



## Inspection Report

Date of inspection: 25/02/2025 Date report completed: 01/03/2025

Name of applicant or current licence holder: Bolton Library and Museum Service

Name and address of zoo: Bolton Museum Aquarium,  
Le Mans Crescent  
BOLTON  
Postcode: BL1 1SE

Tel no: 01204 332200 Licence Number:

Date of last formal inspection: 07/02/2023 Type of last formal inspection: Periodic

Timing of next formal inspection: Feb 2028/9 Type of next formal inspection: Periodic

Type of inspection Statutory composition of inspection team Please tick appropriate box

Section 10 Periodical: 2 Defra/Welsh Government nominees; 1 LA vet; option of up to 2 more from LA .. ☐

Section 11 Special: Any number of competent LA authorised appointees ..... ☐

Section 14(1)(b) dispensation renewal under section 6(1A)(a) (where a direction has been made that section 10 shall not apply):  
Defra/Welsh Government nominee/s ..... ☐

Section 14(2) dispensation Periodical:  
Defra/Welsh Government nominee/s ..... ☒

For a licence inspection (Section 4(1A)(b)) and a significant change inspection (Section 9A(8)) please use the inspection form at Appendix 11A of the Standards.

Name and designation of inspector(s)	Name of zoo representative(s)
Dr. M.J.Fielding MRCVS Sec of State's Inspector List 1	Pierrette Squires MA,MSc.ACR Team leader mus/m access
Ms. Helen Gloster Env Hlth Manager Reg Serv BOLTON Co	Peter Liptrot. Aquarium Access Officer. Bolton Museum
	Matt Duckworth. Aquarium Assistant

When this form has been completed and signed the original must be sent to the local authority.  
If the zoo is owned by the local authority, the local authority must send a copy of the completed form to Defra where the zoo is situated in England or to the Welsh Government, where the zoo is situated in Wales.

## Preamble to inspectors' report

Information and guidance about the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 (ZLA) is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-biodiversity-and-ecosystems-at-home-and-abroad/supporting-pages/species-protection> and <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/zoos/?lang=en>

Preamble to inspectors' report\*, including any comments about the current dispensation status, if applicable.

The aquarium is located in central Bolton as a section in Bolton Museum. It consists of a compact Public display area of small tanks, in which are exhibited tropical, freshwater fish, with the displays laid out so as to represent the environments of several different types of freshwater rivers/estuaries. This is to enhance and co-ordinate with the overall educational and conservational aspects of the Museum.

In addition to the public display, there is an off show area where breeding of fish for conservation and non invasive research is conducted.

Access to the Aquarium and the Museum is free to the visiting public and the aquarium enjoys a footfall of approximately 100k persons annually.

### Notes for the Licensing Authority :

1. The aquarium currently enjoys a dispensation under Section 14(2) of the Act. In the opinion of the inspectors and based on the numbers and types of animals, the current dispensation is still appropriate for this collection.
2. The licensing authority should ensure that a copy of any licence issued is forwarded to the Zoos and Circus section APHA, Horizon House, Deanery Rd, Bristol. ( See below for L.A. requirements if operated by the Licensing Authority).
3. The inspectors note that the correct system of informal inspections has been carried out.
4. The inspectors note that there are no public " close encounter " experiences held in this collection..
5. There have been no escapes of animals from the aquarium premises since the last formal inspection.
6. The senior aquarium staff and supervisors are fully aware of CITES regulations.

Under the Circular which details the requirements of the Zoo licensing Act 1981 in the Annex to the Circular page 16 , Para 78, where the "ZOO" is operated by the local Licensing Authority, The Authority must also send a copy of the agreed final inspection report to APHA , UK CITES Authority, Zoos and Circus section, Floor 3, Horizon House, Deanery Rd ,Bristol BS1 5AH

\*this might include general background about the zoo (type of collection, size etc) and any relevant information or comments from the pre-inspection audit

## Findings at inspection

Guidance note: Where possible a Yes, No or Not Applicable (N/A) answer should be given. Where not all criteria are met for a particular question, comments and clarification should be made indicating where any deficits occur. If appropriate, means of correction or improvement should be included as Conditions or Recommendations under 'Additional conditions' or 'Additional space' towards the end of the form.

