



HEMSLEY
CONSERVATION
CENTRE



2025 Conservation Report

November 2024 - December 2025

Welcome

We're delighted to share our 2025 Conservation Report. 2025 has seen remarkable progress toward our conservation and education goals, reflecting the dedication of our incredible team, the vital efforts of staff across the zoo, and the commitment of our wonderful volunteers, colleagues, and partners around the world. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all of our supporters, whose generosity makes this work possible.

We had our Zoo licensing renewal in August 2025. We once again surpassed requirements and a special note on conservation was included in our report:

“For a small zoo, there is an impressive amount of conservation effort undertaken” - Defra Appointed Zoo Inspector





2025 Conservation Review

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Our Vision

A future where wildlife thrives, ecosystems are protected and sustained through science-driven conservation, research and evidence based action. One where people are inspired to safeguard and conserve biodiversity for generations to come.





Our Strategy

Our Strategy

Protecting Biodiversity, Promoting Change

At Hemsley Conservation Centre, we believe that every action, no matter how small, can contribute to a more sustainable future. As a small but impactful zoo located in Kent, UK, we are proud to house over 40 species and to work tirelessly in promoting and protecting biodiversity both locally and globally.

Our mission is rooted in conservation, education, and action, and our size only strengthens our commitment to innovation and responsibility in all that we do.

The following pages outline our conservation strategy.





Our Strategy

Sustainable Practices

We are committed to minimising our environmental footprint through a range of ongoing sustainability initiatives, including:

- Using renewable energy where possible and reducing energy consumption across the site.**
- Encouraging recycling through strategically placed bins and promoting eco-conscious behaviour among staff and guests.**
- Reducing single-use plastics within our operations and working with suppliers who share our values.**
- Incorporating native and wildlife-friendly planting to support local biodiversity.**
- Ongoing development of water conservation methods and efficient use of resources.**
- Replacing equipment and infrastructure with more energy-efficient alternatives as we continue to grow.**

For a full breakdown of our operational efforts, please refer to our Sustainability Strategy.

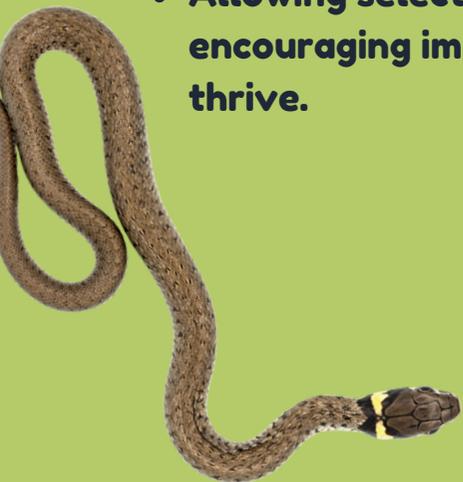


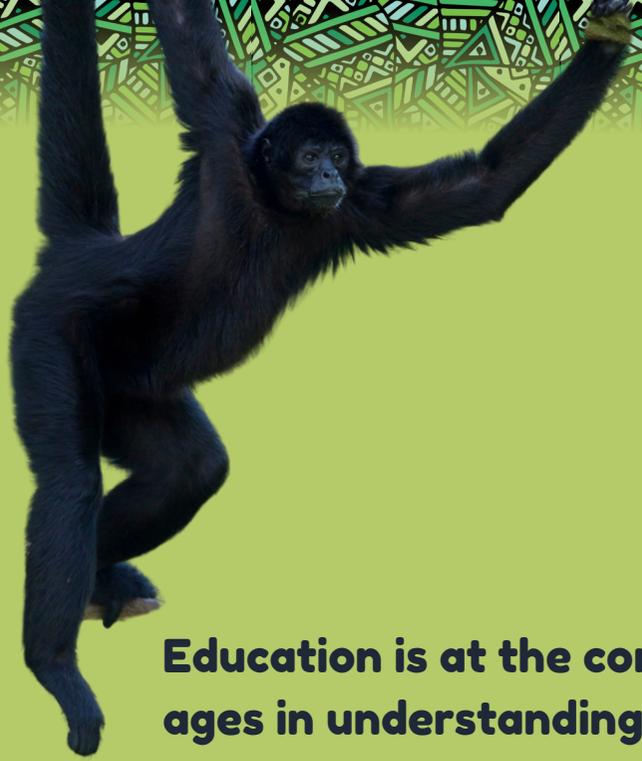
Our Strategy

Helping Local Wildlife

We are passionate about supporting British wildlife and making our centre a haven for native species:

- Maintaining a native wildlife pond, home to amphibians and aquatic insects.
- Preserving unmanaged woodland areas that provide refuge for birds, mammals, and invertebrates.
- Installing bug hotels, bat boxes, and other microhabitats to encourage biodiversity.
- Planting native species throughout the site to create pollinator-friendly zones.
- Allowing selected areas to rewild naturally, encouraging important native flora and fauna to thrive.





