

How to get the best out of your visit to us!

This zoo is primarily a breeding centre for endangered species, not an entertainment centre. A lot of time and expense goes into designing and building the animals enclosures in the most effective way to give the animals what they need. Gone are the days when zoo animals were kept in sterile conditions, without foliage, enrichment tools or hiding places.

It is a lot of work and sometimes quite difficult to achieve a balance which enables a quick, easy and clear view of the animals, yet still allows for the privacy which we all agree captive animals should have. A quick first glance at some of our enclosures may give you the impression that they are overgrown, especially in Spring and Summer. Habitats are landscaped and planted to best accommodate the specific needs of each species.

Some animals are quite shy and so need lots of plant life to give them enough cover to make them feel secure, like the Critically Endangered cotton-top tamarins. Others, like the owls, need plenty of branches and trees to perch in. Flying uses up a lot of energy and is only done out of necessity, not enjoyment.



The cotton-top tamarin is one of the top 25 rarest primates in the world and lives in dense rainforest.

The gardens are also a continuous project, young seedlings are dug up and given to local schools to encourage them to plant their own native wildlife retreat. Watering in the summer, cutting down dangerous branches and controlling new growth:- keeping the careful balance between a haven for native species and a nicely groomed garden environment is hard work for a horticulturist.

So, to get the best from your visit here, walk quietly and slowly around at least a couple of times. Take your time at each enclosure and your patience will be rewarded! You'll be surprised how much our animals enjoy watching you too and you never know what you may miss if you rush past with just a quick glance!



Our top lion enclosure has won two BIAZA awards, most recently for best landscaped enclosure in a small zoo.

Another problem we have to consider, and this is not something that is generally appreciated by our visitors, is that in some cases gardening cannot be done because animals have babies or are nesting and cannot be disturbed in any way what so ever.

This does mean that you may have to spend a bit of time looking for the animals, but when you do see them you will see much more relaxed and natural behaviour than if the enclosures were empty and bare.

We do not shut any animal in or out, so we recommend you to go round at least a couple of times, as you will see something different each time as the animals move around within their enclosure.

There are always several construction projects going on at the zoo at any one time, whether replacing fences, building new enclosures, or renovating older ones. There will never be a time when every part of the zoo looks as perfect as we'd like it to be.

