 'waste' streams, minimise resource consumption and ensure resources are maintained within a circular system.
2. Develop a complete water map of the Zoo and implement actions to minimise consumption and ensure responsible water stewardship.
3. Include sustainability criteria in construction specifications for redevelopment or new build projects.

## CASE STUDY 1

### WASTE MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS

Dublin Zoo has historically managed its organic waste using a combination of strategies. On the one hand, components requiring specific disposal, such as waste from carnivores and primates, as well as meat and fish remnants, are segregated and collected by a specialized company for incineration. On the other hand, vegetative waste that cannot be used in the composting process can be used as fertilizer after being chopped or collected by a waste collection company.

Finally, most of the organic waste generated comes from hoof stock and other herbivore facilities. This waste typically consists of faeces, bedding materials, and uneaten food, representing the largest portion of waste generated in animal facilities. By implementing these waste management practices, Dublin Zoo

aims to minimize environmental impact and ensure responsible waste disposal. In 2021, a decision was made to invest in constructing a dedicated area for storing and managing organic waste suitable for processing and converting into high-value compost. This newly constructed area, measuring 60 meters in length and 15 meters in width, has become a space where organic waste is systematically accumulated and processed. As a result, the Zoo has been able to reduce waste collection costs by 60%.

Simultaneously, this initiative has allowed the Zoo to generate a valuable resource – compost – that is widely used to fertilize our botanical collection. Moreover, the compost can be made available to other institutions for their use, contributing to sustainability efforts beyond the Zoo's boundaries. This approach aligns with the principles of circular economy and environmental responsibility, effectively transforming waste into a valuable and eco-friendly resource.







# 3 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Our employees and volunteers are a critical enabler of the Zoo's purpose and vision.

Dublin Zoo is committed to the continuous training and development of its employees, both in job-related skills training and lifelong learning for personal development. Dublin Zoo's employees are our greatest asset, and helping them to develop is crucial to the achievement of the organisation's goals. We are focused on creating a motivated workforce that is capable of meeting new challenges, is skilled and competent in all aspects, and aligns with Dublin Zoo's objectives, both short and long-term.

To have a wider impact, we also need to engage visitors to our site, and the public offsite, with sustainability messaging. Mobilising them to adopt pro-environmental behaviours and actions in their daily lives is a key role of Dublin Zoo. We have ample opportunities to do this via formal and informal learning and public engagement at the Zoo site and in an outreach capacity.

The actions listed across support the objectives of Dublin Zoo's Conservation Education Master Plan, so that the Zoo's education impact covers multiple stakeholders, from pre-school learners to university students, from employees to contractors and from volunteers to visitors and the wider public.

## VISION

Dublin Zoo will maintain an organisational culture that supports employees and volunteers with high-quality learning and training opportunities. Dublin Zoo's one million+ visitors will be mobilised to engage in pro-environmental behaviour to support wildlife.

## ALIGNMENT



## PRIORITIES

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### We will:

1. Provide training and resources, where necessary, to support employees, volunteers and external contractors to achieve the actions set out in this and other Master Plans.
2. Ensure education activities delivered by the Zoo embed optimistic and solution-based climate change and sustainability education to engage as many audiences as possible in pro-environmental behaviours that support wildlife.
3. Run three social action campaigns in the lifetime of the 'Dublin Zoo 200' strategy. These campaigns will focus on sustainability issues that are relevant to our visitors and will encourage them to join with us in taking achievable actions for a more sustainable future.
4. Design a public engagement framework that reflects our sustainability objectives and provides informal learning opportunities on sustainability topics for our visitors via our volunteers and public engagement staff throughout the Zoo site.
5. Ensure our online communications with our visitors via our website and social media channels reflect our sustainability objectives and achievements.



## CASE STUDY 2

### PRIMARY TEACHERS SUMMER COURSE – EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION IN PRIMARY TEACHER CPD

Dublin Zoo has run its Primary Teachers Summer Course, approved by the Department of Education and Skills (DES), for over 30 years. The course has evolved from being a shared programme with the National Museum of Ireland – Natural History, with teaching duties split across one week and across both sites, to a weeklong programme for 75 primary school teachers at Dublin Zoo. The original focus of the course was to support teachers to deliver the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) curriculum in their own schools, but after a re-write in Spring 2023, the emphasis is now on education for sustainable development (ESD). Experienced zoo educators, animal care staff and expert facilitators from partner organisations, such as BirdWatch Ireland, deliver theory-focused sessions followed by active outdoor learning workshops. The programme has evolved to include sustainability education and pro-environmental behaviour activities to align with the conservation education priorities from the Conservation Education Master Plan. Demand for this programme is exceptionally high, and it is our most empowering teaching and learning programme at Dublin Zoo.



