

Edinburgh Zoo helping to save the top ten mammals



Edinburgh Zoo Says it is helping save the species on Top Ten List of Mammals Surviving Because of Zoos

Edinburgh Zoo has worked towards the conservation of five out of the 10 mammals surviving because of zoos, according to [a new report](#).

The British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA), which promotes the values of good zoos and aquariums, has compiled a list of the top ten mammals most reliant on zoos in the UK and Ireland.

Home to four of the species on the list including the Sumatran tiger, Blue-eyed black lemur, Grevy's zebra and Amur leopard, Edinburgh Zoo plays a significant role in helping safeguard the future of these animals through conservation breeding programmes and raising awareness about their plight.

The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS), which is the charitable organisation that owns and operates Edinburgh Zoo, has also been involved in the conservation of the scimitar-horned oryx. The RZSS WildGenes laboratory is providing genetic information to help manage this species, which is extinct in the wild. This genetic data is being used to support the planned reintroduction of oryx as well as evaluate

how well genetic diversity is being conserved in international breeding programmes.

Chris West, the Chief Executive Officer for the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, said:

“While it is devastating that a list as bleak as this one must exist, it highlights the crucial work we are doing to prevent as many species as possible from complete extinction – something that many animals on this list would certainly face if it weren’t for the conservation efforts, both in captive breeding programmes and in-situ projects, of many zoo collections. It is also a testament to our focus on conservation that the Society is currently working in some way with half of the mammals on BIAZA’s list.”

Dr Andrew Marshall, of BIAZA’s Field Programmes Committee, who co-ordinated the compilation of the list with input from conservation experts based at BIAZA zoos, said: “Last year, BIAZA published a report on the top ten species most reliant on zoos which highlighted the work being done by zoos across all taxonomic groups to help safeguard their future. This year, we have focused on ten prevailing examples of mammals that zoos are working to save from extinction.

“It was a really tough choice this year as there were so many likely contenders, but we have some incredible species with amazing conservation stories.”

Strict criteria was used to select the top ten. All the mammals proposed had to be associated with current field initiatives by zoos and listed as Endangered, Critically

Endangered or Extinct in the Wild on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. Particular importance was given to initiatives which included a management role in the species' conservation, rather than just providing funds and priority was also given to species conservation projects that include habitat protection, education and/or livelihood development.



The top ten list of mammals most reliant on zoos demonstrates the importance of zoos not only for conservation breeding of safety-net populations, but also for their contribution to funding and management of conservation projects in the field, including research, education and support for local communities, as well as protection of crucial wildlife habitats.

BIAZA's top ten mammals most reliant on zoos are:

Blue-eyed black lemur – this Critically Endangered mammal is restricted to a very small area of around 2,700km² in northwest Madagascar and only a small total population remains.

Scimitar-horned oryx – the Scimitar-horned oryx is Extinct in the Wild, so completely dependent on conservation breeding for survival.

Sumatran tiger – there are only 300-400 Sumatran tigers remaining in the wild.

San Martin titi monkey – this Critically Endangered primate is not kept in zoos, but BIAZA zoos are important partners in the only conservation initiative working to protect this species.

Grevy's zebra – this endangered equid has experienced one of the largest reductions of range and numbers of any African mammal.

Livingstone's fruit bat – one of the largest bat species in the world with less than 1,100 individuals remaining in the wild.

Pied tamarin – the most Endangered Amazonian primate found in a very small region of the Brazilian rainforest.

White-naped mangabey – listed as one of the 25 Most Endangered Primates in the World. Only 15% of their original habitat remains.

Western lowland gorilla – the Western lowland gorilla is under threat of extinction from specialist hunting and habitat loss.

Amur leopard – one of the most endangered large cats in the world with less than 50 individuals remaining in the wild.

Next year's report will focus on the top ten reptiles and amphibians most reliant on zoos.