Our Strategy

Conservation through Education

Education is at the core of everything we do. We engage visitors and learners of all ages in understanding and appreciating the natural world:

- **Offering tailored educational programmes for schools and higher education groups.**
- **Delivering talks, animal encounters, and interactive sessions to promote conservation awareness.**
- **Working with local councils and community groups to encourage environmentally conscious actions at the local level.**
- **Featuring clear, engaging conservation signage throughout the centre to inform and inspire.**



Our Strategy

In-Situ Conservation

We are proud to support both in-situ and ex-situ conservation efforts through collaboration, fundraising, and direct action:

- **Active members of organisations including the Ocelot Working Group, British Trust for Ornithology, Butterfly Conservation, Kent Wildlife Trust, and the Small Zoo Network.**

Our Strategy

Ex-Situ Conservation

- **Participation in breeding and husbandry programmes for species including the black-tailed marmosets, prehensile-tailed porcupines, three-banded armadillos, ground cuscus, and rusty-spotted cats.**





Our 2025 Impact

2025 was a landmark year for conservation at the HCC, marked by significant breeding successes, exciting new partnerships, and expanded contributions to both native and global biodiversity initiatives. As a small zoo, our conservation ethos remains rooted in collaboration, education, and practical action, and this year we made strong strides in all these areas.

Breeding Successes

We are proud to report notable achievements in our managed breeding programs, which continue to support the preservation of lesser-known and often overlooked species.

This year saw successful births from:

**Black-tailed marmosets
Bolivian squirrel monkeys
Prehensile-tailed porcupines
Three-banded armadillos
Rusty-spotted cats
Ground cuscus
Parma Wallabies**

These successes are a testament to our animal care team's expertise and the quality of our husbandry programmes.

Looking forward to 2026, we will also be able to move forward with breeding programmes for:

**Ocelots
Geoffroy's Cats
White Lipped Tamarins
Two Toed Sloths
Red Fronted Lemurs
Channel Billed Toucans
Bali Myna
Cuban Hutia**



Our 2025 Impact
**Partnerships & Collaborative
Conservation**

Our 2025 Impact

Partnerships and Collaborative Conservation



This year, we joined forces with several key organizations, further embedding ourselves in the wider conservation community:

Ocelot Working Group (OWG)

We provided financial support through daily visitor donations . One of our donation's to this partner has helped fund the rehabilitation of two ocelots and three bobcats in a centre in Mexico that the OWG is now supporting. The hope is that these ocelots will now be returned to suitable habitat.

Small Zoo Network (SZN)

As founding members, we helped establish this initiative, one goal of which is enabling small zoos to participate in collaborative conservation. The network's first coordinated project—focused on native dung beetles—is now in its formative stages. This is being closely followed by nest box recording activities for Black Cheeked Lovebirds, the data from which will be used in situ to support conservation efforts.



Our 2025 Impact

Partnerships and Collaborative Conservation

- **Nature's Safe - Nature's SAFE is a conservation charity and living biobank dedicated to saving animals from extinction. They achieve this by collecting and cryopreserving (freezing) cells and tissues from threatened wildlife species, essentially creating a living genetic archive. These stored cells can be used in the future to restore populations of endangered animals through techniques like cell culture and assisted reproductive technologies.**
 - **Cryopreservation: Nature's SAFE specializes in cryopreserving cells and tissues from endangered animals, including reproductive cells like sperm and eggs.**
 - **Living Biobank: They act as a living biobank, meaning the cells are stored in a way that they can be thawed and used for future breeding and research purposes.**
 - **Conservation Focus: Their primary goal is to safeguard the future of endangered animal species by providing a safeguard against extinction and supporting breeding programs.**
 - **Partnerships: Nature's SAFE works with zoos, wildlife parks, and wildlife rescue centres in the UK to collect biological samples.**





Our 2025 Impact

Partnerships and Collaborative Conservation

Digital Conservation & Responsible Social Media: #ShareSavvy

In the latter part of 2024, we proudly took part in the #ShareSavvy campaign, a digital conservation initiative launched by Battersea Park Children's Zoo. #ShareSavvy works to combat the negative impacts of irresponsible social media use on wildlife conservation, particularly the normalization of inappropriate wildlife interactions and the promotion of exotic pets.

