

A close-up photograph of an orangutan sitting in a nest made of green grass. The orangutan has thick, reddish-brown fur and is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL CAMPAIGN

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FROM WORKING WITH **COMMUNITIES** IN SOUTH EAST ASIA, TO **EDUCATING** OUR ZOO VISITORS AND SCHOOLS, **EMPOWERMENT** IS AT THE **HEART** OF OUR APPROACH.

Sustainable Palm Oil Campaign

The vital role of zoos

Accredited zoos and aquariums have a vital role to play in solving conservation challenges. As trusted, high profile, conservation organisations, we are uniquely positioned to **lead the way** as sustainable businesses, using our conservation and **science expertise** to drive best practice and influence others whilst providing direct links to the species in our care and the conservation of their counterparts in the wild.

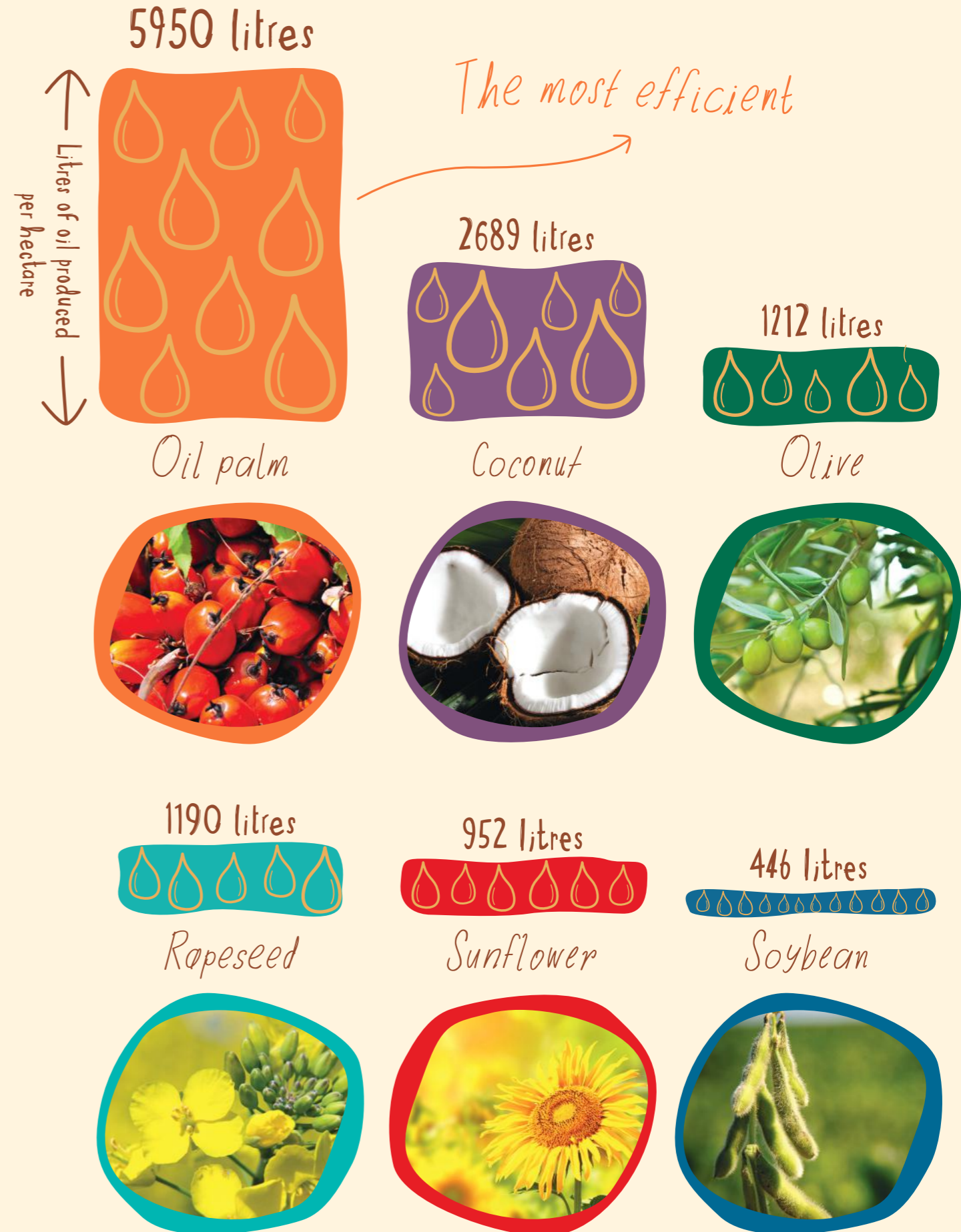
At Chester Zoo, the strength of our voice and the breadth of our audiences means we can open eyes to the environmental challenges that face our planet and **empower people** to be part of the solution. Harnessing our world-class keepers, scientists and educators, together with our highly collaborative approach and extensive partner networks, we can engage our audience of millions to be part of genuine conservation action.