1. Provision of food and water	Marking Yes No N/A	Comments/clarification
<b>Section 1A(c)(ii) ZLA 1981:</b>		
1.1. Are animals provided with a high standard of nutrition?	Yes	Advice is taken from outside experts and co-ordinated with current standards.
1.2. Is food and drink that is supplied appropriate for the species/individual?	Yes	As above
1.3. Are supplies of food and water:		
(a) kept hygienically?	Yes	
(b) prepared hygienically?	Yes	
(c) supplied to the animal hygienically?	Yes	
1.4. Has natural feeding behaviour been adequately considered to ensure that all animals have access to food and drink?	Yes	
1.5. Are feeding methods safe for staff and animals?	Yes	
1.6. Is feeding by visitors permitted?	No	
(a) if 'yes', is it properly controlled?	N/A	
<b>2. Provision of suitable environment</b>		
<b>Section 1A(c)(i) ZLA 1981:</b>		
2.1. Are the animals provided with an environment well adapted to meet the physical, psychological and social needs of the species to which they belong?	Yes	
2.2. Are the following environmental parameters appropriate:		All to a high standard and effectively managed and recorded.
(a) temperature?	Yes	
(b) ventilation?	Yes	
(c) lighting?	Yes	
(d) noise levels?	Yes	
(e) any other environmental parameters?	Yes	

<b>2. Provision of suitable environment (contd.)</b>	<b>Marking Yes No N/A</b>	<b>Comments/clarification</b>
2.3. Are there satisfactory measures in place to safely confine the animals?	Yes	
2.4. Do animal enclosures have sufficient shelter and refuge areas?	Yes	For the species currently kept.
2.5. Do animal enclosures provide sufficient space?	Yes	See later note from the previous inspection re: River rays .
2.6. Are backup facilities for life support systems adequate?	Yes	The museum is high priority in the case of power blackouts and thus back-up power would be available at short notice
2.7. Is the cleaning of the accommodation satisfactory?	Yes	The off-show service area was clean and tidy at the time of inspection.
2.8. Is the standard of maintenance adequate for: (a) the buildings?	Yes	The building is old but is well maintained.
(b) the fences?	Yes	As currently represented by the individual tank parameters.
2.9. Is all drainage effective and safe?	Yes	Waste water is disposed of with the approval of the L.A.
<b>3. Provision of animal health care</b>		
<b>Section 1A(c)(ii) ZLA 1981:</b>		
3.1. Are the animals provided with a high standard of animal husbandry?	Yes	
3.2. Do animals on display to the public appear in good health?	Yes	Some specimens are now ageing, but appear to be in good condition.
3.3. Are observations of condition and health made and recorded?	Yes	Daily observation is recorded in the day book.
3.4. Do animals receive prompt and appropriate attention when problems are noted?	Yes	An appropriate veterinary programme is in place.
3.5. Are enclosures designed and operated in such a way that social interaction problems are avoided?	Yes	No social interaction of a negative nature was observed.
<b>On-site facilities</b>		
3.6. Are catch-up and restraint facilities adequate?	Yes	For the species currently kept
3.7. Is darting equipment satisfactory?	N/A	
3.8. Are on-site veterinary facilities adequate?	Yes	Limited but adequate for the species currently kept

