



PRESS RELEASE

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How Much Are Tigers Worth?

Isle of Wight Zoo Celebrates World Tiger Day with a Fundraising Pledge

Many people are aware that the Isle of Wight Zoo has a long history of providing sanctuary for tigers. Some of them have sad or distressing backgrounds, having spent their youth in circuses or being rejected by their mothers, and as they would not survive in the wild the zoo staff work hard to give them happy comfortable lives. However, the zoo's work goes far further than this, and many people may be unaware of their work protecting wild tigers.

For several years the Isle of Wight Zoo has been supporting tiger conservation in India through funding projects identified by charity Global Tiger Patrol. Earlier this year the zoo received the exciting news that their current project, supporting local advocacy for tiger conservation project in Karnataka, will be expanding. The area is populated with wild tigers in the Kudremukh National Park and Bhadra Reserve, and the project leader has been working tirelessly with local people to promote conservation. Not only does this affect tigers, it also works to promote other wildlife and at the same time has a hugely positive effect on the communities who share their live with the tigers.

The project has three main aims:

- Educating local people,
- Building a communication network that involves the whole community in spotting signs of wildlife crime and
- Reducing conflict between tigers and humans by supporting people who want to move out of the park.

The expansion will allow them to employ two field assistants to support the project leader. It will pay for them to travel the long distances necessary, and it will provide them with the equipment they need to do their job.

This year the Isle of Wight Zoo's contribution will increase threefold, to over £10000. This will mean a renewed emphasis on conservation fundraising, which the team are already very excited about. They have a full breakdown of costs – from the £10 a month utilities bill to the £140 monthly salary of a senior field assistant – and are looking forwards to ticking them off as they go.

Isle of Wight residents can expect to see some strange and bizarre events going on through the year, all in aid of the zoo's flagship species. And if any individuals, organisations or businesses would like to get involved they'll be welcomed with open paws! Fundraising will be kicked off on 26th September, which is World Tiger Day, and therefore seems the ideal time to make the campaign official.

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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 10 tigers, 4 lions and 2 jaguars.