Captivity, liberation, conservation, the wild: rhetorics and the value of zoological institutions

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What story are we telling?

Vision and Mission

WAZA's Vision:

A world where all zoos and aquariums maximise their conservation impact.

This statement expresses WAZA’s desire to achieve the potential of zoos and aquariums globally to make a real difference for animals, species, habitat conservation and sustainability.
What story are we telling?

We believe in a better future for all living things.

We envision a world where all people respect, value, and conserve wildlife and wild places.

JOIN AZA
We Are AZA

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums is committed to providing the highest quality member services to advance the zoo and aquarium movement. AZA is also committed to being a global leader in promoting species conservation and animal welfare by leveraging the size, scope, expertise, and public trust of its member institutions.
What story are we telling?

Formed in 1992, EAZA's mission is to facilitate cooperation within the European zoo and aquarium community towards the goals of education, research and conservation.

By ensuring that its member zoos and aquariums achieve and maintain the highest standards of care and breeding for the species they keep, EAZA empowers European citizens to learn about and contribute to global biodiversity conservation goals.
Why promote “conservation”?

If you promote conservation goals for the sake of animals
“SO THAT THEY CAN LIVE IN THEIR NATURAL HABITAT”
...
...
this may automatically convey the message that the zoo habitat is
“NOT THE BEST ONE”.
ZOOS ARE PRISONS

PRISONERS

WE WANT TO BE FREE
Freedom
Freedom ?
Freedom ?
The freedom we really mean ...
The state of the planet

The biomass distribution on Earth

Yinon M. Bar-On\textsuperscript{a}, Rob Phillips\textsuperscript{b,c}, and Ron Milo\textsuperscript{a,1}

www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1711842115

estimate for reptiles similar magnitude as wild birds (but more assumptions; estimate for amphibians not possible)
The state of the planet

The biomass distribution on Earth

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![Biomass distribution chart]

- Red: Wild mammals
- Pink: Livestock
- Orange: Humans

Fig. S5. The impact of human civilization on the biomass of mammals.
THESE ANIMALS BELONG IN THE WILD.
Don’t
Keiko's Legacy Kit

Help Others Like Keiko!

Only the help of concerned people like you made it happen.

From a small, hot tank in Mexico City that left Keiko in poor health, he was moved to a custom-built pool in Oregon where he was nursed back to health. Then Keiko was returned to Iceland to learn the skills necessary to survive in the wild.

During the summer of 2002, he swam nearly 1000 miles to a fjord in Norway where he lived free until his death in December, 2003.
The release of Keiko demonstrated that release of long-term captive animals is especially challenging and while we as humans might find it appealing to free a long-term captive animal, the survival and well-being of the animal may be severely impacted in doing so.
Tierschutzgesetz (TSchG)


Die Bundesversammlung der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft,

gestützt auf die Artikel 80 Absätze 1 und 2 sowie 120 Absatz 2 der Bundesverfassung¹, nach Einsicht in die Botschaft des Bundesrates vom 9. Dezember 2002²,

beschliesst:

1. Kapitel: Allgemeines

Art. 1 Zweck

Zweck dieses Gesetzes ist es, die Würde und das Wohlergehen des Tieres zu schützen.
In diesem Gesetz bedeuten:

a.

_Würde_: Eigenwert des Tieres, der im Umgang mit ihm geachtet werden muss. Die Würde des Tieres wird missachtet, wenn eine Belastung des Tieres nicht durch überwiegende Interessen gerechtfertigt werden kann. Eine Belastung liegt vor, wenn dem Tier insbesondere Schmerzen, Leiden oder Schäden zugefügt werden, es in Angst versetzt ...
‘Burden’:
- Pain
- Damage
- Suffering
- Fear
- Restriction
Animals are Beautiful People

From the Creator of
The Gods Must Be Crazy

Ein Jean-Jacques Annaud Film

Der Bär
‘Burden’:
- Pain
- Damage
- Suffering
- Fear
- Restriction

‘Loss of dignity’:
- Burden without superior, justifying interests
JACK LONDON

WOLFSBLUT

ROMAN

Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material
‘Burden’:  
- Pain  
- Damage  
- Suffering  
- Fear  
- Restriction

‘Loss of dignity’:  
- Burden without superior, justifying interests
‘Burden’:
- Pain
- Damage
- Suffering
- Fear
- Restriction

‘Loss of dignity’:
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‘Burden’:
- Pain
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‘Loss of dignity’:
- Burden without superior, justifying interests
Dignity is not welfare
If it was an aim to prevent large-scale suffering, we would have to (amongst other measures) remove animals from their natural habitats.
To justify conservation, we need other arguments than (dignity-conserving, suffering-minimizing) animal welfare.
Welfare Concept
(Veasey 2017)

Welfare

extreme captivity ➔ extensive husbandry ➔ free-range „the wild“
Welfare Concept
(Veasey 2017)

Paradise
ex situ

extensive
Human care

protected

artificial

intensive

Captivity

Hell

The wild
in situ
Welfare Concept
(Veasey 2017)

The wild
in situ
Why promote “conservation”? for the sake of the planet ecosystem services, climate buffers for the sake of mankind practicing sustainability and resource abstention biodiversity reservoirs the beauty of natural ecosystems ... not for the sake of individual animal welfare
Welfare Concept
(Veasey 2017)

Welfare

extreme captivity → extensive husbandry → free-range „the wild“

?
Welfare Concept

(Veasey 2017)

Welfare

there is no “wild” for domestic animals – we cannot liberate them; we can only prevent them from existing
Welfare Concept
(Veasey 2017)

Welfare

extreme captivity ➔ extensive husbandry ➔ free-range "the wild"

- domestic
- wild
Stopp Pelz!

ICH WERDE MIT GAS GETÖTET.
Für Ihren Pelzkragen.

Bitte verzichten Sie auf Echtpelzprodukte. Diese Tiere wollen leben! Eine Aktion von:
Please abstain from fur products. These animals want to live!

... so that these animals are not born in the first place and hence will not suffer.
Welfare Concept

(Veasey 2017)

- Domestic
- Wild

extreme captivity ➔ extensive husbandry ➔ free-range "the wild"
What story are we telling?

Meaningful lives in an anxiety-free environment show us, and remind us of, the beauty and complexity of life.