

# Conservation Policy



LAST REVIEWED: SEPTEMBER 2024

At Heads of Ayr Farm Park, we are dedicated to creating a safe, enjoyable, and educational environment for our visitors while championing the highest standards of animal welfare and conservation. Our commitment to these values is reflected in our mission to inspire appreciation for the natural world and foster a deep respect for the environment among people of all ages.

As a responsible visitor attraction, we recognize the vital role we play in conserving wildlife and their habitats. This Conservation Policy outlines our unwavering dedication to protecting and nurturing the animals in our care, preserving their natural habitats, and promoting sustainable practices. By adhering to these principles, we strive to ensure that our park not only delights and educates our visitors but also makes a significant contribution to global conservation efforts.

Our Conservation Policy is broken down into 8 principles that keep us working on track to regularly assess our work and help us to achieve our goals.

## ANIMAL WELFARE AND PROTECTION:

At Heads of Ayr Farm Park, the welfare and protection of our animals are paramount. We are committed to ensuring that all animals in our care receive the highest standards of treatment, adhering to the Five Freedoms established by the Farm Animal Welfare Council:

- **Freedom from Hunger and Thirst:**

We provide all animals with constant access to fresh, clean water and appropriate diets tailored to their species and individual needs. Our staff follow strict protocols to ensure food is preserved correctly, maintaining its nutritional value and preventing contamination.

- **Freedom from Discomfort:**

Each animal is housed in an environment that meets their specific needs, including appropriate shelter, temperature control, and bedding. We ensure that all enclosures are designed to offer comfort and security, replicating natural habitats as closely as possible.

- **Freedom from Pain, Injury, or Disease:**

Our team of trained keepers conducts daily health checks, closely monitoring the condition, behavior, and overall health of each animal. Any signs of illness or distress are addressed immediately. Regular health assessments and behavioral observations are critical components of our care routine. Keepers develop strong relationships with the animals, enabling them to detect subtle changes that might indicate health issues. We have established protocols for disease prevention, and our veterinary team conducts routine inspections and

administers preventive treatments. In cases of emergency or specialized medical needs, we collaborate closely with our veterinarians to provide the best possible care. We have designated treatment areas and isolation facilities to manage infectious diseases and other health concerns. We maintain a robust system for recording and managing medical treatments, ensuring prompt and effective care.

- **Freedom to Express Normal Behaviours:**

Enclosures are designed to provide sufficient space and enrichment opportunities, allowing animals to engage in natural behaviors. We implement an extensive enrichment program, offering toys, sensory stimulation, and social interactions tailored to each species.

- **Freedom from Fear and Distress:**

We strive to create a peaceful and stress-free environment for all animals. Our facilities include quiet areas where animals can retreat if they choose, and we minimize disturbances from visitors through controlled interaction sessions. Staff are trained to recognize and mitigate any sources of stress or fear.

Beyond the basic care principles, we focus on Positive Animal Welfare, ensuring that animals have opportunities for positive experiences. This includes activities that stimulate their minds, encourage physical activity, and promote social bonding.

## HABITAT PRESERVATION:

At Heads of Ayr Farm Park, habitat preservation is a core aspect of our conservation efforts. We understand the critical importance of maintaining and restoring natural habitats for the well-being of our animals and the broader ecosystem. Our approach to Habitat Preservation consists of several key initiatives.

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### HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECTS:

We actively engage in projects aimed at restoring and enhancing natural habitats within and around the park. This includes reforestation efforts, wetland restoration, and the maintenance of our registered site of special scientific interest (SSSI). These initiatives help to support local biodiversity and create thriving environments for both native and captive species.

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### BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT:

We are dedicated to enhancing local biodiversity by planting a variety of trees, shrubs, and flora that provide food and shelter for wildlife. Our efforts also include establishing successful bug hotels and wildlife shelters, which offer vital habitats for insects and small animals, contributing to a balanced ecosystem.

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#### SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING:

Our landscaping practices are designed to be sustainable and environmentally friendly. We use native plants that require minimal water and maintenance, reducing our environmental footprint. Additionally, we avoid the use of harmful pesticides and chemicals, ensuring that our habitats remain safe and healthy for all inhabitants.

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#### WATER CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT:

We implement water conservation measures, such as using reed-bed wastage water systems to naturally filter and purify water. These systems help to maintain clean water sources for our animals and support healthy aquatic habitats. Our commitment to water conservation also includes regular monitoring and maintenance of our water bodies.

