

# ZOO LIFE

ISSUE 9  
Spring Issue 2024

CHARITY  
UPDATE

Find out how Action  
for the Wild helps  
conservation  
projects around  
the world!

## DINOSAUR REALM!

Our BIG new arrivals  
have landed!

## COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Learn more about our transition  
into becoming a charity

## ZOOPER HEROES

Read about the amazing people  
that work at Colchester Zoo

## DESIGN CHALLENGE

Take part in an  
amazing habitat  
creation challenge!

[www.colchesterzoo.org](http://www.colchesterzoo.org)

COLCHESTER ZOO

# OTTO

1997 – 2024

We are saddened to announce that our male white rhino, **Otto**, passed away on 22nd March 2024.

Otto was under veterinary observation which ultimately led us to have to further investigate via general anaesthesia. Unfortunately, Otto, passed away whilst under anaesthesia despite all best efforts to help him.

Otto was born in 1997 and arrived at Colchester Zoo in 2009 from Knuthenborg Safari Park in Bandholm, Denmark. Since his time at Colchester Zoo, Otto sired six calves with his latest offspring, Dara, born on 13th January 2023. White rhinos are currently listed as 'Near Threatened' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, therefore Otto played a vital role in the conservation of his species.

It's always difficult when an animal passes away, especially one with a big personality that has been at the zoo for so many years, they truly are one of the family. Otto leaves a huge hole in our hearts, but we have many cherished memories of him which will last forever. Our Animal Care Team are currently processing the loss of their beloved friend and would like to thank everyone for their support during this difficult time.

We dedicate  
this edition of the  
Zoo Life magazine  
in Otto's honour.

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SPRING 2024  
ISSUE 9

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Some BIG NEW arrivals have landed!



Photography:  
Tom Smith, Mark Blakemore, Brian Matthews, Daniel Thewer,  
Thomas Harris, Jamie Reeve, Lurli Nkithi, Orangutan Foundation, Save the Rhino



## WHAT'S THAT?

DON'T MISS!  
AQUATIC ANIMAL WEEKEND  
6th and 7th April 2024



This amazing creature is a **red-lipped batfish** (*Ogcocephalus darwini*) and is only found around the Galapagos Islands on the edges of reefs and sandy seabeds up to 120m deep.

This species is characterised by the **bright red markings around the mouth**, resembling some poorly-applied lipstick!

While capable of swimming, batfish prefer to **waddle and perch** on modified fins which work as legs.

They possess a structure known as an 'illicium' which is more widely recognised as the 'lure' on anglerfish and similar species. It is thought that the batfish use the illicium in a similar way, **enticing prey towards them to snare them in their needle-like teeth**. Sea snails, shrimps, and small fish are among their prey.

# WELCOME

## WELCOME TO THE THIRD ONLINE ONLY EDITION OF OUR MAGAZINE, ZOO LIFE!

This year is set to be **A BIG ONE** with some exciting new arrivals and preparations for changes at Colchester Zoo!

This Easter, our charity, Action for the Wild, will be changing its name to **Colchester Zoological Society** and will take over the running of the Zoo as a charitable trust on 1st January 2025. Whilst this transition happens behind the scenes, you may start to notice some small changes around the park, including a new logo that will come into full effect in 2025. **You can find out more about this important change and why it's happening on page 6.**

You may have also noticed some **BIG new arrivals** located at what used to be our Wild Displays lawn. The area has been transformed into a wondrous walkway filled with prehistoric creatures of the past. Our **BRAND-NEW Dinosaur Realm** offers the perfect chance to get closer than ever to the creatures that once walked this earth. **Find out more on page 34.** PLUS, our new Cretaceous Crew are excited to meet you over the year!

As well as exciting new developments taking place at the Zoo, we also have a **jam-packed events calendar** that will showcase the important work to which Colchester Zoo contributes, to **help protect and preserve wildlife and wild places** for future generations.

We started the year on a high with our **first birth of 2024**, with female Philippine spotted deer, Autumn, giving birth to a healthy male calf called Flynn in January. You can find out more about all of our new arrivals on our website or via our social media channels.

Join us during May Half Term as we celebrate with **'Love your Zoo' week** that sees the return of our ever-popular Exploratorium, as well as a summer filled with entertainment and activities to beat the boredom. **You can see our full calendar of events starting on page 32.**

With a ZOO PASS you receive unbelievable value for money with so much going on that you can join in with! Why not sign up to our newsletter to receive the latest offers straight to your inbox so you **never miss out!**

We would like to **thank you for your continued support** and hope that you will join us throughout 2024 as we share the journey of becoming Colchester Zoological Society, ready to kick start 2025 as a charitable trust!

FROM COLCHESTER ZOO MANAGEMENT



Our BIG new arrivals are finally here!



Rex and the rest of The Cretaceous Crew join us this Easter.



Our first new arrival in 2024, Flynn, the Philippine spotted deer calf.

# Inspire, challenge, train to teach

Outstanding  
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graduate teacher training  
provider in your local area

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training may be available



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[www.colchesterttc.org.uk](http://www.colchesterttc.org.uk)

[enquiries@colchesterttc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@colchesterttc.org.uk)

MAKE IT *memorable*  
**ESSEX**



## Cherished moments that last a lifetime


Step into the shoes of a zookeeper at an award-winning zoo, go fossil hunting along the stunning Essex coastline, relive history at a Norman castle, enjoy the thrills of white-water rafting or spend the day on the world's longest pier. Essex is the perfect place to create lasting memories with your loved ones.

[visitessex.com](http://visitessex.com) |

visit **essex**

# COLCHESTER

CARING FOR WILDLIFE



In April 2023, we released the exciting news that, as of 1st January 2025, Colchester Zoo will become a charitable trust known as **Colchester Zoological Society!**

For the last 60 years, we have been known as a privately owned Zoo with a charitable arm, Action for the Wild, since 2004, which has provided much needed funds to conservation projects around the world, including our nature reserve in South Africa, UmPhafa.

