

Should Zoos be banned?

Zoos are very popular – and becoming increasingly more so - and have been around, in one form or another, for over 100 years now. Originally, zoos' conditions were poor and animals were treated badly yet they have grown more suitable for both humans and animals, though many people still question if it is right to be doing this to animals. This balanced argument will discuss if zoos should be kept open or banned, consider the benefits to all species and debate whether the potential damage caused is too high.

The most critical reasons as to why zoos should be kept open is that they can prevent extinction of certain animals. In the wild, animals can be hunted and eaten by any predator that could threaten their existence. All animals in Zoos can be cured easily if they fall ill and can be fed healthier food. Now, in the 21st century, the cages can be modified to suit the animal or animal's needs. Consider Twycross Zoo as an example. Recently, they spent over £20,000 pounds redesigning their monkey and gorilla sanctuary: this investment has enabled the animals there to thrive. Their natural habitats, which are in decline for a variety of reasons, cannot guarantee protection whereas a zoo can ensure a species' survival.

Additionally, Zoos can be great fun for humans and can also teach them more about animals. Some people say that you can learn about animals on TV and the Internet although without actually seeing the animal in real life. However, you can't see their interactions with others of the same species; observe them in habitats that replicate their own; and you can't feel their skin, fur or scales through a screen.

However, one argument against zoos being kept open is that being trapped in one cage can bore an animal. Animals do not normally act naturally around people and that does not teach anyone how they behave. Bright camera flashes can shock animals, and people love to take pictures of anything they find interesting - including animals. Unfortunately, Sea World (in America) is regularly in the news for these negative reasons. They have had to put down several of their Orcas in the past twenty years as the animals have started to display disturbing behaviours such as: head-banging against the glass, harming other orcas within the tanks and finally grievously harming humans during performances. David Attenborough – a famous naturalist – has been quoted to say, "Conservation of animal's natural habitats should be human's focus, not building more zoos to make us feel better for destroying their homes!"

Moreover, animals that are caged up cannot grow well and do not learn how to hunt properly. They cannot experience how it feels to roam the wild freely. They can only meet other animals in their cage so cannot socialise and this can cause stress, increased anxiety levels and often this leads to self-harming behaviours being displayed, which were mentioned above. Sometimes, animals are removed from their natural habitats and separated from their families. How would you feel if you were seized from everything you know and placed inside a glass cage for the rest of your life?

In conclusion, I personally think Zoos should be kept open. They can keep animals healthy, feed them when they need food and stop their extinction. Animals that live within zoos often have an extended life span compared to animals in the wild. This has to prove how zoos can benefit animals! I would like the next generation to be able to see the animals we see today in zoos and ensure that no other animals have to become extinct. Will we be able to guarantee the preservation of all species for the future in the wild? I feel that zoos are the safest, easiest and supportive way of ensuring the continuation of all animals.