



Animals and the environment

A lion watches preparations.



WOW!
ZSL London Zoo is the world's oldest scientific zoo. It opened on 27 April 1828.

Lockdown loneliness

There have been reports of animals at zoos missing their visitors. Chimps have been displaying odd behaviour, and other animals have been coming over to the edges of their enclosure to see their zookeepers. Senior keeper Tara Humphrey, who looks after pygmy goats at London Zoo, said of them, "They've been waiting patiently at the gate every day for their usual ear scratches from visitors so we're doing our bit to make it up to them."



England's zoos and safari parks reopen after lockdown

On 15 June, zoos and safari parks in England opened their doors to visitors for the first time since 23 March, when the UK announced a lockdown to fight the coronavirus outbreak. Many zoos and safari parks have struggled during lockdown – they depend on ticket sales from visitors to pay their zookeepers and other staff, as well as to buy food for the animals.

Over the past few months, zoos tried to raise money through online fundraising efforts, but it was difficult to replace what they would have earned from visitors.



Cleaning up at the penguin pool.

Chief operating officer of Chester Zoo, Jamie Christon, said it will take "a long, long, time to recover".

Among the conditions for reopening are safety measures including extra hand-washing and sanitiser stations. People will have to social distance (keeping at least two metres apart), and at some zoos they will need to book a time to visit. These safety

restrictions mean fewer people will be able to visit at one time – Whipsnade zoo in Bedfordshire would normally expect 10,000

visitors a day in June, but this will now be limited to 3,000. At other zoos, some indoor facilities will stay closed for the time being. Marwell Zoo in Hampshire said there would be "no animal talks, touch tables, train services or public animal feeds".

When the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) opened booking for its zoos, its website crashed because so many people logged on. London Zoo's chief operating officer, Kathryn England, said, "We're delighted that we can once again welcome visitors to ZSL London Zoo. We've gone to great lengths to make the zoo a welcoming and safe space to visit."

At the time *The Week Junior* went to press, zoos in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland were not yet allowed to reopen.



ECO TIP OF THE WEEK

IDENTIFY PLANTS AND TREES

Whether you live in the country, a town or a city, there are many different kinds of trees and plants to spot while out on a walk. You don't need to travel at all far, especially at this time of year when the hedgerows and parks are packed with different plants to identify.

There are several helpful apps that will

identify trees or plants from a photo, but it's fun to figure things out for yourself. Start by looking at any flowers or fruit (including those high up among the branches of trees). Look at the

shape and number of leaves, and the size and shape of the plant as a whole. Why not take notes and make sketches on your next stroll and see if you can identify five different types of tree or plant?

DID YOU KNOW?
The oak tree is the most common tree in the UK.

Get to know your local trees.



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Once you have read the article, try any of the following activities...



Hold a debate

For people yearning for an end to lockdown, it feels great that zoos and safari parks are beginning to reopen? But is it silly that we should be opening up places like zoos and non-essential shops when we can't even work out how to get all our children back to school safely? Should the reopening of schools for all children be the sole priority of the Government? Or are schools a particularly difficult thing to reopen and it is good to have opportunities for educational outings such as visits to a zoo? What do you think?

Writing challenge!

Choose one of the following writing warm-ups.

1 Write an amusing dialogue between a couple of zoo animals watching people come back into the zoo after so long. Imagine what they would find funny, amazing or unpleasant about human behaviour. Remember to use all your speech punctuation.

or **2** Write an acrostic poem about CAPTIVITY (so the first letter of each line should spell the word captivity if read downwards). You might want to use it to compare the lives of zoo animals with your own experiences of lockdown.

Investigate

Think of an extreme fact about a zoo, such as the oldest zoo or the longest-living animal kept in a zoo, and find out as much as you can about it. Write up your research as a fact file.