Our focus was on sloths, a species frequently misrepresented online, leading to harmful misunderstandings around their care, behaviour, and conservation status. Through visitor education, digital outreach, and internal training, we aimed to raise awareness of how social media can unintentionally fuel demand in the illegal wildlife trade, and how responsible sharing can instead support conservation efforts. This campaign also gave us an opportunity to further reinforce our messaging around animal welfare and ethics in modern conservation.



Our 2025 Impact
Native Habitat Management & Citizen Science

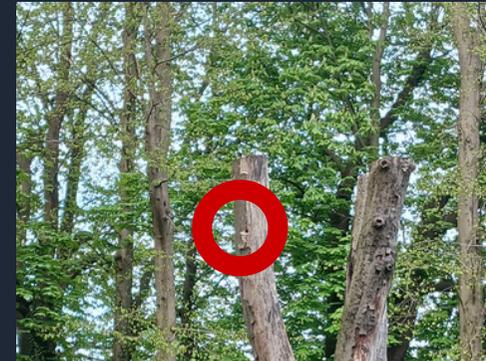
Native Habitat Management and Citizen Science

Recognising our role as custodians of both global and local biodiversity, we continued to manage and enhance our zoo grounds as a haven for native wildlife. Key highlights include:

- Active participation in the Big Butterfly Count in partnership with Butterfly Conservation, tracking species activity during our wildflower season.
- Ongoing bird monitoring, with data submitted to the British Trust for Ornithology via BirdTrack.

Our bird recording efforts have directly informed habitat management practices on site. For instance, research revealed the importance of deadwood for cavity-nesting birds. As a result, we began retaining safe, standing dead trees across the site to support nesting opportunities for native greater spotted and green woodpeckers. Following confirmed success, this practice has now been expanded wherever suitable conditions exist, improving habitat quality across the zoo's landscape.

- We also launched community-led monitoring in partnership with local schools within a five-mile radius. This project not only gathers valuable biodiversity data but also fosters environmental awareness among students. Pending further success, we plan to expand this initiative and offer enhanced educational resources in 2026.



Native Habitat Management and Citizen Science

Conservation Concern Highlights

Based on Birds of Conservation Concern 5 (BoCC5) categories:

- **Red-listed species (highest concern):**
 - Bullfinch
 - Song Thrush
 - Starling
- **Amber-listed species (moderate concern):**
 - Buzzard
 - Dunnock (if recorded, in the full data)
 - Stock Dove (if recorded)
- **Green/Not Listed:**
 - Blackbird, Blue Tit, etc., are common species not flagged for special concern.

Trends

- 21 total species from 41 total records indicate moderate diversity.
- Records come from a single location: Hemsley Conservation Centre.
- First recorded dates cluster mostly around spring and late autumn, suggesting good seasonal monitoring.

Going forward...

1. Enhance Monitoring Effort

Aim to increase the number of complete lists (currently 9), especially in under-sampled seasons like winter or early spring. This has already been achieved for the 2025 season. Consider adding more varied habitat zones within the zoo grounds to attract a broader array of species.

2. Focus on Red and Amber Species

Target habitat enhancements (e.g., hedgerows for Bullfinch, woodland edges for Song Thrush).

Provide nesting sites or winter food sources for Red-listed species.

Log and encourage repeat sightings of these priority species to track any changes.

3. Geographical Expansion

Expanding monitoring slightly beyond the core zoo area could capture a broader dataset and improve conservation impact.

4. Public Engagement

Use the findings in educational displays about local wildlife and conservation.

Highlight conservation successes, such as presence of Bullfinches and Buzzards, to engage visitors.





