



Zoological  
Society  
of London

# Application Guide



**LONDON ZOO**  
**WHIPSNADE ZOO**  
ZSL conservation zoos

**ZSL** Institute  
of Zoology

# It's great to have you here.

Thank you for your interest in joining ZSL, a global community of people united by a passion for wildlife and a shared commitment to protecting our planet's natural wonders.

Whether you're applying for a hands-on conservation role, a scientific position, or one of the many vital support roles that keep our organisation thriving, this toolkit is here to guide you through every step of the recruitment process.

Inside, you'll find practical advice, insights into how we recruit, and tips to help you showcase your strengths and values. Our goal is to make the process open, transparent, and supportive, helping you put your best self forward.

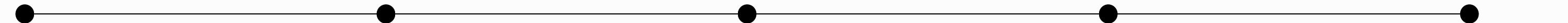


# Our Story

## 200 years of ZSL

People and impact, find out more about our historic milestones.

[The History of ZSL](#)



**1826**

The Zoological Society of London is founded by Sir Stamford Raffles.

**1916**

Evelyn Chessman is appointed as first women in a curatorial post.

**1960 - 1961**

The Institute of Zoology is established.

**2014**

ZSL wins Google Impact Award following its deployment of state of the art camera traps to prevent poaching.

**2026**

200 years of history, milestones and achievements.

# Our Values

Our values and behaviours shape the way we work together, helping us achieve our vision, fulfil our purpose and make ZSL a great place to work.

