

Sad Eyes



& Empty Lives

www.captiveanimals.org

Introduction

There are over 400 zoos in the UK today, ranging from small farm parks and butterfly zoos to large safari parks and aquaria. Worldwide there are probably more than 10,000 zoos, with hundreds of thousands of animals held captive.

Zoos are a relic of a bygone age – a Victorian concept which, as our knowledge of the animal kingdom grows, becomes even less palatable.

An increasing number of people are concerned about keeping wild animals captive. So zoos claim they are on a greater mission than simple entertainment: for conservation, education and research. Zoos now favour terms like ‘wildlife park’ or even ‘sanctuary’.

The Captive Animals’ Protection Society is totally opposed to the incarceration of animals and believes that zoos misinform rather than educate, and further, divert funds from positive conservation. Animals remain threatened or are even driven to extinction, whilst precious resources are drained away on expensive, high-profile breeding projects with no serious hope of success.



In the wild, the puma travels over varying ranges in search of prey. What can this zoo enclosure provide to keep such an animal occupied for years?

the Reality of Zoos

Sad Eyes and Empty Lives

In the wild, animals react to their surroundings, avoiding predators, seeking food and interacting with others of their species doing what they have evolved for. Consequently, even what might seem ‘larger’ or ‘better’ enclosures may be completely impoverished in terms of the animals’ real needs.



Wild rhinos do not restrict themselves to the same territory and may travel for 12 kilometres or more a day. For these captive rhinos, their zoo enclosure is probably as good as it gets; but in reality what is there for the animals? They are short sighted and stimulation in their world relies heavily on smell, so the view of the main road is probably lost on them.

Frustration and boredom are commonplace amongst animals in zoos and can lead to obsessive behaviours in the form of pacing, swaying, and even self-mutilation. This is known as stereotypic behaviour and such pointless, repetitive movements have also been noted in people with mental illnesses. With nothing to do, animals in zoos go out of their minds.

Studies have found that lions in zoos spend 48% of their time pacing and 40% of elephants performed stereotypic behaviours.

Even diets are unnatural. Zebras in zoos become overweight as the grass they are given is higher in calories than the grasses of the African savannah. The resulting obesity can affect fertility as well as make the animal susceptible to nutritional illness.

CAPS have filmed adult gorillas in zoos repeatedly eating their own vomit. A gorilla biologist told CAPS: “I have never seen wild gorillas perform R&R (regurgitate and re-ingest, as it’s known in the zoo world, being such a well known by-product of captivity) and I have never spoken to anyone who has. In fact, I have never seen a wild gorilla vomit.”

Some animals suffer such serious behavioural problems in zoos that they are given anti-depressants, tranquillisers and anti-psychotic drugs to control their behaviours.

Zoos often refer to the animals they confine as being ‘ambassadors’ of their species, but just what message does it give when we see animals in such unnatural conditions, displaying disturbed behaviours?

The Longest Life Sentence

Space in zoos rarely, if ever, matches the animals’ natural range. Animals who would normally roam for tens of miles a day tread the same few paces daily. Some of the fastest animals on earth live in pens so small that they could not gather pace to a trot, let alone full speed.

A study published by CAPS revealed that enclosures in UK zoos and safari parks are on average 100 times smaller than the minimum home range in the wild for the animals they contain.

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Sad Eyes & Empty Lives

Another study of zoos worldwide found that lions and other big cats have 18,000 times less space in zoos than in the wild, and that figure rises to one million times less space for captive polar bears.

"Birds are finely tuned metabolic machines designed for flight. In zoos they are denied the one thing all their evolution has revolved around."

*Professor Alan Feduccia
University of North Carolina*

For fifteen hours a day, many animals may be shut away in their night quarters with even less room to move.

Some zoo enclosures prevent the inmates from enjoying even their most basic behavioural repertoire including exercise and social interaction. Birds are virtually stripped of their most precious gift, flight, often able to do little more than flutter their wings. Consequently, birds in zoos are prone to arthritis and osteoporosis.