## CASE STUDY 3

### THE APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION AT DUBLIN ZOO

Sustainability education is a core feature of learning programmes at Dublin Zoo. Our popular Sustainability programme for post-primary students engages students in examining the impact of their actions in relation to topics such as palm oil, plastics and food waste. At primary level, we continue to work on age-appropriate sustainability messaging for younger students. Sustainability education is also embedded in our teacher professional development work, including our award-winning collaboration with BIAZA collections and Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT), which enabled us to advance pro-environmental actions among teachers. Sustainability education at Dublin Zoo continues to evolve to reflect issues relevant to our audiences and those which will have the biggest impact for wildlife. The Conservation Education Master Plan has set out as one of its commitments the provision of optimistic and solution-based sustainability education via formal and informal learning programmes, teacher training, public engagement and social action campaigns. Our overarching goal is to enable our audiences to understand that conservation is about human behaviours and actions, placing people at the centre of change.





Experiment 3: Outdoor study - 3 Cover identification sheet

Plant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
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# 4 DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY

Dublin Zoo is committed to being an organisation that recognises the value of diversity among its team members and where all team members feel that they are valued and respected.

Dublin Zoo endeavours to ensure that its commitment to diversity, equality, accessibility and inclusivity (DEAI) is reflected throughout all aspects of its operations.

We acknowledge the benefits that a progressive DEAI culture brings. There is strong evidence, consistent with our own experience, which shows the benefits that different backgrounds and perspectives can bring to our organisation such as problem-solving, decision-making, risk management, employee engagement and innovation.

We are also committed to ensuring accessibility and inclusivity of our site, so that Dublin Zoo is seen as a place where everyone can enjoy, learn and connect.

Dublin Zoo's Conservation Education Master Plan includes a commitment to 'Promoting Conservation Education for All', focusing on providing a range of socially inclusive formal and informal learning opportunities that cater to our learners' and audiences' needs.

## VISION

Dublin Zoo's vision is to create a more equal, diverse, accessible and inclusive organisation which represents the best of our community and organisational values by fostering a culture that is welcoming to our employees, volunteers and visitors. We want an environment where everyone is treated with dignity, fairness and respect so that our employees and volunteers can be at their best while supporting the organisation in achieving its 10-year strategic vision 'Dublin Zoo 200'.

## ALIGNMENT



## PRIORITIES

### We will:

1. Develop and monitor the implementation of a Dublin Zoo Diversity, Equality, Accessibility and Inclusion Strategy.
2. Increase our engagement with local communities and other groups from socio-economic and cultural backgrounds that are currently underrepresented among our visitor base.
3. Continually review the accessibility and inclusivity of the Dublin Zoo site and operations.

## 5 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

The Zoo is responsible for the safety of employees, volunteers, contractors, visitors and, of course, the animals in its care. This makes for a unique challenge in terms of ensuring the physical safety, health and wellbeing of all our stakeholders.

As a zoo-based conservation organisation, animal welfare is paramount to us – our mandate to operate. Systems, standards, procedures and dedicated specialists are responsible for ensuring that our animals are kept to the highest national and international standards of animal welfare. The Zoo operates in compliance with the Irish Standards of Modern Zoo Practice, as well as with all standards and policies set out by our professional industry bodies, the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA), the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) and is inspected annually by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Irish Government (NPWS).

Occupational health and safety is managed in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act and associated regulations. Expert, external support is engaged to ensure appropriate risk assessments and systems (including training, maintenance, mechanical and procedural controls) are in place and monitored to reduce risk to as low as reasonably practical. The Zoo's internal Health and Safety Committee is chaired by the Zoo Director and reports to the Health, Safety and Sustainability Committee of the Zoological Society of Ireland's Board.

The Dublin Zoo VHI Employee Assistance Programme provides employees and their families with access to professional support and assistance in areas such as personal and family issues, health and fitness, financial advice, work issues and counselling services. The Zoo has also trained several members of the team as mental health first aiders. The Employee Wellness and Social Group (EWSG) was recently established to liaise with employees on opportunities to promote employee wellness at Dublin Zoo.

