

HEAD OF PHILANTHROPY

Candidate Information Pack

WELCOME

We're delighted you're considering joining us at ZSL as our new Head of Philanthropy. At ZSL, we believe everyone can make a difference, and in this role, your leadership will be key to growing transformational income for wildlife, bringing passionate donors closer to our mission and inspiring them to make a lasting impact for nature.

For nearly 200 years, ZSL has been at the heart of wildlife conservation, inspired by visionaries like Charles Darwin, Joan Procter, and Sir David Attenborough. Today, our family includes two world-class conservation zoos, London Zoo and Whipsnade Zoo, and a leading centre for scientific research, the Institute of Zoology. Here, you'll find an inspiring community united by a deep care for wildlife, nature, and each other.

This is a pivotal moment in ZSL's journey. Our bold global strategy is driving real change: saving species, protecting habitats, training the next generation of conservationists, and reaching more communities than ever. You'll play a key role in generating income for high-profile projects, from groundbreaking elephant and tiger conservation initiatives to enabling schoolchildren across the UK to access our conservation Zoos. And, as we approach our 200th anniversary, you'll have the chance to lead a capital campaign supporting our new Centre for British Species Recovery, leaving a legacy for generations to come.

This is an exciting new role, created to build our philanthropy programme from the bottom up during a pivotal period of growth, with new roles currently being recruited to expand the team. The Head of Philanthropy will work collaboratively with our existing colleagues, drawing on their experience, as we shape an ambitious strategy together. This is a unique opportunity to help develop a flourishing programme that reflects our organisation's values and goals.

If you're someone who leads with empathy, bold ambition, and creativity, who thrives on building a team and relationships that inspire generosity for the world's most urgent cause – wildlife really is a barometer of the health of our planet - we'd love you to join the ZSL family.

By 2026, our Bicentenary year, we'll invest around £20 million in global conservation. There's never been a more exciting time to be part of our story. We look forward to the vision and energy you'll bring as we work together to shape ZSL's future, and drive real impact for wildlife around the world.

We can't wait to meet you.

Pippa Carte – Director of Development





ABOUT US

We're ZSL - an international conservation charity driven by science, working to restore wildlife in the UK and around the world by protecting critical species, restoring ecosystems, helping people and wildlife live together, and inspiring support for nature.

We've been building stronger connections to wildlife for 200 years. Through our leading Zoos, our innovative conservation work in the field and through the Institute of Zoology, a centre of research excellence, we are passionate advocates for nature and won't stop until we have created a world where wildlife thrives.

Climate change and human activity have pushed our precious planet to its limit, causing devastating habitat and species loss. When nature loses, we all do.

Urgent action to help people and wildlife live better together, is the only way to save the natural world we love and depend upon. We believe nature can recover - that's where ZSL comes in, and where you can play your part.



THE ROLE

JOB LEVEL: 6

DIRECTORATE: DEVELOPMENT

CONTRACT: PERMANENT

REPORTS TO: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

FUNCTION: PHILANTHROPY

**LOCATION: REGENT'S PARK (MINIMUM 2
DAYS PER WEEK)**

RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESOURCES

Direct line reports: x2 direct line reports

Financial resources: Annual income target of £3m+ with expenditure budget of c£200k. Accountability for annual target and delegation of individual targets to team members.

OUR VISION AND MISSION

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is an international conservation charity, driven by science, working to restore wildlife in the UK and around the world. Our vision is a world where wildlife thrives and every role, every person in every corner of ZSL has one thing in common – we are all conservationists, and passionate about restoring wildlife.

JOB SUMMARY

The Head of Philanthropy is responsible for driving philanthropic income to support ZSL's mission by identifying, cultivating, and securing major gifts of seven and eight figures from High-Net-Worth Individuals in the UK and internationally.

This role leads the strategic development and management of ZSL's fundraising pipeline for individual supporters, overseeing all giving levels from mid-value to transformational gifts. It includes direct engagement with high-value donors, working closely with the senior leadership team to secure significant contributions towards ZSL's priority research and conservation areas. The post also oversees the successful delivery and growth of ZSL's Patrons and Fellowship programmes, ensuring that all individual supporter groups are engaged, stewarded, and maximised for long-term value and impact.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

FUNDRAISING & STRATEGY

- Lead and deliver ZSL's Philanthropy Strategy, developing ambitious annual implementation plans, income targets, and an expenditure budget, alongside a three-year growth plan to drive major gift income from UK and international High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNWIs).
- Build and manage a robust fundraising pipeline of around 100 high-value prospects, creating and implementing bespoke cultivation strategies to secure major philanthropic gifts of £500k+, including transformational seven and eight-figure donations.
- Create compelling donor propositions and cases for support, using insight into ZSL's priority research and conservation areas, and making strategic decisions about how, when, and by whom major asks should be made including leading on asks and coaching others.
- Oversee and evolve ZSL's individual giving programmes, including the mid-level Patron Programme and the Fellowship Programme, ensuring they deliver value, deepen engagement, and act as effective pipelines for major giving.

