

Welcome

The Scottish Deer Centre is a popular visitor attraction located in lowland Fife. The Centre provides education to thousands of visitors annually and we pride ourselves in the delivery, relevance and quality of this service.

We have simple aims and objectives which are detailed within this document. Our aims and objectives are coherent with BIAZA, The Zoos Forum Handbook and The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy.

SDC Mission Statement:

“To promote through its living animals, using managed breeding, environmental education and research; the conservation of Deer species, their habitats and other fauna within, both in Scotland and worldwide.”

Current Education, Tours and Activities:

- 1. Guided Tour** - an introduction to Deer species from around the world and the diversity of challenges they face.
- 2. Nose 2 Nose** - 15 minutes in with a hand rear covering adaptations to life in the wild of Scotland. This activity also covers antler growth and development.
- 3. Birds of Prey** - 3 demonstrations daily looking into this long existing practice and explaining the relationship of hunting with raptors in medieval times.
- 4. Otter feeding** - introduction to the biology and habitat needs of the otter.
- 5. Carnivore feed walk and talk** - starting with the wolves we explain the impacts on the food chain and habitats since the loss of this top predator. Next the Wildcats plight within Scotland is explained and the conservation efforts being made. We finish at the Red Fox describing its tenacity despite persecution and the relations it shares with very young deer.
- 6. Trailer rides** - a trip around the world and taking in our rarest Deer species promoting their conservation.
- 7. Pond dipping** - our chance to show our visitors the importance of habitats and communities and the amazing array of wildlife within a pond environment.
- 8. Mini Rangers** - aimed at our younger visitors this explains bio-diversity within common habitats and how you can help attract wildlife to your garden or School.
- 9. Red Squirrel interpretation and feeding stations** - on our tree top walkway we tell the story of the Red Squirrel versus the Grey Squirrel. Covering habitat needs, native and alien species and the trouble caused by the Grey Squirrel. We have two wild Red Squirrel families in the park and we have feeding stations erected for their use which is accompanied by interpretation.
- 10. Natures Larder** - interpretation explaining the array of food stores available to wildlife within a woodland and the species which may frequent these habitats.
- 11. Pond area interpretation** - explaining the habitat in full and throughout the changing seasons.

All of the educational tours and activities above are offered daily at The Centre except for the Pond dipping and Trailer rides which are seasonal.



Aims and Objectives:

To provide our visitors with unique and memorable experiences.

- Our trailer ride through some of the enclosures provides our visitors with close views of the animals and the opportunity to feed them by hand. We use this to demonstrate the varied array of size, colour, shape and habitat needs of the species.
- The nose 2 nose meeting involves a hands on experience with a hand reared Deer. Here we demonstrate adaptations to life in the wild and describe the unique senses of Deer.
- We demonstrate the growth of antler from velvet right through to final casting. This is demonstrated with antler specimens from various species. The specimens range from full antlers to antler section with some still being covered in velvet. Our visitors are encouraged to feel and touch the antlers to gain a better appreciation.
- The tree top walk is a 90 metre aerial walkway which leads you into the canopy of a small woodland. This is complimented by Red Squirrel interpretation which tells the story of Sammy the squirrel and his battle with the Grey Squirrel.
- We provide daily feeding talks which demonstrate relationships with Deer and shared habitats on the following species: 1. European Wolf. 2. Short Clawed Otter. 3. Red Fox. 4. Scottish Wildcat.
- Our Birds of Prey flying demonstrations offer close contact and spectacular aerobatics whilst narration is undertaken by highly trained falconers.

To reach all audiences.

- Our tours are adapted to meet the age, learning styles and needs of the group they are directed at.
- We use translators for foreign groups.
- We use artefacts and specimens for touch, feel and smell for our visitors who are impaired.
- Appropriate language is used on presentations and interpretation which can be accessed by all abilities.
- We have a schools brochure which particularly aims at meeting school curriculum needs.
- We provide viewing windows and elevated areas to maximise the experience of all our visitors.

To excel in and be involved in environmental education.

- We have achieved the "Enterprise in Education in Fife, Determined to succeed" certificate.
- We are certified ambassadors of Springboard Scotland.
- We are linked with the following local schools: 5. Bell Baxter High School - Natural connections programme. 6. Kilmarnock Primary - design and establish Wildlife gardens on School grounds as a class project. 7. Lumphinnans Primary - Determined to succeed project. This involved Eco work, fundraising for animal adoption and craft works relating to animal species.

To promote global issues and inspire change.

- Our mini Rangers activity introduces Bio-diversity to young audiences. This covers local common species and how they can be helped and encouraged at home or at School. The importance of habitats are pin pointed on this tour.
- Our environmental policy is on show for all visitors.
- Our most endangered species are highlighted and the global implications explained.
- Positive actions are explained via our Red Squirrel interpretation and how visitors can become involved.

To ensure our education is of a high standard and relevant.

- All staff are annually trained on presentation skills.
- Tour content and delivery is monitored annually and feedback given.
- School and visitor Surveys are circulated.
- Consolidating questions are asked at the end of presentations to ensure the "message" has been passed on.
- Activities such as Pond Dipping and Mini Rangers have a small booklet which accompanies the delivery of the education. This acts as a souvenir of the activity and contains consolidating sentences and facts.

To engage with other sectors involved with environmental education and exchange information.

- We have continued links with Elmwood College Conservation, Animal Care, Horticulture and Game Keeping departments.
- We work very closely with Fife Coast and Countryside Trust. * We exchange information and materials with St Andrews University.