Wonders of the Animal Kingdom – a new museum



This funding will support ambitious plans to completely redevelop the Museum of Zoology with displays showcasing the wonders of the animal kingdom, and new stores to preserve its outstanding collections for the future.

Our vision is to create a museum that enchants its visitors and celebrates the amazing diversity of animal life, showcasing the wonders of the animal kingdom and emphasising the importance of conserving biodiversity for the future. From the long extinct Dodo to specimens that inspired Darwin's theories, the museum has a distinguished history, reflected in the historical and scientific richness of its collections.

This significant grant will enable the Museum to:

- Create displays and new interpretation to engage people with the wonders of animal diversity;
- create new stores to ensure that the Museum's internationally significant collections are cared for to the highest standards;
- expand the Museum's learning programmes, reaching out to wider audiences and increasing online resources.

The University Museum of Zoology in Cambridge is one of the greatest zoology collections in the world. It is designated as being of outstanding historical and scientific importance and forms a major part of one of the leading international research centres for the study of animal biology. Its 4 million specimens illustrate the diversity of animal life on Earth,

tracing its evolution over the past 500 million years to the wonderful variety of life seen today. The collections include many treasures and unique specimens, including fine examples of the extinct Dodo, Great Auk, and Tasmanian Tiger, and many specimens collected by Charles Darwin and other great naturalists of the past.

Professor Michael Akam, Head of the Department of Zoology said: “We are hugely grateful to the HLF for supporting this exciting and far-reaching project which will benefit the collections and visitors alike."

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: “We’re delighted to be supporting this project and thanks to Lottery players’ money, we can all have the opportunity to discover the treasures of this museum’s extraordinary collections.”

Professor Paul Brakefield, Director of the Museum of Zoology said: “The museum is enthusiastically embracing this unique redevelopment opportunity to display the extraordinary richness of our collections in superb new spaces to the benefit of everyone. The creation of a new conservation campus in central Cambridge will mean that scientists and practitioners from across the university, working with Non Government Organizations, will be able to showcase the past, present and future of biodiversity on our planet.”

The museum is currently closed as work on the building, funded by Cambridge University, has already started and will create a Conservation Campus in partnership with the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI). Building work will take approximately two years and the Museum plans to reopen in summer 2016.

Notes to editors

The £1.8m grant is in addition to an HLF Development Grant of £180,000, awarded in January 2013 and matched by the museum, which permitted development of the plans. The total project is currently costed at £4.8m and the museum has already launched a major public fund-raising appeal for £3m.

Further information

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