

The Captive Environment: What the Visitors Think...

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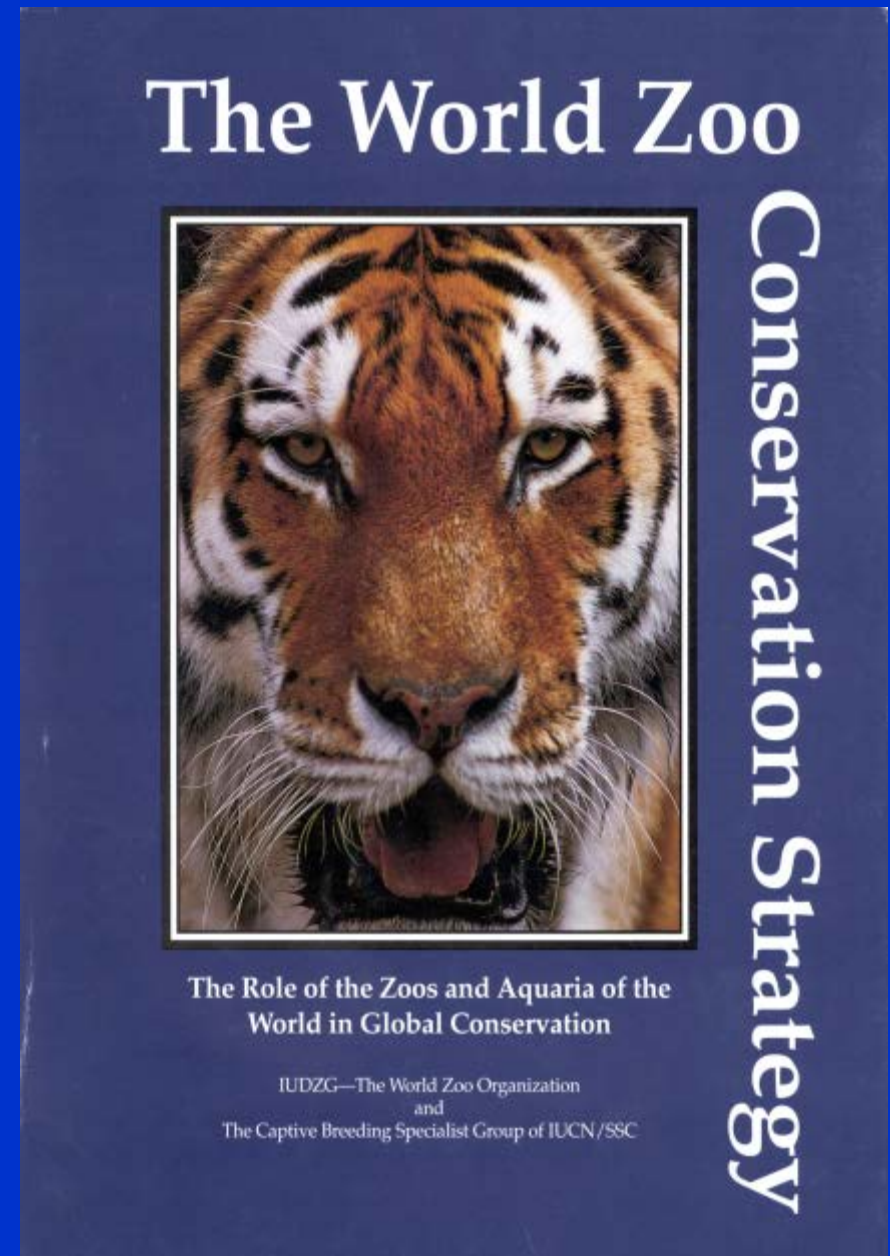
**University of Queensland
Australia**

The Modern Zoo: What is it?

- Tourist destination
- Conservation centre
- Not-for-profit organisation
- Commercial business
- Educational enterprise
- Community resource
- Animal husbandry facility

The Modern Zoo:

