

# Research paper on animals amusement parks: rare species retention sanctuaries or ...

[Environment](#), [Animals](#)



As of this moment, animals' being kept in captivity is a habitual practice for most world countries. The state of affairs in wild nature is such that humanity has already come as near as could be to almost completely exterminating separate species, with natural habitats being either fragmented or destroyed in the aftermath of human encroachment. In order for rare wild animals that are on the point of becoming extinct to be saved they are placed in sanctuaries, zoos, and theme parks where they are put on display. Theme parks are thematic entertainment places like Safari Park in San Diego, California, with a variety of rare and exotic species kept in open-air enclosures, which seems to be a noble cause. Animals' being used for entertainment has remained relevant for centuries ever since it was arguably first practiced in the ancient Coliseum that would have hundreds of wild animals killed in gladiatorial battles. Little has changed over 2000 years in human thirst for blood; still spectators no longer call for animals to be mortified, theme parks of today are hardly as bloody. However, even without people calling for blood, there is enough cruelty for us to think about. Some say current thematic amusement centers are far from being the coliseums of blood and pain where animals are killed at audience request. Now it is time we considered if the bread and circuses of today are not as cruel as they used to be years ago and if they serve the purpose of saving rare species, whatever skepticism.

Sanctuaries, amusement parks and zoos are utilized to protect animals from amateur hunters, enterprising industrialists and poachers who smuggle them as the source for precious commodities, such as jewelry, ivory caskets, ivory handle sabers, leopard hides and so on. It is hard to even think how many

South African elephants have been victimized over the past 400 years for precious ivory since colonization was started by Britain, Portugal, France and Spain. Rare wild animals would be used by the cavalrymen of Alexander the Great, being rigged with leopard pelts or Roman centurions wearing lions' hides. Time was, elephants were used by both Persians and Carthaginians as formidable force for military purposes. Centuries of meaningless extermination have taken their toll on the wild nature, securing places for its species in the Red Book. Even so, with all measures possible being taken around the globe, have animals' suffering stopped? Is living beyond their conventional habitat in human care safe?

Speaking of zoos, animals' confinement facilities are often situated on the territory of amusement parks, such as New Jersey Great Adventure and Safari Park, where animals serve thematic and entertainment purposes. Christina Russo, a Ph. D. in Molecular Biophysics, suggested that zoos play a critical role in conserving rare species (n. d.). The population of Africa wild animals is reported to have been reduced by 80% over the past 100 years, with 600 species on the verge of complete extinction. Zoos experts introduce specific breeding programs into wild animals' treatment. Captive breeding results in research being further increased while zoos are a perfect place for such studies. The major aims are to understand, protect and replenish both population and habitats. Scientists, conducting similar studies have succeeded in breeding the jeopardized species of the golden lion tamarin and the black-footed ferret this far. Zoos and amusement parks also do invest in showcasing animals that are less popular with visitors (Russo n. p.). According to Russo (n. p.), there are the so-called animals demonstrations

practiced in plenty of zoos. Sea lions usually undergo training sessions while in a pool, performing for people in attendance. They receive food reward for performing well, allowing themselves to be fondled, rolling over or revealing fins. Training is important because it is of great difficulty to get a 500 pounder to roll over to have its abdomens scanned with ultrasound, which is far easier for marine animals to do while performing. Training sessions make it possible to mentally stimulate the animals as well as providing them with medical care, such as eye drops and injections. Most importantly, aquarium personnel concentrate more on medical treatment rather than on audience amusement. Experts believe such amusement facilities are instrumental in arousing awareness by delivering a public message of how dangerous and detrimental human anthropogenic activity may be, causing marine animals to be evacuated from the place of their natural habitation contaminated with spilt oil or toxic fallouts (Russo n. p.). Wisdom though there might be in what experts think about the goods of keeping animals in amusement parks, there appears to be a solid counterargument never to be refuted, much less denied.

Peter Batten, the author of “ Living Trophies” believes, however, animals to be used in zoos and theme parks for purposes other than conducting special researches (qtd. in Russo n. p.). This is where controversy stems from which is yet to be addressed. Stark (n. p.) believes that American theme parks, being popular with people for their having fun, while interacting with animals, are nothing short of places where animals are ill-treated, having been taken away from their natural habitats in a very unethical manner. As has been mentioned before, zoos prevent animals from being hunted down

by smugglers; however, while staying in their enclosures, animals cannot perform their natural innate functions, to put a few simple examples, whales in “ Sea World” cannot communicate by singing like they do when in natural habitat, birds are devoid of vital flying space, being confined in small cages (Stark n. p.). A mere concept of zoos or animals confinement facility suggests the lack of freedom, to put it mildly. According to Stark (n. p.), most zoos and theme parks are very choice of endangered species they would like to see added to the list of their specialties, preferring charismatic as well as appealing animals to those being about to get lost for good. Depressing is the fact that animals are being traded as if they were commodities. Lowry Park Zoo based in Tampa, Florida, as well as San Diego Zoo in California is known for their having imported 11 elephants from the kingdom of Swaziland illegally, inflicting psychological trauma on the animals. The living goods may be transported only for them to be found put up to auction or sold to a “ side show” (Stark n. p.). Still, this is by no means the biggest problem imaginable.

