Are Zoos Beneficial or Harmful?

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Introduction

Even though the confinement of wild animals causes some discomfort, it remains beneficial in the long run, especially in the wake of poaching. Zoos are facilities where wild animals are housed and portrayed to the public for various reasons, such as tourism. Whether or not zoos are beneficial to the animals can be debatable. This is crucial in the continuous recognition of the rights of the animals.

Some feel that the animals were initially meant to stay freely in the wilderness and that confining them in zoos deprives them of their rights. Some think that animals have feelings, too, just like humans, and that restricting them to one area deprives them of the right to free movement. On the other hand, some people feel zoos are the only places where wild animals can survive and be cared for. The world faces an era of a high level of poaching that kills wild animals at a very high rate (Woosley n.p). For this reason, zoos have become the refuge for most animals, turning out to be safe grounds for their breeding. The following analysis should be carried out to determine whether zoos are more beneficial or harmful to the animals.

First, the size of the zoo determines the level of benefits and harmfulness. The smaller the zoo space, the more stressful the situation is for the wild animals inside the zoo. For instance, the zoos in China are considered bigger than those in America for Bears. For this reason, the Chinese zoos act more as homes to the bears than the ones in the US. For this reason, the beneficial aspects take the aspect of the space provided for the animals. When an area is enough for the animals to move freely, they are useful as they protect the animals. On the other hand, they become harmful to the health of the animals when the space left is limited.

The world today faces a big threat from the high levels of poaching. Almost every continent faces this as a menace and thus strives to protect its wild animals from being killed by poachers. As the animals have feelings, they sometimes feel insecure when some of their own are poached in their presence. For this reason, taking them and providing them with security relieves the presumed long-day tension (Woosley n.p). Therefore, security for the animals is a significant benefit for the zoos. When the animals are left to move freely in the wilderness, they face dangers from both the people and the rest of the animals. However, the risks are minimized when they are confined to the zoos.

The zoos also act as the breeding sites for the wild animals. The animals are often left to breed in the forests and on their own. The world aims to have as many of the animals being born surviving as long

as possible. This is only possible when the animals are retained in the zoos and thus checked upon from time to time. Having the animals in confinement allows the medical practitioners to take care of them all along with giving birth and even afterward. For instance, it happens naturally that the mother might die soon after giving birth to a young one. The probability would be that the young one dies in the wilderness. However, the zoo provides a chance for the reception of medical attention of the young one even if the mother dies soon after birth. In this case, the zoo is quite beneficial instead of harmful.

The population around the world bulges and increases day by day. However, the size of the land is not growing in any way. People must, however, survive on the land that is in existence. This creates a high rate of conflict between wild animals and people. In many cases, the animals attack the people close to their natural habitats, and the people attack the animals as well. The high rate of conflict results in the loss of lives for the animals and the people. Thus, the benefits come in two aspects. First, zoos provide a suitable animal location (Woosley n.p). When the animals are kept in the aquarium, the chances of conflicting with the people are minimized to zero. For this reason, the animals are safe from any form of attack and live longer. On the other hand, the zoos are beneficial to the people. The chances of meeting animals elsewhere are minimized as the animals are maintained in the aquarium. Thus, people are guaranteed their safety in their day-to-day engagements.

The zoos also benefit people because they create awareness of the need to protect endangered species. Many people appear to be ignorant of the possibility of getting the endangered species rid of soon. However, a visit to the zoo acts as an awareness creation that enables the safety of the animals to win the support of many people. Ignorance of the endangered species contributes to the high rate of poaching among the people. However, people get an insight into the possible consequences if the right procedures are not taken to protect the animals. Information benefits the people in that they can come up with the best strategies to protect the remaining animals from being poached for money (Lin n.p). The awareness created assures the animals of more safety in the future. Protection is enhanced through the combined efforts of the authorities and the public.

Also, having the animals in the zoo benefits them as they are well-catered for and provided with food. This is the opposite of what happens in the wilderness as the animals have the role of looking for their food, which may not be possible on everyday occasions. The confinements of the zoo allow the animals to be fed one by one and thus save them from potential deaths, especially during unfavorable weather conditions. For instance, the food chain is real in the wilderness and takes effect throughout. During the dry seasons, the grass dries out, causing the herbivores to run out of food supplies and water. As the herbivores die out, the carnivores get less source of food and start dying as well (Hulbert et al., 156). Zoos provide food security for the animals as they are fed at all times irrespective of the weather conditions. This is a crucial benefit to the survival of the animals.

Zoos are safer places for the public to visit than the open wilderness. Many forest animals are not tamed and immediately turn against the people when they see them around. For this reason, the forests are unsafe for the people and animals. Zoos come in and provide a safe environment in which

people can visit and have a close look at the animals. The experience is thus more educating the visitors. Most importantly, it creates awareness of the need to preserve the animals and protect them from becoming extinct.

Medical attention is also made possible in the zoos. The zoos bring the animals close to the supervision of human beings. The animals move in the narrow range of the people entrusted with their welfare. For this reason, animals get the chance to be medically attended to, either when they fall sick or even when attempting to prevent them from diseases. For this reason, the zoo's lifespan is better than in the wilderness where medical attention is made almost impossible.

The wilderness presents many natural barriers to the still living of the animals. For instance, many of the animals left in the open suffer from changes in weather conditions from time to time. In this regard, many animals die in the wilderness at a rate considered quite high (Woosley n.p). The zoo, on the other hand, presents a controlled living environment for the animals contained therein. Therefore, the animals are protected from natural barriers to survival such as excessive rainfall, snowball falls, and other natural calamities.

However, situations indicate that zoos result in harm, especially to the animals confined in them. First, the animals' natural way of life is affected. The rights of the animals are taken away from them as they live as the people require of them. The animals are denied the right to decide the location at a particular time and what to do. As such, zoos deprive the right animals of the opportunity to lead a natural life, just as human beings do.

Also, animals are family beings, just like human beings. The zoo, however, separates the animals (Victoria n.p). When an animal is captured from the field, it is separated from the rest of the family members. This tortures the animals psychologically, which in turn affects their mental health. This idea seems entirely selfish to the people as they consider their satisfaction more than the animals.

The animals have feelings just as the people do. Animals, therefore, ought to have some freedom to live their natural way of life. However, the confinement of the animals in the zoos creates a situation of loneliness for the animals. This results in the deterioration of the medical health which reduces the animals' lifespan.

Many zoos worldwide provide limited spaces for animals to move. As such, the animals remain confined to the small premises on which they are placed on the first day. This creates a dull environment for the animals, as many of them are naturally meant to roam around in search of food.

Some of the zoos also present physical torture to the animals. Across the world, reports exist of animals' physical torture for supposedly doing the wrong thing. This amounts to the breaking of the rights of animals as they should be free from any physical assault from the people entrusted with their care (Norton n.p). Physical attacks create more psychological torture that amounts to the deterioration of their health.

Conclusion

Zoos remain beneficial even with the various disadvantages identified. In comparison, the benefits of zoos seem to be more and have more weight than the demerits. However, both aspects are important when deciding to place animals in a zoo. The various weaknesses identified in zoos, such as the small spaces, ought to be rectified to improve the lives of the animals. Also, there is a need to confine the animals in families to reduce the psychological problems faced by the animals due to loneliness.

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