

# Battersea Park Children's Zoo

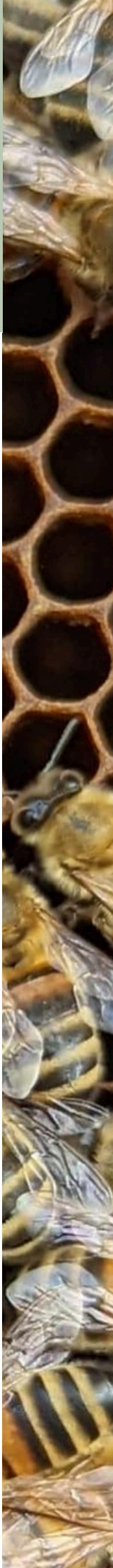


**Conservation Education  
Strategy  
2025 – 2030**



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# 01

# Introduction

In 1951, Battersea Park was transformed into a pleasure garden as part of the Festival of Britain celebrations, and the forerunner of Battersea Park Children's Zoo was born.

In the summer of 2004, the zoo was rescued from the threat of closure by the Heap family. Alongside the New Forest Wildlife Park and the Chestnut Centre, Roger, Carol and Ed Heap transformed the zoo into a modern zoological establishment.

Over the past 20 years the zoo has grown to become a dedicated force in both conservation and education, adapting to the evolving needs of modern zoos. Recognizing the critical role zoos play in addressing global biodiversity loss, the zoo has expanded its conservation efforts, focusing on endangered species and contributing to international breeding programmes. Through innovative educational initiatives, it has become a centre for raising awareness about environmental sustainability and the importance of preserving wildlife. As a pillar of the community, the zoo not only serves as an educational resource but also provides a space for visitors to connect with nature, fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges facing our planet's biodiversity.



# 02

# Mission Statement

To excite and captivate our visitors with the wonders of living animals and the planet we share with them.

We endeavour to impress young minds with the importance of local and global conservation.





# 03

# Objectives



## INFORM

Provide every visitor with learning opportunities through signage, accessibility resources and daily keeper talks.



## HIGHLIGHT

Highlight the in-situ plight of a variety of endangered and rare breed animals.



## SHARE

Share ways the public can support conservation and sustainability efforts in their own lives.



## INSPIRE

Inspire the next generation of conservationists to make choices that support the natural world.



Battersea Park Children's Zoo is situated in South London, near to the border of the London Borough of Wandsworth and the London Borough of Chelsea.

The inhabitants of these two boroughs come from a diverse range of economic, social and cultural backgrounds, and we find this reflected in our visitor demographic.

As of January 2025, over 350 locals or frequent zoo visitors, have joined our annual zoo membership scheme, which allows unlimited entry.

During **weekdays of school term time**, our main visitors are comprised of:

- **Nursery and primary-aged children on School Trips** (this includes both private and public schools).
- **Zoo members**
- **Child minders or nannies with young children**

During **schools holidays and weekends**, our main visitors consist of:

- **Families with children**
- **Zoo members**
- **Youth groups/holiday clubs**

We are aiming to diversify the age of our clientele, through initiatives such as corporate away days, wildlife drawing classes and adults only VIP tours.

As London is a holiday destination, we find many of our visitors are tourists visiting from overseas. This is important to consider when developing signage to display around the zoo and considering language used in our talks, as many visitors may use English as an additional language.





It is important to us that any visit to Battersea Park Children's Zoo provides opportunities for learning.

We provide signage around the zoo, detailing both species specific fact files and our conservation programmes. We also deliver informal education through our daily keeper talks programme. These core talks are available for any visitors to attend at any time of year, on any day of the week.



Additional talks are added to the schedule during the school holidays (our busiest season) and numbers can reach up to seven talks per day. Some talks focus on our most beloved, charismatic species, such as Asian short-clawed otters and capuchin monkeys, whereas others aim to shed light on some of our lesser known projects, such as our summer honeybee talk.

Extra talks are also added to correspond with seasonal events, such as a cotton-top tamarin day and our Winter Nights after-dark event.

