



Species Selection Framework

at Zoos Victoria

Our Mission

Animals are core to our vision, our passion and our operations. It is critical that Zoos Victoria has a clear understanding of our responsibilities to animals in our care. We will use adaptive, collaborative and innovative approaches that consider the needs of the species and wellbeing of individual animals.

Jenny Gray, CEO, Zoos Victoria

Zoos Victoria's promise is that no Victorian terrestrial vertebrate species will go extinct on our watch. This is a bold statement and a huge undertaking. We are sticking to it because we do not accept a future without diverse wildlife. We simply refuse to stand by as species become extinct. Zoos Victoria is committed to conservation of biodiversity. Locally, we are working to support the recovery of 27 threatened native fauna species, our Fighting Extinction species. Beyond Australia, we are fighting extinction in globally renowned biodiversity hotspots. Our international conservation grants and sister zoo program help support critically endangered species in Oceania, Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Our three properties, Healesville Sanctuary, Melbourne Zoo and Werribee Open Range Zoo attract over 2.5 million visitors each year. As a not-for-profit, these visits provide revenue to support our conservation work, and a community of supporters who are effecting changes that provide tangible conservation outcomes.

Zoos Victoria provides care for more than 4,500 individual animals, and houses some 350 species to support our conservation goals. The choice that we make in species to house, breed and release to the wild have far-reaching impacts on communities, species and habitats.

The Animal Species Selection Guiding Principles and Framework provides for consideration of long-term requirements of species, helping us to future-proof our activities.

Zoos Victoria is a just, humane and effective zoo-based conservation organisation committed to securing a future rich in wildlife. Every species in our care has a justified role to support the delivery of our conservation efforts. This can be achieved through a range of strategies including involvement in species recovery programs, community conservation campaigns and actions that provide financial support for our conservation or animal welfare work.

The Zoos Victoria Framework for Species Selection informs our choice of species. It draws on the guiding principles outlined in our Code of Animal Welfare and Ethics.

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zoo.org.au/fightingextinction

ZOOS
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Fighting Extinction

Key Guiding Principles

Zoos Victoria's decision-making for species commitments is guided by three key questions:

1. Is it justified?
2. Is it humane?; and
3. Is it effective?



Justification – Conservation Outcomes

Zoos Victoria will ensure all species housed at our sites support our conservation or animal welfare goals. This can be achieved by actions that contribute to wildlife conservation, community conservation and financial sustainability. Our commitments to ensure justification in species decision making include:

- Every species has a clearly defined role to support our conservation mission.
 - The species (including wildlife rescue cases) must meet the criteria of at least two conservation value categories, including:
 - Recovery – Housing the species at Zoos Victoria supports species survival, e.g. through breed for release
 - Ark - Housing the species at Zoos Victoria supports species survival, e.g. protection from immediate threats
 - Ambassador – Housing and display of this species showcases Zoos Victoria's conservation work and/or influences community values/behaviours towards conservation
 - Enabling - Housing and display of this species showcases Zoos Victoria's commitment to animal welfare and/or influences community value of and motivation to visit our zoos
 - Research - Housing of this species increases knowledge and enables evidence-based decisions to support conservation/animal welfare outcomes. Housing of this species provides opportunities for learning and builds our capabilities.

The species should also be aligned with the Property Master Plan and Property branding.

Key triggers for decision-making: must align with at least two conservation value categories, and, Property Master Plan/branding.

Humaneness – Animal Welfare

Zoos Victoria commits to only housing species that can thrive in our care. Our commitments to ensure humaneness in species decision making include:

- The needs of a species can be met now, and in the future; housing and animal care practices will reflect contemporary values
- For wildlife rescue cases, our decision to return animals to the wild or continue to house them in our zoos will be based on assessment of likely welfare outcomes
- We are mindful of the impacts of our activities on wildlife that shares our land, and seek to find solutions that provide for wildlife welfare¹
- Due diligence will occur to ensure that all animal acquisitions are ethical
- We will ensure compliance in housing, husbandry and management of species in accordance with Zoos Victoria's Code of Animal Welfare and Ethics
- We will share our commitment to animal care with visitors.

Key triggers for decision-making: must satisfy requirements of Zoos Victoria Code of Animal Welfare and Ethics, and due diligence occurs when planning species acquisitions.

¹ For animals/species that present risks to our priority species and/or to people, intervention, including humane destruction may be deployed, or may be a legislative requirement (e.g. for declared pest species).



Effectiveness – Outcomes

Zoos Victoria uses evidence-based management wherever possible and will ensure adequate resources to drive progress. As such, our commitments to ensuring effectiveness in species decision making include:

- We will conduct annual assessments of the conservation value and resource effort of a species using the Zoos Victoria Species Selection Tool
- We will ensure resources and capabilities for species management processes are provided
- We will engage in long-term planning to future-proof species populations at Zoos Victoria; providing assurance that we can access and house species. This includes:
 - Succession planning – species requirements over the next 20 years are able to be predicted
 - Procurement strategy – method for acquiring the species is known, reliable and aligns with contemporary values
 - Transfer potential – frameworks are in place to enable transfer of species between Zoos Victoria and other organisations, including international transfers
 - Breeding programs – population metrics including size, founder base, genetic diversity are understood.