*You can read more about UmPhafa later on in this issue.*

Each and every visit made to Colchester Zoo has contributed to not only the continuous development of the Zoo, but to vital conservation projects worldwide.

Whether you have made a purchase of admission tickets, adoptions, experiences, annual passes or by donating through our website, without your support, we wouldn't be able to help protect wildlife and wild places...but we want to do more!

#### WHY IS IT CHANGING?

Colchester Zoo is currently privatised. As part of the transition to Colchester Zoological Society, we are securing the future of the Zoo for future generations. This change ensures that Colchester Zoo remains a key attraction in Colchester, but in the UK, and continues to care and preserve wildlife and wild places at its heart.

#### WHAT WILL CHANGE?

Although it seems a huge change, it will make a difference during your day to day visit. The Zoo will be the same as you know it today, but with new development as we work towards the future. The big change is behind the scenes, as we become a charitable trust, but you may notice changes within the park as we get closer to the transition. We will also be launching a brand new website. Watch this space!

#### ARE YOU RE-BRANDING?

We are excited for the future and our new design and marketing team have created a new, recognisable Colchester Zoo logo. As part of the upcoming change to Colchester Zoological Society, this will gradually be introduced across the Zoo. This will gradually be introduced across the Zoo as a charity to take over the running of the Zoo from 2025. The logo is not vastly different from the Colchester Zoo branding because it remains our charitable arm, Action for the Wild. Colchester Zoo to fulfil the Zoo's mission as Colchester Zoological Society.

#### WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ACTION FOR THE WILD?

Action for the Wild will transition to Colchester Zoological Society, and will take over the running of the Zoo on 1st January 2025. Your support and donations will continue to fund conservation projects worldwide during this transition.

#### WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO UMPHAFU?

A charitable trust is being prepared to run the South African operation, the UmPhafa Conservatory, applying to the authorities to gain protected area status. This effort, if approved, UmPhafa will always ensure that animals are safe and protected.

DUCEING

ZOO LIFE  
SPRING 2024  
NEWS

# R ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## E AND WILD PLACES

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**FOR THE WILD?**  
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help support conservation  
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of UmPhafa and includes  
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be a natural reserve where  
d forever.

### WILL I STILL BE ABLE TO USE MY ZOO PASS FROM 1ST JANUARY 2025?

Yes! We hope that you will join us on this journey throughout  
2024 and 2025 as well as enjoy a whole host of benefits  
included with your Zoo Pass such as entry to our special  
events, discounts in our catering outlets and Outpost Gift  
Shop, along with FREE entry to other major zoos.

### OUR FUTURE VISION AS A CHARITABLE TRUST?

Not only have we released the exciting news about becoming  
Colchester Zoological Society, but we have shared a vision  
for the future of Colchester Zoo which includes the expansion  
of the site. A bigger site may not necessarily mean more  
animals, but will allow us to expand on our high standard  
of welfare and provide bigger habitats for a range of species.  
The visual drawing below gives you a taste of what the future  
holds for Colchester Zoo - [CLICK HERE](#) to view in more detail.



Work has already started on the first phase of development  
towards the future vision. Watch this space for more  
information coming this year!

We hope that you will join us on this **EXCITING JOURNEY**,  
helping us to protect wildlife and wild places across the globe!

# ZOO DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

**1963 JANUARY**  
**Frank and Helena Farrar**  
**buy Stanway Hall**

Whilst exploring North Essex, Helena happened across a "for sale" sign for Stanway Hall.



**1969**  
**A new name**

The Zoo changed its name from Stanway Hall Zoo Park to Colchester Zoo.



**1998**  
**Elephant Kingdom opens**

Covering an area of over 8,200m<sup>2</sup>, this was the largest building project in the Zoo's history.



**2002**  
**First elephant born named Kito**

Kito was the first born at the Zoo, first through artificial insemination in



**1960s**

**1970s**

**1980s**

**1990s**

**2000s**

**1963 MAY**  
**First animals arrive**

Two lions called Rajah and Queen arrived from Southport Zoo.



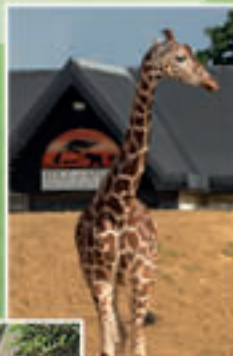
**1983**  
**Dominique and Angela Tropeano take over**

When the Tropeanos bought the Zoo, there were eight full-time keepers, one part-time office worker, a gardener and one person on maintenance. The number of visitors averaged 100,000 per year.



**2001**  
**Kingdom of the Wild building opens**

The mixed African paddock opened, housing giraffe, white rhino, zebra, ostrich, and kudu.



**2003**  
**Playa Patagonia opens**

Home to Patagonian sea lions and the UK's first straight underwater viewing tunnel at a length of 24m long!



**1963 JUNE**  
**Stanway Hall Zoo Park opens**

An estimated 12,000 people visited on the first two days.



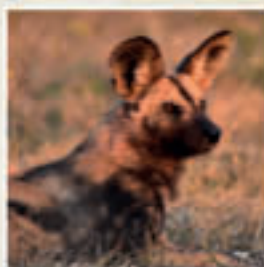
**1992**  
**New Chimpanzee Habitat opens**

This area marked a change in habitat design at the Zoo. Using glass to give the chimpanzees more space and visitors better visibility.



**2004**  
**Action for the Wild achieves charitable status**

Colchester Zoo's charity arm that provides both financial and technical assistance for conservation work in the UK and globally. Since 2004, the charity has donated over £4.2 million



**2005  
Umphafa Private Nature  
Reserve established  
in South Africa**

Covering over 6,000ha. The mission of the reserve is to create a sustainable future whilst maintaining social responsibility and promoting conservation and environmental regeneration.



**2018  
Chimpanzee enclosure  
gets an upgrade**

Alongside the chimpanzee habitat redevelopment, the slender-snouted crocodile habitat also underwent major redevelopments, providing both species with a more complex environment.