The journey to deforestation-free sustainable palm oil is one example of how we can interlink science and practice, using this approach to **find innovative ways** to tackle the biodiversity crisis.

Through our conservation and science work, we understand what has happened in the rainforest, and we know what is needed to save species. Through our engagement expertise we also understand how to **inspire the public** and influence businesses, agencies and governments at a policy level to deliver change. We enrich and enhance these skills by collaborating with our partners and colleagues from national and international zoo associations, academic and educational institutions, conservation NGOs and stakeholders throughout the palm oil supply chain.



PER HECTARE OF LAND



Sustainable Palm Oil Campaign

Increased demand for palm oil has caused extensive habitat destruction across South East Asia, and in particular, Indonesia and Malaysia, where around 85% of palm oil is grown.

Deforestation is a major environmental crisis, and is now the second leading cause of climate change globally, after burning fossil fuels.

Agricultural expansion is thought to account for around 80% of deforestation.

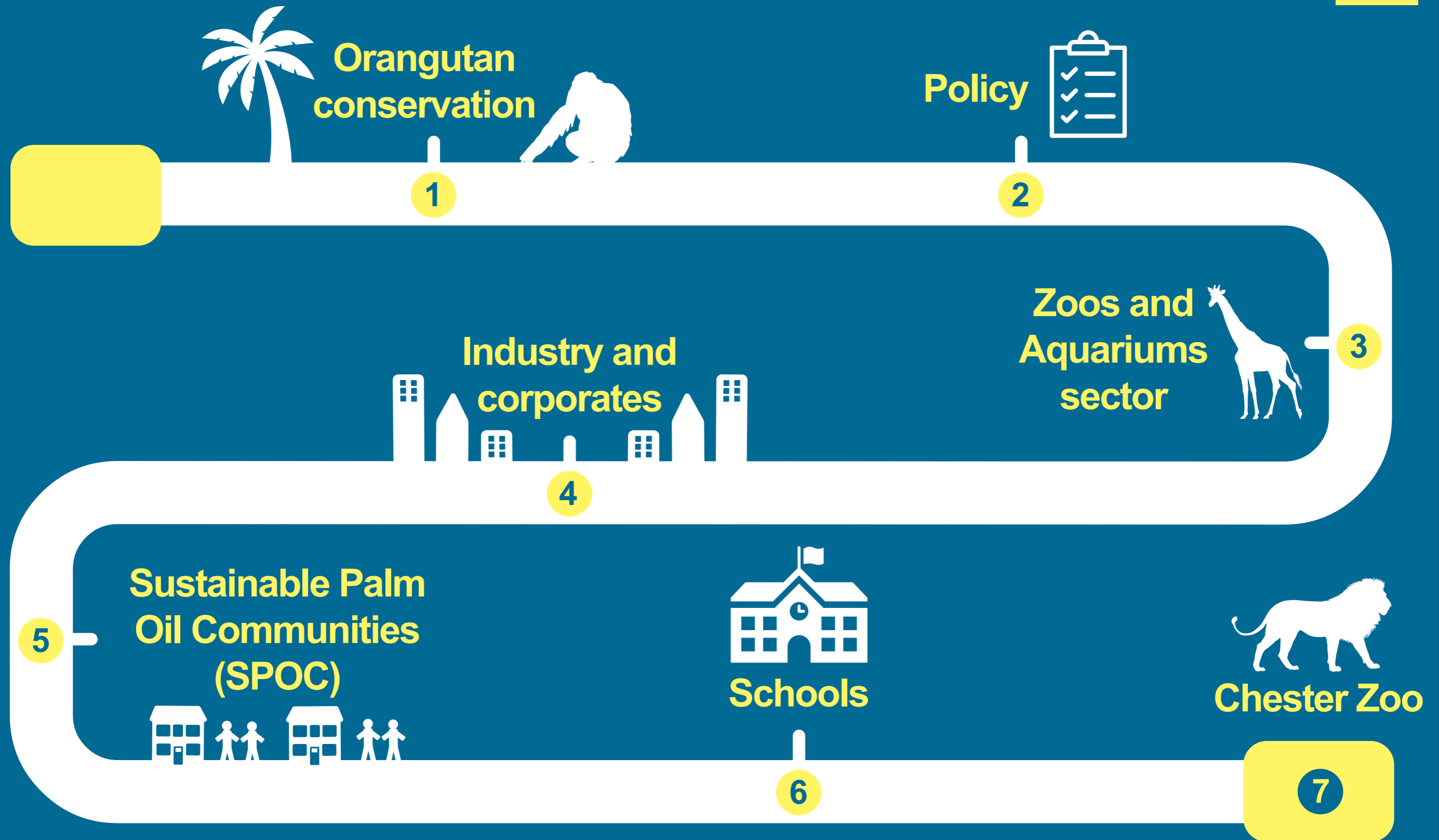
The palm oil industry is not going anywhere; habitat fragmentation and destruction has already occurred and moving demand to other vegetable oils would require more land for crops, impacting biodiversity elsewhere. It's widely recognised amongst scientists and conservation organisations that deforestation-free certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO) production is the most feasible solution to preventing further environmental damage whilst also tackling social and economic challenges.

