



LATGALES ZOO



LATGALES ZOO (Latgales zoodārzs, LZD in Latvian) is a Daugavpils City Council institution, established on 1998.10.22., which successfully implements all the main functions of the zoos: Ecological education; Science; Nature conservation.

1. Ecological education. LZD was created in accordance with the author's concept: **Latgale Zoo is a joint nature-like environment for friendly contacts between animals and humans**, with basic principles:

1) *Friendly communication.* Animals and visitors are equal partners in friendly communication: animals look at people – people look at animals.

2) *Joint nature-like environment.* The interaction between animals and humans takes place in a specially created joint nature-like environment.

3) *No caught animal.* LZD has no animals caught in the wild, all animals are from zooculture and have lived next to humans for generations like domestic cats. Most LZD animals are pets that have become unnecessary for their owners.

4) *Nature is not a store.* Some of the LZD animals will go unnoticed by visitors - their rooms are designed in such a way that it is not easy to find animals in them: as in nature, it depends on the eyes of the visitors and the wishes of the animal.

5) *Latvia - in Latvia!* Only exotic animals live in the LZD exposition and there are no animals from Latvia to see them, go to Latvian forests and swamps.

LZD animals. The expositions' 90 terrariums, basins, aquariums are home to more than 120 species of animals that make up about 2 000 individuals. They are only small animals, for which an environment has been created to meet their requirements. Most LZD animals breed here. LZD also accepts pets, which became unnecessary for its owners, in the shelter - these are about 70% of our animals.

LZD visitors. Every year, LZD is visited by about 60 000 visitors from all over Latvia and many European and world countries. LZD organizes excursions, seminars for parents, schools for young zoologists, lectures for Daugavpils University students.

2. Scientific research. LZD implements the research and nature protection functions according to the author's concept: **We research what we protect – we protect what we research.** This allowed LZD to be very effective in these functions.

The main directions of LZD scientific research are: *Dytiscus latissimus*; Latvian herpetofauna species; anthropogenic threats; invasive species etc. LZD biologists registered new for Latvia reptile species *Anguis colchica* (1) and rare species' new populations, published more than 50 scientific articles and 3 monographs, presented at more than 120 scientific conferences. LZD performs the functions of Daugavpils University Zooculture and Nature Conservation Laboratory, biologists in cooperation with Daugavpils University participated in more than 20 scientific projects financed by Latvia and EU.

3. Nature conservation. LZD implements the nature conservation function of zoos together with scientific research according to the concept above. LZD biologists have been performing the conservation of rare Latvian herpetofauna species according to the system: 1) research of the populations of protected species and the factors endangering them; 2) development of the legislation; 3) management plans; 4) habitat improvement; 5) reintroduction of a rare species; 6) monitoring; 7) education.

LZD biologists developed 2 Species Conservation Plans; established 2 NATURA 2000 micro-reserves; excavated 72 ponds; improved more than 120 ha of habitats; developed zooculture methodologies for 4 rare species, bred and released more than 6 000 young *Bombina bombina*, about 1 000 young *Epidalea calamita* and 62 adult *Emys orbicularis* (2) in 3 populations (3).

LZD biologists in cooperation with Daugavpils University participated in more than 15 nature conservation tenders and projects financed by Latvia and European Union.



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