However, it is not just a matter of space, but also the quality of the environment. Chimpanzees are our closest relatives in the animal kingdom, their intelligence is universally accepted, but they exchange the infinite possibilities of the forest for little more than playground climbing frames which would not keep a human child occupied for hours, let alone years.

Reptiles need complex thermal ranges, variation in humidity, special phases of light and other factors that may seem difficult for us to appreciate as humans.

Zoos rarely have the numbers to match the natural social interaction of herd animals. And when animals do find company, their world may be torn apart when cage mates are sold or become excess to requirements.

Large birds in zoos are prone to bone disease because small cages prevent them from flying properly.

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It is so common for big cats to constantly pace up and down their enclosure that zoos put concrete paths along the fence to stop the ground wearing down.



Giraffes, who drift gracefully across the African plains, in the zoo become awkward looking freaks in a sideshow

Solitary and shy animals are often in enclosures with viewing from all sides, and even a window in the night quarters as well. A study of gorillas in Belfast Zoo found that when there were more visitors the gorillas displayed "more behaviours suggestive of agitation, such as repetitive rocking, group-directed aggression and self-grooming."

The Con in Conservation?

A quarter of British zoos don't keep any threatened species, and those that do only have them in very small numbers. Many animals are there just to draw in the tourists.

Lions are popular 'exhibits' in zoos, but according to an international zoo journal the vast majority of the lions "are 'generic' animals of hybrid or unknown sub-specific status, and therefore of little or no value in conservation terms."

Even many of the high-profile co-ordinated breeding programmes amongst zoo bodies have no mechanism for returning animals to the wild, they simply provide for the continued breeding of certain species. When reintroduction programmes do take place they are often initiated by government wildlife agencies rather than by zoos. Many examples given by zoos as 'success stories' have simply been translocations into previously occupied or vacant habitat or have failed to lead to the establishment of a self-sustaining wild population.

The Arabian oryx is seen as the flagship of zoos' conservation image. Hunted to extinction in the mid-1970s, a captive-bred group was released in 1982 at a cost of \$25 million. By 1999 only a quarter of the 400 animals had survived; just 13 females remained in the wild, closely guarded by rangers. Poaching has continued to impact on numbers.

Captive-bred animals often lack survival skills, especially those normally learned from a parent – finding food, avoiding predators, etc. Some reintroduction projects have had to be suspended indefinitely.

Releases of captive animals also pose a significant disease threat to native populations. In some cases reintroductions have been cancelled after discovering viruses in captive-bred populations that were due to be released in areas where the virus was unknown; in others, native animals have died because of viruses spread by introduced animals.

Zoos still take animals from the wild. Throughout the 1990s over 1,000 elephants were taken from the wild and sold to zoos and circuses, and over 70% of elephants in European zoos today were wild-caught.

Aquaria are even bigger culprits, particularly due to the short life span of many aquatic species in captivity. A study by CAPS found that 79% of all animals in UK public aquaria were wild-caught.

The very nature of most zoos would doom any conservation efforts to failure. Captive-breeding projects need to be as close as possible to the ultimate release site, certainly in terms of climate, habitat and fauna. The animals need space appropriate to their needs and populations large enough to provide a suitable gene pool and a natural social balance of the species, with minimal human contact. Zoos and safari parks keep



Jaguar cubs would normally remain with their mother for the first two years of life – this 8-day-old cub at a zoo was being shown to a group of children.

solitary or unnaturally small groups of misplaced animals in substandard artificial habitats, permanently on show, thousands of miles from where the animals belong.

Animals become threatened because of a variety of environmental factors all too often, the destruction of their habitat by humans. Protection of natural habitats can actually be cheaper than keeping animals in zoos.

It is estimated to be 50 times more expensive to keep an elephant in a zoo than to protect sufficient natural habitat to sustain that elephant and many other animals. Major conservation groups do not think that captive breeding contributes significantly to elephant conservation and that priority should instead be placed on establishing more protected areas and enforcing anti-poaching legislation.



