# Pro Case ZOOS SHOULD BE BANNED

***2nd and 3rd Pro-Aff speakers defend these arguments***

“The animals of this world exist for their own reasons”

It is because we agree with author Alice Walker, and believe that animals do not live to be imprisoned by humans, that we affirm Zoos should be banned.

## First, zoos are cruel to animals.

Journalist Oliver Milman writes in a March 2015 Guardian article “zoos belonging to the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) have been filmed over the past five years making animals perform dangerous tricks, confining them to inadequate premises and beating them, contrary to Waza’s code of ethics, which demands the “highest standard of animal welfare.” One example is the San Antonio Zoo. Melissa Cronin writes in April 2014: “named the ‘worst zoo for elephants’ last year (for the sixth time)... the zoo keeps a female Asian elephant named Lucky in solitary confinement after the death of another elephant named Queenie. Profoundly social animals, elephants need companionship and often exhibit obsessive behaviors when housed alone.” Even when there is no intentional abuse, the animals still suffer. A 2015 Vice article written by James Nolan explains “on the issue of space, the average lion or tiger has 18,000 times less in captivity than it does in the wild; polar bears a million times less. To say this adversely affects the animal is an understatement: In 2008, a government-funded study in the UK discovered there was a welfare concern over every elephant in the country.”

## Second, zoos distract from conservation.

Outside Magazine contributor Tim Zimmermann explains “there have been studies done on how people think about conservation and the future of species in the wild... that sort of research shows that seeing animals in zoos cared for by humans, and hearing about a zoo’s conservation plans, reintroduction plans and breeding plans sometimes tends to make people think that animals are doing better in the wild [than they really are.]” Dr. Paul Dolman, from the University of East Anglia’s School of Environmental Sciences, conducted research on this subject. He found “captive breeding can reduce motivation and resources for conservation in the wild, with disastrous consequences.” The research used the Great Indian Bustard, a rare bird, as an example. “Predictive models show no guarantee that a captive population could be established, and a high chance it would fail,” which would only serve to “[divert] energy and funds away from the urgent action needed in its last remaining habitats.”

## Third, animals released by zoos pose health hazards.

According to a Harvard study led by Noel Snyder, “animals were not subjected to physical examinations by a professional biologist or veterinarian in 24% of [examined] reintroductions.” The study also cites another survey, which found “medical screening was practiced in only 46% of reintroduction programs.” As a result, animals released by zoos sometimes carry unnoticed diseases with them. Chris Draper and David Jay, members of the Born Free Foundation, explain “animals not exposed for generations to diseases found in the wild may have reduced resistance to them. Released animals can also carry diseases into the wild population, as recently discovered following a release of Mallorcan midwife toads.” The Harvard study provides a few more examples of where this has occurred. “Many reestablished populations of Wild Turkeys are infected with a parasite... apparently resulting from translocations of infected birds... Similarly, a virulent upper respiratory disease in wild desert tortoises... and gopher tortoises.. is believed to have resulted from releases of infected captive animals.”

## Pro responses to the Con Case (for 2P)

***3rd Pro speaker defend these arguments***

## Responding to conservation

**1. Zoos aim to entertain, not to conserve.**

Outside Magazine contributor Tim Zimmermann writes “less than 1 percent of the species kept in zoos are actually part of serious conservation [efforts]... "I think much more could be done by targeting specific species that really do need conservation.”

**2. Most zoo animals are too inbred for conservation.**

Conservation geneticist Dr. Paul O’Donoghue, of the Aspinall Foundation, examined conservation programs and found “the animals alive now are all related, mostly sharing more DNA than if they were cousins... their offspring become inbred, meaning they face stillbirths, genetic diseases and shorter lives.”

## Responding to education

**1. There is no data supporting zoo education.** Marc Bekoff, Professor emeritus of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Colorado, explains “some people asked for data on the educational values of zoos and there really aren’t any that support the claim that zoos educate in any meaningful way that makes a difference for their residents or for their wild relatives.

**2. Zoos lack basic information.**

James Nolan, journalist for Vice, asks “with 41 percent of Britain's aquariums lacking even the most basic information on signs, what can a person possibly learn that they can't from documentaries or YouTube? “

**3. Visitors wouldn’t use the information anyway.**

Bekoff continues “going to a zoo is like going to a car dealer to look at a car. Sure, zoo and auto showroom visitors learn something about the animals or the cars on display, but this does not mean that what they learn results in making a difference in the lives of the animals or that they actually buy a car.”

## Responding to research

**1. Zoo research isn’t intended to save animals.**

A 201 PETA factsheet explains “The purpose of most zoos’ research is to find ways to breed and maintain more animals in captivity. If zoos ceased to exist, so would the “need” for most of their research.”

**2. Research can easily be done without zoos.**

Chris Draper and David Jay, of the Born Free Foundation, write “many of the high-profile ‘successes’... of reintroduction have involved animals bred at specialised centres not open to the public, rather than in zoos.” If breeding can occur in specialized private centers, there is no reason why research can’t as well.