Our 2025 Impact
Species in the Living Collection

Species in the Living Collection

Species Overview by Taxonomic Class – 2025

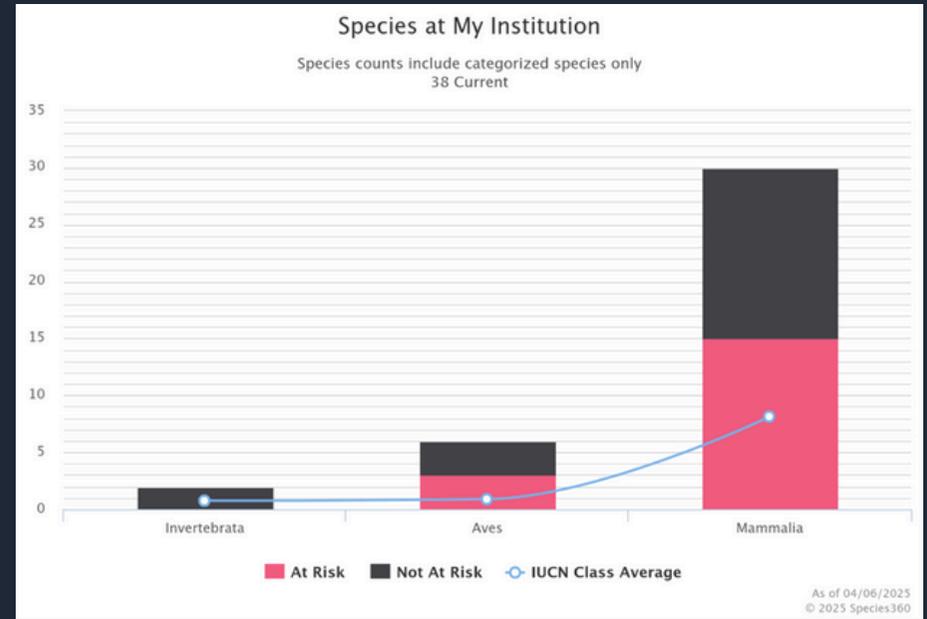
Summary by Class:

- **Mammalia (Mammals):** This group dominates the institution's collection, accounting for the majority of species with approximately 30 mammals, of which around 15 (50%) are considered At Risk (i.e., Vulnerable, Endangered, or Critically Endangered).
- **Notably,** the zoo maintains a higher-than-average proportion of threatened mammals compared to global IUCN averages, demonstrating strong institutional prioritisation of mammalian conservation efforts.
- **Aves (Birds):** We house 3 bird species, with all categorised as At Risk. The proportion aligns closely with the global average for this class. While smaller in overall numbers, this reflects targeted efforts toward avian conservation and opens opportunities for future expansion or specialisation.
- **Invertebrates:** Currently underrepresented, invertebrates comprise just 2 species, none of which are listed as At Risk. While this is consistent with the lower conservation focus often given to invertebrates, increasing representation in this class will align with modern conservation goals that emphasise ecological diversity and the foundational role of invertebrates in ecosystems.



Our 2025 Impact

Species in the Living Collection



Species in the Living Collection

Key Observations:

- **The HCC exceeds the global average in its mammal conservation focus, contributing meaningfully to global strategies targeting charismatic and ecologically critical species.**
- **A balanced presence in bird species suggests a commitment to broader ecosystem representation.**
- **The low number of invertebrate species suggests an area for growth, especially in light of global biodiversity loss trends impacting pollinators and aquatic invertebrates.**

Strategic Opportunities:

- **Continue leveraging the zoo's strength in mammalian conservation through breeding programmes, habitat simulation, and public education.**
- **Explore partnerships with avian conservation programmes to broaden species diversity and bolster threatened populations.**
- **Consider establishing or expanding an invertebrate conservation exhibit or programme to support ecosystem-wide conservation education and engagement.**

The HCC is well-positioned to deepen its impact across all major animal classes, advancing its role as both a steward of endangered species and an ambassador for ecological awareness.



Our 2025 Impact

Species in the Living Collection

As of June 2025, the HCC actively manages 38 species currently categorised under the IUCN Red List, out of a historical total of 62 species. This reflects a long-standing commitment to biodiversity conservation across varying levels of threat, and channelling our efforts into key species.