## COLLABORATIVE

We bring people together to share expertise

## ETHICAL

We make the right choices

## IMPACTFUL

We focus on activities that make a positive difference

## INCLUSIVE

We value our differences and foster belonging

## INNOVATIVE

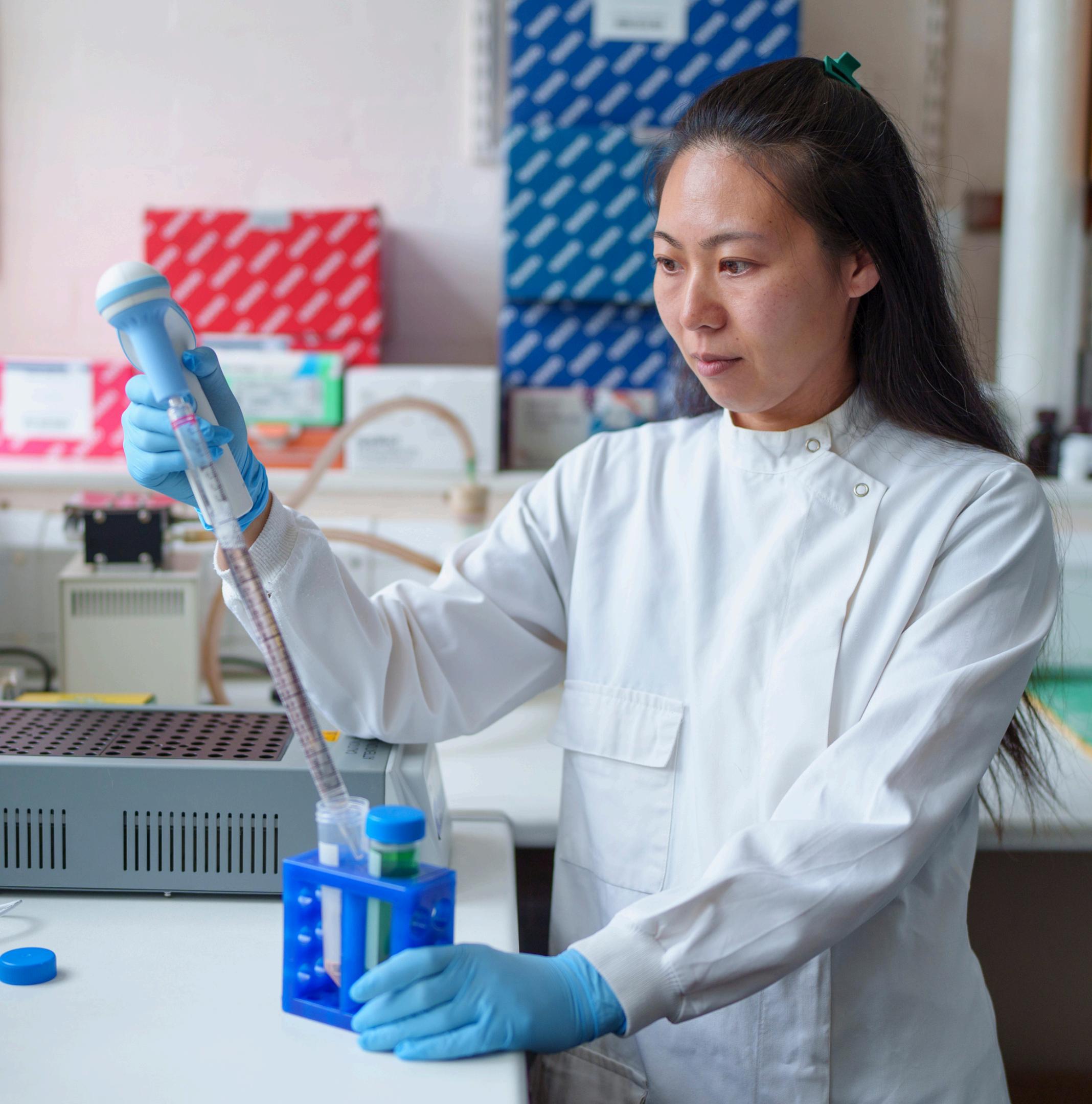
We find new ways to solve problems

## INSPIRING

We encourage people to take positive action

# Our Recruitment Principles

- **Fair and Inclusive:** Our aim is to deliver a transparent and accessible recruitment process for everyone.
- **Global and Local:** We value local expertise and global collaboration.
- **Merit-Based:** Roles are filled based on values and skills.
- **Respectful and Confidential:** Candidate information is always handled responsibly.





# Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

ZSL recognises that conservation is one of the least diverse sectors, and we actively encourage applications from candidates who identify as part of underrepresented communities.

We are committed to building a supportive and inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive and celebrate the value of having a team of employees with diverse skills, experiences, and heritage.

You can find out more about our commitment to EDI here -  
**[www.zsl.org/about-zsl/working-at-zsl/diversity-and-inclusion](http://www.zsl.org/about-zsl/working-at-zsl/diversity-and-inclusion)**

# Your Application

## TIP

To avoid losing your work if the portal times out, it's a good idea to draft your statement (or any application questions) in a document first. Once you're satisfied, you can copy and paste it into the portal's text box.



- Keep your CV concise, well-organised, and easy to read.
- Tailor your CV and statement to demonstrate how you align with ZSL's mission and values.
- Read the job description carefully and note the key skills and experience.
- Explain your motivation and relevant experience in your supporting statement.
- Use clear, specific examples to show what you've achieved.

To support a fair and unbiased shortlisting process, applications are reviewed anonymously. Please avoid including any personal or identifying details (such as your name or contact information) in your statement.

# What Happens After Shortlisting?

Our recruitment process is designed with your role in mind and may include including one or more of the stages below in addition to a panel interview.

## SCREENING

This can happen over the phone or virtually via Teams and would usually be between 10 - 20mins.

Our hiring teams use screening calls to support with further shortlisting, particularly when there is a high volume of great applicants.

## PRESENTATIONS

As part of your interview, you may be asked to prepare a presentation.

This is a great opportunity to showcase your understanding of a topic and your ability to engage others, skills that could be important in the role. You'll receive all the details and guidance for the presentation in advance.

## TASKS

For particular roles we may ask you to complete a task as part of your interview.

This could be something you need to prepare in advance or something you will complete on the day.

If a task forms part of your recruitment process, we will let you will know in advance.

## ASSESSMENT CENTRES

We hold group interviews for roles where we need a number of people to join our teams. This is typically for positions within our retail, visitor engagement and events teams.

The format of the assessment centre will be sent to you ahead of time.