Research has also shown that the average carbon footprint of CSPO is 36% lower than for non-certified palm oil, and has a role to play in the climate change conversations.

Working with certification schemes and growers is a key component of sustainable agriculture solutions. Our goal was simple: advocate for improvements in the current certification scheme whilst increasing demand for sustainable palm oil.

Our approach

In 2012, Chester Zoo made a commitment to increasing demand for sustainable palm oil in the UK, using the zoo brand to create the link that was missing between the public and the industry. Using a social marketing and behaviour-change approach, we brought together a UK wide network of partners with the single aim of driving a cultural shift towards deforestation-free sustainable palm in order to protect wildlife across the world, through engagement with the whole supply chain from field to store.



1 Orangutan conservation



For over 15 years we've worked with partners in Malaysia and Indonesia to understand conservation challenges and conserve regional biodiversity. Our long standing partnership with HUTAN, a local conservation organisation based in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo, has developed from orangutan research and forest protection, to a holistic programme of work from community education to reforestation and advocacy. The impact of unsustainable oil palm production in the region on species such as the Bornean orangutan is major, and presents the challenge of how to manage biodiversity conservation within landscapes severely degraded and fragmented by extensive agriculture. HUTAN have spearheaded innovative solutions to this issue, central to which has been the facilitation of dialogue and action between the conservation and palm oil production sectors.

Through our partners, and working with plantation owners, local communities and the Sabah Wildlife Department, we have been able to establish critical forest corridors in the Kinabatangan forests. The next phase of this landscape work will restore further forest corridors creating more extensive forest connectivity over a wider landscape, in conjunction with monitoring and evaluation to inform future management of wildlife within forest-agricultural mosaic landscapes across Borneo and elsewhere.

2 Policy



Through building our expertise in sustainable palm oil, and engaging effectively through various networks, we have also been able to proactively influence at a policy level, engaging politicians and leaders and consulting on the criteria within schemes such as the RSPO and government policies such as the EU policy change on labelling laws in 2012. Through increased reputation in the field, we have a seat at the table alongside influencers in the supply chain, and represent our sector at UK industry roundtables.

In June 2018, conservationists from the zoo, alongside our local Chester MP, organised a large gathering at the Houses of Parliament. This event gathered stakeholders from the palm oil supply chain, NGOs and MPs together to launch Chester Zoo's Sustainable Palm Oil Communities campaign.

In 2019 we were invited to present about forest risk commodities at the EU Committee of the Regions, and, by combining the scientific work of our partners on the ground with our knowledge of supply chains and policy within Europe, we have worked to influence the UK Environment Bill, a new due diligence law on forest risk commodities, and the European Commission's new legal framework on deforestation free commodities.

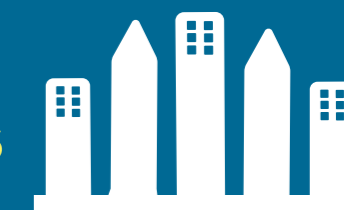
3 Zoos and Aquariums sector



Working collaboratively within our own industry (national and international zoo association bodies), we have amplified a joint message on palm oil by providing consistent messaging to the public and industry. We represent our sector in global conversations on sustainable agriculture, at national, European and global levels providing specialist knowledge in the sustainable commodities field, influencing association policies, engaging members and creating resources and opportunities for collaboration in the sector to make a difference in the field. By working in this way, we are a major voice promoting a shift towards sustainable global markets.

