

# Animals in the zoo – is it fair to keep them in cages?

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At some point in our lives, it would be fair to assume that we have all been to a zoo of some size and capacity. Visiting a zoo with children or friends to view the animals can be a fun and educational day trip, with people being able to experience wildlife from all across the world in a close up way that could not happen in their natural habitats. As however, our awareness of animal rights becomes more and more acute in modern times, some people have been left to wonder whether the practice of keeping animals in cages for human enjoyment is still a valid form of entertainment and fun in 2016. Of course, the argument is not quite as cut and dry as simply keeping animals caged for entertainment, as many zoo workers and scientists will provide the opinion that they are more focused on the conservation of endangered and vulnerable species, with the aspect of public viewership being a mere side line to their real work of keeping species of animals safe and breeding in a controlled environment. There is certainly something to be said for the work that many zoos do for species such as the Giant Panda, an animal that is low in numbers and notoriously slow and picky with regards to procreation. By making homes for Giant Pandas in comfortable captivity, scientists are able to give the species the best chance of survival by giving a helping hand to the breeding process.

Also, with the sheer amount of deforestation and industrial damage that is being done to the world, zoos can be seen as safe havens for species of animals whose natural habitat has been destroyed beyond repair. In order to fund the continuation of these conservations practices, officials would argue that it is necessary to invite visitors to enjoy the animals for a fee. On the other hand, there is a counter argument to this positive attitude. Many

people believe that there are zoos across the world that do very little to enhance the prospects of their animals, providing minimal care and simply banking on the attraction of exotic animals like lions, tigers, elephants, giraffes, rhinos etc. to make easy money while not performing their expected conservations duties.

There have been countless news story examples of endangered species found to be living in terrible conditions in zoos that are supposedly good quality establishments, so we must be wary of believing the blanket statement that all zoos are there for purely conservational purposes. In conclusion, it would be fair to say that the paying guests are the people who have the power to force the zoos to increase their quality. If we do not give our money to bad establishments, they will be forced to make changes. Ultimately, to keep an animal in a cage is never the ideal choice, but if conservation calls for it, then the least we can do it ensure that they receive the best of care.