**2023  
Our 60th Birthday**

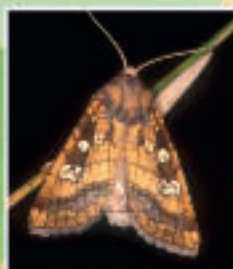
As the Zoo turned 60, we celebrated with a host of special events throughout 2023. Currently, the Zoo welcomes 1 million visitors annually, is home to over 155 species of animals, part of 67 breeding and conservation programmes, and supports 11 worldwide conservation projects, with more on the way.

2010s

2025

**2008  
Fisher's estuarine moth  
conservation project**

The Zoo began breeding this locally endangered moth to release in reserves along the Essex coast. This reintroduction programme has led to the wild population now colonising new sites on their own and was shortlisted for the BIAZA Great British Wildlife Restoration award!



**2013  
Bears of the Rising  
Sun opens**

This habitat is home to Jo-Jo and Srey Ya, who were rescued by Free the Bears in 2007 and 2008 as cubs. Jo-Jo was rescued from a bar at the age of 6 months old and Srey Ya was 300g when she was rescued.

**2019  
Endangered tiger  
and critically endangered  
leopard cubs born**

The Zoo's first Amur tiger and Amur leopard cubs were born in support of international conservation efforts.



**2025  
Colchester Zoological  
Society**

Becoming a charitable trust allows us to further our conservation work and secure the future of the Zoo's vision.

**COLCHESTER  
ZOOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY**

**2020  
Two white rhinos born**

The zoo welcomed our 5th and 6th white rhino calves. The first time we had two in the same year!



**COLCHESTER ZOO'S  
action  
FOR THE WILD**  
Using action to protect the world's wildlife



# ZOO PER HEROES!



## GARDENER SHARDON

My job is to look after all of the beautiful trees and gardens around the Zoo.

Along with my team of gardeners, I also manage the Zoo's Nature Area for the benefit of local wildlife too.

My favourite part of the job is that every day is different! It varies from watering plants in Chimpanzee Lookout to helping move 20 tonnes of soil, to planning the different plants to put in a new habitat!



## REPTILE KEEPER GLEN

Looking after reptiles is very different to caring for the mammals in the Zoo!

Each reptile has its own special requirements for temperature and light, which involves a lot of environmental parameter checking, such as heating, lighting and humidity.

The best bit about my job is designing and furnishing habitats, whether it be a large aquarium to furnish with rock work or a small dart frog vivarium to plant out.

Meet some of the ZOOPER HEROES of Colchester Zoo! As we start to celebrate the exciting transition into Colchester Zoological Society, we thought it would be the perfect time to share some of our very own Zooper Heroes that make Colchester Zoo what it is today.

Not only do our conservation warriors help to provide care for our animals, but they also sit on various committees that range from breeding programmes through to education and research, to help towards protecting and preserving wildlife and wild places.



## ZOOLOGICAL DIRECTOR REBECCA

I coordinate conservation projects and the Animal Care Team - one minute, I can be talking to colleagues in other conservation organisations about projects in the wild and then helping the Animal Care Team to produce protocols the next!

My favourite part of the job is the variety. From attending the Houses of Parliament for a native species conservation award ceremony and visiting South Africa to see the latest work on the UmPhafa Nature Reserve, to working with the Animal Care Team at the Zoo to ensure the smooth running of the Animal Department, and so much more in between!

### WHAT A STAR!

We are excited to announce that Rebecca was nominated and achieved **RUNNER UP** for the **BIAZA Woman of the Year 2024**.

The nomination was for overseeing the animal department and representing the Zoo on a national and international level, having been at the Zoo in various positions since 2004!



## EDUCATOR JEMMA

Educating visitors about animals and conservation is great!

I love to share the many ways we can all help save animals. Another huge part of my job is research! I train the Animal Care Team on how to record data about animals, and also write and share our findings to improve how we care for animals.

My favourite part of the job is using science to inform our animal care team so that we are taking account of natural behaviour and biology when designing habitats, enrichment and diets. This is how we ensure we are caring for our animals to the highest possible standard!

# VITAL Research

Research Coordinator, Jemma, has been working on involving the animal care team in research, both engaging team members in research and supporting the individual keepers in their own research projects.

Keepers collect data on animals throughout their daily routines. So, animals are healthy to recording changes in their behaviour. So, such as ZooMonitor, which was developed by staff at Lincoln Park to record animal behaviour, visualise the results and share data to use this to collect information on animal behaviour, such as certain behaviours and which other animals they interact with.

Colchester Zoo is also working on increasing research projects to improve the visitor experience at the Zoo. We have already completed several education opportunities at our hyena habitat, such as the use of the ZooMonitor. We have been in challenging negative perceptions of the species. View our amphibian exhibits and what we can do to engage the public.

This is a relatively new area of zoo research, but is proving to be a valuable tool for keepers and visitors alike.

working  
research projects,  
on student projects  
leading their

We have had a number of research students join us at the Zoo to complete a research project as part of their university degree. These students offer a valuable opportunity to learn more about the animals we care for here at the Zoo by analysing their behaviour in detail and how this might change under different conditions.

With the launch of our annual Research Presentation Day, first taking place in May 2023, students have been able to share their findings with Zoo staff. Keepers also attended a research ideas workshop to identify topics for investigation which would help them provide the best standard of care for the animals.

from visually checking  
software programmes,  
Zoo, allow research staff and keepers  
ta. Keepers around the Zoo are being trained  
how they use their habitat, when they perform  
so that we can feed this back into our animal care.

in social science so that we can better understand  
some research projects investigating how effective  
use of signage and keeper talks.  
We would also like to learn about how visitors  
the public in our conservation messaging.

pivotal in our conservation work.



Recent research projects included African elephants,  
spotted hyenas and poison dart frogs.