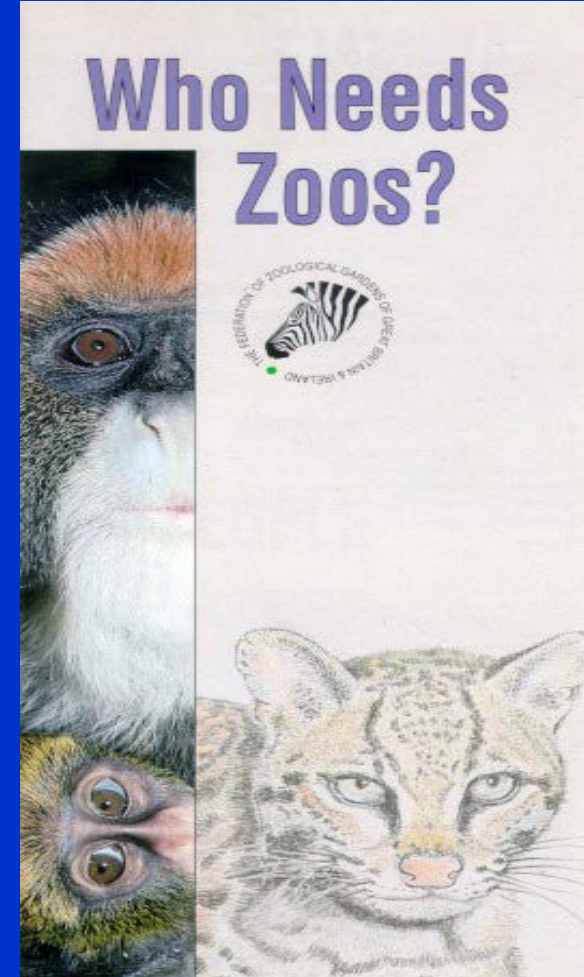
- Conservation
- Education
- Research
- Recreation



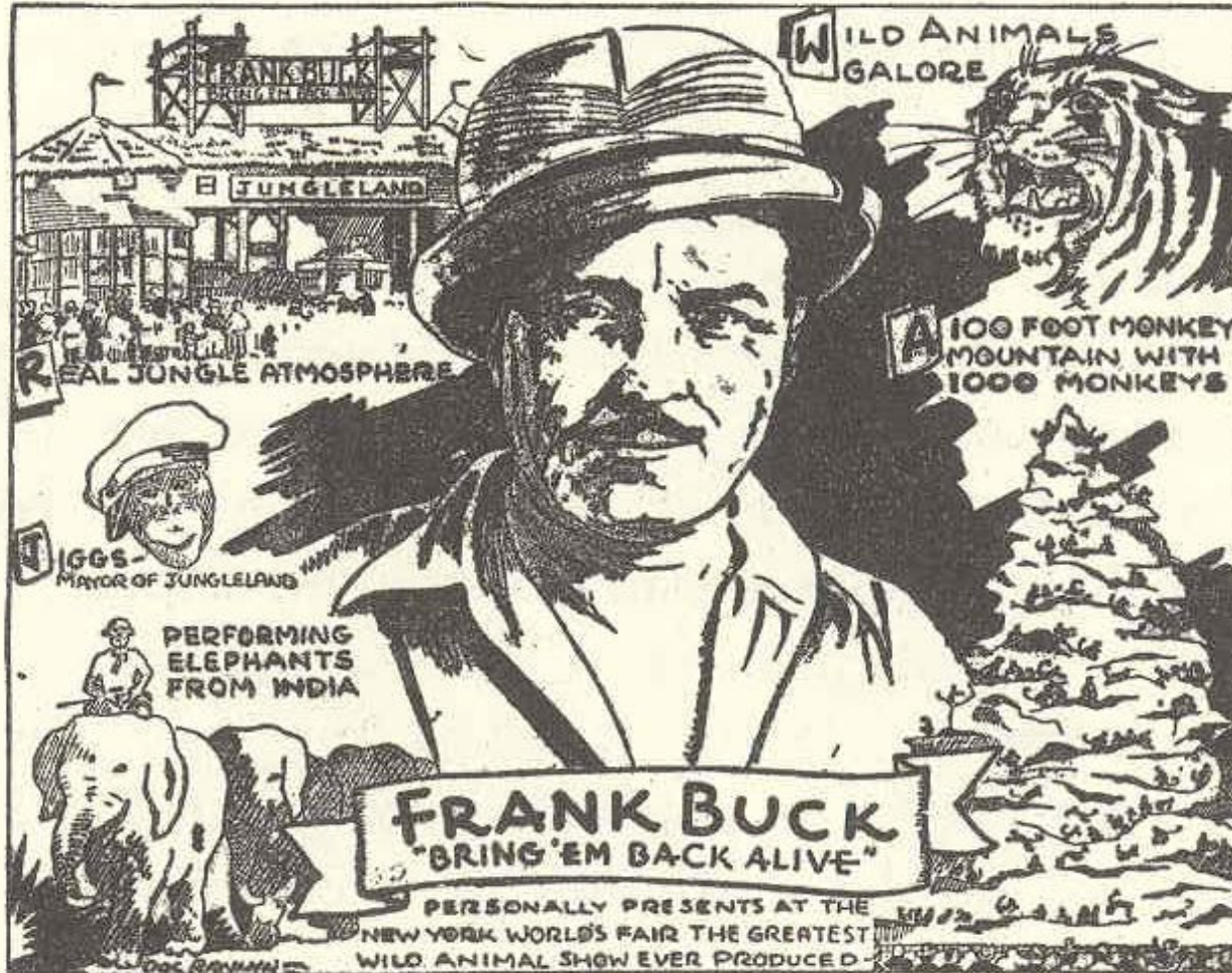
The Modern Zoo:

