

Essay on keeping animals in zoos

[Technology](#), [Internet](#)



Keeping animals in zoos has been a contested issue for several decades now. As more information has been learned regarding animal health and welfare, along with it has come an increased concern in the animals, and not just in the entertainment of people who want to see wild animals in close proximity. Zoos appear to be contributing positively to education and awareness of wildlife, but it is clear that life in a zoo is not in the best interests of the individual animals concerned.

Many zoos claim that they work in the interests of education and conservation. As Bristol Zoo states on its website, “ the role of good zoos is to provide their visitors with amazing experiences for learning and caring about wildlife and biodiversity and applying our specialist skills to identify and investigate threats to biodiversity, then supporting remedial action” (Conservation, 2011).

Some people view zoos as vital in the preservation of endangered species, via specialised breeding programs. However, some animal activists contend that such arguments are weak. Counterarguments include the view that zoos tend to be incapable of keeping a night enough number of animals in a species to breed from a varied gene pool. Furthermore, animal activists argue that the benefits to the population of the species in question are not substantial enough to compensate the captive animals for the destructive effects of being in a zoo (Ethics, 2011).

There are many arguments against keeping animals in zoos, and one of the key issues is the welfare of the animals themselves. Certainly, there is a great deal of evidence to validate this concern. For example, the UK

government funded a study into elephants living in British zoos. They found that, “ 75% of elephants were overweight and only 16% could walk normally, the remainder having various degrees of lameness. Less than 20% were totally free of foot problems” (Facts, 2010).

While zoos provide a means of educating the public and of raising awareness about global wildlife issues, the individual animals made to live in such captivity appear to be suffering in terms of their health, both physical and mental.

References

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