# ACTION FOR THE WILD

Charity No. 1105621

## 15 YEARS OF BREEDING AND RELEASE:

Colchester Zoo's Contribution  
to Conservation Success  
of the Fisher's Estuarine Moth



The moth's ideal habitat of coastal plants, in particular hog's fennel.

### BACKGROUND

The Fisher's estuarine moth (*Gortyna borellii*) is a British species of high conservation priority, listed on the Red Data Book as a Protected Species. The moth is restricted to a small area of seawalls and coastal grassland in north-east Essex and north Kent.

This moth is completely reliant on hog's fennel (*Peucedanum palustre*) as its sole larval food plant; a plant species which is also threatened. The limited distribution of the hog's fennel results in localised European distribution of the moth, and suitable habitat for the plant is dwindling, due to rising sea levels along the coastline, mowing of the plant and trampling by dog walkers.

### PROJECT CREATION

In 2006, a project was set up to plant up a sustainable landscape-scale network of hog's fennel sites. Funding has been made available through Higher Level Stewardship Schemes to encourage farmers and landowners to create areas of habitat for the moth on their land. The creation of habitat has, to date, involved planting thousands of hog's fennel plants, such that over 30 sites are now in existence along the Essex coastline.

In 2008, Colchester Zoo teamed up with Tendring District Council, Natural England and Writtle College to initiate the captive breeding programme for the Fisher's estuarine moth at Colchester Zoo, to enable the species to be established at the newly-created sites of hog's fennel, without necessitating the translocation from naturally occurring sites where populations are relatively small and vulnerable.




Colchester Zoo has always cared passionately about the world's threatened species, and created its charity Action for the Wild (AFTW) to assist projects worldwide.

It provides both financial and technical assistance, and aims to raise awareness among local people in community conservation programmes, as well as supporting conservation research.

Since 2004, when AFTW achieved charitable status, over £4.2 million has been donated to a broad spectrum of conservation projects worldwide, and encompasses a wide range of species from orangutans to vultures, hornbills to Komodo dragons and elephants to moths.


AFTW will gradually unite with Colchester Zoo to fulfil the Zoo's mission for the future, and take over the running of the Zoo as Colchester Zoological Society in 2025.

**ACTION FOR THE WILD  
CHANGES NAME  
TO COLCHESTER  
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
IN SPRING 2024!**




**40 breeding cages were established in an off-show location at Colchester Zoo and a hog's fennel plant and grass species were placed in each cage to fulfil the moth's life history requirements.**

After overwintering as eggs laid on long, coarse grass species, such as false oat-grass, the larvae hatch in late spring.



When the caterpillars hatch each April, they are immediately placed onto a hog's fennel plant, where they remain feeding throughout the summer until pupation.

Young larvae feed in the stems of hog's fennel, later boring into the roots. This leaves 'frass' which is the waste product from the burrowing activity.



The adult moths emerge in September and Colchester Zoo's keepers ensure unrelated pairs are mixed for mating. Resulting eggs are then used for the following year's captive breeding programme and any additional eggs are released into the newly-created sites.

Since the release of the eggs into the wild, signs of caterpillars feeding and adult moths have been seen at all but one of the sites. Approximately 8 sites have been colonised by 200 introductions and other newly-created sites colonised naturally by moth expansion.

*The breeding programme was designed to provide a readily available supply of moths that will ensure the sustainability of the programme for the long-term.*

#### **SHARING OUR SUCCESS**

Colchester Zoo has highlighted our contribution to moth conservation over the years, in particular presenting the programme to King Charles on his visit to Colchester in March 2023.

At the end of 2023, it was an honour to get shortlisted for the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) Great British Wildlife Restoration, alongside 21 other native species projects, and to attend the award ceremony on the 16th January 2024, hosted by House of Commons speaker, Sir Lindsay Hoyle, in the Speaker House in the Houses of Parliament.

The event brought together thirty MPs, Lords, and those representing Zoos, Aquariums and conservation organisations to celebrate the conservationists protecting our native species; highlighting the role of good zoos, aquariums and others in protecting and restoring UK wildlife through field conservation work, habitat restoration and education.

#### **A BRIGHT FUTURE**

In January 2024, a steering committee with attendees from Natural England, Essex Wildlife Trust, Essex Biodiversity Project, Environment Agency and Butterfly Conservation was held at Colchester Zoo. Due to the population expansion and colonisation of sites, it was felt that the zoo captive breeding element of the programme should now pause. This does not mean it will stop permanently, but rather pause, whilst new sites are considered for planting, which will need populating with moths in the future.

The Zoo team will therefore continue to maintain the off-show area and grow on plants for future use once additional new sites are created and will also continue to conduct monitoring surveys of larval feeding and adult moth sightings at various locations.

This programme is a great achievement for all involved at Colchester Zoo, none more so than our Reptile Section Care Team who have checked the breeding cages for emerging moths every other night throughout September and October for the last 15 years!

*We are delighted to play a role in contributing towards the conservation success of this programme so far and are very proud of our efforts in helping to save this species.*

Throughout 2024, the charity will be providing aid to support the vital work of these amazing animal conservation projects:



**LWIRO PRIMATE REHABILITATION CENTRE**  
Democratic Republic of Congo

The Centre de Rehabilitation des Primates de Lwiro (CRPL) works to care for and rehabilitate orphaned primates.

**£4,858.50**



**GHOSTFISHING UK**  
United Kingdom

The purpose of this team of specialised volunteer divers is to remove, where possible, lethal entanglement hazards to marine life and scuba divers from the marine environment.

**£883.62**



**FISHERIES & BREEDING**  
United Kingdom

The Fisheries and Breeding team primarily focus on the conservation of the Colchester wrasse, a conservation priority species.



**GALAPAGOS CONSERVATION TRUST**  
South America

The Trust works with scientists, authorities, NGOs and local communities to tackle key threats to the unique biodiversity of the Galapagos, including invasive species, pollution, climate change and overfishing.

