

Zoo used for global education

To celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity, pupils from across Scotland visited Edinburgh Zoo's Education Centre last week to take part in the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland's (RZSS) annual global classroom conference.

In line with the RED LIST announcement from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) indicating that more species are threatened than ever before, over 100 pupils learnt about the importance of biological diversity. Students debated international issues surrounding the subject of biodiversity, including the value placed on natural resources such as rainforests and how they can be protected.

Pupils learned how resources and products like medicines and beauty products come from biological sources in developing nations. Although these nations are biodiversity rich from the raw ingredients they supply, they do not receive fair payment or support with the profits generated from their resources.

Students took part in a variety of interactive workshops, including a live web link to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 10th Conference of the Parties which is currently taking place in Japan. 193 countries are attending the convention, and pupils were given the unique opportunity to hear first-hand from two IUCN delegates what is currently happening to get international agreements on the long term protection of biodiversity.

Polly Phillpot, Senior Education Officer for RZSS said:

"RZSS has been celebrating International Year of Biodiversity with various events throughout the year in an effort to raise public awareness on this important subject.

"This year's global classroom event was designed to help young people discover the importance of all aspects of biodiversity, from a single species to an entire ecosystem. We hope that the

pupils who attended today will leave with a greater understanding not only of what biodiversity means, but what they can do as individuals to help combat biodiversity loss and make other people aware of the issues.”