

AS & A LEVEL

EDUCATIONAL TALKS INFORMATION



Educational Talks

We currently offer the following talks to pupils:

Conservation

Evolution

Habitats and Adaptations

During the talk the keeper will take you round to visit three or four different animals so that the pupils get to see a variety of species. This allows for a discussion of similarities and differences between the animals as well as information relating to the specific talk. The pupils will then have an opportunity to ask and answer questions relating to the animals.

The group size for talks will be limited to 20 pupils, so you may be given separate times for the same talk if your group is larger than 20 pupils. This is to ensure that all the pupils taking part get the most out of the session.

Talks generally last around 30 minutes and will take place out in the Park in all weathers; please ensure pupils wear suitable clothes for the conditions. They are generally delivered by the keepers and may vary slightly between different staff members.

Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee which animals you will see during your talk, but you will get to learn more about three or four different species during your talk as the keeper takes you to visit the enclosures.

Please note: our talks do not involve any hands-on contact with the animals.



Talk Details

Conservation

Conservation is the management of nature and biodiversity with the aim of protecting species, their habitats, and ecosystems. The IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) evaluates the extinction risk of thousands of species which are then ranked in a range from **least concern** to **extinct**. This talk will look at a few different species that we have here at the park that are facing various threat levels. We will discuss the problems these animals face in the wild and the ways that zoos and conservation bodies are trying to combat these threats. We may also discuss particular captive breeding and conservation programmes that the park is involved in.

Evolution

Evolution is where species of all living things have changed and adapted over time. Many theories have been developed for how evolution occurs but the most widely accepted theory is Darwin's Theory of Evolution by Natural Selection. This is where individuals in a species show a wide range of genetic variation. Some of the individuals will therefore be better suited to the environment than others and so will be more successful in passing on their genes. This causes a gradual and continuous change in a species so that it evolves to perfectly adapt to its environment. In this talk we look at some different animals we have here at the Park and how they have evolved to be perfectly adapted to their environment. We will look at one group of animals (mammals/birds/reptiles) and discuss where different species diverged and how this happened, whether it be by specialised diets, habitats or behaviours.

Habitats and Adaptations

Most animals are adapted to survive in a particular habitat. Over a period of evolutionary time, they have developed special features that help them survive in their environment. This is called an **adaptation**. In our Habitats and Adaptations talk, we will take a look at species from varying habitats and the adaptations they have to help them survive in different conditions. We may also look at how adaptations come about through variation over time and the "survival of the fittest" theory. This talk varies according to the animal section we visit but will always aim to include animals from different habitats.