LEADERSHIP & COLLABORATION

- Act as a senior ambassador for ZSL, representing the organisation with authority, intellectual rigour, and authenticity in donor meetings and high-profile engagements, and building deep relationships that yield transformational philanthropic outcomes.
- Serve on the Fundraising Senior Leadership Team, shaping and influencing fundraising strategy and culture across ZSL, while leading the strategic development of individual supporter engagement.
- Establish and lead high-level Development and Campaign Boards, recruiting members, setting clear objectives, and driving their contribution to major gift cultivation and campaign delivery.
- Inspire and manage a high-performing team of fundraisers, providing leadership, mentoring and development, and creating a collaborative, inclusive, and ambitious environment that enables the team to meet and exceed targets.



KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

- Personally steward a portfolio of major donors and prospects, ensuring frequent, personalised, and proactive communication (in person, by phone and email), resulting in high-value asks and long-term commitment to ZSL.
- Collaborate across the organisation, working with senior leaders, Council members, the Executive Committee, and Campaign Boards to identify new opportunities, nurture relationships, and bring in major gifts.
- Maintain strong internal relationships with programme and research colleagues to ensure up-to-date knowledge of funded projects, enabling donors to receive timely updates and reporting that reflect the impact of their gifts.
- Partner with the Fundraising Operations team to produce high-quality proposals, events, briefings, and stewardship materials that support cultivation, engagement, and recognition of individual supporters.

PERFORMANCE, REPORTING & INSIGHTS

- Set clear, measurable annual targets for income generation, donor engagement, and prospect pipeline growth, and contribute to long-term income forecasting and planning for the organisation.
- Track and analyse performance data, producing insightful briefings, presentations, and reports for the Director and senior stakeholders to evaluate success and identify areas for improvement.
- Drive a culture of continuous improvement, working toward year-on-year increases in income, donor retention, and supporter lifetime value, informed by performance data and sector trends.
- Ensure robust data management using Tessitura, maintaining accurate and comprehensive records of prospect strategies, donor interactions, communications, and outcomes to support effective relationship management and audit compliance.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Experience

- Evidence of success in setting strategy and delivering significant philanthropic income growth.
- Demonstrable success in identifying and recruiting donors to achieve income and other measurable targets, with a track record of making and securing 6-8 figure asks.
- Capital appeal fundraising experience.
- Experience of building credibility and developing productive working relationships with senior volunteers, supporters and colleagues.
- Experience in the development and implementation of an appropriate strategy and to manage the resources (including staff) required to ensure fundraising targets are met.
- Experience of working across departments within a complex organisation in order to ensure appropriate personnel are kept abreast of progress and are brought into negotiations with funders as necessary.
- Experience in the identification of opportunities for approaches, the co-ordination of approaches and the mobilisation of key individuals to ensure a steady stream of approaches to potential supporters.
- Experience of managing a variety of diverse and complex approaches concurrently.
- Proven experience of effective line management, delegation and employee development.

Knowledge and skills

- A degree or equivalent qualification.
- Excellent relationship management skills, with the ability and confidence to operate at a high level with donors and senior stakeholders internally and externally.
- A willingness to 'make the ask' personally where appropriate, and to coach/support others doing so.
- Proven ability to think strategically, and manage a pool of donors to deliver growth and maximise opportunities.
- In-depth knowledge and understanding of the major giving process and the various techniques used, including latest developments in trends, approaches and codes of best practice, and relevant legislation (eg tax-effective giving).

Additional requirements

- Intellectual curiosity, sound judgement, and the ability to operate effectively and credibly with senior internal and external stakeholders.
- Understanding of the nuance and diplomacy required to build trust at the highest level.
- Interpersonal skills to manage relationships across organisations and work with key personnel across ZSL, including Directors, any fundraising volunteer boards, and members of the education, communication, commercial, conservation, science and animal care departments.
- Well-developed ability to represent ZSL and communicate in a persuasive and knowledgeable way to colleagues, supporters, external contacts and the public
- Able to produce creative, imaginative and inspiring proposals, reports and other communications that encourage support of ZSL.
- Able to deal sensitively and appropriately with confidential information.
- Evidence of creating a high-performing team.



VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS FOR PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Collaborative: creates an engaging environment where people feel comfortable asking for help or support

Ethical: creates a culture which ensures everyone is treated fairly with dignity and respect

Impactful: delivers results on time and to the agreed standards

Inclusive: makes decisions that promote transparency and inclusion

Innovative: is forward thinking and able to see the broader picture when planning and organising work

Inspiring: has self-awareness and seeks feedback to better understand own style, approach and impact on team/staff motivation



HOW TO APPLY

To apply to this position please share an up to date CV and supporting statement addressing the person specification (maximum 2 pages) via this link <https://www.prospect-us.co.uk/job/192488>.

Closing date – 17th August

ZSL and Prospectus welcome candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds. Please let us know if we can help you with the application process in any way. We are more than happy to make any reasonable adjustments to enable all interested candidates to apply. If you have any disability and would like assistance with completing an application then please contact Rhiannon Mehta, Rhiannon.mehta@prospect-us.co.uk

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