

Abstract

Two faces of ZOO

Perception of zoos from the view of their supporters and opponents

The main topic of this thesis is a role of zoological gardens in the modern society, especially their importance to conservation of biodiversity as well as to progress in public education. I was interested not only in the opinions and the attitudes of the supporters of zoological gardens, but also in views of their opponents as the opposite side. In the case of the opponents I wanted to reveal if their criticism of zoos is based on negative emotions (bad feeling from breeding animals in captivity and thinking about their rights to freedom) or rise from real inadequacies (for example bad living conditions of animals). So in the theoretical part of the thesis I was concerned about contributions of zoological gardens in many ways as well as about their limitations, mostly mentioned by their opponents. To be more precise in drawing conclusions I made my own empirical research which was based on questionnaires and interviews with directors of certain zoos in the Czech Republic. The main aim of my research was not only a usual opinion poll, but also a detection of differences in opinions and personal characteristics between supporters and opponents of zoos. I also wanted to find out which aspects of zoos are highly appreciated by the public and contrary to this which of them are the most criticized. The last thing I wanted to reveal was how successful the Czech zoological gardens are in the public education about endangered species and conservation programs.

Key words:

zoological gardens, supporters and opponents of zoological gardens, breeding in captivity, conservation of biodiversity, extinction of species, public education, ethics of breeding animals in captivity, maltreatment