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#### EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

We believe that education is a vital tool in habitat preservation. Through interactive exhibits, guided tours, and outreach programs, we educate visitors about the importance of conserving natural habitats and the role they can play in protecting the environment. We also engage with local communities to promote sustainable practices and involve them in our conservation efforts.

We actively engage in habitat preservation projects, including maintaining our registered site of special scientific interest (SSSI) and contributing to local biodiversity through the planting of trees and flora, and the establishment of successful bug hotels and wildlife shelters.

#### SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES:

At Heads of Ayr Farm Park, we are dedicated to implementing sustainable practices that reduce our environmental footprint and promote conservation. Our commitment to sustainability encompasses several key initiatives:

- Energy Efficiency
- Renewable Energy
- Water Conservation
- Waste Reduction
- Local Sourcing
- Sustainable Landscaping
- Eco-Friendly Products
- Paperless Systems
- Education and Advocacy
- Collaboration and Innovation



More information regarding these initiatives can be found in our *Environmental Policy*.

By implementing these sustainable practices, Heads of Ayr Farm Park is dedicated to protecting the environment and promoting conservation. Our ongoing commitment to sustainability ensures that we operate responsibly and set a positive example for our visitors and the community.

## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH:

At Heads of Ayr Farm Park, education is a cornerstone of our conservation efforts. We are dedicated to inspiring visitors to appreciate and protect wildlife through engaging and informative programs. Our educational initiatives include:


- **Hands-On Learning Opportunities:** Interactive exhibits where visitors can learn about different species, their habitats, and conservation efforts in an engaging and participatory manner.
- **Guided Tours:** Educational tours led by knowledgeable staff that offer insights into animal behaviors, conservation issues, and the importance of preserving natural habitats.
- **Workshops and Classes:** Regular workshops and educational classes designed for all age groups, focusing on topics such as animal care, environmental sustainability, and conservation practices.
- **Outreach Programs:** Outreach initiatives that bring our conservation message to schools, community groups, and other organizations. These programs aim to educate and inspire a broader audience about the importance of wildlife conservation.
- **Special Events:** Hosting special events and presentations featuring guest speakers, conservation experts, and interactive activities that highlight various aspects of wildlife conservation and environmental protection.

Our goal is to foster a deeper understanding and respect for wildlife and the environment among our visitors. We believe it is our responsibility to inspire future generations to appreciate and protect wildlife and their habitats.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of our educational objectives and programs, please refer to our full *Education Policy*.

## RESEARCH AND MONITORING:

At Heads of Ayr Farm Park, research and monitoring are vital components of our conservation strategy. We are committed to advancing our understanding of animal behavior, health, and welfare through ongoing research initiatives. Our approach to research and monitoring includes the following key elements:

- **Behavioral Studies:** Observing and recording the natural behaviours of our animals, helping us to understand how they interact with their environment, socialize, and express natural behaviours to improve our enrichment programs and habitat designs.
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- **Health Assessments:** Performing routine health assessments to monitor the physical condition of our animals, identifying any concerns to ensure prompt and effective treatment.
- **Welfare Indicators:** Utilising welfare indicators such as health metrics, behaviour observations and environmental conditions to assess the overall wellbeing of our animals and take proactive steps to improve where possible.
- **Environmental Monitoring:** Monitoring the impact of seasonal changes and human activities on the environment to ensure that our habitats are maintained at optimal conditions.
- **Collaborative Research:** Collaborating with research institutions, colleges, universities, vet practices, students, and other zoos to conduct research projects wherever possible, although these studies are not yet as frequent as we would like them to be. These partnerships allow us to contribute to the broader scientific community and stay informed about the latest advancements in animal welfare and conservation science.
- **Public Engagement:** Actively engaging the public in our research and monitoring efforts through educational programs and interactive exhibits. By sharing our findings and involving visitors in citizen science projects, we promote a greater understanding of wildlife conservation and the importance of research in improving animal welfare.

By integrating these research and monitoring practices into our conservation policy, Heads of Ayr Farm Park ensures that our efforts are guided by scientific evidence and best practices. Our commitment to continuous learning and improvement enables us to provide a high standard of care for our animals.

## ETHICAL ANIMAL INTERACTIONS:

At Heads of Ayr Farm Park, we are steadfast in our commitment to the highest ethical standards in all aspects of animal care and interactions. Our ethics are grounded in compassion, respect, and a deep understanding of the natural behaviors and needs of the animals in our care. We are dedicated to ensuring that all animal interactions are conducted in a manner that prioritizes the well-being and dignity of the animals.

