



Helping Zoo Animals One at a Time

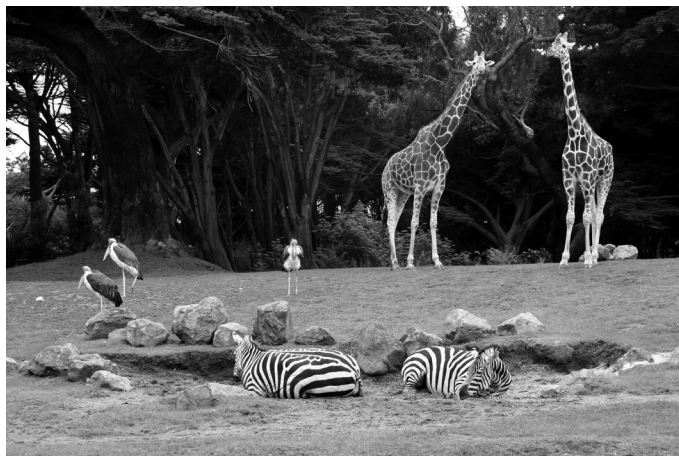


- 1** For most people, going to the zoo is the only time to see foreign animals or animals that are in danger of being extinct. Sometimes, zoos are the only place to see such animals. Having zoos is a great way to take care of endangered animals, and it is also a great way to help these animals reproduce in safe conditions.
- 2** Going to a zoo to see the animal exhibits is a great way to learn about gold-hair monkeys who are not **indigenous**¹ to North America, polar bears from Antarctica, or even Madagascar Penguins. Without zoos bringing these animals to their enclosures, people would not have the opportunity to learn about them or see their behaviors. Zoos can provide opportunities for schools to study certain animals that are rare in their areas and allow students to learn about exotic or endangered animals.

¹ indigenous - originating in and characteristic of a particular region or country; native

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3 Like people, animals need certain things to remain healthy and happy. When animals are far from their homes, it can be difficult to give them everything they need. However, zoos have created exhibits that replicate animal habitats to keep them comfortable. Zoos have built cold caves to keep the polar bears happy, created rock mountains to allow the lions to rest during the day while sunbathing, and constructed birdhouses to allow exotic birds to fly freely through the air. In San Diego, you can safely see the lions roam around much like they would in their native homes.



the condors with the hope that they would mate. Once the chicks were old enough, they would be released into the wild once again. It took several years for this to work, but by 1991 the first condors were released into the

wild. Since this project's inception, the two zoos have successfully released hundreds of condors into the wild.

4 Not far from the zoo, there is a San Diego Safari Park where the animals are able to live freely in habitats that have been created to replicate their home environments closely. In this safari park, tourists can travel in a jeep and see the animals living freely with no cages or barriers. In these situations, the animals are living life as if they were free, but they are also being taken care of. They are not in danger of predators, illnesses, or starvation.

5 Zoos also help repopulate endangered species of animals. In the 1980s, the California condor was in danger of extinction. Condors are birds that eat dead animals, that if left to rot, can spread diseases to other animals. By the late 1980s, there were only about 22 condors left in the world. The San Diego Safari Park and the Los Angeles Zoo came together to capture

6 Another important part of zoos is how well they take care of their animals. It is important that zoos keep their exhibits clean and free from overcrowding. The animals should have space to roam around freely. It is also important to see what happens during feeding time. Several of the animals in a zoo spend much of their day looking for food in the wild. Good zookeepers should keep this in mind while feeding the animals. Food should be hidden in bushes or trees to allow the animals to continue to use their natural born hunting instincts.

7 There are many people who are against having animals in zoos, but without the help of zookeepers and zoos, there would be many more animals in danger of extinction. Keeping animals in zoos helps repopulate endangered species and gives people opportunities to learn about animals they would probably have never seen otherwise. Before jumping to conclusions and thinking the animals in the zoos are unhappy, learn about them and do your research. You will often find the animals are happy and being well taken care of.

"Helping Zoo Animals One at a Time" written for educational purposes.



Letter to the Head Zookeeper

Dear Ron,

I believe that our city zoo should be closed. I feel there are too many events to gain interest in the zoo and raise money, but it does not seem any of that money is being invested in the animals.

During my visit last month, I was appalled to see the conditions in which the elephants were living. They were in a tiny enclosure with not nearly enough space to walk around. Their water hole was tiny, and the water was dirty. If the zoo cannot afford to build larger enclosures for the elephants, then you should consider other options such as moving them to a zoo that is better equipped for them or maybe sending them to a reserve where they will have more room to move around.

Also, while walking through the gorilla exhibit, I did notice that there was one solitary gorilla away from the others. This seems to be a problem, and he looked **lethargic**² and uncomfortable. He was pacing back and forth and did not even move when feeding time came. These are just two of the many instances I saw that were saddening to me.



It is a cruel punishment to keep animals locked up in zoos. I think we should consider sending them back to their native homes or introducing them to an animal reserve where they can live out the rest of their time wandering freely and more closely resembling their natural way of life.

Sincerely,

Morgan Marie

² lethargic – drowsy; sluggish