# Interview Structure

## INTRODUCTION

The panel will introduce themselves and explain how the interview will be structured.

They may start with an introductory question to understand your motivation for applying for this role.

For example  
*“What interests you most about this role?”*

## COMPENTENCY

You will be asked a number of questions relevant to the expertise required for the role. This could be one or more of the following types of questions.

- Scenario based
- Technical
- Knowledge

For example  
*“What steps would you take to ensure a process was followed correctly?”*

Your interview will include a variety of different types of questions. The length and number of interview stages may vary depending on the role you are applying for.

## VALUES

You will be asked one or more values based questions.

For example  
*“Can you tell us about a time when you achieved something at work that had a meaningful impact? What did you do, and what was the outcome?”*

## Q&A

At the end of the interview, you'll have the opportunity to ask your own questions.

Think in advance about what you'd like to learn, and how you want to use this time to get the information you need.



# Interview Tips

## Have Your Examples Ready

Think about times you've shown skills or values that match the role. Sharing these experiences using the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) makes your examples easy to follow.

## Get to Know the Role and Organisation

Spend a little time learning about the role and the organisation. Knowing the organisation values can help you show why you're excited about this opportunity.

## Be Honest and Confident

If you haven't done something before, that's okay! We appreciate curiosity, problem-solving, and a willingness to learn just as much as experience. Talk about how you would approach it or share any experiences you have had outside of paid work that could be relevant.

## Show Your Enthusiasm

Let your passion shine! Whether you're working with people, animals, or projects, showing enthusiasm is a great way to demonstrate your motivation to join our team.

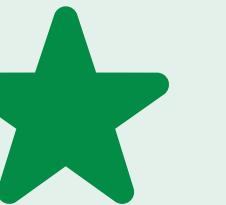
## Make the Q&A Work for You

The Q&A at the end of the interview is your chance to get the most out of the conversation. Ask about the role, team, or opportunities to grow, it helps you understand if the job is right for you and shows your interest.

# The STAR Method

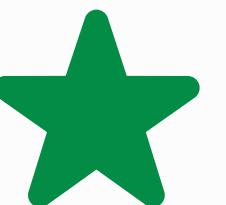
The STAR method is a simple but powerful way to tell your story with clarity and confidence. It helps you structure your answers for scenario or competency questions, showing what you did, how you did it and the impact you made.

Whenever possible, choose examples that clearly link back to the responsibilities and skills required for the role you're applying to.



## SITUATION

Describe the context or challenge you faced.



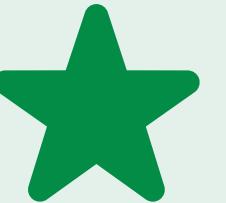
## TASK

Explain your specific responsibility or goal.



## ACTION

Outline the steps you took to address the challenge.