**£373.62**



**ELEPHANT ORPHANAGE PROJECT**  
Zambia

The orphanage strives to rescue, rehabilitate and release orphaned Elephants back into the wild.

**£10,000**

**ACTION FOR THE WILD**  
Pledged Project



**SAVE THE RHINO**  
South Africa

This project strives to uphold the security of Hluhluwe-Imfolozi National Park's Rhino populations by maintaining a viable perimeter fence and to increase the effectiveness of anti-poaching and monitoring activities, in order to ensure the continued and increased competence of field rangers in the reserve.

**£7,068.04**



**VULPRO**  
South Africa

Through rehabilitation, research and education, and a captive breeding programme, VulPro aims to save Africa's wild Vulture population.

**£4,994.22**



**UMPIYIYA NATURE RESERVE**  
South Africa

Action for the Wild's own reserve in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, working to restore the natural habitat, flora and fauna populations of this important ecosystem.

**£479,000**



**ESTUARINE MOTH PROGRAMME**  
The Estuarine Moth is a rare  
y-threatened species  
found on Skipper's Island.  
er Zoo undertakes  
vation breeding and  
g programme to promote  
ervation of this species.



**EAZA ELEPHANT HERPES FUND**  
Europe

Elephant herpes virus is a  
devastating infectious disease  
posing a significant threat to the  
long term conservation of Asian  
Elephants. Via research projects  
through EAZA, the aim is to provide  
better understanding and combat  
this virus.

£900.70



**THE RED PANDA NETWORK**  
Nepal

The network is committed to the  
conservation of wild Red Pandas  
and their habitat through the  
education and empowerment  
of local communities.

£250

**THE WILD**

Charity No.  
1105821

Support



**FREE THE BEARS**  
Loos

The mission of Free the Bears  
is to protect, preserve and enrich  
the lives of Bears throughout  
the world.

£7,800



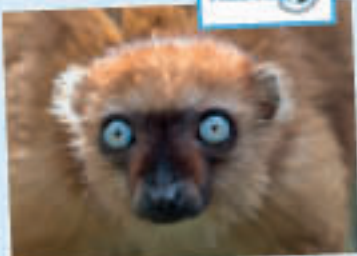
**ORANGUTAN FOUNDATION**  
Borneo

The world's foremost Orangutan  
conservation organisation focused  
on saving Asia's endangered great  
ape by protecting their forest  
habitat, working with local  
communities and promoting  
research and education.

£7,500



6,000ha  
restore  
and



**A.E.E.C.L. LEMUR CONSERVATION**  
Madagascar

AEECL focuses on advancing the  
understanding and conservation  
of Madagascar's lemurs through  
scientific research, captive  
propagation, and protection  
of their natural habitats.

£2,000



**KOMODO SURVIVAL PROGRAM**  
Indonesia

The Komodo Survival Program  
aims to protect and monitor  
Komodo Dragons and their  
habitat with the involvement  
of the local community.

£1,500

**FIND OUT MORE**  
about the amazing  
projects our charity  
supports **HERE**



# NEW SPECIES ARRIVAL!

Read about the latest  
amazing animal species  
to arrive on the UmPhafa  
Nature Reserve, the  
**AFRICAN BUFFALO!**

UMPHAFA IS A 6,000-HECTARE RESERVE IN KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA, ESTABLISHED BY COLCHESTER ZOO AND ITS CHARITY, ACTION FOR THE WILD, AFTER BUYING THE LAND IN 2005 TO REHABILITATE AND RECREATE HISTORICAL ANIMAL POPULATIONS.

## LAND MANAGEMENT MASTERS

Buffalo are important for the ecosystem and play an important role in land management. Due to their large size and weight, they break up the soil, stimulating the recycling of nutrients back into the ground. They can also digest long fibrous grasses and often clean up old grazing areas to open the way for new growth.

On a misty morning on 2nd November 2023, the African buffalo arrived and were offloaded – running as fast as they could once they were released, they soon disappeared into the bush and we have only had glimpses of them since.

Several years ago, UmPhafa decided to apply for a permit to have one of Africa's big 5 animals introduced to the Reserve; the African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*). It took 2 years for the permit process, which included collecting neighbourhood agreements for the introduction of this species and checking fences to ensure they were adequate for holding the animals, as well as site visits by the vet and then the final 'shopping' for some disease-free buffalo.

Once the buffalo were chosen, they were kept in a 'boma' (large outdoor holding area) for several weeks whilst the vet tested them for various diseases. Once they passed, they could then be brought to UmPhafa.

The movement of buffalo is strictly controlled in South Africa and a vet has to be present on their departure from the seller and on the animal's arrival to the Reserve where special numbered tags are removed from the transport truck to prove the buffalo were not tampered with on their journey to their new home.

In total, 4 bulls – one being a dominant – and 12 females were introduced onto the Reserve.



#### **BUFFALO UPDATE!**

Over the Christmas period the buffalo have started to settle, with 9 of the females and 4 males joining up and seen daily on the top of our Ithala hill where the grass is lush and juicy and wallowing in the local dams.

In March, the field rangers identified 13 adults and 6 babies, spotted from a drone flight.

We're looking forward to many future sightings of these majestic animals as they roam through the African bush and enjoy the freedom on the Reserve!

# LENDING A HELPING HAND

With food waste and making the most of our outdoor spaces hot on the agenda, we give some top tips for helping wildlife closer in the garden.

## LETTUCE COMPOST TOGETHER!

Did you know... composting your garden waste is an excellent way to not only recycle some of your old peelings, but can help towards creating healthy soil for planting!

Compost heaps also help to provide a great home for a range of critters such as slowworms, slugs and beetles. Whether you're a budding gardener looking for new ways to make the most of your garden or simply reducing waste and recycling, composting couldn't be easier!

## HEDGEHOG HEAVEN

With the arrival of the warmer weather, you may notice the arrival of a new guest in your garden!

Hedgehogs will begin to emerge after their long hibernation around March to May in search of food and water.