In 2023, we delivered a total of 430 hours of educational keeper talks to our visitors.

## Keeper Talk Structure

Keeper talks tend to follow a similar format and include topics and themes related but not limited to;

- Characteristics and personalities of individual animals
- Anatomy and physiology
- Wild lifestyles and behaviours
- Animal welfare, husbandry and training
- Breeding and reproduction
- Threats and conservation

In the conservation section of each keeper talk, we aim not only to discuss the plight of the species in the question, but also, to give the public suggestions of things they can do in their own lives to support wildlife.

We aim to use keeper talks to spark an emotional connection between visitor and animal to bring people closer to nature. We aim to present all of our visitors with realistic and achievable actions, behaviours

and lifestyle changes that they can do/make to contribute directly to the conservation of certain species and global biodiversity. These can include suggestions on how to look for sustainably and locally produced meats or not interacting with social media posts promoting the exotic pet trade.

## Signage

To consolidate our educational output, 100% of our species information signage includes up-to-date conservation information relating to all of the species within our care.



At each animal enclosure we have easy to read signage about each species, complete with maps and photographs.



Our species signage contains the following information;

- Latin name
- Habitat
- Range
- Diet
- Lifespan
- Predators
- Activity
- Conservation status (according to the IUCN Red list)
- Fun facts

As well as species specific signage, in 2023, we added additional signage to the zoo that focuses specifically on the conservation, education and research goals of modern zoos, to complement our species display boards. These include specific case studies and success stories from our own conservation work.

In 2024, we added a large flowchart mural on the wall next to our resident primates. This mural depicts the main ideas behind our newly launched '#ShareSavvy' campaign, which aims to highlight the problems social media can have on the exotic pet trade.

During our keeper talks, we encourage visitors to photograph the flowchart and revisit it whenever they come across a social media post containing an exotic pet. We hope that such a prominent display captures the eyes of our visitors and sparks conversations surrounding the topic, even if the visitor was not able to attend a keeper talk.



We also welcomed 2084 non-guided (not enrolled in a formal zoo educational workshop) school children to the zoo in 2024. Non-guided school groups enjoy a self-led visit, which can include attending keeper talks, learning from our signage or other activities provided by their teachers.

## How are modern zoos fighting extinction?

Battersea Park Children's Zoo (BPCZ) works with a large number of European Endangered Species Breeding Programmes (EEP), as well as supporting conservation charities in the UK and abroad. BPCZ also contributes to breeding and rewilding projects, directly increasing the numbers of endangered species in the wild.



Bali starling (*Leucospiza rothschildi*)

### Ex-situ conservation

The Bali starling is one of the rarest birds in the world with fewer than 100 remaining in the wild. BPCZ is part of the EEP that protects these birds from extinction. We have had such success with breeding them as part of this programme that we now have one of the largest groups in the UK.



Cotton-top tamarin (*Sapajus oedipus*)

### In-situ conservation

Between 1960 and 1973, 20-30,000 cotton-tops were captured for biomedical experiments reducing their wild population to just 2,000. Still at threat due to the illegal pet trade and deforestation, BPCZ is part of the EEP as well as supporting Proyecto Tití, an organisation who carry out in-situ conservation in Colombia.



Harvest mouse (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*)

### Reintroduction

The number of harvest mice in the UK has drastically reduced in recent years due to changes in habitat management and agricultural methods. At BPCZ we breed our harvest mice in a collaborative environment, before releasing them into the wild to boost their numbers in suburban and rural woodlands, improving ecosystem diversity.



Oxford sandy and black pig (*Sus scrofa domestica*)

### Rare breed conservation

BPCZ supports efforts to save and promote our native livestock breeds as almost 80% are at risk of extinction. We collaborate with a number of organisations to breed, conserve and educate the public on the importance of protecting these breeds.