3. Provision of animal health care (contd.)	Marking Yes No N/A	Comments/clarification
<b>Veterinary care</b> <b>Section 1A(c)(ii) ZLA 1981:</b> 3.9. Are the animals provided with a documented and maintained programme of preventative and curative veterinary care and nutrition?	Yes	A veterinary programme is in place, with further advice available from additional outside experts.( University of Liverpool).
3.10. Is there a system for the regular review of clinical and pathological records?	Yes	Undertaken at the time of the routine veterinary visits.
3.11. Are appropriate veterinary records kept?	Yes	Held on computer with back up to main server.
3.12. Are medicines kept and disposed of correctly?	Yes	Lockable cupboard present with current list of medical products present .( No prescription items present at the time of inspection.)
3.13. Are controlled drugs used and recorded satisfactorily?	N/A	None present
3.14. Are appropriate antidotes available?	N/A	None present
3.15. Are <i>post mortem</i> examination arrangements satisfactory?	Yes	Managed under the veterinary programme. Staff are trained in basic P.M. techniques. ( mortality in the collection is notably low ).
<b>Isolation and containment</b> 3.16. Is adequate reserve accommodation available for isolation of animals for: (a) assessment?	Yes	Adequate reserve accommodation present for the species currently kept. ( See recommendations)
(b) treatment?	Yes	
(c) recovery?	Yes	
(d) quarantine (where required)?	Yes	
<b>Sanitation and control of disease</b> <b>Section 1A(e) ZLA 1981:</b> 3.17. Are satisfactory measures in place to prevent the intrusion of pests and vermin into the zoo premises?	Yes	Overall programme of controls supervised by the Museum authority. In practice, as all animals are kept in secure enclosures (Tanks), risks are minimal
3.18. Does it appear that general sanitation and pest control are effective?	Yes	As above

<b>4. Provision of an opportunity to express most normal behaviour</b>	<b>Marking Yes No N/A</b>	<b>Comments/clarification</b>
4.1. Do the accommodation and management regimes encourage normal behaviour patterns and minimise any abnormal behaviour, taking into account current enrichment and husbandry guidelines?	Yes	See update note on Rays at end.
4.2. Are animals of social species normally maintained in compatible social groups?	Yes	
<b>5. Provision of protection from fear and distress</b>		
5.1. Are the animals handled only by or under the supervision of appropriately experienced staff?	Yes	
5.2. Is physical contact between animals and the public consistent with the animals' welfare?	Yes	All animals separated from public by tanks fronts.
5.3. Are interactions between the animals such that they are not excessively stressful?	Yes	None observed at the time of inspection.
<b>6. Transportation and movement of live animals</b>		
6.1. Can the zoo demonstrate a knowledge of, and compliance with, the regulations covering transportation of animals, and provide copies of certificates to show compliance when transportation has occurred?	Yes	Well familiar with requirements for the species currently kept.
6.2. Can the zoo demonstrate that: i) transport and movement equipment is in good order?	Yes	For the species currently kept.
ii) facilities suitable for lifting, crating and transportation of all the types of animals kept within the zoo to destinations both inside and outside the zoo are readily available?	Yes	As above.
iii) catching and transportation techniques take account of the animal's temperament and escape behaviour in order to minimise injury, damage and distress?	Yes	As above
iv) adequate provision is made for the animal's and the public's safety and well-being while the animal is being transported or kept away from the zoo?	Yes	As above

7. Conservation, education and research	Marking Yes No N/A	Comments/clarification
<b>Section 1A(a) ZLA 1981:</b> 7.1. Is the zoo participating in at least one of the following: (i) research from which conservation benefits accrue to species of wild animals?	Yes	Mostly carried out in co-operation with outside individuals and academic institutions.
(ii) training in relevant conservation skills?	Yes	Often in conjunction with wider museum conservation projects.
(iii) the exchange of information relating to the conservation of species of wild animals?	Yes	Regular contact with other institutions.
iv) where appropriate, breeding of wild animals in captivity?	Yes	Are currently and historically involved in breeding and conservation of "at risk" species.
(v) where appropriate, the repopulation of an area with, or the reintroduction into the wild of, wild animals?	Yes	When possible and practical, but mostly using successful projects to maintain stocks for other approved institutions.
<b>Section 1A(b) ZLA 1981:</b> 7.2. Is the zoo promoting public education and awareness in relation to the conservation of biodiversity, in particular by providing information about the species of wild animals kept in the zoo and their natural habitats?	Yes	Mainly by signage and on-site educational talks and courses.
7.3. Where appropriate are animals managed in a way consistent with the conservation needs of the species, (such as exchange between zoos, accommodation to encourage natural behaviour and breeding etc)?	Yes	
7.4. Are on-site education facilities adequate for the resources of the collection?	Yes	
7.5. Are the conservation efforts adequate for the resources of the collection?	Yes	See recommendation re: recording hours spent on In situ projects
7.6. Are the research efforts adequate for the resources of the collection?	Yes	
7.7. Is captive breeding properly managed?	Yes	Some notable successes achieved

