

SING FOR SONGBIRDS

Whole School Project



After February half term, all the classes at St Bernard's Primary School will be embarking on a whole school project in conjunction with Chester Zoo. It is called '**Sing for Songbirds**'. It all begins on Monday 27th February when rangers from Chester Zoo will hold an assembly, calling all children to help with the bird crisis in Indonesia. On the Tuesday we will then visit the zoo, where they have arranged a bird trail especially for us.

Over the 6 weeks the children will be learning all about birds in our local environment as well as ones in Indonesia. We will then be holding an celebration event at the end of May where the children's amazing work will be showcased.

Here is some information from Chester Zoo's website about the project.

INDONESIAN SONGBIRD PROJECT

Throughout Indonesia millions of birds are kept in captivity, a tradition deeply embedded in Indonesian culture. The tradition of keeping caged birds originally concerned just a handful of species favoured for their ability to sing. The capture of wild songbirds for this tradition is unsustainable and now encompasses all birds, irrelevant of colour, song, size and most importantly conservation status. To help combat this crisis, we are focusing our work on the critically endangered **Javan green magpie**, **black winged starling** and **Bali starling**.

For both the Javan green magpie and black winged starling on Java, their future relies on conservation breeding. With numbers in the wild critically low we are working alongside the Cikananga Conservation Breeding Centre (CBBC) as a major partner, establishing viable zoo populations of these birds and developing long term strategies for their survival and reintroduction in the wild.

With less than 100 individuals thought to be left in the wild, there is a very real possibility of the Javan green magpie going extinct. Five years ago, nine birds were rescued from markets and traders to set up the breeding programme and the first bird was bred in 2013. 30 birds are now at the centre and an additional insurance population has been recently established with 12 birds being bred at UK institutions as part of an EEP, including at Chester Zoo.

Following successful breeding of the black winged starling at the centre, trial releases have taken place. Exploratory work is now underway to identify new, secure release sites for the birds. With the bird trade in Indonesia still rife, the security of release sites is of major importance and the development of these is ongoing.