

# Animals shouldn't be kept in zoos

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For hundreds of years, the prospect of caging animals for the purpose of entertaining visiting members of the human public has been one that has generated much interest and business all over the world. In every single corner of the planet, on every single continent and in every single country, there are zoos that charge fees for people to enter and spend the day looking through glass walls and iron bars at species of animals from all over the planet. Whilst this was seen as something of a marvellous curiosity in, for example, the Victorian era, over the last few generations it would be fair to say that there has been a wave of opposition with regards to the moral and ethical practise of keeping animals in captivity purely for the entertainment of the public. It is an argument that provides valid points on either side, the most convincing in the 'for' camp being that many zoos provide a safe sanctuary for species of animals that have become severely endangered, as well as zoos building research centres for the improvement of health and care in the animal kingdom.

Whilst it's almost impossible to argue against the merits of those particular aspects of some zoos across the world, there are some reservations withstanding that need to be addressed. Firstly, whilst the argument of species protection and extinction prevention is certainly valid in the cases of some specific animals, there is no denying that a large, big city zoo is also going to be the home of several species that are nowhere near the endangered list, and therefore are only present as a means of entertainment for visiting humans. Animals like meerkats, common reptiles, farm yard species and even certain types of penguins, for example, are all guaranteed to be hit attractions in zoos everywhere, but can a person really argue the

benefits of a small penguin living in an artificially chilled and created ecosystem behind a glass wall in favour of being able to thrive and flourish in their natural, original environment? No matter how content or comfortable these animals might seem from an outside perspective, it is unfathomable to imagine that they wouldn't be happier, and possess a bigger sense of freedom if they were living their lives in their natural habitat. There is also a worrying trend, something we see perhaps a couple times a month across global news, of either an animal causing harm to a human who has breached a zoo's security measures, or an animal being destroyed by authorities because it has managed to escape its captivity and now poses a real danger to those nearby. These are both tragic situations, but they are also situations that can be entirely avoided if humans choose to change the way that we treat animals and zoos as forms of entertainment.

The fact of the matter is that we are not supposed to get as close to lions and tigers as the format of a zoo allows us to get, and the same goes for other potentially deadly encounters with animals like rhinos, elephants and other large beasts. Overall, in my opinion, I believe that animals should only be kept in captivity in order to preserve, protect and hopefully enhance the future of a species. With the quality of nature documentary and media that we have today, there really is no excuse to pay your money and go and point at a monkey who only has the perimeter of a large cage in which to roam. It doesn't make sense both morally and ethically in today's more enlightened times.