Species Composition and Threat Levels:

- **Least Concern (LC):** This category represents the largest portion of species at the zoo, with 20 currently managed species and a total of approximately 35 historically. While these species are not currently at significant risk, maintaining healthy populations remains essential to prevent future declines.
- **Near Threatened (NT):** With about 4 species currently and a few more historically, this group highlights early signs of conservation concern. Continued monitoring and proactive management are crucial.
- **Vulnerable (VU):** The zoo is home to around 9 currently managed species in this category, indicating a strong commitment to species at significant risk of endangerment without intervention.
- **Endangered (EN):** Hosting about 3 species currently in this high-risk category, the zoo contributes to critical efforts to safeguard populations that face a very high risk of extinction in the wild.
- **Critically Endangered (CR):** 1 currently housed. This underlines the zoo's historical involvement in high-stakes conservation efforts and presents opportunities for future reengagement with species in this category that we have cared for before, which have been planned for 2026.





Our 2025 Impact

Species in the Living Collection

Key Insights:

- The HCC demonstrates strong ongoing support for species of concern (NT–CR), making up roughly half of the current IUCN-listed collection.
- The decline from historical numbers in some higher-threat categories (especially CR) suggests a need to reassess capacity or partnerships for reintroducing or expanding programs for critically endangered species. This was however, previously based on opportunities available, or not available to the individual animals and species we housed.
- The robust representation in the LC and VU categories provides a valuable foundation for education, research, and pre-emptive conservation strategies.

Looking Forward:

To enhance impact, the HCC will consider:

- Expanding participation in global species survival plans.
- Increasing representation of CR and EN species through strategic partnerships and facility enhancements.
- Continuing to prioritise conservation education to raise awareness about species across all threat levels.

The HCC remains a critical player in global species conservation, balancing preservation of stable populations with bold action for those most at risk.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, we aim to:

Advance the native dung beetle project through SZN collaboration.

Scale up our school-based wildlife monitoring program.

Continue refining and diversifying on-site habitats to benefit both native species and public engagement.

Develop further digital literacy programs around wildlife representation on social media.





Our Future Focus



Our Future Focus

We recognise that conservation is a journey, and we are continuously evolving our approach to reflect the best practices in sustainability, wildlife care, and public education.

Future aims include:

- **Expanding our partnerships with global conservation bodies.**
- **Supporting research that contributes to species survival in the wild.**
- **Enhancing our outreach and engagement to empower more people to take conservation action.**
- **Continuing to fundraise for meaningful projects that align with our values and mission.**





Sustainability

Zero to Landfill: Closing the Loop

We proudly continue to send zero waste to landfill. All animal and food waste generated on site is converted into energy, and used cooking oil from our catering facilities is collected and recycled into biofuel. In our tearoom, we use Vegware—plant-based, fully compostable disposables—to further cut waste and reduce our reliance on plastic-based materials.

Renewable Energy and Efficiency

This year, we took major steps in clean energy:

- Solar panels were installed on-site, and we are proud to say the otter and binturong habitats are now fully powered by solar energy.
- We continue to upgrade our lighting, with 95% of all lighting across the zoo now energy-efficient LED.
- The majority of our animal enclosures are fitted with low-wattage LED lighting, reducing both our energy use and our carbon footprint.

We removed our old roof from our feed room building and half of our Fragile Forests House. This was replaced with transparent roofing. This has meant that we do not need to light these areas unless late in the day in the winter, further reducing our electricity consumption.

Water Conservation and Green Transport

To reduce water use, we've begun installing rainwater harvesting systems, including water butts that supply our gardening team with collected water for landscape care.

We've also upgraded our fleet by replacing our diesel van with a 100% electric vehicle, making our business transport cleaner and more efficient.

Community and Staff Engagement

Our sustainability impact extends into our local area:

- Our team carried out local litter picks to support a cleaner community.
- We actively support local initiatives such as “No Mow May” and “Bloom in June”, helping increase local biodiversity through low-intervention habitat management.
- We continue to work with nearby villages and community groups to share sustainable practices and promote wildlife-friendly gardening.





Sustainability

Looking Ahead

As we move further towards 2026, we aim to:

Expand our solar infrastructure to power more areas of the zoo.

Complete the transition to 100% LED lighting.

Strengthen partnerships with local sustainability groups.

Enhance visitor learning on eco-living through interactive displays and talks.

Complete the other half of our Fragile Forests building with new roofing, and make plans to continue doing this throughout.





As we look ahead, we remain committed to protecting wildlife and the habitats they depend on. Through science-based conservation, collaborative partnerships, and the continued support of our community, we are making meaningful progress for species at risk. Together, we can ensure that future generations inherit a world rich in biodiversity, where animals thrive both in the wild and under our dedicated care.





Conservation Strategy & Review 2025

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