

# What's Wrong With Zoos?



Three words: frustration, loneliness and heartbreak. That's what animals in zoos feel day after day. They can't fly, swim, run or climb the way they would in the wild, so they often resort to pacing back and forth, swaying, gnawing on bars or even mutilating their own bodies just to have something to do to relieve their stress.

© iStock.com/mamahoooba

**PETA**



## What Might a Visitor See in a Zoo?

Visitors to zoos may see elephants chained all day long, bears kept inside small barren concrete enclosures and leopards, lions and tigers confined to small cages, among other cruel conditions.

In fact, animals in zoos are denied the opportunity to express most of their natural behaviour, including flying, swimming, roaming, foraging for food, socialising, selecting a partner and so on. So visitors to zoos can expect to see animals who are sad, depressed and despondent.



## Are Any Indian Zoos Acceptable?

PETA investigators have visited dozens of zoos throughout India and found appalling neglect, decrepit facilities and animal suffering on a massive scale. Every facility visited was deficient in providing animals with adequate food, drinking water, housing, veterinary care, environmental enrichment, safety and security.



## But Aren't Zoos Necessary for Conservation?

Most animals imprisoned in zoos are not endangered, nor are they being prepared for release back into their natural habitats. In fact, it is nearly impossible to release captive-bred animals – including threatened species like elephants, polar bears, gorillas, tigers and chimpanzees – into the wild. Zoos don't breed animals with the intent of replenishing threatened populations – they do it because cute babies bring paying visitors through the gates. And captive breeding gives the public a false sense of security about a species' survival, which undermines support for and diverts resources away from efforts to conserve habitat.

A 2015 study published in the *Journal of Applied Ecology* concluded that unless animals' habitats are protected, captive breeding won't affect their survival.



## What Can I Do to Help Animals in Zoos?

Never patronise zoos. Instead, support reputable non-profit sanctuaries and groups that work to preserve animals' habitats.