Along with increased awareness and action in the zoo community, there is increasing recognition of the value of zoos in the sustainable palm oil conversation, merging our skills and expertise in various areas to have a positive impact on the supply chain. Crucially the campaigning work of zoos globally on the topic have filled a missing link between the public and the palm oil supply chain, creating an opportunity for change.

4 Industry and corporates



Engaging with manufacturers, retailers and suppliers has been an important part of the campaign process from initiation. To make a change on the ground, increasing the demand within UK industry for sustainable palm oil to put pressure further up the supply chain is fundamental.

Initially, starting with our own suppliers in the zoo's supply chain, our work expanded through initiatives such as the Sustainable Palm Oil Shopping List, a resource we were being asked for by the public. Through our sector role in BIAZA, our involvement in initiatives such as the UK RoundTable on Sourcing Sustainable Palm Oil has cemented recognition of Chester Zoo as a sustainable palm oil specialist, and provided opportunities to influence and partner with UK industry. Engagement and networking through conferences has also contributed to our own on-going learning, whilst also providing the opportunity to engage and influence new audiences.

The SPOC component of our work developed from the recognition that there was a need for urgent change in the UK hospitality sector. Our own research in the local area had concluded that awareness of the palm oil issue (and sustainable palm oil use) was low. Through our SPOC campaign we worked not only with local independent businesses, but also with larger national suppliers, creating a movement amongst the hospitality sector. The SPOC campaign is now national, and our ambition is to work with larger-chain global businesses in the sector to create positive action.

Our campaigning has attracted support from companies who are leading the way with sustainable palm oil procurement and who recognise and champion the need for wider industry change. These partnerships have not only allowed us to build on our conservation and campaign work, (reconnecting areas of forest, engaging schools with complex issues around sustainability, and developing further sustainable palm oil communities) but have also proved that our charity is an intelligent investment for corporate social responsibility, effectively supporting conservation and influencing change.

5 Sustainable Palm Oil Communities (SPOC)

In 2017, we took the next step on our journey and launched an innovative behaviour change programme 'Sustainable Palm Oil Communities'. The aim was to increase demand for sustainable palm oil through businesses operating within our own city, by using our position in the community to influence change. This project created a network of organisations in Chester, all united to help tackle the palm oil crisis.

Empowerment, and making people an active part of the solution, is at the heart of our approach. By creating a community of like-minded organisations, we saw not only enthusiasm for the project grow, but also amplification of the messages. Our strategy selected organisations that could help us with social diffusion, providing a range of different companies able to influence diverse stakeholders and consumers. We wanted to spread our message more broadly across the city region and beyond, so that mix of education and public institutions, hospitality, retailers, manufacturers and cultural institutions was key to creating the tipping point and creating the noise that we needed to achieve our goals.

Businesses committed to be Sustainable Palm Oil champions were required to put in place a sustainable palm oil policy, switching products from unsustainable sources to certified sustainable sources. We supported their journey by providing resources, advice, and celebration of their achievements, and in 2019 we were able to announce Chester as the world's first Sustainable Palm Oil City. Cities and towns nationwide are now working with us to take on the initiative in their own area, with seven communities in total now having launched their programmes.

6 Schools

Our conservation education team works with local schools in many different ways, from providing workshops and resources, to teacher training and the development of longer-term projects that enable schools to create their own sustainable palm oil campaigns.

Working with Ignite Teaching School Alliance and pedagogical experts, the zoo's experienced educators have supported schools across the North West of England to build whole school curricula around the sustainable palm oil theme. These projects enable young people to become changemakers in their communities and have seen them not only learning in depth about the topic and how they can be part of the solution, but reaching out and engaging with business leaders and politicians on the issues.

Our resources platform contains a wide variety of support for teachers who want to engage their pupils with this vital conservation topic, including curriculum linked teaching resources, lesson plans and guidance notes.

Through virtual workshops, online resources and digital toolkits, our sustainable palm oil education work has global reach, whilst in our region educators work directly with schools helping them to build their own sustainable palm oil projects with multiple workshops and inputs from our expert team.

