

1/21/14

Zoos aren't a thing of the past and they never will be as long as we have incoming youth that want to see the rest of the world's animals up close and personal. While the zoos of today may not be a thing of the past they are overdue for an update. Many zoos main focus is on the bigger animals and the stereotypically pretty/cool animals rather than the smaller animals and insects and the way they affect the ecosystem. Zoos need to start incorporating and caring about other species of life like plants, insects, and smaller animals. They should also include more educational information not only about the animal but how we affect the species, how the species affects its surroundings, and us, and how its natural surroundings affect the species. (The future and ethics of zoos)

For thousands of years people have used animals for everything from entertainment in the form of hunting, to medicines, to food. The usefulness of animals in the eyes of humans has only increased as time goes on to the point that whole species have gone extinct because of the cultural traditions and habits of humans. As of right now it's the government's job to protect certain species from the habits of humans. Although the job they have done does have its issues its far better than leaving the species unprotected and unable to defend themselves against human habit/tradition. All in all at this point the decision seems to be best handled in the hands of experts and government agencies.

It is the people's responsibility to care for/maintain species and ecosystems. They were here first and we depend on them to survive so it makes sense to take care of what keeps us alive. Over the years of humans living on this planet we have done little for the earth and the rest of its inhabitants except destroy them, their/our home, and our livelihood at the same time. Although we have done so much damage we are now trying to fix some of what we have done to this world and a lot of that effort is channeled through our effort to preserve the ecosystems and the species in them that are the most at-risk. We determine what areas need the most help by identifying what we call hotspots. Hotspots are small isolated areas with high proportions of species including many that are endemic to that area (How should we prioritize the protection of species diversity). By identifying the hotspots we can determine which areas demand our attention more than others in an effort to fix what we broke and preserve what's left.

When environmental issues are being evaluated for economic value numerous things are looked at to determine how what you talking about benefits us as humans. For example you're determining the economic value of a forest you would have to look at how the forest and its inhabitants benefit us. You would need to look at how much wood is logged and sold, if there are fruit trees how much is made off the selling of the fruit, the fact that the trees absorb carbon dioxide from the air and emit oxygen, and even how the forest

might be used for recreational purposes by humans and how much money could be made by that. You would also have to look at how the inhabitants of that forest benefit us and how much of the forest you can use before it has too much of a negative impact on the inhabitants. After all this is considered you can come up with a number representative of how much that forest is worth to us. (Economic Valuation of Environmental Benefits)

There are many programs and places that claim to work with animals to conserve the species but as we saw this past week many of those programs don't always have the animals best interests in mind they are just in it for the possible economic pay off. One of the movies we watched this week was Blackfish, a documentary about SeaWorld and the treatment of the animals in its care, in specific the orca. This movie showed that the animals there were starved for training and stored in small areas. Because the orcas were kept in such close quarters they would fight and pick on each other causing injuries to each other (Gabriela Cowperthwaite). We also looked at zoos and the way they treat the animals and how the animals are affected by being in captivity. Some of the things we noticed were passing back and forth, and lying in one spot for long periods of time. These things are signs that the animals are under stress from being held in small enclosures for long periods of time. When keeping a species in captivity for the sake of conservation it's hard to not to cross the line between what's ethical in the treatment of animals and what's not. Everything we observed are signs of the ethical issues associated with keeping animals in captivity for the sake of conserving a species. Not all programs are like this but it is difficult to conserve a species with out crossing the line between right and wrong.