The Zoo invests significant resources to ensure the safety of over 1 million visitors each year. Trained first aiders are on site and at peak times additional, external first aid resources are present to assist visitors as needed.

As a recreational green urban space, a visit to Dublin Zoo is in itself good for visitors' wellbeing. The Zoo's focus on proper landscaping, using a rich diversity of plants, ensures animals and visitors have stimulating environments and are immersed in nature.





## VISION

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Dublin Zoo is recognised as an organisation and place of work that protects and enhances wellbeing.

## ALIGNMENT

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## PRIORITIES

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### We will:

1. Continue to implement a safety culture programme to further improve our occupational safety performance. This builds on the health, safety and welfare management processes and procedures already in place.
2. Support EWSG initiatives to highlight the benefits of employee wellness.
3. Develop animal habitats and viewing/exhibition areas to promote the wellbeing of both animals and visitors through appropriate landscaping, lighting and interpretation.

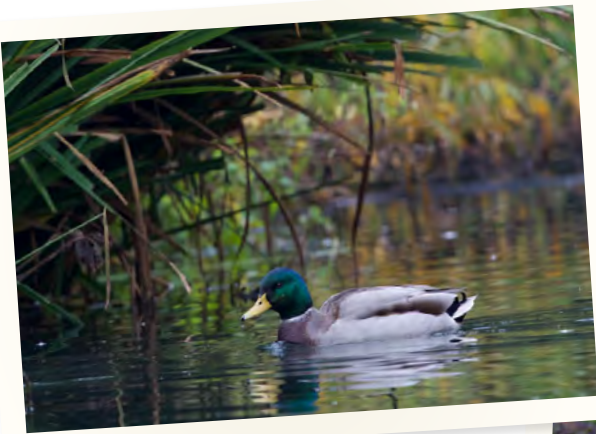


# 6 BIODIVERSITY

Dublin Zoo's expansive 28-hectare site provides excellent habitats for a wide variety of native species. Although these plants and animals are outside of our direct care, they benefit from the provision of dense naturalistic planting throughout the Zoo, bird and bat boxes across the site, pollinator-friendly plants and wild spaces where nature can flourish. Dublin Zoo's wild bird population is the largest in the whole of the Phoenix Park and is one of the most diverse in the country. A 2014-2015 study commissioned by the Office of Public Works, and coordinated by Bird Watch Ireland, found that 41 species of wild bird could be found at Dublin Zoo. The corresponding report highlighted the unique importance of the lakes in Dublin Zoo in supporting native waterbird populations. Our two on-site lakes also provide habitats for fish, invertebrates and aquatic plants.

Dublin Zoo actively takes part in the AIPP (All Ireland Pollinator Plan), protecting and promoting pollinators on-site. As part of the AIPP, we have planted a variety of pollinator-friendly native species around the Zoo, while also creating new habitats (such as log piles) for pollinators and other invertebrates. Monitoring the impact of our actions is an important part of this initiative, and each year we undertake pollinator monitoring through Flower-Insect Timed Counts (FIT Counts), a nationwide monitoring scheme which feeds directly into the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

The planting around the Zoo is a mix of native and exotic trees and shrubs or herbaceous plants. The dense planting attracts many insects which in turn attract birdlife. A survey of breeding birds within the Phoenix Park showed that the Zoo had roughly four times the park's average of breeding birds, with 41 species recorded as breeding, and noted that areas of the park with water and more intensive horticulture had a better range of nesting birds.



## VISION

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Dublin Zoo's vision is to ensure that our 28-hectare site is appropriately managed to allow native biodiversity to thrive, demonstrating biodiversity leadership and engaging with local and national initiatives.