7 Chester Zoo

As tourist attractions as well as conservation organisations, the zoo sector is relatively unique amongst other third sector organisations in having both commercial and conservation focus. Our campaign journey began in 2011 with changing palm oil awareness and use within Chester Zoo itself.

We developed a responsible sourcing policy for sustainable palm oil with the aim of transforming our own supply chain and worked directly with our suppliers to influence and create change. Through an internal awareness campaign, we brought onboard all staff, from management to volunteer and catering teams. Consistent and transparent messaging on palm oil resulted in a cultural shift in the organisation that provided the foundation for wider consideration of sustainability within our supply chain

Once our own internal sustainable palm oil journey was well underway, we moved to increase awareness amongst our 2 million annual visitors, with engagement and interpretation teams delivering complex and sometimes challenging messages to the public. Visitors to the zoo receive information to support a healthy palm oil discussion at various points in their visit, from interpretation at relevant species enclosures, to animal talks and in our shops and cafes. We produce a broad range of free digital resources and practical tools (from infographic and video resources, to sustainable palm oil shopping lists and toolkits), to inspire and enable people to choose sustainable palm oil and understand the reasons why they could make a difference by doing so.

In 2021 we announced our new goal of 100% deforestation-free commodities within our own supply chain as part of Chester Zoo's 10-year Conservation Masterplan. This builds on our initial sustainable palm oil work, expanding to include other key commodities starting with soya and the impact its production has on landscapes in Latin America and on climate change.



Sustainable Palm Oil Campaign

The road ahead

Chester Zoo has commanded its place in the palm oil debate through its expertise, its trusted voice and its breadth of audiences, and this has led to recognition of the zoo as a primary go-to source for palm oil issues. We are regularly approached by national media, policy-makers, industry leaders, other conservation NGOs and businesses large and small, for collaboration, advice, guidance and a steer through this complex and often divisive topic.

Our campaign stakeholders now range from local shoppers and independents to SME businesses, the global zoo community, policy makers, manufacturers and global distributors. We will continue to nurture those joining us on this time-crucial journey, but this is still not enough.

We must continue tabling sustainable palm oil and sustainable agriculture at all the relevant junctures, pushing for improvements in certification and monitoring, listening to the needs, concerns and advice of NGOs in-country, and empowering both the public and industry to be part of the solution. We'll continue to call for stronger mandatory due diligence on all forest risk commodities and improved transparency within supply chains to break the link between palm oil and deforestation.

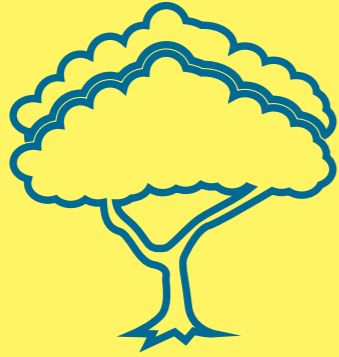
This is far from concluded.

Habitat loss is increasing at an unprecedented speed, and as a consequence, species face extinction on an unimaginable scale. The climate crisis further exacerbates the need to move faster on these issues. **We are literally running out of time.**

Want to be part of our journey? Contact us SPOCity@chesterzoo.org

29,000

trees planted through corporate partnerships



Responsible sourcing policy for sustainable palm oil put in place at Chester Zoo

2600

pupils from 32 schools encouraged to write to their MP on sustainable palm oil

824 staff members



and volunteers trained to talk about our sustainable palm oil policy and supporting campaigns

More than

3.6 million

visits to our online palm oil content



20,000

downloads of our Sustainable Palm Oil Shopping List

Edsential, a Chester champion, became the first certified sustainable palm oil catering provider in the world

52

Chester Sustainable Palm Oil Champions published their own sustainable palm oil purchasing policies

Our achievements



Six additional communities around the UK signed up to SPOC campaign

6194

downloads of our palm oil learning resources

37

Chester Sustainable Palm Oil Champions achieved 100% sustainable palm oil supply chains

Three corporate partnerships sponsor our palm oil and field work, covering reforestation, community education and Sustainable Palm Oil Communities project

Reached over

6.1 million

people through our social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)

213



Sustainable Palm Oil Restaurant Toolkits downloaded

Over **65,000** engagements with sustainable palm oil activities run by the Conservation Education & Engagement for school groups and zoo visitors

28



speaking engagements at conferences and industry events across Europe



Preventing Extinction.

**Chester Zoo
Upton-by-Chester
Chester CH2 1LH**

Chester Zoo is a registered charity, number 306077