



## MEDIA RELEASE

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Perth Zoo has launched a new program to support the conservation of animals in the wild as part of its efforts to ensure that zoos don't become the final resting place for thousands of threatened species.

Perth Zoo Chief Executive Susan Hunt said the new **Wildlife Conservation Action** fundraising program provided the community with the opportunity to contribute to the conservation of threatened native and exotic species in the wild.

Funds raised through **Wildlife Conservation Action** will support priority species including Sumatran Orang-utans, Sumatran Tigers, Asian Elephants, Sun Bears, African Painted Dogs, New Guinea Tree Kangaroos and native species including frogs.

Key projects include the establishment of an orang-utan breeding sanctuary in Sumatra and vital research to help save native frog species.

“There is enormous public interest in the environment and in conserving threatened species and the Zoo is in a unique position to harness that energy to raise funds for wildlife conservation,” Ms Hunt said.

In addition to successfully breeding threatened native species for release into the wild in Western Australia, Perth Zoo is working with neighbouring countries providing assistance for the conservation of some of the rarest and most endangered species on earth.

“This assistance includes financial support and the provision of staff expertise and training, as well as support for wildlife surveys, habitat protection, and research and conservation of threatened species such as Sumatran Orang-utan, Asian Elephant, Sumatran Tiger and Javan Gibbon.

“Perth Zoo has the expertise and commitment to support the conservation of species in the wild and believes it has the responsibility to assist its neighbours where possible to conserve extraordinary species, habitat and biodiversity.”

Late last year, in a world first, Perth Zoo released one of its captive-bred Sumatran Orang-utans into the protected Bukit Tigapuluh National Park in Sumatra as part of an international effort to re-establish a population of this critically endangered species in the wild.

“One of our key priorities in **Wildlife Conservation Action** is to support integrated conservation efforts in the Bukit Tigapuluh National Park. This will include wild elephant surveys to assist with the development of a management plan for this species in the park, and the establishment of an open orang-utan sanctuary,” Ms Hunt said.

“The sanctuary will allow rescued ex-pets or orphaned orang-utans unsuitable for reintroduction to the wild to live in a rainforest setting, with the aim of their offspring contributing to the orang-utan population within the Park. Zoo staff will be instrumental in setting up the sanctuary.”

“The sanctuary will provide a secondary site for orang-utan reintroductions, as well as providing a base for anti-poaching and anti-logging surveillance and a conservation research facility.”

Ms Hunt said Bukit Tigapuluh National Park was a unique and an extremely important area of land, guarded by specially trained anti-logging and anti-poaching Orang-utan Protection Units.

“It is the only national park in Sumatra with a complete representation of Sumatran mega fauna including tigers, elephants, Sun Bear, tapir, possibly Sumatran Rhinoceros and the re-established population of Sumatran Orang-utan,” Ms Hunt said.

Javan or Silvery Gibbons are another species of focus for **Wildlife Conservation Action**. Native to the most populated island in the world, secure areas for Javan Gibbon can be secured through concerted efforts and financial support for this species.

Other priorities include conservation of New Guinea Tree Kangaroos, the African Painted Dog and Sun Bears in Cambodia.

Found only in Papua New Guinea, as few as 200 Tenkile Tree Kangaroos remain in the wild.

The African Painted Dog, once widespread across Africa, is now reduced to small, scattered populations totalling no more than 2500 individuals.

“Money raised through our **Wildlife Conservation Action** fund will help us support these and other priority species in the wild and provide the community with the opportunity to play an active role in supporting wildlife conservation,” Ms Hunt said.

Perth Zoo covers the administration costs for **Wildlife Conservation Action** which means that 100% of donations to the fund go to conservation projects.

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## **Background**

Perth Zoo is dedicated to using its resources to help secure long term populations of species in natural environments while engaging the community in global conservation action.

Perth Zoo’s wildlife conservation work includes breeding animals for release into the wild, conducting research into the reproductive biology of threatened fauna, providing wildlife rehabilitation services and wildlife medicine training, and providing financial and non-financial support for habitat protection and conservation projects in the field.

Around 1800 native animals bred at Perth Zoo have been released into the wild in Western Australia as part of threatened species recovery programs.

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