Stark (n. p.) claimed that human beings are thought to need at least 400 square feet to remain tranquil and sane. Animals other than humans surely need far more spacious living conditions, considering their physique, size and weight as well as other anthropometric data that exceed those of humans. In parks, they are forced into living in what could be described as cramped space, which cannot but render many an animal miserable, so one can only guess about what happens once a keeper shuts cage doors tight, to say nothing of zoo personnel utterly neglecting their animals care duties. T. I. G. E. R. S. exhibit in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina is a regular violator

of the Animal Welfare Act. According to Stark (n. p.), animals given birth, raised and then kept in captivity for the better part of their lives are often released; still it is similar to letting an uneducated human to have been raised in a box into a hostile world with no clues of what to do and how to earn for the living. Once released, such animal is as good as eaten by predators, being short of adaptation and survival experience.

Jacques Cousteau claimed, “ There is about as much educational benefit to be gained in studying dolphins in captivity as there would be studying mankind by only observing prisoners held in solitary confinement”. How is an animal supposed to be studied that is kept outside the environment where it naturally thrives? This thought, however, runs counter to the aforementioned opinion of Christina Russo about animals capitalizing on being studied in zoos. Keith Berger, Miami animal rights examiner, suggested the Miami Sea aquarium reminded of a “ watery cell” animals were kept in for 23 hours a day. To put an example, an orca named Lolita has been kept in Miami Aquarium for as many as 40 years. Florida being the biggest player at the entertainment market, there are 13 similar amusement facilities with 367 animals kept captives for years. Tanks animals are kept in are cleansed with toxic chemicals, making it nearly impossible for dolphins in Clearwater Aquarium in Florida to open their eyes and causing their skin to peel off (Berger n. p.).

Dolphins are used to swimming up to 100 miles per day in their natural environment while tanks of 24 feet long, 24 feet wide, and 6 feet deep render this natural habit useless. Dolphins are known for navigating by bouncing “ sonar waves” off various objects while reverberations rebounding

from tank walls may drive marine animals wild, if not insane. For the animals to be kept outside their habitat means that their sociality, acoustic perceptions and hunting instincts are in question. Capturing techniques applied by sailors do harm dolphins by terrorizing them because they are chased after before being caught. Unwanted or heavily injured animals are dumped, some contract pneumonia due to water entering their lungs following fatal body thrusts delivered with hunting tools. Pregnant female orcas face the possibility of having their offspring aborted. Those surviving these challenges have to endure years of captivity.

Transportation may cause about as much mortality, especially when it comes to delivering bottlenose dolphins to amusement facilities. There have been 193 orcas held in captivity since 1961, with around 151 or 78% being dead as of now. The rate of mortality of orcas held in captivity is 2, 5 times as high as that of wild orcas largely due to social and psychological issues that they face. Sea World parks are solely responsible for the death of 22 orcas since 1985 (Berger n. p.). Williams (n. p.) suggested years of captivity impact killer whales, culminating in them killing their trainers. In 2010, the whole audience saw Tilikum, a killer whale pulling and then drowning its 40 year old trainer, which is not the first time a fatality like this has presented itself. According to Kirby (n. p.), whales, being kept in Spanish aquariums, are subject to sexual harassment on the part of their fellows as well as brutal attacks, which leaves their bodies lashed with scars. Bloody battles issues are said to be coupled with serious inbreeding violations.

Graef (n. p.) reported about exotic animals, such as miniature donkeys, Siberian tigers, Canadian lynxes, camels, being kept at the Lagoon

Amusement Park in Utah, a facility poorly designed for such purposes, in inhuman conditions, being forced to live in cramped cages with dirt on concrete floor, minimal space and no much needed environmental enrichment. Gloomy news also come from Europe where animals used to be mortified by being clubbed with baseball bats or crowbars in a Polish zoo and then fed to guest workers from Eastern Europe, who lived in horrific conditions themselves (Malm n. p.). Atrocious housing and feeding conditions are reported to have raised concerns in Sweden, being an integral part of local amusement parks (Malm, n. p.).

## **Works Cited**

Berger, Keith. "Chlorinated Cruelty: Performing Prisoners in Florida's Marine Parks and Aquariums." Examiner. com. 15 July 2009. n. p. Web. 07 Oct. 2013.

Graef, Alicia. "Help Sad Animals at Lagoon Amusement Park." Care2. 27 April 2012. n. p. Web. 07 Oct. 2013.

Kirby, David. "Forced Inbreeding and Bloody Battles – Killer Whales in Horror at Spanish Theme Park." TakePart. com. 15 March 2013. Web. 07 Oct. 2013.

Malm, Sara. "Fresh Horror at Zoo where Animals Were Clubbed to Death as It Is Revealed They Were Then Fed to Polish Park Workers." Mail Online. 19 October 2012. n. p. 07 Oct. 2013.

Russo, Christina. "Can You Worry about an Animal You've never seen? The Role of the Zoo in Education and Conservation." Plos. org. 11 March 2013. n. p. Web. 07 Oct. 2013.

Stark, Joseph. "Animals in Captivity: the Dark Side of America's Favorite Theme Parks." Business 2 Community. 7 March 2013. n. p. Web. 07 Oct.

<https://assignbuster.com/research-paper-on-animals-amusement-parks-rare-species-retention-sanctuaries-or-lifetime-top-security/>



2013.

Williams, Olivia. " Captivity Makes Whales Killers: Stress of Appearing in Theme Parks Can See Animals Turn on Their Trainers." Mail Online. 17 June 2013. n. p. Web. 07 Oct. 2013.