

= Edinburgh Zoo =

Edinburgh Zoo , formerly the Scottish National Zoological Park , is an 82 @-@ acre (33 ha) non @-@ profit zoological park in Edinburgh , the capital of Scotland . The land lies on the south facing slopes of Corstorphine Hill , from which it provides extensive views of the city . Built in 1913 , and owned by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland , it receives over 600 @,@ 000 visitors a year , which makes it Scotland 's second most popular paid @-@ for tourist attraction , after Edinburgh Castle . As well as catering to tourists and locals , the zoo is involved in many scientific pursuits , such as captive breeding of endangered animals , researching into animal behaviour , and active participation in various conservation programs around the world .

Edinburgh Zoo was the first zoo in the world to house and to breed penguins . It is also the only zoo in Britain to house koalas and giant pandas . The zoo is a member of the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) , the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) , the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) , and the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions . It has also been granted four stars by the Scottish Tourism Board . The zoo gardens boast one of the most diverse tree collections in the Lothians .

= = History = =

The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) was founded as a registered charity in 1909 by an Edinburgh lawyer , Thomas Hailing Gillespie . The Corstorphine Hill site was purchased by the Society with help from the Edinburgh Town Council in early 1913 . Gillespie 's vision of what a zoological park should be was modelled after the ' open design ' of Tierpark Hagenbeck in Hamburg , a zoo which promoted a more spacious and natural environment for the animals , and stood in stark contrast to the steel cages typical of the menageries built during the Victorian era . The Scottish National Zoological Park was opened to the public in 1913 and was incorporated by Royal Charter later that year . In 1948 , following a visit by His Majesty King George VI , the Society was granted the privilege of adding the prefix ' Royal ' to its name . It remains the only zoo with a Royal Charter in the United Kingdom .

Edinburgh Zoo 's long association with penguins began in January 1914 , with the arrival of three king penguins from the Christian Salvesen whaling expedition which docked in Leith . The subsequent successful hatching of a king penguin chick in 1919 was the first penguin to be hatched in captivity . These were the first penguins to be seen outside of the South Atlantic anywhere in the world . The now famous daily penguin parade started by accident in 1950 with the escape of several birds . This proved so popular with visitors and the penguins that it is a daily feature of the zoo today .

After Tom Gillespie retired , Gilbert D. Fisher was appointed director @-@ secretary of the zoo in 1956 . He held the post till he retired in 1971 .

In 1986 , the Society acquired the Highland Wildlife Park at Kingussie , 30 miles (48 km) south of Inverness . The zoo and the park work together in providing the most appropriate captive habitat possible in Scotland . Public visitation trips between both sites are organised frequently by the RZSS .

The zoo still retains the original charter , which drives its active breeding programme , and biodiversity , conservation and sustainability initiatives . The RZSS provides multiple ways for the public to help support its mission , including a membership club , animal adoption , donations , legacies and volunteering .

= = Animals and exhibits = =

= = = Budongo Trail = = =

Named after the Budongo Forest in Uganda , the Budongo Trail facility houses a troop of 18

common chimpanzees ; 9 males (David , Louis , Qafzeh , Paul , Rene , Frek , Kindia , Liberius and Velu) and 9 females (Cindy , Pearl , Lucy , Eva , Sophie , Lianne , Heleen , Kilimi and Edith) . The main building features viewing galleries , a lecture theatre and interactive games and displays designed to teach visitors about the chimpanzee 's lifestyle and social structure .

== Living Links ==

Living Links is built around a field station and research centre for the study of primate behaviour . The exhibit features enclosures housing common squirrel monkeys and tufted capuchins .

== Penguins Rock ==

Edinburgh Zoo is well known for housing penguins in its collection , the first three being king penguins , which arrived in January 1913 . The zoo 's current penguin pool , named " Penguins Rock " , is 65 metres long , 3 @.@ 5 metres deep at its deepest point , contains 1 @.@ 2 million litres of water , and houses colonies of gentoo , king , and rockhopper penguins .

== Giant pandas ==

In 2011 , Edinburgh Zoo leased two giant pandas , a male named Yáng Gu?ng (?? , meaning " sunshine ") and a female named Tián Tián (?? , meaning " sweetie ") , from the Bifengxia Breeding Centre in China at a cost of \$ 1m a year . The zoo spent £ 285 @,@ 000 building an enclosure especially for the pandas , and they will remain at the zoo for a maximum of ten years before being returned to China . Edinburgh Zoo is currently the only zoo in the United Kingdom that houses giant pandas .