## ALIGNMENT

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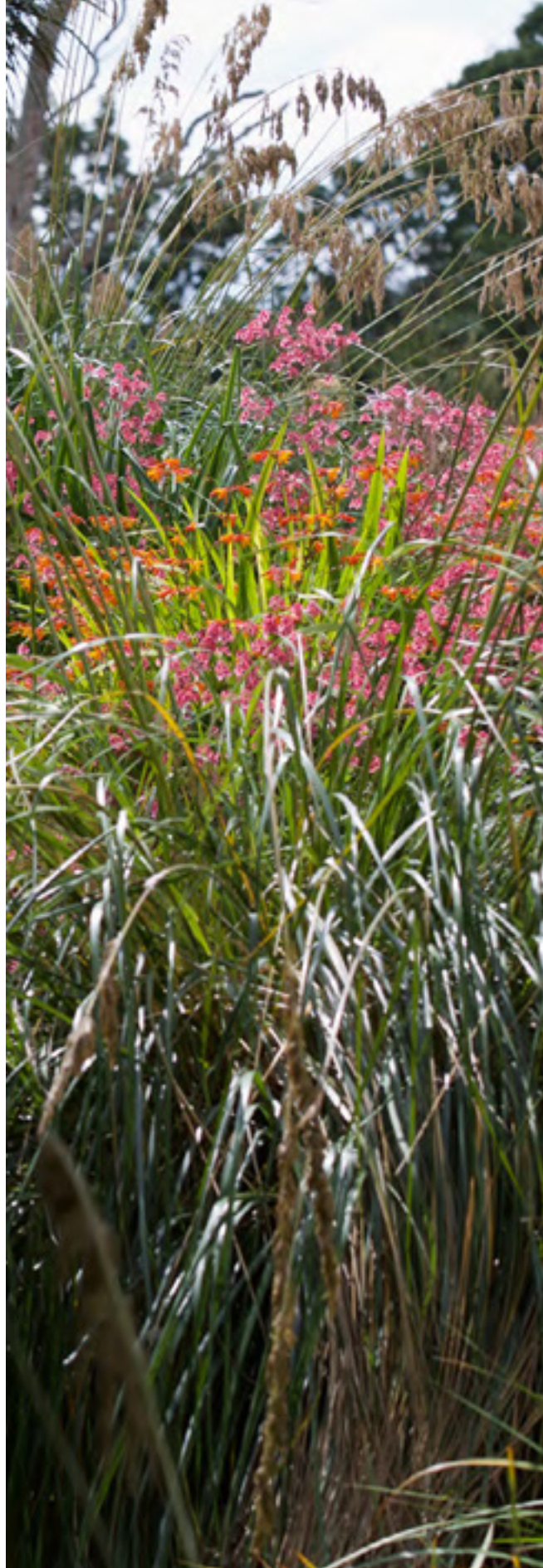


## PRIORITIES

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### We will:

1. Undertake a full biodiversity audit of our site, providing the first comprehensive assessment of the biodiversity at Dublin Zoo across taxonomic groups.
2. Create a Biodiversity Action Plan to support the management of our site as a quality habitat for native species. (See Dublin Zoo Conservation Master Plan for further details.)
3. Continue to support existing national and local strategies, such as the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021–2025 and, where possible, support new external initiatives.
4. Submit findings from our biodiversity assessments to the National Biodiversity Data Centre through Ireland's Citizen Science Portal.





# 7 SUPPLY CHAIN ENGAGEMENT

The environmental and social impacts of the Zoo reach far beyond the boundaries of our site in the Phoenix Park, Dublin. The conservation organisations we support and the procurement decisions we take have wide-ranging environmental and social impacts in our supply chain. We work closely with partners to set clear expectations and standards to maximise positive impacts and minimise negative ones from our funding and procurement choices.

More than 75% of the fish consumed in our restaurants, and all fish purchased for the Zoo's marine animals, comes from Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and other certified sustainable sources.

All products sold in shops and vending machines across the site are made with sustainably sourced palm oil or with no palm oil at all.

Our Visitor Operations Team sources sustainably made souvenirs and has partnered with wildlife conservation and humanitarian NGOs to donate a percentage of sales to these organisations.

We also work with our food services partner to improve performance in areas such as the elimination of single-use plastics, reduction in food waste, promotion of fairly traded products and food provenance.

## VISION

We want to fully understand and improve our supply chain impacts and use our influence to drive positive social and environmental outcomes.

## ALIGNMENT



## PRIORITIES

### We will:

1. Identify negative environmental and social impacts of our purchasing decisions and work with partners to minimise these.
2. Develop a responsible procurement code to communicate the environmental, social and ethical standards expected of our suppliers.
3. Continue to source sustainable products that support the wider conservation goals of Dublin Zoo and explore the potential to source products directly from the local communities who are working to protect and restore habitats, thus providing economic support for their conservation efforts.

