

Noah's Ark Zoo Farm (NAZF) Research Policy

1. Research Mission

Noah's Ark Zoo Farm is committed to utilising our living collection to advance scientific knowledge and support global biodiversity, sustainability, and conservation. Our mission is to facilitate evidence-based improvements in zoo operations and animal welfare while enhancing public understanding of the natural world.

2. Priority Research Areas

NAZF encourages reliable scientific research that builds a body of knowledge to protect wildlife, people and the planet, in-line with our charitable vision. Priority is given to projects in the following areas:

- **Animal Welfare & Behaviour:** e.g studies on social dynamics, environmental enrichment, and transitioning to data-driven care through tools like thermal imaging.
- **Conservation Science:** e.g. studies on captive animal behaviour that can be extrapolated to external conservation partners to aid their development of effective management plans and native field projects.
- **Zoo Education:** e.g. evaluating visitor engagement, educational messaging, and the impact of technology such as augmented reality on learning.
- **People & Wellbeing:** e.g. examining multi-sensory exhibit benefits for all visitors and the link between staff wellbeing and animal welfare.

3. Application Procedure

We welcome proposals from zoo employees, interns, and external researchers, including students.

1. **Submission:** Applicants must submit a **Research Project Proposal Form**.
2. **Review:** Proposals are reviewed by the NAZF Research Coordinator to ensure strategic fit, scientific merit, feasibility and animal welfare impact in-line with the NAZF Research Proposal Approval Process. Each application will receive confirmation of the approval/declination of the proposal. Where appropriate NAZF might provide some constructive feedback before a study can be approved, so please submit proposal forms in good time to allow for this. Any recommendations must be addressed by the applicant to the satisfaction of NAZF before approval can be granted.
3. **Requirements:** If proposal is accepted a health and safety risk assessment must be approved before site access is granted. The Coordinator will liaise

between external researchers and the relevant keeping staff to agree site visits for sample/data collection.

4. **Conduct:** Researchers must remain courteous to staff and visitors, avoiding the obstruction of staff workflows or visitor views. On-site protocols, such as biosecurity measures, must be strictly followed if appropriate.

If a researcher's project plans change significantly after approval the project may require a new proposal form to be submitted and approved. NAZF reserves the right to revoke research approval if researchers are found to be in breach of the research policy or due to animal welfare, health and safety or ethical compliance concerns.

4. Legal and Ethical Standards

All research must comply with the **Zoo Licensing Act 1981** and relevant UK/EU legal requirements.

- **Animal Ethics:** Research is restricted to non-invasive techniques that do not require Home Office licensing.
- **Human Ethics:** Studies involving humans must ensure the right to withdraw, informed consent, transparency, and data confidentiality.
- **Privacy:** Capturing images or video of staff or the public requires prior written consent.

5. Data Ownership and Outputs

- **Reporting:** Researchers must provide NAZF with a copy of their final thesis or project report for our records and BIAZA reporting. Projects exceeding 12 months require an annual progress report.
- **Ownership:** All data and biological samples remain the property of NAZF. Data may not be used for purposes outside the approved application.
- **Acknowledgment:** NAZF must be acknowledged in all reports and publications. Collaborative or commissioned projects require co-authorship for relevant zoo staff.
- **Media:** Any media publicity or press releases related to the research require written permission from the NAZF PR Manager. The content of project reports may be used by the Zoo for non-scientific publicity purposes (e.g. Annual Report) without notifying the researcher.