But the questions remain:

- “What is this thing called ‘recreation’?”
- “How is it related to the other zoo objectives?”



Wildlife and Entertainment



N.Y. WORLD'S FAIR

**WORLD'S GREATEST
COLLECTION**

FRANK BUCK'S

RARE WILD

ANIMALS

BIRDS &

REPTILES

ALL ALIVE!

ORANG-UTANS

CHIMPANZEES

AMUSING APES

**Educational &
Thrilling**

TIGERS, LIONS

ELEPHANTS

LEOPARDS

The Zoo Challenge:

Commercial Viability

Versus

Ethical Credibility

This Project

To compare the perceptions and attitudes of **visitors** at 4 Australian and 4 UK zoos to:

- *The role of zoos*
- *Their visit (and level of satisfaction)*
- *Zoos and education*

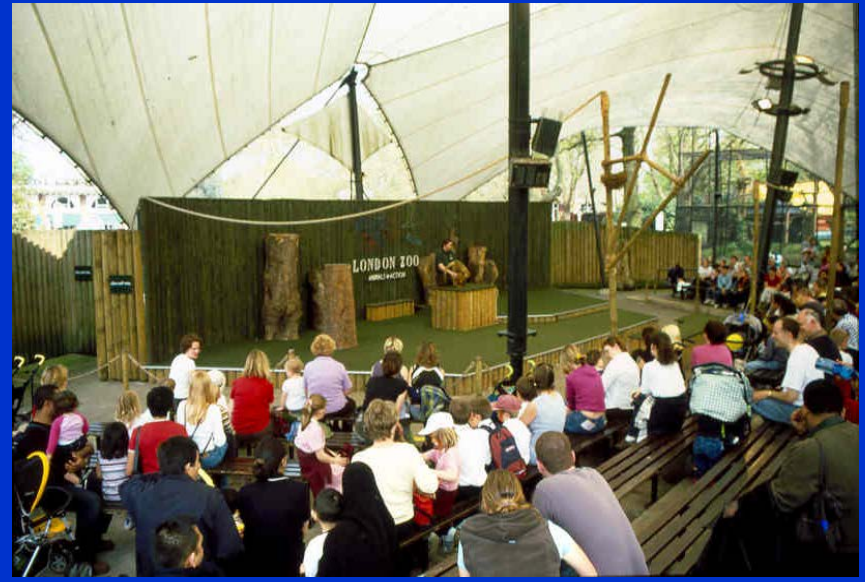
The 8 zoos selected

- **Australia** : Adelaide, Australia, Melbourne and Perth
- **United Kingdom**: Bristol, Jersey, London and Twycross



The Visitors

- 1439 surveys completed
- 64% female
- 88% domestic
- 96% with family or friends



The Visitors: Reasons for Visiting

- Lots of different animals
- Being with family and friends
- Pleasant outdoor environment
- Seeing rare animals
- Learning about conservation
- Contributing to conservation



Visitors think zoos should:

- Educate the public about wildlife
- Breed endangered species
- Support wildlife conservation
- Provide a pleasant day out
- Entertain visitors
- Support research

The Visitors: What Do They Get?

- **A high level of satisfaction** 8.5
- **A “medium” level of learning** 6.8
- **Less conservation learning** 6.1/10



Visitor Conclusions

- Main motivation – good time with family and friends
- Expect to learn about animals and conservation
- Don't expect to contribute to conservation

- BUT - believe zoos **are** important for conservation
- Most important activity **education**



The Visitors: Satisfaction and Learning

Positive correlations found between

‘level of satisfaction with visit’

And

1. ‘level of learning’
2. ‘how much does this zoo do for conservation?’

