

9) Wolf (*Canis lupus*)

Find me in the Lower Gallery to the right of the Discovery Room.

European wolf populations declined dramatically during the 18th and 19th centuries, largely due to human persecution, until all wolves were gone from Central Europe and almost all from Northern Europe. However, populations began to expand again in the 1950s when fewer people were choosing to live in rural areas. Wolves are now protected in several countries, including Norway, Sweden, Finland, Portugal, Spain and Italy. The European wolf population now numbers 12,000 across 28 countries.



Do you think wolves should live in the UK? Why?

10) Mercury island tusked wētā (*Motuweta isolata*)

Find closely related insect specimens in the Upper Gallery.

This large, flightless insect was discovered in 1970 living on a small island near New Zealand. When first discovered, tens of individuals could be seen on a single night's expedition, but by the 1990s, they were becoming worryingly rare. Thanks to a successful captive breeding programme and translocation, there are now healthy populations on six islands, all safe from mammalian predators.



How would you save a rare insect species?

Conservation Optimism Trail



We've put together some success stories from the front line of conservation. Follow our trail around the Museum to learn all about the progress we've made so far!

A lot of these animals are still very rare, so we don't have specimens of all of them, but we've directed you to where you can see something similar.

#ConservationOptimism

1) Large blue butterfly (*Phengaris arion*)

Find me in the Upper Gallery in the insect section.

This butterfly was declared extinct in the British Isles in 1979 because of a loss of suitable habitat. However, a reintroduction programme was set up in the 1980s, and several populations were introduced from Sweden. By 2006, the estimated number of adults in Britain was 10,000 – the largest number seen in the British Isles for over 60 years. This beautiful insect can now be found on 33 sites across Britain thanks to collaboration between dedicated conservationists.



What other species would you save using a similar method?

2) Rodrigues fruit bat (*Pteropus rodricensis*)

Our bats exhibit is due to open soon. Come back and have a look!

This bat is only found on the island of Rodrigues in the Indian Ocean. In the 1970s, its population was reduced to just 70 individuals, mainly due to habitat destruction and hunting. But thanks to a successful captive breeding programme and a focus from several conservation organisations, this species is now enjoying an increasing population trend.



What would you do to save a bat species like this one?

7) Scimitar oryx (*Oryx dammah*)

Find closely related antelope species in the Lower Gallery.

This type of antelope has been classified as extinct in the wild since 2000. But all hope is not lost. A population has recently been introduced into the wild from a captive-bred group. They were released into a 78,000 km² reserve in Chad and are doing well – a calf was born in September 2016, just six months after the adults' release. The plan is to continue releasing oryx into the reserve, with the aim of building a self-sustaining population of 500 oryx in Chad.



What other animals would you release back into the wild to save them?

8) Montseny brook newt (*Calotriton arnoldi*)