Did you know, you can create a feeding station for any visiting hedgehog by using an old plastic container upside down with woodpiles inside.



## HOMES FOR BUGS

Give a bug a home this spring with an insect hotel! Pick up one from your local gardening centre or why not get crafty by creating your own from wood and cardboard tubes!

Once you've chosen your ideal spot next to a water source in the garden, sit back and watch as different creatures enjoy your handy work! Don't forget to fill your bug houses with natural materials such as pinecones, bark, straw, decomposing leaves, or twigs to encourage wildlife.

## GO NET FREE

Spring is the ideal time for sowing your vegetable seeds and vibrant plants!

Many avid gardeners choose to cover their crops and ponds by using garden netting and whilst this helps to protect your greenery, many birds and other wildlife can become tangled within the netting and lead to death.

Why not switch your netting to soft fabric protection bags this spring and help protect your local wildlife.



Give the PURR-FECT present  
for an animal lover with an

# ANiMAL ADOPTiON



By **ADOPTING AN ANIMAL** at Colchester Zoo, you are helping to fund our work, as well as our charity, Action for the Wild, which assists conservation projects all over the world.



FIND OUT MORE  
about our  
Adoption Packages  
HERE



Give the gift of an adoption for any special occasions and you can upgrade to one of our **BRAND NEW ADOPTION PLAQUES**, to treat that special person!

# My name: Eurasian Grey Wolf

Scientific name: *Canis lupus lupus*

I'M CLASSIFIED AS:  
'LEAST CONCERN' ON  
THE IUCN RED LIST OF  
THREATENED SPECIES.

MY FAVOURITE FOOD:  
I LIKE TO EAT LARGE  
UNGULATES AND SMALLER  
MAMMALS, CARRION  
AND BERRIES.

**About me:** Both males and females in my pack look very similar, but males are generally larger, reaching 165cm in length and weighing up to 80kg.

I'm a social animal, living in packs of five to twelve individuals, with a highly organised social structure and a strict hierarchy. The leaders of my pack are the alpha male and female, and the other members are offspring from previous years. Hierarchy is maintained through our body postures.

As a pack, we fiercely defend our territory of several hundred square kilometres by scent marking the boundary and howling.

**Did you know?** The alpha male and female are the only animals who breed, and are constantly tested by the subordinate animals.



NEW SPECIES  
AT THE ZOO!

MY FAVOURITE FOOD:  
I LIKE TO EAT FRUITS,  
INSECTS AND SMALL  
VERTEBRATES.

My name: Goeldi's Monkey  
Scientific name: *Callimico goeldii*

**About me:** I'm a small primate with dark fur and bright orange eyes.

I am from the upper Amazon basin in South America and known as the only South American primate to eat mushrooms, relying heavily on them in the dry season when fruit is scarce.

**Did you know?** This species is good at climbing and has been reported to leap distances of 4m horizontally without losing height!

I'M CLASSIFIED AS:  
'VULNERABLE' ON THE  
IUCN RED LIST OF  
THREATENED SPECIES.



The IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List of Threatened Species gives the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species, dividing species into nine categories from low risk 'Not Evaluated' to 'Extinct'.

I'M CLASSIFIED AS:  
'ENDANGERED' ON THE  
IUCN RED LIST OF  
THREATENED SPECIES.

My name: Komodo dragon  
Scientific name: *Varanus komodoensis*

MY FAVOURITE FOOD:  
I EAT DEER, WILD BOAR,  
AND SNAKES. WE WILL  
ALSO EAT FISH AND  
YOUNG KOMODO DRAGONS

**About me:** I'm the world's largest land-living lizard and can reach lengths of 2.75 metres or 9 feet.

I'm a member of the monitor lizard family, with adults varying in colour from dark red through to grey/black.

I use my long tongue and keen sense of smell to find my food and although I mainly scavenge, I will hunt animals such as pigs and water buffalo, using my serrated teeth to injure my prey. My mouth is also full of deadly bacteria, which leads to my prey dying of blood poisoning one or two days later.

**Did you know?** I have a slow metabolism and can survive on only 12 meals in a year!

Find out more about how I am fed at the Zoo [HERE!](#)

## YEAR OF THE DRAGON

As the Lunar calendar resets and this year celebrates the Chinese Dragon, we share our very own amazing reptiles with a **Komodo Dragon Feeding Session!**



WATCH THE VIDEO [HERE](#)



# MAKE UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES WITH AN ANIMAL EXPERIENCE

We have a number of unique opportunities to see our animals up close and learn more about them from our Animal Care Team with an **ANIMAL EXPERIENCE** at Colchester Zoo.

Get closer to a gentle giant and have the chance to hand feed our towering giraffes! For just £20.00 up to 5 people can participate in this **EXCLUSIVE FEEDING EXPERIENCE**.

EXPERIENCES RANGE  
FROM JUST £20



Click [HERE](#) to find out more and purchase your experience



\*Terms and conditions apply to all animal experiences. The £20.00 covers 1 group of up to 5 people rather than an individual. Please check the website for the full details.

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# THE OUTPOST GIFT SHOP

Visit our Outpost Gift Shop, located in the main entrance for a great range of homeware, soft toys, books, souvenirs and much more!

You can visit The Outpost Gift Shop without having to enter the Zoo.

Plus, enjoy FREE parking – perfect for picking up a last minute gift for that someone special!



View inside the  
Outpost Gift Shop



## Striking sculptures

Our range of **EDGE SCULPTURES** is a collection of contemporary designs that are originally created from clay, then hand cast and individually hand painted, bringing the finished sculptures to life.

Check out the collection, including the giraffe calf and rhino calf from the **NEW BORN TO BE WILD SERIES** on your next visit.



## PERFECT PINS

Keep an eye out for our latest **PRE-HISTORIC** and **ZOOPER** additions to our **PIN BADGES**.

These new designs have just arrived so pick one up before they get snapped up!



