

Zoos are great, right? You get to be up close and personal with some amazing animals that you'd pretty much never get to see in the wild. Clearly, zoos are a win for people. But when it comes to the animals, zoos might cause more harm than good. Should zoos exist?

In the wild, big cats spend their time traveling vast distances to hunt, seek mates, and stake out territory. Most species are primarily nocturnal (they like to be active and hunt at night time) and, with the exception of lions and male cheetahs, are solitary by nature, which means that they like to spend their lives alone rather than round other cats of the same species. Housing incompatible animals together in cramped quarters has frequently led to big cats killing or harming their cage mates. This is not because the animal is cruel, it is usually down to the animal feeling uncomfortable and unhappy. When they are in captivity, even in a well-kept zoo with a large enclosure, these animals are not in their natural habitat. They do not have the opportunities to roam the lands, which is instinctive for them, they do not have the opportunities to hunt for their food which is a natural instinct and rarely are they in an environment that is similar to their natural surroundings and climate.

Forced inactivity due to confinement, as well as standing and walking on a hard surface such as concrete, can cause foot, joint, muscle, and circulatory problems; worn, cracked, and ulcerated footpads; poor muscle tone; and overall poor physical fitness. Sometimes when visiting nature parks or zoos you can see large cats walking up and down the same patch of its enclosure for most of the day. It is thought that this is not a good sign for the cat's mental well-being.