

SHOULD ANIMALS BE KEPT IN ZOOS?

Have you ever gone to the zoo and watched lions play with their cubs or flamingos standing in the water? For many kids, the zoo is a place where they can see animals up close that they might otherwise only see in pictures or videos. There are thousands of zoos around the world. Many zoos try to design exhibits that look and feel like an animal's natural habitat, but they can't perfectly recreate life in the wild. That leads some people to ask: is it okay to keep animals in zoos?



QUICK FACTS

- About 900 animal species that are vulnerable or extinct in the wild live in zoos.
- Zoos have helped save at least 9 species — including California condors and red wolves — from extinction.
- Big animals have much less space in zoos than in the wild. Lions and tigers may have 18,000× less space, and polar bears up to 1,000,000× less.



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YES, WE SHOULD KEEP ANIMALS IN ZOOS

Zoos help protect animals. Some zoos give homes to animals that are sick, injured, or affected by habitat loss. Zoos also work to protect endangered species through carefully managed breeding programs. By studying animals' behaviors, traits, and diets, scientists learn information that may help protect those animals in the wild. Zoos also give people the chance to learn about animals from around the world and understand ways humans can help protect them.

NO, WE SHOULDN'T KEEP ANIMALS IN ZOOS

Even good zoos cannot give animals the same freedom they would have in the wild. Animals are fed by zookeepers, so they don't get to hunt or search for their own food the way they naturally would. Some animals may not have enough space to roam, which can lead to boredom, stress, or unhealthy behaviors. Wild animals should live in natural habitats, not in places where people come to look at them for entertainment.