Visitor Conclusions cont'd

Can conservation attract visitors?

- 48% would like to return within a year

BUT

- 73% would not return if the zoo did nothing for conservation

Visitor Conclusions cont'd

The higher the 'Satisfaction with visit'
the higher that zoo rated for –

- Level of learning
- Wildlife conservation
- Desire to return

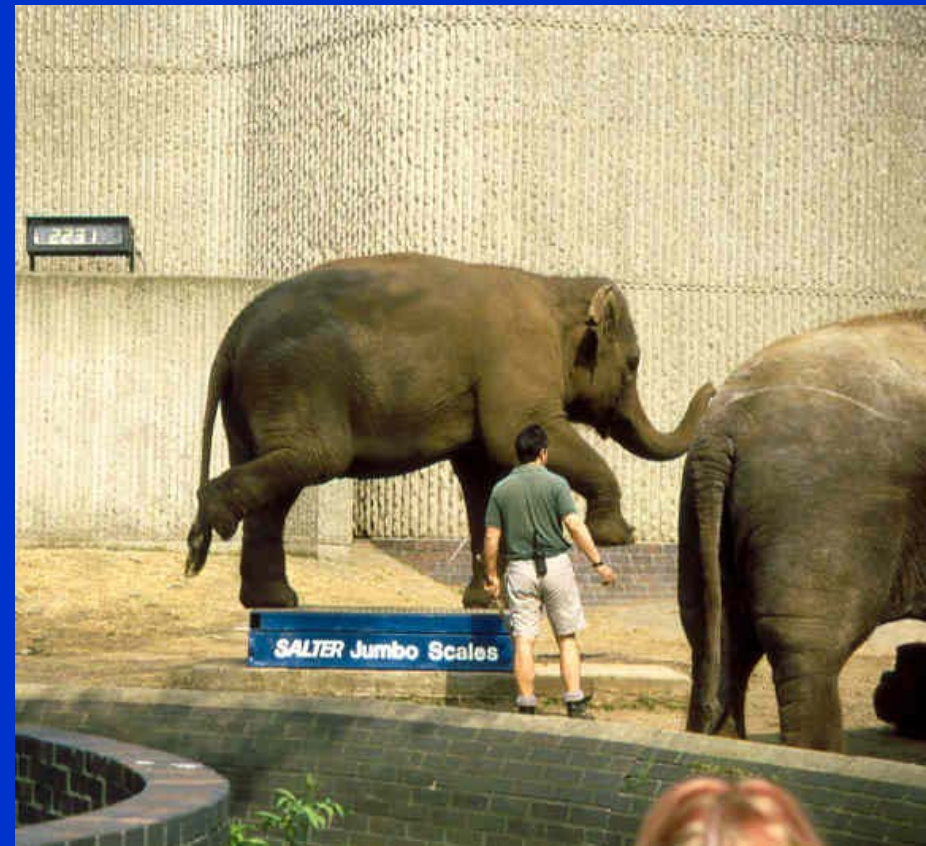


Visitor Conclusions:

Why Is It So?

What aspects of the display influence visitor Perceptions?

- The character of the exhibit - naturalistic
- The behaviour of the animals - active
- The type of animal - 'cuteness'
- The type of display - interactive



