

# A problem of animals captivity

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## **Captive Freedom**

Animals add beauty to the world. For centuries, people have found delight in the animal's appearance. In order to admire these creatures safely, people capture animals to have on display. These places are commonly known as a zoo or zoological parks. Historians have found traces of menageries, "zoos created as private collections by the wealthy to show their power," as early as 2500 BCE (Rutledge 1). Menageries opened their doors to the public during the 18th century "to study animals for scientific reasons. To do this, scientists and zookeepers had to keep animals in places that were close to, or resembled, the animals' natural habitats" (Rutledge 1). As Bill Baker states, "zoos serve three main purposes: conservation, environmental education and entertainment." Zoos accomplish their three main purposes while sacrificing the rights of the animals being held in captivity. In reality, zoo animals are being exploited. Animals should not be kept captive for three reasons: captivity negatively changes their physical conditions, they cannot act upon their natural instincts, and people have developed programs dedicated to inbreeding.

Captivity negatively affects an animal's physical appearance. Animals suffer physical mutation due to poor nutrition. Hannah O'Regan and Andrew Kitchener research demonstrates that "a variety of physical changes are thought to have occurred to wild [animals]" such as "changes in body and the brain size, alteration of external appearance, the gaining of a fat layer beneath the skin and a reduction of facial region." Captive animals are not receiving the "necessary vitamins and minerals" and suffer from a "

deficiency of calcium and vitamin D" (O'Regan et al.). O'Regan and Kitchener saw physical changes in captive big cats. Deficiency of vitamins and minerals caused the big cats several health problems such as " thickening of the cranial vault, cranial asymmetry and...eyesight loss" (O'Regan et al.). Wild animals are suffering the consequences that could have been easily been avoided either by providing a healthy nutrition that could have otherwise not been found in the wild or maintaining them in their natural habitat. Due to the fact of their malnutrition, wild animals have undergone many physical changes that " the differences between them and their wild ancestors are likely to be marked" (O'Regan et al.). Furthermore, it also negatively affects their mental condition.

Wild animals shouldn't be kept captive because their natural instincts endanger society. Unlike domestic pets, their behavior is extremely difficult to change. Wild animals are born with instincts of survival and safety. During their stay at the zoo, these species are expected to control their behavior by not acting upon their instincts for families to safely enjoy their presence. Unfortunately, when these creatures do act according to their instincts, they are punished for doing so. Tragedy struck on September 23, 2014, at a New Delhi Zoo. Vicki Croke reports, " a 20-year-old man, identified by police as Maqsood Khan, either jumped or fell into an enclosure in a New Delhi zoo yesterday and was killed by a white tiger." Circulating the internet are videos and images of the exact moment the white tiger attacked the victim. Khan invaded the white tiger's territory. Consequently, the white tiger approached Khan; meanwhile, the public threw rocks and sticks at the tiger. Instead of helping the situation, the tiger angrily attacked Khan. Vicki Croke reports, "

one online source wrote: ' Zoo officials did not say what would happen to the tiger that attacked the boy... although ... many people believe the animal should be put down.' Punishing a tiger for being a tiger is ludicrous." This international news story exemplifies why wildlife animals belong in their home and not among society. On the other hand, having certain species captured is beneficial.

Although having animals in captivity is not appropriate, zoological parks have a mission to repopulate endangered species. Zoos accomplish their mission through breeding programs. As Joni Praded states, " various institutions [are receiving] public and private funding" in support of " captive-breeding programs". People are willing to support breeding programs because " twenty-four of all mammals, twelve percent of all birds and 14 percent of all plants face extinction." Breeding programs help populate and protect the species; afterwards, the once endangered species, are released back into their natural habitat. Unfortunately, not all breeding programs seek to repopulate endangered species.

Animals are no longer in control of their own mating; instead, humans exploit certain species. People question how the white tiger came into existence. Jackson Landers uncovers the truth about the white tiger; they " are not a subspecies at all but rather the result of a mutant gene that has been artificially selected through massive inbreeding to produce oddball animals for human entertainment." Zoological parks are in charge of providing entertainment to the viewers; therefore, creating a never-seen unique animal was the solution to provide that form of entertainment. Inbreeding of

the white tiger should not be permitted because “ the mutation causes serious defects” (Landers). These defects include “ problems with the way their brains control their eyes and process visual stimulation...kidney problems, club feet, and shortened tendons” (Landers). Sadly, white tigers born with defects have to be put down because no one is willing to take care of them, nor are they able to be sold. The white tiger exemplifies animal exploitation for entertainment and money. While some zoo programs have upstanding captivity programs other breeding programs, such as those for the white tiger, do not seek the greater good for wild animals.

Zoological parks do more harm rather than benefit the animal kingdom. Wild animals should be left alone in their natural habitat in order to have a healthy physical development. Consequently, removing animals from their home negatively manipulates their natural instincts, putting society in risk. Although most breeding programs strive to protect endangered species, some programs take advantage of the situation to benefit themselves. Just like human beings demand freedom, animals also deserve their freedom.