Dublin Zoo opened its doors on September 1, 1830. Founded as a private society by anatomists and physicists and supported by wealthy subscribers.

In 1840, featuring 46 mamals and 72 birds donated by london Zoo, the radical decision was to throw its gates open to the public for a penny on Sundays.

This gesture, remarkable for that time, established the affectionate relationship that still exists between Dubliners and the ‘ah-Zoo’ in the Phoenix Parks.

Now, utterly transformed, Dublin Zoo’s 28 hectares is attracting almost 1 million visitors a year. Officially Ireland’s bigest attraction, not only [offers](http://www.dublinzoo.ie/59/About-Us.aspx) a great and entertaining day out for all, but also a journey of learning and discovery about the world’s precious wildlife.

Animals at Dublin Zoo live enriched lives in natural social groups, they are fit and healthy, able to breed and raise their own young. They can be observed in naturalistic spaces with vegetation, substrate and water features that reflects their native habitat.

Dublin Zoo are managed by caring zoo professionals who devote their lives to the welfare and care of animals and to understanding their needs. They are knowledgable about the natural habitat of the animals, [diet](http://www.dublinzoo.ie/59/About-Us.aspx), genetics, animal health and social groupings.

Modern Zoos, like Dublin, adhere to strict codes of practice in animal welfare laid down by european and Global Associations. Through such organisations, partnerships among Zoo’s and other kindred institutions, agencies and individuals are encouraged. This in turn leads to opportunities for co-operative research in conservation, biological and veterinary science. By supporting specific research staff, collaborative partnerships with universitys and publications, symposia and workshops they constantly develop knowledge, understanding and expertise.

Dublin Zoo is a registered charity and works in partnership with zoos worldwide to make a significant contribution to the conservation of bio-diversity on earth. It needs people like you to donate to keep it going.

Dublin Zoo is much more than a fun-filled, stimulating day out for all the family... it’s a place to learn about wild animals, especially those which are endangered. The Zoo is a registered charity – your visit will help maintain Dublin Zoo to a high standard, improve the Zoo and contribute to conservation programmes. Located in the Phoenix Park in the heart of Dublin city, Dublin Zoo is Ireland’s most popular family attraction, and welcomed over one million visitors last year. As one of the world’s oldest, yet popular zoos, the 28 hectare park in the heart of Dublin is home to some 400 animals in safe environment where education and conservation combine for an exciting and unforgettable experience!

History

Dublin Zoo was opened in 1831 by the then Royal Zoological Society of Ireland, which have been founded the previous year. The animals were supplied by its counterpart in the UK, London Zoo.

Like other Zoos of this time, Dublin Zoo was nothing like it is today. Its sole purpose was to show as many diferent kinds of animals as possible to people who had never seen anything like it.

Our Zoo has had a long and fascinating history - here are just some highlights from the first hundred years.

Timeline

| Year | Event |
| --- | --- |
| 1833 | The entrance lodge to the Zoo was built for £30! |
| 1838 | To celebrate Queen victoria's Coronation the Zoo held an open day - 20,000 people visited, which is still the highest number of visitors in one day. |
| 1844 | The Zoo receive its first giraffe. |
| 1855 | The Zoo bought its first pair of lion. These bred for the first time in 1857. |
| 1868-9 | An aquarium, a lion house and the Society House (which still stands) built with funds from a goverment grant. |
| 1876 | Reptiles shared the aquarium; it officially became the reptile house in the 1890s. |
| 1898 | Haughton House opened, providing tea rooms for members upstairs and enclosures downstairs. |
| 1916 | Getting in and out of Phoenix Park became difficult during the Easter Rising and meat ran out. In order to keep the lions and tigers fed, some of the other animals in the zoo was killed! |
| 1939-1945 | During World War II the popularity of the Zoo soared despite the huge difficulty in replacing animals who died. The public donated [food](http://www.dublinzoo.ie/142/Zoo-History.aspx) for the animals and, after the war when fuel was still difficult to acquire, trees were chopped down to heat the houses. |
| Today | There are still parts of the zoo that date back to the very begining - why not go along and see them for yourself |