== Brilliant Birds ==

Opened in 2011 , Brilliant Birds is a walk @-@ through aviary housing several species of exotic birds , including Nicobar pigeons , Bali starlings , lilac @-@ breasted rollers , chestnut @-@ backed thrush , and Victoria crowned pigeons . A selection of amphibians , invertebrates and fish are also displayed in the building 's main entrance hall , including axolotl , blue poison dart frogs , mudskippers , figure 8 pufferfish , banded archerfish , blind cave fish , and a colony of leafcutter ants .

== Koala Territory ==

Koala Territory was first opened in 2005 , and houses three koalas , two males named Gooanroo and Yabbra , and a female named Alinga . Yooranah was the offspring of Alinga and Goonaroo , and was born in 2013 and died in 2016 . Koala Territory is decorated with Aboriginal @-@ inspired artwork , and features a garden of eucalyptus plants .

== Wallaby Outback ==

Opened in 2015 , the walkthrough became the zoo 's swamp wallabies new home . Visitors can get up close to these marsupials .

== Animal Antics ==

A daily show in which keepers demonstrate the natural skills of animals to an audience of visitors . Keepers use positive reinforcement training with every animal , which means that the animals that perform in the shows are never forced into doing tricks . Because of this , the animals used in Animal Antics vary between shows .

== Other mammals ==

Other notable mammal species in the zoo 's collection include oriental small @-@ clawed otters , Asian lions , meerkats , sun bears , Sumatran tigers , giant anteaters , binturong , African wild dogs , Grévy 's zebras , greater one @-@ horned rhinoceros , banteng , red river hogs , North American porcupines , swamp wallabies , striped skunks , pygmy hippopotamus , Scottish wild cats , Malayan tapirs , white @-@ faced saki monkeys , ring @-@ tailed lemurs , cottontop tamarins , geladas , and Barbary macaques .

== Other birds ==

Other notable bird species in the zoo 's collection include Darwin 's rhea , Chilean flamingos , Egyptian vultures , eastern white pelicans , scarlet ibis , waldrapp ibis , great argus pheasants , ocellated turkeys , red @-@ fronted macaws , rainbow lorikeets , hamerkop , and southern cassowary .

== Military animals ==

Several of the zoo 's animals have held military rank .

Wojtek was a bear adopted in Iran by the Polish II Corps and enlisted into the 22nd Artillery Supply Company to allow him to travel when the troops were posted . He served in the Middle East and during the Battle of Monte Cassino and retired to Edinburgh Zoo when the Polish troops , billeted in Scotland , demobilised .

Sir Nils Olav , a king penguin , was the mascot and Colonel @-@ in @-@ Chief of the Norwegian King 's Guard . He was adopted in 1972 when the King 's Guard were in the city for the Edinburgh Military Tattoo , given the rank of visekorporal (lance corporal) , and promoted each time the corps visited the city . He died in 1987 and his successor , Nils Olav II , inherited his rank . Nils was visited by the Norwegian King 's Guard on 15 August 2008 and awarded a knighthood . The honour was approved by the King of Norway , King Harald V. During the ceremony a crowd of several hundred people joined the 130 guardsmen at the zoo to hear a citation from King Harald the Fifth of Norway read out , which described Nils as a penguin " in every way qualified to receive the honour and dignity of knighthood " .

== Future developments ==

The carnivore rock dens , located between the Sumatran tigers and the geladas are to be totally overhauled , with the Amur leopard and jaguar leaving the collection . The Asian lion , Sumatran tiger and Scottish wildcat will remain on @-@ show . A new Sumatran tiger enclosure is being developed in the meadow behind the current enclosure . Red panda are due to rejoin the collection later in the year .

== Research and conservation ==

Edinburgh Zoo is the national centre for primate behavioural research . Budongo Trail , a state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art chimpanzee enclosure , was opened in May 2008 by The Princess Royal . Budongo Trail is a naturalistic enclosure which can house up to 40 chimps . It includes a large outdoor area and three separate indoor areas for the chimps together with observation areas and a lecture theatre for the public . The RZSS is the principal sponsor in the long term study and conservation of a group of approximately 60 chimpanzees as part of the Budongo Conservation Field Station in Uganda , Africa . Amidst the opening of Budongo Trail , Jane Goodall described it as a " wonderful facility " where primates " are probably better off [than] living in the wild in an area like Budongo [Forest] , where one in six gets caught in a wire snare , and countries like Congo ,

where chimpanzees , monkeys and gorillas are shot for food commercially . "

In addition to Budongo Trail , the zoo is home to Living Links , a field station and research centre for the study of primates that was developed in a partnership with the University of St Andrews . Living Links houses capuchin monkeys and squirrel monkeys originating from the forests of South America , and offers researchers unique opportunities to study primate behaviour .

