

Are zoos really a setting for ecotourism?

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According to the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, over 700 million people visit zoos each year (WAZA, 2012) and with the growing popularity amongst tourist the debate continues whether it is moral for animals to be kept in zoos, although the primary objective of entertainment has changed to include research, education and conservation.

An area to be looked into is whether zoos are defensible as an ecotourism setting. Latest research by David A. Fennell, *Contesting the zoo as a setting for ecotourism*, and the design of a first principle published in *Journal of Ecotourism*, investigates this topic and uses research on three main concerns: conservation – education; welfare; and captivity.

Although we could argue that the animal welfare is successful with factors such as freedom from hunger, thirst, pain etc, with the failure in animal breeding and captivity programmes are zoos achieving ecotourism objectives?

David's research concludes that if we put the welfare of animals over humans' in ecotourism then this will make the step towards a more ethical ecotourism industry.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14724049.2012.737796>

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