## POP of PINK

Add a burst of colour to your outfit with our latest range of **ALICE WHEELER ACCESSORIES**, including this beautiful pink purse and shoulder bag.

With their interchangeable straps and cute bee motif, available in a selection of bright shades, these bags are both practical and pretty, a must for any fashion-conscious shopper!



# UNLIMITED ENTRY FOR A WHOLE YEAR WITH A ZOO PASS

**PLUS** many more **Benefits**, including:

**SAVE MONEY** on Animal Experiences.

**10% DISCOUNT** in our Gift Shop and Food Outlets!  
Excludes sweets and selected items.

**FREE ENTRY** to selected special events,  
such as Wake Up With!

**DISCOUNT** for tickets to A Toast to Wildlife  
exclusive evening event.

**FREE ENTRY** to Jungle Tumble Soft Play, Sensation  
Station, Discovery Den and NEW Dinosaur Realm.

**FREE ENTRY** to 9 other major zoos!

**FREE Home Education Sessions.**

**DOWNLOAD A DIGITAL VERSION**  
of your pass so you never miss a day!

**REGULAR EMAIL UPDATES** for Passholders.



**VISIT GUEST SERVICES TODAY  
AND UPGRADE YOUR ADMISSION TICKET  
TO A ZOO PASS!**

**PASS PRICES (INC. VAT)\***  
Adult (16 – 59yrs): £72.50  
Child (3 – 15yrs): £52.00  
Senior (60yrs+): £62.00

ZOO LIFE  
SPRING 2024  
ZOO PASS

# GIVE THE GIFT OF MEMORIES

Budget friendly gifting! You choose the amount, the lucky recipient decides how to spend it at the Zoo!\*

GIFTING  
JUST GOT EASIER  
with our own range  
of Colchester Zoo  
gift cards!



\*Minimum amount of £10.

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# WHAT'S ON

See all the exciting events we have in store for all the family in 2024...

## ST-EGG-OSAURUS EASTER 29 March – 14 April 2024



This Easter, we will be celebrating all things dinosaur with a range of EGG-cellent activities suitable for all ages. PLUS the opening of our BRAND-NEW DINOSAUR REALM!

THE WILD VIBE CREW will also be joining us to 'Step back in time' with daily Dino parades and Dino Stomp parties on the main stage throughout the holiday!



## DINO DISCOVERY DAY 13 April 2024



Take a step back in time with our Dino Discovery Day filled with all things prehistoric, including the chance to MEET OUR DINOSAURS and their keeper, and it's all included in the cost of your admission!

Discover extinct species from millions of years ago, from gigantic carnivores to the graceful herbivores.

We will also have a range of exciting activities taking place throughout the day too, including appearances by our BRAND NEW CRETACEOUS CREW!



This event is FREE for Zoo Passholders. Simply turn up on the day and bring your valid ZOO PASS to gain entry into the Zoo.



ZOO LIFE  
SPRING 2024  
CALENDAR



  
**DINOSAUR**  
SPECIES FROM THE  
PAST IN THE PRESENT  
**REALM**

**NOW OPEN!**

Journey around our **BRAND-NEW** prehistoric experience and discover these amazing species from the past in the present.



**ZOO LIFE  
SPRING 2024  
CALENDAR**

**AQUATIC ANIMAL WEEKEND**  
**6 April & 7 April 2024**



Did you know... 71% of the earth's surface is covered in water!

Join us as we share the incredible underwater world of animals with a range of aquatic inspired activities.

Discover how long a Patagonian sea lion can hold its breath or how our Animal Care Team tell our Humboldt penguins apart! Across the weekend there will be activities around the Zoo.



**BIG CAT WEEKEND**  
**3 August & 4 August 2024**

Did you know... the Amur tiger is the biggest of all the cats!

Join us for a purr-fect weekend as we share paw-some facts about these magnificent creatures with a range of activities about our fabulous felines and the different ways we look after them.

**ANIMAL DAYS** Celebrate some of the amazing species here at Colchester Zoo



**REPTILE WEEKEND**  
**1st June & 2nd June 2024**



Did you know... the Aldabra giant tortoise can live up to 150 years!

Join us as we share all things smooth and scaly with a range of reptile inspired activities.

From the humid habitat of our Komodo dragons to our brightly coloured emerald tree monitor lizard, find out more about these incredible animals and how we care for them.



**PRIMATE WEEKEND**  
**31 August & 1 September 2024**

Did you know... a chimpanzee isn't a monkey – it's an ape!

Discover the difference between an ape, monkey or lemur with fun activities suitable for the whole family.

You can health check some toy animals and make some enrichment items for our primates at areas around the zoo.



BACK BY  
POPULAR DEMAND!



**ELEPHANT AND RHINO WEEKEND**  
**21 September & 22 September 2024**

Did you know... African elephants are either left or right tusked!

Celebrate our African elephants and Southern white rhinos with a range of fun activities suitable for the whole family!

Find out how wild rhinos live in our reserve in South Africa and how we are supporting conservation efforts to save these amazing mammals.

**17 May, 21 June, 12 July  
& 6 September 2024**

Once the Zoo is closed, we will welcome you through our doors with refreshments and a small tour with an experienced Zoo host, before hearing about the Zoo's work and aims for the future!

Choose from 4 exclusive evenings with a limited number of tickets available.

Tickets **MUST** be pre-booked.

Limited spaces available,  
pre-book online [HERE](#)

**Colchester Zoo on one of our ANIMAL DAYS!**

**ZOOKEEPER WEEKEND**  
**5 October & 6 October 2024**

Learn just what it takes to care for some of the most endangered species around the world with our Zookeeper Weekend.

You can try some of the tasks they do every day, from analysing poo to preparing enrichment and training.





