



# THE ROYAL ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND

## THE HIGHLAND WILDLIFE PARK



**THE HIGHLAND WILDLIFE PARK AND EDINBURGH ZOO ARE** owned by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS), which was founded in March 1909. The Zoo was opened in July 1913. The Park was opened in 1972 and was acquired by the Society in 1986. The Park used to specialise in native species, but in 2006 changed to animals from cold climates (Mountain and Tundra). The Park is set within the Cairngorm National Park, between Kingussie and Kincaig in approximately 199 acres. The Park is split into 2 sections the drive around the Main Reserve in your own vehicle and then you can investigate the walk-round area by foot.

### THE RZSS MISSION STATEMENT

*"To inspire and excite our visitors with the wonder of living animals, and so to promote the conservation of threatened species and habitats."*

The Park has the only Polar bear in a British zoo and is the 3rd largest enclosure in the world. It has one of the largest and most naturalistic Amur tiger enclosure in Europe and one of the largest Japanese macaque enclosures in Europe. There are also many endangered animals from around the world and native to Scotland. The collection is set within the dramatic Cairngorm National Park which emulates the environment of Mountain and Tundra.

**THE COLLECTION** has many animals from around the world and some endangered native species. Some animals at the Park have been Extinct in the Wild, and are Critically Endangered. This includes Amur tigers, Przewalski horse, Red panda, European Bison, Scottish Wildcat and Capercaillie. And European beaver to name a few. Throughout the day there are keeper feeding talks on some of the many creatures in the walk-around area. Watch as some of the animals are fed and hear some more fascinating facts about them! Can you recognise some of the animals below.



Mishmi takin



Polar bear



Japanese serow



**CONSERVATION** is the protection of biodiversity (the variety of life) on the planet. There are many reasons why animals are becoming endangered. The main reasons are habitat loss, overhunting by man and the change in the environment. The aim of RZSS is to conserve endangered animals and their habitats. In the Park the animals are part of national and international breeding programmes (ex-situ conservation). We work with zoos around the world to manage the breeding of endangered animals in captivity. The animals are moved between zoos to increase numbers and enable the best genetic diversity (reduce inbreeding) of the captive population. Some species are eventually reintroduced back where they should be, in the wild. The RZSS also supports conservation projects worldwide (in-situ conservation) like the re-introduction of beavers into Scotland and maintaining the current Scottish wildcat population. International projects are established in Uganda, for chimpanzees, Falkland Islands for penguins and Sun bears in Cambodia to name a few.

**RESEARCH:** RZSS is involved in many research projects. By studying animals in captivity it is possible to understand how animals interact and behave, as this is very important to help protect them in the wild. RZSS has teams of experts studying animal behaviour, animals DNA and how best to look after animals in zoos, particularly their diet, enclosure design and veterinary care.

**EDUCATION;** Our aim is to encourage people to notice the world around them, to understand it and care about its future. Most people are concerned if they learn that an animal is endangered; we want to help as many people as we can to understand the problems that lead to these situations and to realise that they themselves can make a difference. Many schools and colleges visit the Park each year for cross-curricular education. We also do outreach visits to schools and organisations, run educational programmes like the Science Summer Schools and formal and informal education. For further information see our website or call (01540) 651981.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT OUR ANIMALS IN OUR COLLECTION**

**Links**

- <http://www.highlandwildlifepark.org/ht>
- <http://www.highlandtiger.com/>
- <http://www.arkive.org/>

- <http://www.edinburghzoo.org.uk/>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/animals/>
- <http://www.iucnredlist.org/>

<http://www.scottishbeavers.org.uk/>



Amur tiger