# Opp Case ZOOS SHOULD NOT BE BANNED

“Zoo animals are ambassadors for their cousins in the wild.”

It is because we agree with legendary zookeeper Jack Hanna, and believe that zoos provide a crucial link between humans and animal populations, that we negate Zoos do more harm than good.

## First, zoos assist in conservation.

Dr. Dave Hone, lecturer at Queen Mary University of London, explains “colossal numbers of species are going extinct across the world, and many more are increasingly threatened and risk extinction.” Zoos can protect species from going extinct, by providing them with a safe environment for breeding. According to a study published in the Public Library of Science in December of 2013, 23% of zoo collection plans are currently devoted to holding and conserving threatened species. Two examples of species that were saved by zoos are mentioned in a July 2016 Chicago Tonight article written by Evan Garcia. Garcia explains “roughly three decades ago, the Lincoln Park Zoo and Brookfield Zoo set up critical captive breeding populations of two bird species native to the Pacific Island of Guam – the Guam rail and Guam kingfisher. These birds would have been lost to extinction if not for dedicated captive-propagation programs.”

## Second, zoos educate visitors.

Jeffrey P. Bonner, president and CEO of the St. Louis Zoo, explains “nearly 180 million visitors go to accredited zoos and aquariums around the world – the St. Louis Zoo alone welcomes 3.2 million annual visitors.” Each of these visitors will leave the zoo knowing more about animals. Dr. Hone continues “many children and adults, especially those in cities, will never see a wild animal beyond a fox or pigeon, let alone a lion or giraffe... Seeing a living creature in the flesh, hearing it, smelling it, watching what it does and having time to absorb details... will bring a greater understanding and perspective to many.” There is also “education that can take place through signs, talks, and the like that can directly communicate information about the animals they are seeing and their place in the world.” Cristina Russo, Ph.D. in Molecular Biophysics, cites an otter demonstration as an example. Researchers compared “pre- and post-visit questionnaires,” and found “visitors attending [the] animal demonstration retained large amounts of the content material weeks after having attended.”

## Third, zoos conduct important research.

A survey conducted by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association found that 53.7% of zoos “reported having an institutional animal care and use committee” and 43.5% of zoos “reported having formalized research programs.” Bonner explains how the St. Louis program has been useful, stating “what we have learned in zoos has also been used to treat and benefit animals in the wild. We are transferring research findings from our reproductive management experts, endocrinologists, veterinarians and other scientists to the field to help address the health needs of endangered species.” An example of a zoo research program is the Ape Heart Project. A July 2016 Phys.org article explains “the Ape Heart Project is a European-wide research programme led by leading primate specialists at Twycross Zoo, in collaboration with The University of Nottingham, to investigate why great apes such as chimpanzees and gorillas are prone to heart disease.”

## Con responses to the Pro case (for 2C)

***3rd Con speakers defend these arguments***

**Responding to animal cruelty**

1. Zoos are transitioning away from cruel arrangements. Rob Vernon, spokesman for the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, explains “we are seeing an evolution of people’s thinking of what a modern zoological institution should be... In the past 10 to 15 years we’ve seen a dramatic shift in how AZA members approach the public display of animals. We see much larger, more open exhibits based upon modern science.”

2. Zoos are the only reason why many animals are still alive. A Scientific American article from 2009 states “programs have helped bring black-footed ferrets, California condors, red wolves and several other endangered species back from the brink of extinction over the last three decades.”

**Responding to distraction from conservation**

1. Zoos also fund other conservation efforts. Jeffrey P. Bonner, president and CEO of the St. Louis Zoo, writes “accredited zoos invest more than $160 million per year in conservation on nearly 3,000 projects in 127 nations.”

2. Zoos also help educate about conservation. Bonner continues “we work to help villagers feed themselves and their families in ways that still leave room for wildlife. We encourage them to become engaged in conservation and offer development opportunities so people in these communities are not solely dependent on exploiting natural resources to put food on their tables.”

3. Zoos help people empathize with animals. Dr. Dave Hone, lecturer at Queen Mary University of London, explains seeing a live animal at the zoo “will bring a greater understanding and perspective to many and hopefully give them a greater appreciation for wildlife, conservation efforts and how they can contribute.”

**Responding to health hazards**

1. Screening standards have improved/are continuing to improve. The affirmative’s own Harvard study states “the CBSG and the American Zoo and Aquarium Association hosted a symposium in 1992 to develop health screening protocols for reintroductions. Zoos have increasingly integrated these standards. The San Diego Zoo, for example, states “our team is committed to... ensuring that reintroduction candidates are healthy and fit for release into the wild.”

2. Zoo research is necessary to eliminate animal diseases. Jeffrey Bonner mentioned in case how zoos are “transferring research findings... to the field to help address the health needs of endangered species.” Diseases exist in the wild regardless, zoos provide us with the best way of studying and treating them.