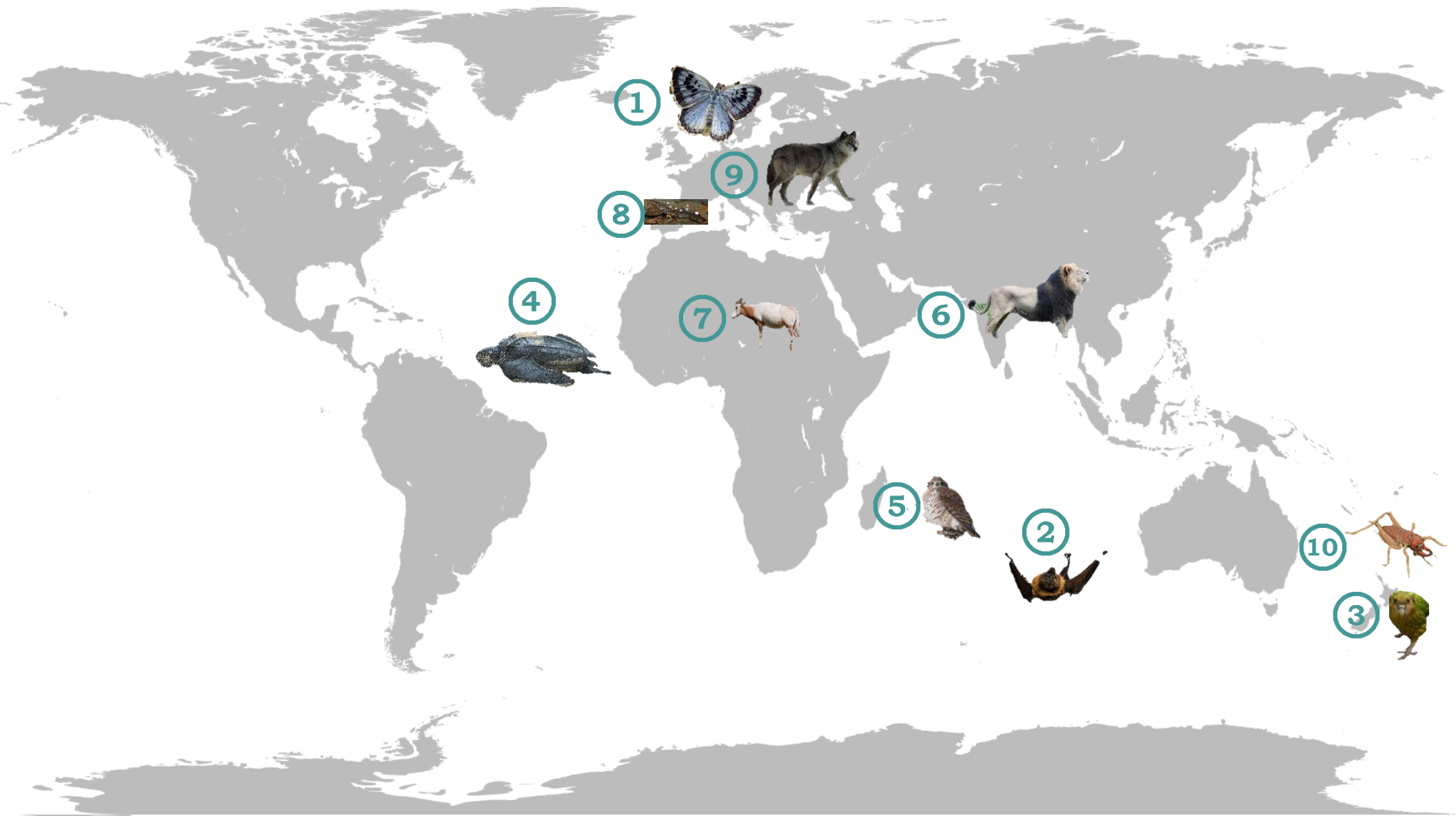
Find closely related amphibian specimens in the Upper Gallery.

This is a critically endangered species of salamander only found in a small region of north-eastern Spain. There are an estimated 1,500 individuals left in the wild.



However, these amphibians have been bred successfully for the first time in captivity at Chester Zoo. This breeding programme is hoping to reintroduce the individuals bred here in the UK back into the wild, so there is hope for this species yet!

How would you try to breed salamanders in captivity?



5) Mauritius kestrel (*Falco punctatus*)

Find closely related bird specimens in the Upper Gallery.

This bird of prey is only found on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. The population suffered a severe decline during the 1950s and 1960s as a result of a chemical once widely used as an insecticide. In 1974, only four individuals were left. However, an intensive recovery programme was set up, and numbers increased to about 350 by the year 2000. This recovery programme is often cited as one of the most successful in the world.



How would you save a rare bird of prey species?

6) Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo*)

Find me in the Lower Gallery to the left of the Discovery Room.

Asiatic lions are only found in the Gir National Park of north-western India. Their population is made up of only 600 individuals, and they are classified as endangered. However, an international conservation programme is working hard to conserve this beautiful species by working with local vets, zoos and communities. They have already developed innovative monitoring techniques involving patrols, which help identify new threats.



How would you convince people that lions are worth saving?

3) Kakapo (*Strigops habroptilus*)

Find me in the Lower Gallery by the African elephant specimen.

This bird used to be the third-most common bird species in New Zealand. However, their numbers declined dramatically because of hunting and predation until there were only 51 individuals left in 1995. It was at this point that the Kakapo Recovery Programme was set up, and kakapo numbers have been steadily increasing as a result. Resolution Island (20,860 ha) has been prepared for kakapo reintroduction to help establish a new population.



How would you protect this new kakapo population from predation?

4) Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

Find me in the Upper Gallery to the left of the bird section.

Numbers of this species of turtle were estimated at just 35,000 in 1996. However, it has inspired numerous conservation initiatives around the world, including in Costa Rica, Brazil, Malaysia and the USA. In southern Africa, strong protection over the last three decades has increased the small population there by more than fourfold, demonstrating what can be achieved when conservation of a species is made a priority.



How would you conserve a species of turtle that moves over large distances?