## CASE STUDY 4

### MSC-CERTIFIED FISH



Food acquired for Dublin Zoo animals must meet the nutritional needs of a wide variety of species with different requirements based on age, physical activity or seasonal cycles. Additionally, we strive to formulate diets using seasonal and locally sourced products as much as possible. Fish is one of the most challenging sustainable food sources to obtain due to its marked seasonality, the need for its low storage temperature (-20°C) and the specialized harvesting methods. Sea lions and penguins are obligate piscivores, meaning they exclusively feed on fish. Since 2019, our fish supplier provides us with standardized parameters of proven quality, which includes quality analysis; they also have established methods of self-monitoring and product traceability. This supplier is Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified. The MSC label applies to wild fish or seafood from fisheries that have been certified as sustainable, according to the MSC standard. This label ensures the conservation of the marine environment, the sustainability of fish stocks and the effective and sustainable management of fisheries.

One of the factors that has helped us choose them as our supplier is their strong commitment to the sustainability of their catches. As part of the MSC certification, they commit to practice sustainable fishing and to preserve natural marine resources (fishing of non-endangered species and use of selective and non-destructive fishing techniques); they choose species whose stocks are commercially exploitable, respecting quotas, sexual maturity sizes of the different fish species and their natural cycles of reproduction – to ensure the replenishment of species on whom their trade depends.

## CASE STUDY 5

### RETAIL INITIATIVES

Dublin Zoo works with Nature Planet, one of our biggest plush suppliers, to save endangered species and their habitats, empower communities and promote sustainable livelihoods. We support the Red Panda Network by donating 5% of the turnover from our Nature Planet Red Panda Network product range to the organisation. The Red Panda Network is a leader in red panda conservation. Their 'Forest Guardians' programme hires local people to monitor and protect red pandas and advocate for their conservation. The Network's community-based red panda conservation programmes began in just a few villages in eastern Nepal, but now have been replicated in ten districts — 50% of Nepal's red panda range. The Red Panda Network range has been on sale at Dublin Zoo since 2022 and continues to grow.

In a similar partnership, we support Plan International's work on advancing children's rights and equality for girls by donating 5% of the turnover from selling our Plan International range of plush toys at Dublin Zoo's shop. Some of Plan International's impact to date includes the build and re-build of 17 schools, one health post and one birthing centre, including toilets, water supply and solar-powered electricity, in Indonesia and Nepal.





# 8 SUSTAINABLE FINANCES

To implement this Sustainability Master Plan, Dublin Zoo must be financially sustainable. For us, as a charitable organisation, money is not the purpose of our economic activities, but a consequence of them and a means to implement our strategic goals. We fully reinvest our funds in the development of Dublin Zoo and in supporting wildlife conservation in Ireland and worldwide. Our financial decision-making follows defined ethical, social and environmental values.

The financial health of Dublin Zoo is important to us, as it allows us to maintain and strengthen our social and economic impact. In order to achieve our objectives, the Zoo needs to generate income streams to fund our ambitious 10-year strategic vision 'Dublin Zoo 200'. This includes the development of a National Centre for Species Survival, running social action campaigns, a Conservation Fund, a Conservation Grants programme, increasing the numbers of conservation learners, a National Wildlife Biobanking Hub, a Zoo internship programme, new attractions such as an aquarium, a new ecoregion for Irish native species, new playgrounds and a new Zoo restaurant.

Alternative and additional funding will also support our ambition to provide subsidised or free-of-charge entry for school children and other disadvantaged groups which have financial barriers preventing access to Dublin Zoo.

Our objective is to extend our sources of funding to increase philanthropic donations, sponsorships, research grants, government support, and commercial partnerships.

## VISION

We want to create diverse sources of annual and multi-year funding to support the Zoo's vision and create shared value for all stakeholders.

## ALIGNMENT



## PRIORITIES

### We will:

1. Initiate a multi-annual philanthropic fundraising campaign to secure capital for new development projects.
2. Develop a corporate sponsorship strategy to engage with organisations that share the Zoo's passion for conservation, education and the environment.
3. Maintain the profitability of Dublin Zoo purely from its operative business and increase revenue streams from events and additional experiences.
4. Review all conservation projects supported by Dublin Zoo on a regular basis to ensure they continue to deliver the best possible economic, environmental and social outcomes.









**“AS A MUCH-VISITED ATTRACTION,  
WE LEAD BY EXAMPLE, SHOWCASE  
HOW WE DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY  
AND TAKE OVER 1 MILLION  
VISITORS ALONG WITH US ON  
OUR JOURNEY TO MEET OUR  
SUSTAINABILITY TARGETS.”**

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**We are Dublin Zoo.  
We save wildlife and inspire  
a passion for nature – one  
person, one family at a time.**

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