

Are zoos good or bad for animals?

What are the arguments in favour of having zoos?

Zoos may be great entertainment, but their big goal is to educate the public about wildlife and what we can do to protect them. Zoo animals are sort of like ambassadors for their counterparts in the wild. Zoos also contribute to scientific research. "Zoo" is short for zoological park, and zoology is the scientific study of animal biology and behaviour. In addition, zoos work really hard to save animals that are threatened in the wild. Zoos can take at-risk animals, breed them in captivity, and then reintroduce them back into the wild.

What are the arguments for NOT having zoos?

Zoos have their problems. Not all zoos are created equal. Some are clean and well staffed, others aren't. There are some in the richest cities in the world, and there are some in conflict zones. What this means is that not all zoos have the resources to properly care for the animals they house. And for many critics, no amount of education or research justifies keeping animals captive. That captivity can be REALLY bad for both physical AND psychological health. And while zoos have been really helpful in saving endangered animals, it doesn't work out for certain species. For example, most large carnivores like lions and tigers that are bred in captivity die when released into the wild. It turns out that they haven't developed the natural behaviors they need when they're out on their own and have to fend for themselves.

