

The impact of the economy on us zoos

Economics



Throughout the course of this semester, I have learned much about macroeconomics. I came into this class knowing and understanding very little about this topic and found it very hard to grasp at first. As the weeks passed, I found myself starting to understand it a little better than previously once I started to apply it to a topic that interested me. Being able to choose a topic to write this paper on was a very good way to get students, like me, to actually look into real-life scenarios and apply what we have learned.

This is what I will be doing throughout the course of this paper. The topic I chose to apply the concepts I have learned throughout class is the effect the economy has on zoos in the United States. Zoos have been affected dramatically since our economy has started to decline. This decline has affected many, many companies, businesses, and people. Because of all this, the zoos have suffered greatly over the past few years. Many different examples of zoos and how they were affected will be given throughout this paper to show the enormity of the situation they are currently in.

All of the terms I use throughout this paper have been learned from my Macroeconomics book by the authors McConnell, Brue, and Flynn as cited at the end of this paper. Having said this, I am ready to talk about two struggling zoos and what cutbacks they were forced to make. The first zoo I would like to talk about is the Bronx Zoo in New York. This zoo is the largest urban zoo in the country and it has been hit hard by the dropping economy. With New York being such a large city, the state and city budgets have been cut drastically.

This makes the zoo have to cut things out of their budget as well as people, exhibits, and even the animals themselves. The labor force at the zoo has

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been cut by 15%, this was 186 people who are not out of a job like so many others across the country. Just some more names to add to the unemployment list I guess. The zoo also had to close three of its exhibits. The animals from the exhibits were sent all over the country to other zoos that could afford to take them in (Luhby). Not only do these cuts affect the zoo itself, but it also affects the economy as a whole in New York.

It is estimated that four million visitors come through the gates of the Bronx and the New York Aquarium each year. In the Fiscal year of 2008, the zoo hired 800 seasonal employees and they are the largest youth employers in the Bronx (Wildlife Conservation Society). This provides a very positive impact on the area and now that they had their nominal income lessened, these jobs are no longer available for these people to have. These are just some of the problems the Bronx Zoo is facing, but what about some other zoos? The Lincoln Park Zoo in Illinois has also been suffering from budget shortfalls like Bronx Zoo.

Not only did they face cuts in their labor force and more than a million dollars cut from their budget, but they had to find other ways to make cuts as well (Mullen). They have been using substitute goods for feeding their animals. Blueberries are very expensive so they have not been buying them for their gorillas. They use these blueberries as treats, but since there is a lack of funds they have had to find other treats for them to eat. Choosing less expensive fruit is a small, but effective way to cut costs (Fountain). This is just another way another zoo was affected by the economy's current state.

Now that I gave you a few examples of how certain zoos are struggling, I would like to discuss just how they are impacted as a whole. There is an <https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-the-economy-on-us-zoos/>

organization called the Association of Zoos and Aquariums or known as AZA. This organization sees over zoos all across the world. AZA hired a very recognized economist, Dr. Stephen Fuller to conduct a state-by-state economic analysis. This 21-page analysis has been used in many articles I have examined he seems to have a very strong grasp on just how the economy has affected these AZA-accredited zoos.

Examples of his findings from two different states will be discussed below. An example state was using to show just how much the economy was impacted by the zoos itself. Indiana brought in \$84. 3 million for the national Gross Domestic Product alone. This created 947 jobs and allowed personal earnings to reach \$30 million (Zoo Impact: Tens of Millions of Dollars, Hundreds of Jobs). Another example was the impact the Houston Zoo had on its' surrounding area. Fuller said that in 2010, more than 2 million visitors were recorded to enter the gates. The operating budget at this time was around \$28. million. I know that sounds like a lot to run a zoo, but in return, they created an economic impact of \$70. 7 million. Also in 2010, a capital budget of \$24. 5 million generated an impact of \$65. 9 million. This all totaled to a whopping \$135. 97 million (Your Houston News). All this money is just on a state scale. Across the United States, 224 zoos were surveyed and in total, they contributed \$16 billion dollars to the Gross Domestic Product. That's right, it is in the billions! It created around 142, 000 jobs and their personal earnings were right around \$4. billion (Zoo Impact: Tens of Millions of Dollars, Hundreds of Jobs). All of these numbers could increase if they simply had the funds. The economic crisis that we are in right now has caused their budgets to dwindle down and it does not just affect the zoo

itself as I have shown. It affects the people whose jobs get cut because there isn't enough money, animals lose their homes and get shipped away, and it causes zoos to make cutbacks on the food and care the animals are receiving. On whole, all of this affects the surrounding areas of the zoo and all who live there.

This impact then affects the whole United States, impacting the Gross Domestic Product. People just think we can take away money from these zoos to help ourselves out, but in reality, it is still hurting us. I'm not only concerned about how it affects us, but the animals are suffering as well. These animals were not asked to be given less food or smaller space to roam, but have to suffer the consequences of us humans not being able to care for them because of the economy. We do not always see how we affect the environment and things around us because we are too worried about ourselves.

So not only did I take away knowing and understanding terms like GDP, Nominal income, and operating costs but also on how each individual plays an important role in the economy. All of this has allowed me to understand just how we affect zoos because we are the economy. The economy is determined by our spending of money on goods and services and if we didn't it would collapse completely like we are starting to witness with other countries today.

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