

Why wild animals should not be kept in zoos.

A common debate that has been brought to the public attention by conservationists is whether wild animals should be confined in zoos or even be domesticated. Those who support the idea argue that captive animals provide several benefits to man and environment at large while those that are opposing argue that the benefits are minimal. However, after a close examination one can establish that humane alternatives to zoos can be set up to ensure wild animals live in their natural environment.

In developed countries zoos are popular feeding a major tourist industry world-wide (Woods, 2002). Doing away with zoos would therefore mean loss of revenues to major cities. Zoos provide easy access to various wild animals up close to the public which would not be easy to see in the wild. Zoos are often modified to mimic the natural environment in which wild animals exist which is an expensive and time consuming exercise.

Woods (2012) also cites studies which indicate minimal educational benefits of zoos with animals suffering from isolation and restricted movement due to limited space (Zamir, 2006) states that animals in zoos do not have the space they would in their natural habitat Zoos have also been used as research centers to deal with wildlife diseases as samples are easily obtained and animals monitored .this can also be used to come up with vaccines for diseases that can be deadly to both man and wildlife such as H5N1 avian influenza and (SARS) a serious respiratory syndrome. Therefore, zoos share among themselves data banks which collectively provide a wealth of information that can have positive implications in both human and animal health care and disease prevention (McNamara, 2007).

In conclusion, zoos are not that much needed and individuals can learn more about wild animals in their natural environment through documentaries or game drives. Surveillance equipment can also be used to monitor wildlife activity gathering data that can be analyzed for various purposes. The Society should re-evaluate the use of zoos and other similar organizations and determine how to end or modify their present use and existence.

References

Bostock, S. St. C. (1993). *Zoos and animal rights: The ethics of keeping animals*.

London: Routledge.

GAO (2000): *West Nile virus outbreaks: Lessons for public health preparedness*. Report

No. GAO/HEHS-00-180. Washington DC: United States General Accounting

Office. Retrieved from <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/he00180.pdf>

McNamara, T. T. (2007). The role of zoos in biosurveillance. *International Zoo*

Yearbook, 41(1), 12-15. doi:10.1111/j.1748-1090.2007.00019.x

Woods, B. (2002). Good zoo/bad zoo: Visitor experiences in captive settings.

Anthrozoos, 15(4), 343-360.

Zamir, T. (2006). The welfare-based defense of zoos. *Society and Animals*, 15(1), 191-

201.