In July 2006 , a cull of invasive brown rats on the Scottish island of Canna was deemed a provisional success and after two years of observation , during which time no rats were observed , the island was declared officially rat free by the Environment Minister , Mike Russell on 7 June 2008 . The rats had been outcompeting the rare local wood mouse , known as the Canna mouse and also endangering local seabird populations . The National Trust for Scotland which own the island invested £ 500 @, @ 000 employing exterminators from New Zealand to cull the estimated 10 @, @ 000 brown rats. in co @-@ operation with RZSS , approximately 150 Canna mice were captured and homed at Edinburgh Zoo and the Highland Wildlife Park . 40 mice were returned to the island in late 2006 with the remaining being re @-@ introduced in stages .

In May 2008 , a joint application submitted by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) and the Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) was approved by the Scottish Government allowing for a trial reintroduction of the European beaver to the Knapdale Forest in Mid @-@ Argyll . If the trial is successful then the European beaver will be the first mammal to be reintroduced to the United Kingdom . Beavers have been extinct in Scotland since the 16th century , when they were hunted for their pelt , meat and medicinal properties (use of castoreum) .

= = Zoo gardens = =

Before being acquired by the society , the Corstorphine hill site was a nursery , once owned by Thomas Blaikie , who planted many of the great French parks such as ? La Bagatelle ? . On this site two nurserymen raised the famous apple cultivars ? John Downie ? and ? James Grieve ? . Today , the zoo has one of the most diverse tree collections in the Lothians with 120 species . The south @-@ facing aspect allows bananas to be grown outside . Increasingly , horticulture is seen as a discipline in its own right , with the focus on habitat creation within enclosures , food stuffs for the animals , and enrichment for both the animals and the visiting public .

= = Controversies = =

Organisations that remain critical of Edinburgh Zoo 's work include the Animal Liberation Front , who have voiced their distaste for the quality of the enclosure that formerly housed polar bears . The Born Free Foundation has also stated several times that the zoo fails in its conservation work , as well as opposing the zoo 's plans to house elephants .

Edinburgh Zoo received a public backlash on Twitter after the European Endangered Species Programme (EEP) recommended that they should cull three red river hog piglets after an unplanned birth . A protest took place under the # savethehogs tag on Thursday 3 February 2011 . The Twitter campaign was started by OneKind , with major support from Captive Animals Protection Society . On Friday 4 February 2011 , it was announced that the # savethehogs campaign had been successful and the zoo would attempt to re @-@ home the piglets .

Following various internal issues and allegations relating to senior staff , the zoo was subject to investigations relating to its charitable status . The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) held an inquiry into the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland , and one director was fired while two others were suspended . The zoo suspended its chief operating officer and acting chief executive Gary Wilson while it investigated allegations made against him .

In July 2011 , the zoo 's monkey house had to be closed after a gelada escaped from its enclosure . The animal vaulted an electric fence as it tried to escape whilst visitors looked on .

The zoo also came under criticism for plans to charge £ 20 per person for visitors to watch the necropsy of an animal . A OneKind spokesman criticised the idea , largely due to the timing of the event , which was scheduled to take place two months after the zoo announced a £ 2 million loss in

profits , making the necropsy seem like a " Money @-@ making drive " .

In February 2012 , the zoo was told to conduct a full review of its financial controls following an inquiry into complaints about how the zoo was run in 2011 . The report by the OSCR cleared the zoo of misconduct but found " areas of governance that could be improved " .

In May 2012 , several hundred zoo visitors were forced to seek shelter after a family of hogs escaped from keepers and ran amok . Those who had taken refuge in the monkey house later described scenes where zoo workers pursued the animals with various equipment including brushes and dart guns . Though the drama lasted over an hour , the adult hogs were recaptured unharmed .

On 22 August 2012 a scarlet ibis escaped from the zoo and went on the loose in the city after a squirrel had chewed a hole in the netting at the top of its cage . Keepers noticed it was missing and later that day it was spotted more than 3 miles away in Dundas Street , near the city centre . The ibis was missing for nearly a week before being recaptured four miles from the zoo .

In September 2012 zoo customers were herded indoors when a Heck bull escaped from its enclosure . The 600 kg animal with three feet long horns was loose for over 40 minutes , until zoo workers and vets managed to restrain him by using tranquilliser darts .