8. Public safety	Marking Yes No N/A	Comments/clarification
<b>Section 1A(d) ZLA 1981:</b>		
8.1. Are there satisfactory measures in place to prevent the escape of animals?	Yes	
8.2. Are there satisfactory measures in place to be taken in the event of any escape or unauthorised release of animals?	Yes	
8.3. Are escape drills carried out four times a year, recorded and regularly reviewed (at least two drills should include the escape of a Category 1 animal where present)?	Yes	
8.4. Will the perimeter deter unauthorised entry and aid the confinement of zoo stock?	Yes	Perimeter defined by tanks and the space dedicated to the aquarium.
8.5. Do stand-off barriers appear adequate?	N/A	In this collection.
8.6. Are adequate warning signs provided?	Yes	
8.7. Are prohibited areas appropriately signed?	Yes	
8.8. Are exits clearly marked and accessible?	Yes	
8.9. Do public areas, walkways and buildings appear safe?	Yes	
8.10. Are trees regularly inspected and appropriate remedial action taken?	N/A	
8.11. Have appropriate risk assessments for direct contact by the public with animals been carried out?	Yes	Very comprehensive.
8.12. Are the special safety requirements for walk-through or drive-through exhibits adequately met?	N/A	



9. Records	Marking Yes No N/A	Comments/clarification
<b>Section 1A(f) ZLA 1981:</b>		As far as is possible for very small species
9.1. Are there up-to-date records of the zoo's collection, including records of:		
(i) the numbers of different animals?	Yes	
(ii) acquisitions, births, deaths, disposals and escapes of animals?	Yes	
(iii) the causes of any such deaths?	Yes	Mortality levels are currently very low
(iv) the health of the animals?	Yes	
9.2. Are daily diaries maintained, and do they contain appropriate information?	Yes	See recommendation at end re: details recorded
9.3. Are animal stock records clear and up-to-date?	Yes	
9.4. Are annual stock records completed in the correct format and submitted to the local authority?	Yes	See minor recommendation re stock summation
9.5. Are animal source and destination records kept?	Yes	
9.6. Are archived records secure?	Yes	Backed up to Museum server.
<b>10. Miscellaneous</b>		
10.1. Do staff numbers and training of staff appear adequate?	Yes	One extra part time personnel being recruited.
10.2. Is the management structure and organisation of staff adequate to ensure compliance with the Standards at all times?	Yes	
10.3. Are effective risk assessments carried out where appropriate?	Yes	Very comprehensive
10.4. Has an ethical review process been established and implemented?	Yes	Rolled in with Museum conservation ethical procedures.
10.5. Are public toilet facilities adequate and serviced?	Yes	
10.6. Are parking facilities adequate?	Yes	None on-site, but multi-storey park close by.
10.7. Is a First Aid policy and accident reporting and recording system in place?	Yes	

<b>11. Associated legislation</b>	<b>Marking Yes No N/A</b>	<b>Comments/clarification</b>
11.1. Is electrical equipment routinely serviced?	Yes	Carried out by Museum authority
11.2. Have fire precautions been agreed and implemented?	Yes	Full policy present and drills carried out
11.3. Is refuse and clinical waste disposed of correctly?	Yes	
11.4. Are the required needs of disabled visitors met?	Yes	Lifts and access to all public areas.
<b>12. Compliance check including licence conditions</b>		
12.1. Is the current licence or a copy on public display at each public entrance?	Yes	
12.2. Is adequate Public Liability Insurance current?	Yes	Extensive cover
12.3. Have any Additional licence conditions been met?	Yes	General cleanliness much improved following the condition on the last inspection report

## Additional space

The following space is provided for:

- additional notes and comments on the answers to the earlier questions
- recommendations (other than in respect of grant or refusal of a licence and any specific conditions recommended for a licence) including those based on comments already made to earlier questions
- any general remarks which the inspecting team may wish to record

The inspectors thank the operator and staff for their work on the Pre inspection audit and the comprehensive attached information supplied and for their co-operation on the day.

