

Zoos don't educate us – they're just for show.

Zoos are a relic of a bygone age - a Victorian concept. As our knowledge of the animal kingdom grows, they are becoming even less acceptable.

People aren't concerned enough about the welfare of animals in zoos. Most people wouldn't visit a zoo if they knew how little impact they really have on conservation. They haven't really changed from the menageries of old. Anyone can see that keeping a rhinoceros in a small concrete enclosure in central London is hardly appropriate.

Most animals in zoos, for example the African lions, elephants, and giraffes, are not threatened. They are simply exhibits. Take a look at the way they keep those precious, rare species whose very future they claim to hold in their hands. In one zoo, for example, a pair of highly endangered snow leopards live alongside a big dipper with cars hurtling past every few minutes.

I think that zoos don't educate, but misinform us, and divert funds from positive conservation. Animals remain threatened whilst precious resources are drained away on expensive, high profile breeding projects with no serious hope of success.

Zoos are changing, and we need them for conservation and education.

Zoos aren't just great places to see wildlife, they're also great places to save wildlife! Zoo workers contribute to conservation, education, and scientific research all over the world.

75% of the population will never see creatures in the wild, so this may be only way to raise awareness and hopefully inspire humans to love and protect these species. Zoos are in a process of change. Increased global awareness is slowly but surely transforming the worlds' zoos from the glamorous sideshows of yesterday into places where people can go to learn about the animals that are in captivity. More and more, zoos are allocating funds to creating 'habitat' style environments that are more comfortable for the animals themselves, and research into the survival of biodiversity.

I am lucky enough to come from Australia where zookeepers are among the most active animal rights activists, rehabilitating animals that have been injured and re-releasing them into the wild. I don't know what your local zoo is like, but perhaps it's a good idea to find out for yourself- you might be pleasantly surprised.

Zoos do vital work that we should be proud of!

Zoos are world leaders in conservation, ensuring that resources - plants, animals, water, even whole ecosystems - are used sustainably. This means that future generations will be able to enjoy the beauty and the benefits of nature. We should be proud of the work our zoos do on behalf of the animals and plants here and in the wild, and for the good of the environment.

Many zoos operate in an environmentally responsible and safe way. They carry out conservation research, breeding programmes and fund conservation in natural habitats. The money that visitors pay when they come to the zoo is used to help animals in the wild, as well as the zoo breeding programmes.

Modern zoos are very different from the places that many people remember. They are always researching the behaviour and well being of their animals, so that we can better help them in the zoo and in the wild. Facilities are always being improved. Zoos also help us learn about conservation, and about what we all can do to make a difference. If people don't have the chance to learn about animals and conservation around the world, they won't be inspired to help save wildlife before it is too late.

Zoos don't help conservation – the money should be spent on protecting natural habitats.

Zoos claim they are on a greater mission for conservation, but about 6,000 species in the world are either threatened or endangered, and only a few are in captive breeding. Out of an estimated 10,000 zoos worldwide, less than 500 register their animals on an international species database, and only between five and ten per cent of space is devoted to endangered species.

Even if zoos are genuinely working hard for conservation, the way they do it just won't succeed. Breeding projects need to be as close as possible to the ultimate release site, in the real environment. The animals need plenty of space and large populations, with minimal human contact.

Unfortunately, zoos and safari parks don't keep large enough groups of animals to repopulate the wild. They keep solitary, or unnaturally small groups of misplaced animals in poor artificial habitats, permanently on show, thousands of miles from where the animals belong.