Aquaria cause the same problems as 'traditional' zoos. This starfish lost a limb after being handled by so many people in an aquarium touchpool. Many tope, a British shark, in aquaria have damaged faces, probably caused by continuously crashing into objects or the wall of the tank.

What Happens to Surplus Animals

Surplus animals are a problem for zoos. The sad truth is that in many cases, zoo animals are bred simply to attract visitors and pressure on space and resources means that some will be disposed of or killed at the end of the season. CAPS estimate that at least 7,500 individual animals in European zoos are 'surplus' at any one time.

In the past, British zoos have sold animals to vivisection laboratories and exotic meat farms. Animals are now more likely to be sold into the pet trade, and British zoos buy and sell animals with wildlife dealers around the world.

In 2002 a zoo in Cambridge sold four rare marmoset monkeys to a Belgian animal dealer; the animals ended up in a Brussels pet shop. Several British zoos actually have pet shop licences to enable them to sell animals direct to the public!

When an Essex zoo closed down undercover reporters were able to buy a lioness for cash and drive off with her in the back of their van!

Education

Zoos claim that seeing a live wild animal gives an unparalleled appreciation of the power and wonder of nature, but what are they really showing us?

"Most visits to most zoos throughout history have served only as diversions for the curious. Most zoo animals have traditionally been reduced to caricatures of their wild cousins."

Zoo director David Hancocks

TV wildlife programmes have ensured that our understanding of these animals extends beyond these pathetic exhibits. Indeed, CAPS believes

school trips to zoos leave children with a distorted view of wildlife. A study of zoo visitor attitudes found that after people saw animals in zoo enclosures that were highly artificial they had "a significantly greater negativistic and dominionistic attitude to animals."

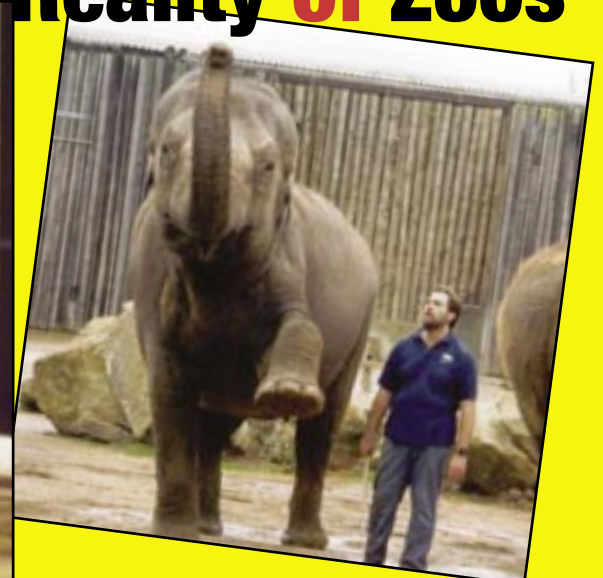
Signs on zoo enclosures can often give little information, or even incorrect details. A CAPS study of public aquaria in the UK found that 41% of the individual animals on display had no signs identifying their species – the most basic of information.

Studies have shown that most visitors spend less than three minutes looking at each exhibit, and sometimes as little as eight seconds.

We don't need to be wealthy to see animals in the wild. Wildlife is all around us, whether we live in a city or the countryside. From birds in the garden to badgers and deer in the woodland, we can all explore wildlife in its natural habitat with as little – or as much – effort as we want to put in.

Zoos claim that they afford people the opportunity to see something that many will never see in the wild. This is true; we will have to make do with books, magazines and television. However, can a few minutes of entertainment ever justify the tragedy of the disturbed behaviours and suffering we have outlined?

Some zoos even present animals performing little more than circus tricks to keep the visitors amused. CAPS have filmed elephants, sea lions and parrots performing tricks at several British zoos. We even uncovered electric goads being used on elephants during training. CAPS infiltrated a training session in a major British zoo and filmed elephants being trained to lift their feet and head, hold sticks in their mouths and jabbed with elephant hooks in the shoulder and head.



