

How we factor animal welfare into our events

At Marwell Zoo, animal welfare is a top priority, and all our events are assessed for their potential impact on the animals that live here. Each event involves collaboration between our Animal Management team, including the animal keepers, vets and Animal Behaviourist, as well as our Events coordination team to reduce any potential negative impact on animal welfare.

Our upcoming winter event, Glow Marwell, requires a considerable amount of planning and preparation. Whilst many of our animals will be tucked up in their night quarters away, others will be active and we want to make sure that all our animals remain as happy as we hope our guests will be!

We've carefully considered the path to be taken and ways to avoid species that may be more responsive to the event than others; we'll direct the lighting to keep it out of the animal habitats (so please, no flash photography or torches) and will avoid certain wavelengths; music will be low-key and limited to certain sections of the route; and the event will finish at 8 pm so the animals can still have a good night's rest.

In the lead up to Glow's opening night, we have planned a period of habituation, where the animals along the route will be gradually introduced to the sights and sounds they may experience during the event. This process will allow the animals to become accustomed to and eventually unaware of the changes.

A dedicated team, headed up by our Animal Behaviourist, are already preparing a programme for monitoring the behaviour and welfare of the animals. This will begin prior to the start of the habituation process and continue throughout the event set-up, the event itself, dismantling and afterwards. This process will involve behaviour studies and sound monitoring, and information will be constantly reviewed and acted on. Along with the animal keepers and other staff, this team will be present every night of the event to keep a close eye on how the animals are responding and immediately implement mitigations if any concerns arise.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the event, if you want to see Marwell's fur, feathered or scaled inhabitants, this probably isn't the event for you, but we would love to welcome you as a day visitor during the zoo's normal opening hours.

- Animal Behaviourist at Marwell Wildlife