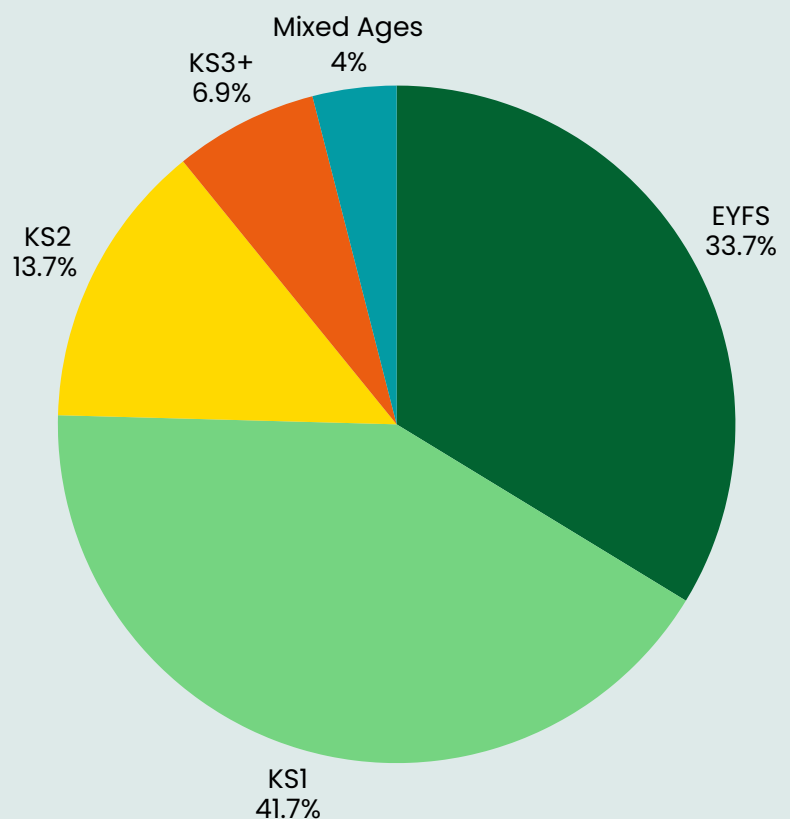
## Formal education overview

Formal educational group trips (henceforth known as guided groups) make up the majority of our school and youth group visits.

We currently offer guided visits to:

- Nursery aged children (henceforth known as Early Year Foundation Stage or EYFS)
- KS1 learners (aged 4-7 years)
- KS2 learners (aged 8-11 years)
- Learners with special educational needs (henceforth known as SEN learners)
- KS3 learners (aged 12-14 years)

In 2024, the majority of our guided visits were from KS1 learners, with EYFS learners being the second most prevalent.



All guided groups take part in an educational workshop and guided tour of the zoo. All of our workshops have been carefully designed to include maximum engagement and interaction from the children. We have achieved this by incorporating games, vocalisations, role play and practical craft activities into each workshop plan. Workshops also include the opportunity to interact with animal artefacts such as skulls and feathers. No live animals are used in the workshops.

All workshops provide a link to the national curriculum and also contain an important conservation message behind them. The objective of our workshops is to educate and inspire the younger generation, whilst provoking a curiosity and passion for the natural world around them.

# Educational Workshops

At BPCZ, we currently offer 7 workshop options for guided groups:

## EYFS

### STORY TIME

This workshop has been designed for children aged 3-5 years and involves the reading of an original story, starring our zoo residents before heading out into the zoo to see the featured animals.

## KS1

### ANIMAL NEEDS (AN)

Learners understand the basic needs of animals and how their wild habitats meet these needs. This workshop also encourages learners to explore the consequences of not meeting animals' needs.

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT (FFT)

Focuses on grouping animals together based upon their diets and feeding habits. Learners will also explore the relationship between living organisms at different levels of a basic food chain.

## KS2

### ADAPT, SURVIVE, THRIVE! (AST)

Learners identify different adaptations of animals which help them to survive in their environment and how to differentiate between a behavioural and physical adaptation.

### WHAT MAKES A MAMMAL? (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS CLASS OF THEIR OWN) (WMAM)

Children learn the difference between vertebrates and invertebrates and how to group and classify vertebrates based upon their similarities and differences.