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## ETHICAL GUIDELINES:

- **Respect for Natural Behaviors:** We design our enclosures and enrichment programs to allow animals to express their natural behaviors, ensuring they lead fulfilling lives.
- **Minimizing Stress:** Interactions between animals and visitors are carefully managed to minimize stress. Our staff is trained to recognize signs of discomfort and take immediate action to protect the animals.
- **Education and Engagement:** We engage visitors in educational programs that emphasize the importance of ethical treatment of animals and conservation. By fostering a culture of respect and empathy, we aim to inspire positive attitudes towards wildlife.

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## PUBLIC INTERACTIONS:

All public interactions with animals are conducted under strict supervision and in controlled environments to ensure the safety and comfort of both animals and visitors. We limit the duration and frequency of these interactions to prevent stress and exhaustion for the animals. Our petting sessions, for example, are capped at ten minutes and take place twice daily during the summer, with careful monitoring and rotation of animals to ensure their well-being.

For a comprehensive understanding of our ethical commitments and practices, we encourage you to refer to our detailed Ethics Policy. This document outlines our principles and guidelines in greater depth, reflecting our unwavering dedication to animal welfare.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS:

At Heads of Ayr Farm Park, we recognize the importance of community engagement and collaborative efforts in promoting conservation. We strive to make a positive impact through meaningful partnerships and community initiatives.

### **Local Community Involvement:**

We actively engage with the local community by offering educational programs, workshops, and events that raise awareness about conservation and animal welfare. These initiatives aim to foster a sense of responsibility and stewardship towards the environment.

### **Collaborative Partnerships:**

Wherever possible, we collaborate with local schools, charities, and conservation organizations to support and enhance our conservation efforts. These partnerships allow us to pool resources, share knowledge, and amplify our impact on wildlife conservation.

### **Conservation Support:**

Heads of Ayr Farm Park supports conservation projects through fundraising activities and awareness campaigns. We regularly host events and collaborate with charities to raise funds for local and global conservation initiatives.

### **Volunteering and Outreach**

We encourage community members to get involved in our conservation efforts through volunteering opportunities by participating in animal care and educational programs, volunteers play a crucial role in supporting our mission.

While we may be limited in our location away from major cities or university towns, our commitment to community engagement and partnerships remains strong. By working together with local organizations and individuals, we aim to create a lasting positive impact on wildlife conservation.

## RESPONSIBLE BREEDING AND TRANSPORTATION:

We are committed to the responsible transportation and breeding of our animals to ensure their welfare and the sustainability of our conservation efforts. Our practices are guided by ethical standards and regulatory requirements to guarantee the highest level of care.

### **Animal Transportation:**

- We adhere to The Welfare of Animals Transport Scotland Regulations 2006, ensuring that all animals are transported safely and humanely.
- Adequate measures are taken to isolate new arrivals before integrating them with existing stock to prevent the spread of diseases and ensure a smooth transition.
- Transport vehicles are equipped to provide a comfortable and secure environment, minimizing stress and potential harm during transit.


### **Breeding Practices:**

- Our breeding programs are designed to maintain and preserve endangered species, support educational purposes, and sustain our animal populations responsibly.
- We prioritize natural and appropriate mating procedures, ensuring that all breeding activities are conducted with the animals' well-being in mind. Artificial insemination is rarely used and only performed under the guidance of veterinary professionals if required.
- Detailed records of all births, mating activities, and genetic data are maintained to manage our breeding programs effectively and responsibly.

### **Ethical Considerations:**

- We consider the viability of hand-rearing offspring and the potential for reintroduction to their species. Hand-rearing is only undertaken when absolutely necessary to save an animal's life.
- Rehoming of animals is approached with diligence, ensuring that new homes are suitable and meet high standards of animal care.
- We are committed to ethical decision-making regarding euthanasia and culling, following strict guidelines to ensure humane treatment. These decisions are made only when absolutely necessary and in the best interest of the animal's welfare.

For a comprehensive understanding of our responsible transportation and breeding practices, we encourage you to refer to our detailed Ethics Policy. This document provides further insights into our principles and protocols, reflecting our commitment to ethical animal care.



At Heads of Ayr Farm Park, our commitment to conservation is woven into every aspect of our operations. From ensuring the highest standards of animal welfare to engaging with our community and implementing sustainable practices, we strive to make a positive impact on the environment and inspire our visitors to do the same.

By adhering to ethical guidelines and continuously improving our practices, we aim to protect and preserve wildlife and their habitats for future generations. We invite you to join us in our mission to safeguard the natural world, ensuring that future generations can continue to experience the wonder and beauty of wildlife. Together with our visitors, we believe we can make a meaningful difference in the world of conservation.