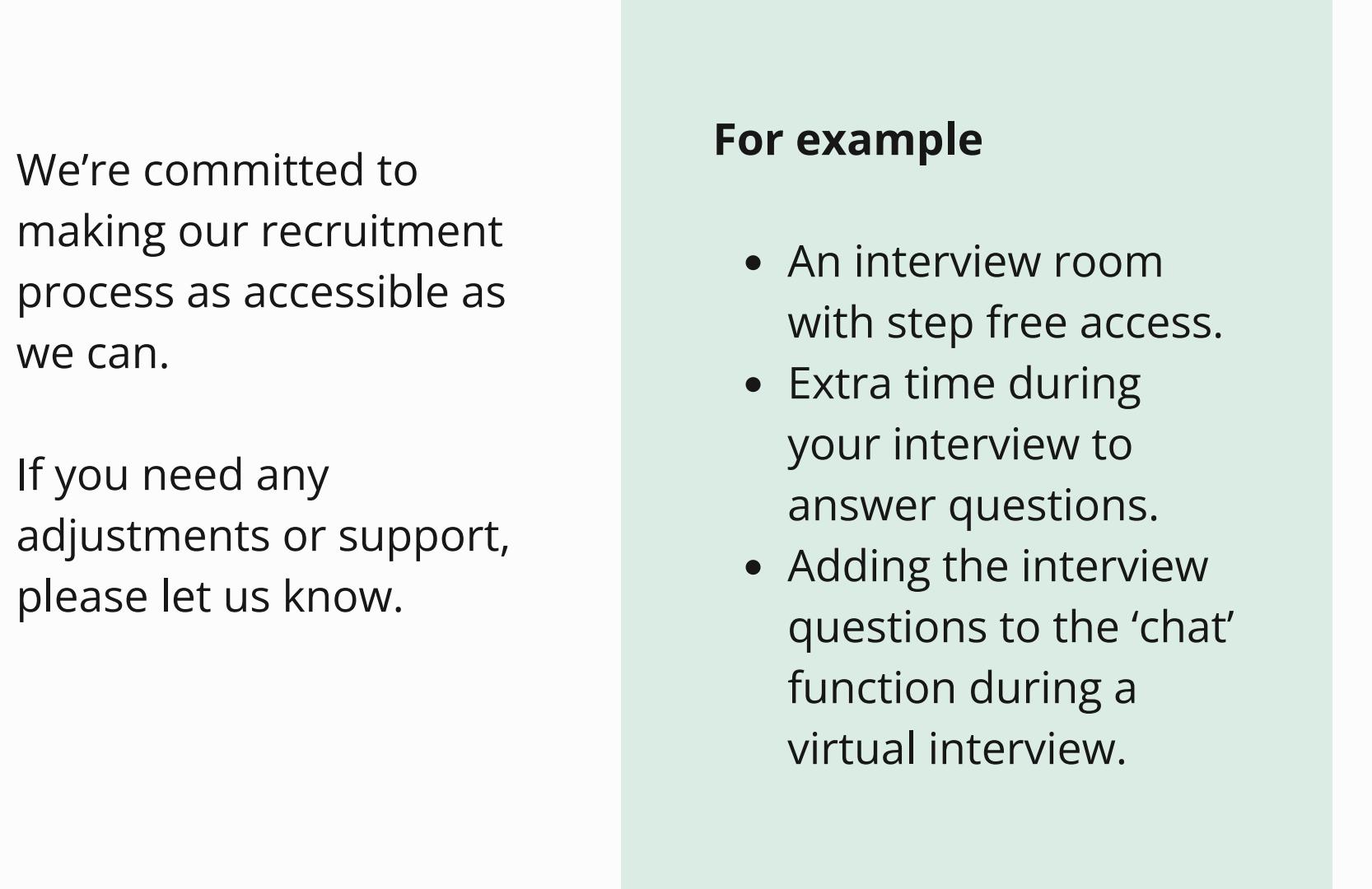
## RESULT

Share the outcome of what you achieved or learned and the impact.

# Support & Interview Adjustments

We have a dedicated recruitment team within our people department who are there to answer any questions you have at any point of the process.

**You can reach the team at [recruitment@zsl.org](mailto:recruitment@zsl.org)**



- Receiving interview questions in advance or in large print.
- An interview room near accessible toilets.
- Providing extra breaks between tasks during assessment centres.
- Bringing notes to your interview.

# Useful Links

We've included some links below to support your research ahead of your application and interview.

Take a look to learn about our conservation efforts, global projects and how our zoos support our mission.

[\*\*https://www.zsl.org/about-zsl/organisation\*\*](https://www.zsl.org/about-zsl/organisation)

[\*\*https://www.zsl.org/about-zsl/working-at-zsl\*\*](https://www.zsl.org/about-zsl/working-at-zsl)

[\*\*https://www.zsl.org/what-we-do\*\*](https://www.zsl.org/what-we-do)

[\*\*https://www.zsl.org/about-zsl/bicentenary\*\*](https://www.zsl.org/about-zsl/bicentenary)

[\*\*https://www.zsl.org/about-zsl/our-people\*\*](https://www.zsl.org/about-zsl/our-people)

[\*\*https://www.zsl.org/what-we-do/institute-of-zoology\*\*](https://www.zsl.org/what-we-do/institute-of-zoology)



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