

# Firefighters provide upcycled play equipment for Edinburgh Zoo

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has swung into action yet again – by providing the bear necessities for some upcycled play equipment for Edinburgh Zoo.



The emergency service is dedicated to reducing waste and always seeking creative and innovative ways to reuse old or damaged gear that can no longer be used.

And the sustainability team at SFRS was therefore delighted to hand over a batch of redundant, heavy duty hoses to make a sturdy hammock swing for the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland's sun bears – a species also known as the honey bear due to their love of honeycombs.

It is clear that Rotana thinks his new equipment is sweet judging by this picture

Kenneth Blake is the SFRS sustainability manager. He said: "We are always thinking of new and creative ways to reduce waste – but I have to say that this particular example really lays 'bear' the true extent of our commitment.

"There are not that many disposal routes for these hoses,

which are around 25 metres in length and made from really durable rubber, other than as building materials.

“When the opportunity came up to give them to a wildlife conservation charity, we were thrilled. These hoses really are the bee’s knees for creating a long-lasting swing hammock for the sun bears.”

Malayan sun bears are one of the world’s rarest species of bear. The wild population is under serious threat due to the rapid destruction of their habitat and the illegal wildlife trade, making them vulnerable to extinction.

Rotana was rescued from a tiny cage in a private home in Cambodia. He was rehomed at the zoo in 2010 and later joined by Babu, a female from the Czech Republic. The pair took their first steps outdoors together just over a year ago.

Kenneth added: “We are also a humanitarian organisation so it is a sincere pleasure to play a small part in providing bears like Rotana with a comfortable and safe environment to play, relax – and ultimately flourish.”

And now the wildlife conservation charity has been given another large donation of hoses, which will be turned into something fun and useful for some of the zoo’s other inhabitants in the coming months.

Darren McGarry, head of living collections at Edinburgh Zoo, said: “As a wildlife conservation charity, we are always grateful when other

organisations are keen to support our work. Thanks to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, we have been able to create new spaces for our animals to explore using the hoses. As well as being great fun for Rotana and Babu, this is a fantastic way to encourage them to express their natural behaviours."