The aquarium is a relatively small area of interest within the whole museum, but provides a useful, well themed and presented part of the Museum display for the general public. It is a useful educational introduction to freshwater fish and the principles of natural conservation. It is making a notable contribution to breeding and conserving several "at risk" species as well as outreach work with other organisations and institutions.

The overall health of the fish appears to be of a high standard and staff are well skilled and dedicated to their care.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. A useful day book is kept with relevant entries of items requiring attention. It is recommended that on days when no item is noted a brief remark is entered to indicate that checks have been made and that all is in order.
2. The management and staff are frequently involved in outreach, local conservation projects to which they contribute both conservation skills and time. It is recommended that where possible a record of the hours committed to such projects is kept to indicate the significance of inputs made.
3. Although signage on displays is present and notes most relevant information on the aquarium displays, this is mostly written and thus may not be understood by young visitors. A review of signage is recommended and the use of more pictorial image presentation be considered.
4. Provision for the logging -in of medicines which are kept in a lockable cupboard, is present. It is recommended that when this occurs such medicines are fully labelled and that expiry dates are noted and when such dates are exceeded the items are clearly identified and safely kept until they may be safely and correctly disposed.
5. The stock list was correct and up to date. It is recommended that at the end of the list on the excel sheets, final numerical totals in the collection are shown to assist clarity and indicate total number of specimens held.
6. In the breeding / quarantine room there appears to be little distinction between the areas used for these two functions. Although the risk of cross contamination is low it is recommended that consideration be given to arranging tanks such that these two functions are clearly delineated. Tidyness of equipment and loose materials in this area should be maintained.
7. The previous inspection report mentions the space provided for the Henle's river rays. Although at present this space marginally meets the requirements and expectations of the Sec of State's Standards. It is recommended that the challenge of upgrading space be addressed and if not possible under current circumstances more consideration of re-location for these animals be considered

H&S note for the Licensing Authority: The service area at the rear of the tanks (off show). The walkway round the tank area is well kept and clear of debris etc. Part way along, the walkway drops ( via a step-down) to allow access to admin areas. This has been previously highlighted by marker paint at the edge. This is no longer clear and may need review.

## The Aquarium at BOLTON Museum

25th February 2025

Please tick appropriate box

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Date signed

W. J. Fitching Barnes ARCS

01/03/2025

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14/3/2025

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## **The Data Protection Act 1998 – Fair Processing Notice**

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The purpose of this Fair Processing Notice is to inform you of the use that will be made of your personal data, as required by the Data Protection Act 1998.

The local authority in England (or in Wales as the case may be) is the data controller in respect of any personal data that you provide when you complete this zoo inspection form. The information that you provide may be used by the local authority in its consideration of issuing or amending a zoo licence in accordance with the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 (ZLA). The local authority may be required to release information, including personal data and commercial information, on request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs) or the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). However, local authorities will not permit any unwarranted breach of confidentiality nor act in contravention of their obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA).

Where the zoo, to which this inspection report applies, is owned by the local authority, the local authority must send a copy of the completed form to Defra (in accordance with section 13(2) of the ZLA) where the zoo is situated in England, or to the Welsh Government where the zoo is situated in Wales. Defra or the Welsh Government (as the case may be) may use the information contained in the form to ensure that local authorities are carrying out their duties correctly in accordance with the ZLA.

Defra and the Welsh Government are also subject to the EIRs and the FOIA and so may be required to release information, including personal data and commercial information, on request. However, as above, Defra and the Welsh Government will not permit any unwarranted breach of confidentiality nor act in contravention of their obligations under the DPA.

