

All in a Day's Work

Willie Duffy – Fota Wildlife Park

Willie Duffy is Head Warden at Fota Wildlife Park, Carrigtwohill, Co Cork. The Park has been home to thousands of animals since it first opened its gates 30 years ago and aims to make each and every visit to the Park an enjoyable and valuable learning experience for all age groups.

www.fotawildlife.ie



Images courtesy of Fota Wildlife Park

Willie Duffy

Have you always been interested in what you do?

Yes, since I was young. I come from a farming background so I've always been interested in working outdoors and working with animals. I used to keep pet rabbits when I was younger so they were the first animals I had to take care of.

What training did you do to get where you are today?

I've been working in Fota Wildlife for the last 25 years. I started in Pets Corner and have worked my way up to Head Warden. I've been Head Warden for 10 years this year.

What is a day in your life like?

I start every day at 8am and begin with checking on the animals. The main responsibilities of my job are the day to day caring of the animals and managing the other wardens.

What is your main aim?

To win the lotto! 😊

What is the best thing about your job?

When baby animals are born in the park. Our main aim is conservation so it's great to see that in

motion and see how we're helping keep these animals from extinction.

What is the worst thing about your job?

The weather. Nobody likes to work in the rain!

Do you enjoy your work?

Of course, it's an interesting job that constantly changes with the different animals we have and with the different visitors that come through the park.

What equipment do you use?

We use a lot of farming equipment like tractors and woodchippers.

Where does your work take you?

I get to visit other zoos and wildlife parks to pick up animals that we're bringing back to the park. Last year I travelled to France to transport cheetahs back to the park.

Do you work alone or as part of a team?

Everyone in the park operates as a part of a team, we have many people that carry out different roles.

What advice would you give someone wanting to do your job?

Stay in school, go to college and get a good education. Also, you should look for volunteering experience in many different types of animal care.

What would you do if you weren't doing what you do?

I'd definitely be working outside, maybe something in landscaping.

What is best piece of advice you have ever had?

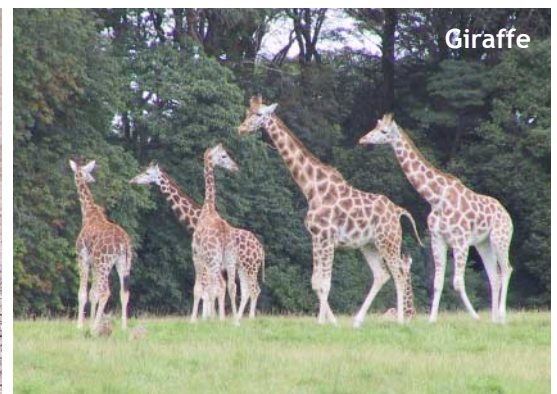
It's something my father told me when I was younger, "Make a mistake once, but do it again and it becomes a habit". It's served me well through my life. Never be afraid to make a mistake but don't repeat it.



Cheetah



Ring-tailed Lemur



Giraffe

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