Performing animals in zoos – parrot, sea lion, elephant. Some zoos have become little more than a circus.

the Reality of Zoos



If the standards of the Zoo Licensing Act have any meaning, how can this enclosure for orangutans be legal?

Disease risks

As if zoos weren't bad enough for the animals they incarcerate, there is also a risk to zoo visitors and staff. Zoonoses – the transmission of diseases between animals and humans – is a growing concern worldwide. Captive animal facilities such as zoos can play a major role in the spread of zoonotic diseases.

Capture from the wild, handling, transportation and captivity all cause increased stress in animals, which can damage their immune system and make them more susceptible to disease.

In 2005, six children received hospital treatment for a stomach bug after visiting a Scottish zoo. It is thought that contact with animals led to 24 reported cases of cryptosporidium.

At the same time more than two-dozen people were hit with a kidney infection after visiting a petting zoo in the USA.

British zoos have been implicated in outbreaks of the dangerous e-coli intestinal infection, with people being hospitalised.

Several British safari parks slaughtered hundreds of monkeys after they tested positive for Simian Herpes B Virus. Although harmless to monkeys, if caught by humans it is almost always fatal.

Psittacosis ('parrot fever'), West Nile Fever, tuberculosis, salmonellosis and various forms of BSE ('mad cow disease') are

just some of the many zoonotic diseases found in animals in zoos. While visitors and staff are more likely to be at risk through direct contact with animals or their faeces, many zoonoses are airborne and can be carried around on clothes, shoes, hair etc. Avian influenza has created worldwide panic, and in one Indonesian zoo alone 115 zoo visitors had symptoms and several workers were hospitalised with suspected HN51 virus.

The Law Has Failed Zoo Animals

Zoos are governed by the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 and EU Zoos Directive 1999, which set minimum standards for zoo management. CAPS believe that this Act and Directive are woefully inadequate and fail to effectively take in to consideration the psychological suffering of zoo animals. Thus we still see tiny impoverished cages with little or no environmental enrichment, and animals deprived of their most basic social needs.

In principle the law is policed by zoo inspectors but these are often zoo directors or zoo vets.

Zoos are given advance notice of inspections. Roger Cawley, husband of animal circus trainer Mary Chipperfield, was a zoo inspector. He only resigned after being convicted of cruelty to a sick elephant whom he had whipped to force her to move faster in a circus training ring.

CAPS want to see an end to the keeping of animals in zoos. Animals should not be held captive for our entertainment; in addition, the law cannot adequately protect zoo animals from the inevitable suffering of imprisonment. In the short term a moratorium should be placed on building new zoos in the



UK, as well as captive breeding and taking animals from the wild. In the long term, zoos should be phased out.

Gorilla regurgitating and reingesting food at Twycross Zoo.

Please help captive animals



Remember: Zoos will close once people stop paying to see animals incarcerated.

- Don't visit zoos and safari parks - your money keeps them in business.
- Question the credentials of establishments claiming to be 'sanctuaries'.
- Order a copy of the CAPS video/DVD Sad Eyes & Empty Lives (£6).
- Write to your MP calling for a moratorium on new zoos and greater legal protection for captive animals.
- Write to your local newspaper highlighting what is wrong with zoos; use information from this fact sheet.
- Send £10 or more to become a Supporter of the Captive Animals Protection Society (CAPS) or send a donation to help our campaign.

I would like to become a CAPS Supporter and enclose a cheque for £10

I enclose a donation to help CAPS for £ _____

Please send me a free information pack about your work

Please make cheques/POs payable to CAPS

OR please debit my () Visa () Mastercard

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Signature: _____

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Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Address: Captive Animals' Protection Society
PO Box 4186, Manchester, M60 3ZA

Phone/Fax: 0845 330 3911

E-mail: info@captiveanimals.org

Web: www.captiveanimals.org