

## Northumberland College's trip to Yorkshire Wild Park

On the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017, a group of level 2 and level 3 students (and three lucky members of staff) were able to visit Yorkshire Wildlife Park in Doncaster.

The students, whilst studying animal management at the Kirkley Hall campus, were able to interact and view a variety of species that the park had to offer.



As part of their studies, learners have completed a zoo management module which helps them to understand the role of a modern day zoo in terms of conservation and how animal welfare, enclosure design and enrichment is focused upon. The trip has greatly benefited their studies and allowed them to gain insight into an effective and well intentioned animal collection.



The park is home to a magnitude of species however, unlike contemporary zoos, YWP focuses more on space and providing quality for the animals rather than quantity of species. The zoo currently occupies around 100 acres (40 ha) of the area.

Students particularly enjoyed entering the mixed species, immersion exhibits whereby visitors are able to walk around (inside the enclosure) and view the animals around them. These enclosures were very spacious and allowed visitors to view the animals at a close distance whilst sticking to walkways to respect their personal space and privacy.

Students also benefitted from the numerous educational talks and feeding displays that took place every half hour. The information portrayed was very relevant to their studies and discussed in situ and ex situ conservation steps that the park was taking and offered opportunities for visitors to get involved and help out whilst promoting sustainability for the planet.

The zoo is both members of the British & Irish Association of Zoos & Aquariums (BIAZA) and the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA), both highly accredited zoo organisations.

Student Feedback = "I really enjoyed the trip, it was a good experience to get to talk to some of the keepers at the park. My favourite part was the polar bears and the giant otters. The animals were well trained. Thanks to the 'friends of Kirkley hall' for the opportunity to develop knowledge on different species that can be in a wild life park and zoos." – Chelsea Brennan Level 2 animal care student



The best enclosures:

**Lion Country** = Lion Country was opened in May 2010, and houses a pride of ten African lions, all of which came from Oradea Zoological Garden in Romania. The lions were kept in small enclosures and poor living conditions at the Romanian zoo, which could not adequately care for them. Their new enclosure is large and grassy and it includes a waterfall, rocks and trees. The lions are split into three prides, and have a much better life at the park

**South America Viva** = South America Viva is a walk-through enclosure displaying several South American species, including Patagonian mara, common squirrel monkeys, Azara's agouti, common rhea and capybara. There are also separate enclosures housing six-banded armadillo, South American coati, giant anteaters, common marmosets and giant otters.

**Project Polar Reserve** = Opened in August 2014, Project Polar Reserve houses four male polar bears named Victor, Pixel, Nissan, and Nobby. These are the only polar bears in an English zoo. The largest enclosure is ten acres in size and features two pools, the largest of which is eight metres deep and contains 25.5 million gallons of water. This is one of the largest polar bear enclosures in the world.

All in all, an excellent day out. This trip would not have been possible had it not been for the financial assistance of the 'Friends of Kirkley Hall'. Thank you very much for the opportunity for a great day out!