## KS3

### #ShareSavvy (SS)

Older learners explore the world of social media, the exotic pet trade and issues with interacting with posts involving wildlife.

## SEN LEARNERS

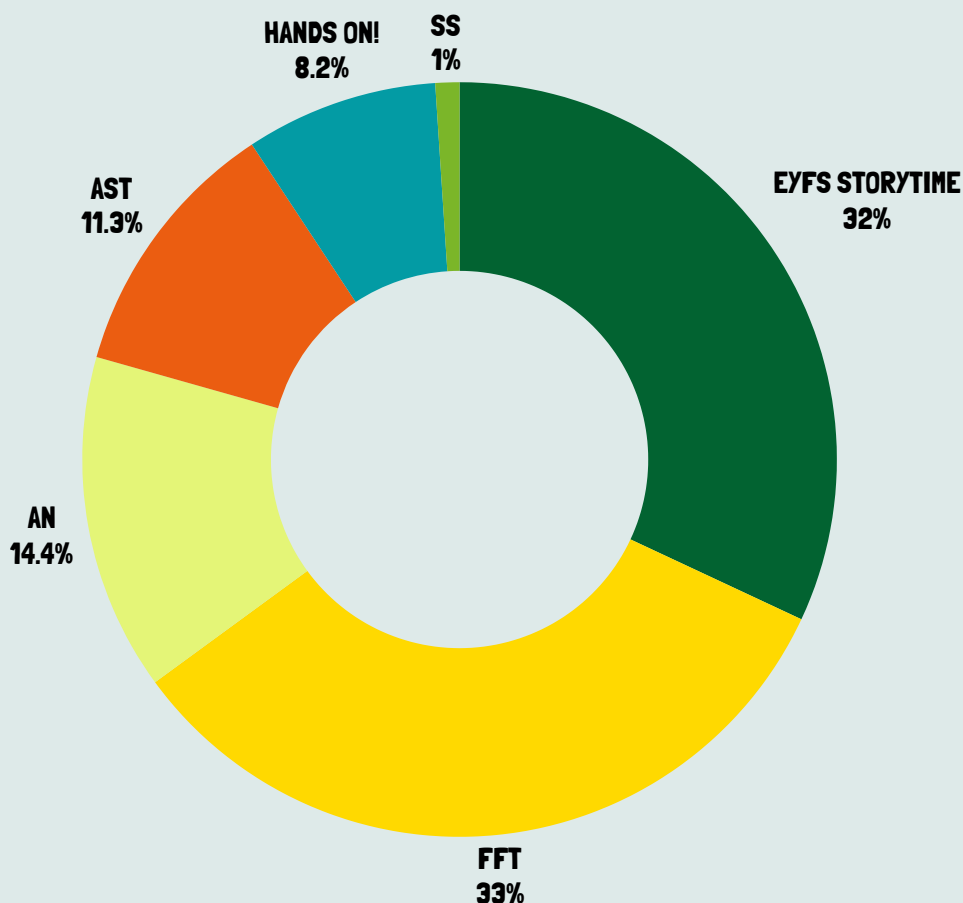
### HANDS ON!

Learners who may prefer a less formal workshop setting will be encouraged to move at their own pace and get up close and get hands on with various tactile animal artefact stations.



# Evaluating Our Programme

**In 2024, the most popular workshop choice was KS1 'Food for Thought', closely followed by EYFS Story time.**



The 'Class of their own' workshop, did not receive a booking in 2024, so the decision was made to rewrite and rename the workshop 'What makes a mammal', in the hope of it becoming more appealing to teachers.

## Judging Effective Learning

All KS1, KS2 and KS3 workshops start with a opening question to the group, pertaining to the workshop topic. The same question is repeated at the end of the workshop in order to compare understanding before and after.

## Visit Feedback

Teachers of guided groups are encouraged to fill in a feedback survey the end of their visit. This survey can be accessed from posters in the lunch room.

Education staff can use these surveys to identify parts of the trip that are being well-received and any areas for improvements.