### MEET PEPPA 12 May 2024

Join us on 12th May to meet our  
by ever-popular character  
**PEPPA PIG AND GEORGE**  
be greeting visitors  
throughout the day

Admission for Colchester Zoo  
be required to have a ticket for  
Peppa Pig and George

To allow as many visitors as possible  
to see Peppa Pig and George  
an individual meet and greet  
be required but please be patient  
utmost to keep waiting

## SIZZLE

### WAKE UP WITH THE SUN 6 July 2024

See the Zoo in a different light  
early from 7:30am with a  
number of special events

To enjoy this exciting event  
Colchester Zoo Pass, or a  
PLUS, there is no need to book

### SUMMER HOLIDAYS 20 July - 1 September

Colchester Zoo Summer  
Keep the kids entertained  
the school holidays

PLUS, enjoy more special events  
2024 with a later start

### LOVE YOUR ZOO WEEK 25 May - 2 June 2024



Join us as we celebrate our charity,  
**COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY**  
(previously known as Action for the Wild),  
and the vital conservation work that  
we undertake in the UK and worldwide.

From meeting members of our Animal Care Team,  
to learning how to be a ranger on Umphafa,  
our Nature Reserve in South Africa,  
there will be lots of chances  
to find out about our work.



This  
Simply tu  
valid



## IG AND GEORGE

As we are joined by children TV characters, **GEORGE**, who will appear at intervals throughout the day!

Colchester Zoo will give you the chance to see George on 12th May 2024.

To give as many visitors as possible the chance to see George, this will not be an individual 'meet and greet'. Queuing will be required but please be assured we will do our utmost to keep waiting time to a minimum.

## WEDNESDAY WONDERS 12 June, 11 September & 20 November 2024

We've teamed up with our local Baby Sensory and Toddler Sense group to be able to offer you some amazing taster classes for just £2.50\* a session!

We're pleased to bring this popular activity back in 2024, but to make this viable a small participation fee of £2.50 is required per child attending a session.

**Paying Visitors:** You will need to purchase a pre-paid ticket for our Wednesday Wonder class AND a Zoo Admission ticket to enjoy this activity.

**Passholders:** You will need to purchase a pre-paid ticket for our Wednesday Wonder class to enjoy this activity.

## MEET BLUEY AND BINGO 29 June 2024

Say g'day to the dynamic duo, **BLUEY AND BINGO** who will be greeting visitors at intervals throughout the day!

Admission for Colchester Zoo will be required to have the chance to see Bluey and Bingo on 29th June 2024.

To allow as many visitors as possible the chance to see Bluey and Bingo, this will not be an individual 'meet and greet'. Queuing will be required but please be assured we will do our utmost to keep waiting time to a minimum.

# WILDLIFE SUMMER

TH

A different light as our doors open for a **RARE OPPORTUNITY** to enjoy special morning animal encounters!

For this rare event, you must hold a valid Zoo Pass. **BUY YOURS TODAY**, to avoid missing out! Please pre-book with your Zoo Pass.

EXCLUSIVE  
PASSHOLDER EVENT!

## SUMMER LATE NIGHTS 10 August & 24 August 2024

Experience a summer like no other as we stay open until 9.00pm!

Journey around the park and watch as our animals soak up the summer sun. Feeling toasty yourself? Duck out of the heat and head into one of our many undercover areas or pick yourself up a cooling treat at one of our many seasonal catering outlets! There will be lots to see and do as you relax into the evening.



## WEDNESDAY 11 September 2024

Summer Celebrations are set to be hot hot hot! Entertain this summer by visiting throughout the day.

For value for your money on 10th & 24th August closing time on our **SUMMER LATE NIGHTS**!

This event is **FREE** for Zoo Passholders. Turn up on the day and bring with you your **ZOO PASS** to gain entry into the Zoo.

## STARLIGHT SAFARI NIGHTS 14 September & 28 September 2024

Join us as we remain open until 9.00pm! As the temperature drops and the senses sharpen you will have the chance to see some of our animals in a whole new light, as some bed down for the evening whilst for others the night is just beginning...



# Shriek Week!

26 October – 3 November 2024

This October half term, enjoy a week filled with **SPOOK-TACULAR** daytime activities suitable for children of all ages. Little ones can transform into a scary witch or creepy vampire at our Face Painting Station or create wands and potions with the good witches and wizards at the Witches' Coven.

Our range of **FANG-TASTIC** activities will keep the family entertained all day long!

More information **COMING SOON!**



## THE TRAIL OF TERROR

18, 19, 23, 25, 26, 28 & 30  
October 2024

### EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

The Trail of Terror begins as soon as you step foot in the door, from rustling bushes, to masked monsters and screaming scarers, they could get you anytime and anywhere.

This is a pre-bookable event with a maximum capacity each evening and all produced in-house! Arrivals will be staggered along the trail offering you screams of laughter as you won't know what is lurking around the corner on The Trail of Terror!

\*MUST BE PRE-BOOKED

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Tickets **AVAILABLE SOON.**  
This is a sell out event so  
**BOOK EARLY!**

# The Magic of Christmas

23, 24 & 30 November 2024  
1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 19 to 24 December 2024

Immerse yourself in the **WONDERFUL FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE** with festive-themed activities for the whole family.

More information **COMING SOON**.

## Enchanted TRAIL OF LIGHT

30 November,  
4, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21, 28 & 30 December 2024

The Enchanted Trail of Light is a limited ticket, pre-bookable event. Arrival time slots are staggered offering you the chance to leisurely **EXPERIENCE THE WONDER** of the lights and magical atmosphere!

With a host of illuminations along a designated route, dancing fountains and fairies spreading their magic, our light trail will leave you feeling enchanted.\*

Tickets **AVAILABLE SOON**. Pre-booking is advised due to the popularity of this **SELL-OUT EVENT!**

\*MUST BE PRE-BOOKED



## THE SANTA EXPERIENCE

23, 24 & 30 November 2024  
1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 19 to 24 December 2024

Journey through our **MAGICAL** Santa Experience filled with festive scenery and cheeky elves, where you will also have the chance to meet Santa himself!\*

Check our social media for more information **COMING SOON!**

\*MUST BE PRE-BOOKED

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