



PRESS RELEASE
15th March 2011

A Really Wild Fundraiser

Chris Packham Fills Shanklin Theatre for the Isle of Wight Zoo

The Isle of Wight Zoo received some valuable extra support on the 25th February from BBC wildlife presenter Chris Packham. His one-man show, *A Wild Life Exposed*, has been touring the country and Mr Packham stopped off at Shanklin Theatre to put on a special version in aid of the zoo.

Mr Packham's talk was based around his own wildlife photography, which came from around the world as well as his own back garden. As he shared stories of capturing – or missing – the perfect picture he also communicated his message of conservation. From international eco-tourism initiatives to appreciating local wildlife, Mr Packham outlined positive ways humans can get involved with the natural world and related them to his own experiences.

A long-standing supporter of the Isle of Wight Zoo, Mr Packham also highlighted the zoo's contribution to conservation and the need to support it. He called for more volunteers, who help with tasks such as maintaining the gardens and welcoming the zoo's guests. He also praised Shanklin Theatre as an example of the enormous difference a successful volunteer scheme can make to an organisation.

Thanks to Mr Packham and Shanklin Theatre's generous support the evening raised over £5000 for the Isle of Wight Zoo. Zoo staff answered questions and sold merchandise and raffle tickets during the interval, and were thrilled to see the evening so well supported by the local community.

Zoo Curator Paul Bailie said of the evening: "Chris's talk was one of humour, serious conservation issues, as well as some amazing pictures. We are very grateful for his support, which raised a fantastic amount of money."

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Notes to editors:

Isle of Wight Zoo aims to promote the survival of endangered species through first class educational and recreational experiences, exemplary animal management, conservation and research. The Zoo is best known for its work with exotic cats. As a centre for surplus or rescued big cats, all have come to the Zoo at different stages of their lives and from a variety of backgrounds. The Zoo strives to encourage the social development and natural behaviour of each cat in their care. Every species of big cat residing at the Zoo is currently under considerable threat in its natural habitat. Isle of Wight Zoo is currently home to 8 tigers, 4 lions and 2 jaguars.