

Penguins march once more

Penguins have marched again at Edinburgh Zoo for the first time in over four years, to the delight of visitors.

The world famous daily Penguin Parade took place in Edinburgh Zoo for nearly 70 years until it was postponed in March 2020 due to the Covid pandemic. Its return was then further delayed due to Avian Flu risks.

The Zoo has now introduced a new version of the Parade, dubbed the "Wee Waddle".

The Wee Waddle, a reimagined version of the traditional parade, is completely voluntary and penguins are not coerced into taking part and leaving their enclosure.

There is also a small, "penguin-sized" fence separating the birds from visitors along the short route.

Edinburgh Zoo is home to over 100 Gentoo, Northern rockhopper and King penguins, including the world's only knighted penguin, Major General Sir Nils Olav.

Included in the Waddle visitors might see cheeky Gentoo Kevin, who has been given a reprieve after being banned from the parade in the past for playfully nipping at visitors' ankles.

David Field, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) CEO, said: "We know our visitors have missed the Penguin Parade, and the Wee Waddle is a great way to bring this back and keep the magic of experiencing the penguins waddle around and explore outside their pool, while also getting closer to the

colony during feeds.

“This is all part of our charity’s ongoing efforts to get people as close to nature as possible so that we can inspire and enable them to help protect it.”

Penguins have been an integral part of Edinburgh Zoo for over 100 years.

The first parade is thought to have taken place in 1951, when a keeper accidentally left the gate open and a few curious penguins left the enclosure and marched down to the front gate and back, with the keeper in tow.

It then became a much-loved daily ritual until the last Penguin Parade in March 2020, to stop people from gathering in large crowds during Covid.

The new experience, which will run from Thursdays to Sundays at 2.15pm allows visitors the chance to get up close to see the Gentoo, Rockhopper and King penguin colony take a stroll along the walkway before they explore a new area outside of their usual habitat.

The penguins leave their Penguins Rock enclosure to take part in feeds, then have the opportunity to waddle around part of the perimeter.