Feedback from the previous years has been very positive, however, many schools have not been filling in the survey, suggesting we need to find a more comprehensive way of assessing the success of our school visits.

# Collaborative Projects

Since 2023, Battersea Park Children's Zoo have partnered with the London Beekeepers' Association and the School Food Matters charity, to provide education opportunities, as part of our 'Honeybee School'. This scheme has allowed over 500 London school children at present, free of charge, to attend practical beekeeping sessions and classroom workshops on the importance of pollinating insects. Also included in this programme, is a visit day to the zoo in which the students are given a guided tour by a member of zoo staff. The School Food Matters charity selects schools with students from low-income families and children with special educational needs, as we strive to make nature education accessible to all.

In 2024, this project won the education category in the annual BIAZA awards.



We will continue to support this project in the coming years, and are always looking for additional opportunities to collaborate within our community for the purpose of education.



# The Education Team

The Education and Events team are responsible for overseeing school and group visits, children's birthday parties and seasonal themed events. Led by the Education and Events manager, the Education and Events guides deliver workshops, tours, activities and themed stalls throughout the year.

The team hold a range of relevant qualifications, including degrees in Zoology and Environmental Sciences. Many also have backgrounds in teaching, museum curation, working with children and public speaking.





Themed events throughout the year provide opportunities for educating our visitors about specific species or conservation matters .

Some of these events are BIAZA led campaigns, some are national animal days and some are initiatives created by the BPCZ team.

Through stalls, games, activities and talks, we aim to excite and captivate our guests as stated in our mission statement.



A group of young visitors playing a tamarin match-up game on Cotton-Top Tamarin day 2024.



Visitors attending a free #ShareSavvy workshop on Share Savvy Saturday 2024.



Visitors learning about sustainable farming during the Winter Nights pig talk.



Visitor matching adult and baby animal names during an Easter event.



# 13

# Accessibility Within Our Programme

**At Battersea Park Children's Zoo, we believe wildlife is for everyone. We are working hard to make sure our zoo is as enjoyable as possible for all visitors.**

At the start of 2024, resources were made available to download from the zoo website or borrow from the shop that may be useful for some visitors. These include:

- Sensory maps of the zoo
- A social script of zoo visits

These resources are continuously being reviewed and added to.

Also in 2024, our keeper team switched from using a megaphone to a microphone in their daily talks. This means that, not only is the speech quality clearer, but lip-reading is much easier as the speaker's mouth is no longer fully covered.

Our 'Hands' On!' workshop, which was specifically developed for SEN learners, launched in 2024 and was booked and enjoyed multiple times throughout the year by both child and adult groups. The 'Hands On!' workshop ' may suit visitors who prefer a less formal workshop setting. Learners will be encouraged to move at their own pace between tactile artefact stations staffed by the education team, where they can get up close and hands on with items such as deer antlers and snail shells. This workshop, along with all our other workshop options, can be modified to meet the needs of individual learners.



# Future Goals

**In the next 5 years, the education team aim to complete the following goals:**

- Ensure the collection of post-visit feedback from as many teachers as possible. We will give each group leader a physical paper feedback form as the QR code posters in the education cabin have historically not yielded many results. Feedback surveys could also be collected via a post-visit email.
- Have a total of 10 workshop options by 2030, including introducing an option for older students and a second EYFS option.
- By 2030, we aim to welcome over 6000 students per year, with at least 75% of the booked schools engaging in our guided workshops.
- Develop downloadable activity sheets as an extra resource for schools or any visitors.
- Continue to improve our accessibility resources each year, starting by developing downloadable communication boards specific to our site and adding sensory signs to loud, smelly and dark areas of the zoo.
- Providing more learning opportunities for visitors through the development of home educator days and a conservation education themed summer school programme.







**Battersea Park Children's Zoo, Battersea Park, London, SW11 4NJ**

**[www.batterseaparkzoo.co.uk](http://www.batterseaparkzoo.co.uk)**

Education contact: [events@batterseaparkzoo.co.uk](mailto:events@batterseaparkzoo.co.uk)