Considerations for effectiveness of species categories include:

- Recovery and Ark species – provide outcomes that benefit recovery program goals (e.g. investigate/determine husbandry requirements so that the species can be housed and bred reliably and successfully)
- Ambassador species - species can be maintained at Zoos Victoria for duration of campaign/program, species is readily seen and utilised to influence community values/ behaviours

- Enabling species - species can be maintained at Zoos Victoria in a way that is engaging for visitors, the community values the opportunity to observe this species
- Research species – completed projects provide outcomes that benefits our programs (e.g. wildlife conservation, community conservation, animal welfare).

Key triggers for decision-making: species is fit for purpose, if outcomes repeatedly fall short of agreed goals, review of species to occur.

Decision-making for phase-out or non-acquisition of species

If we cannot meet the above conditions, consideration should be given to potential interventions. If this is not possible, species should not be acquired, or if species is already at Zoos Victoria, consider options for phase-out.

Zoos Victoria will maintain a Schedule of Restricted species. Our current resources and values preclude acquisition of those species included on the Schedule.

Exemptions may apply to Fighting Extinction priority species for which zoo populations are being established, and animal care requirements are currently unknown.



Species Selection

The Zoos Victoria Species Selection Tool supports decision-making and ongoing assessment of species in our care. Annual assessment of all species occurs against conservation value and effort criteria.

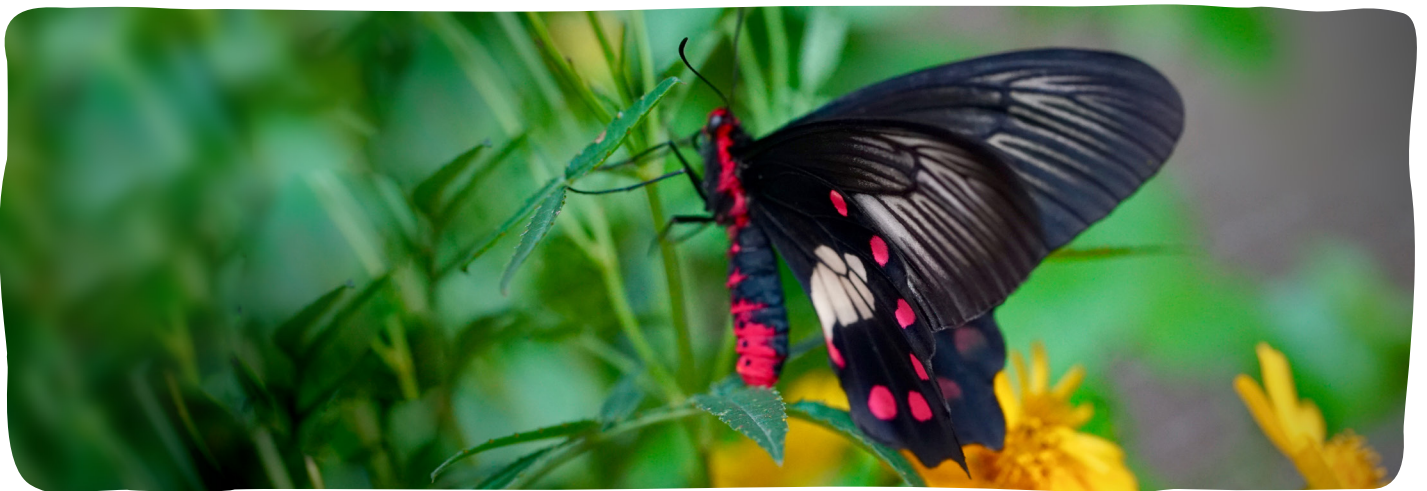
THE FIVE CONSERVATION VALUE CRITERIA ARE:

- Recovery Species – threatened species for which there are formal Recovery Programs
- Ark Species – threatened species for which there are collaborative species management programs such as ASMP
- Ambassador Species – species that are the face of our Zoos Victoria Conservation Programs, including our community conservation campaigns and international programs
- Enabling Species – species that enable connections with visitors to support conservation outcomes, this includes species that attract visitors to our zoos
- Research Species – species that enable research that increases knowledge that can be applied to animal care and conservation.

THE FIVE EFFORT CRITERIA ARE:

- Animal Welfare – capacity for species to thrive at Zoos Victoria, includes assessment of housing, animal care program, physical health and behavioural repertoire
- Species Health – potential for sustainable populations, including genetics of population, population size and any specific needs associated with population management
- Ease of Transfer – including legislative frameworks and our ability to import/export the species as well as transfer the species between zoos and other organisations in Australia
- Environmental Implications – alignment with our carbon neutral goals, including a species need for heating, cooling, water management and distance food is transported
- Financial Implications – costs associated with care of the species, including number of keepers, cost of food, medications, planned animal transfers and exhibit works.

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