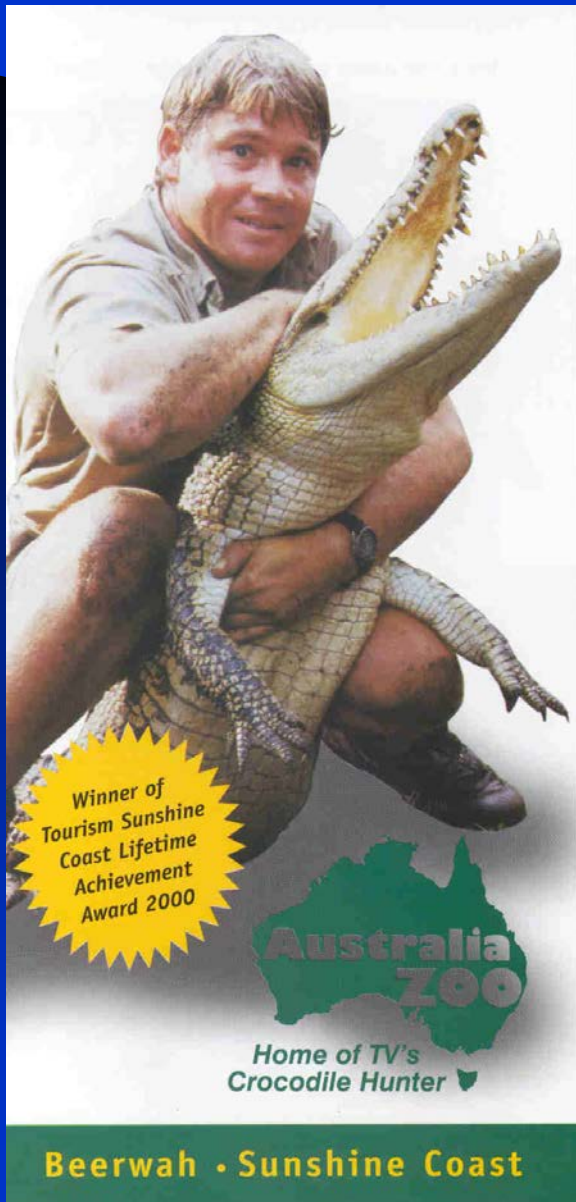
Visitor Conclusions: Why Is It So?

What aspects of the visitors are also important?

- Motivation for visiting
- Social interactions
- Visitor emotions



Australia Zoo – The Future Zoo?



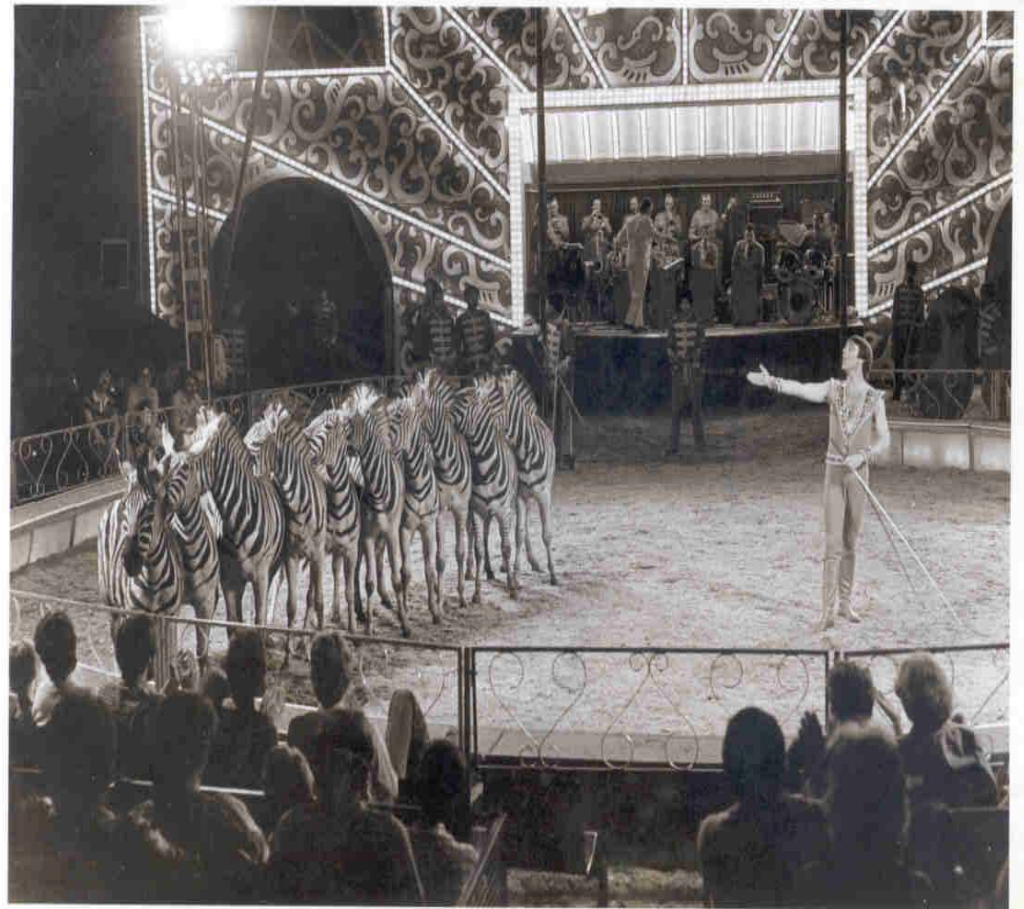
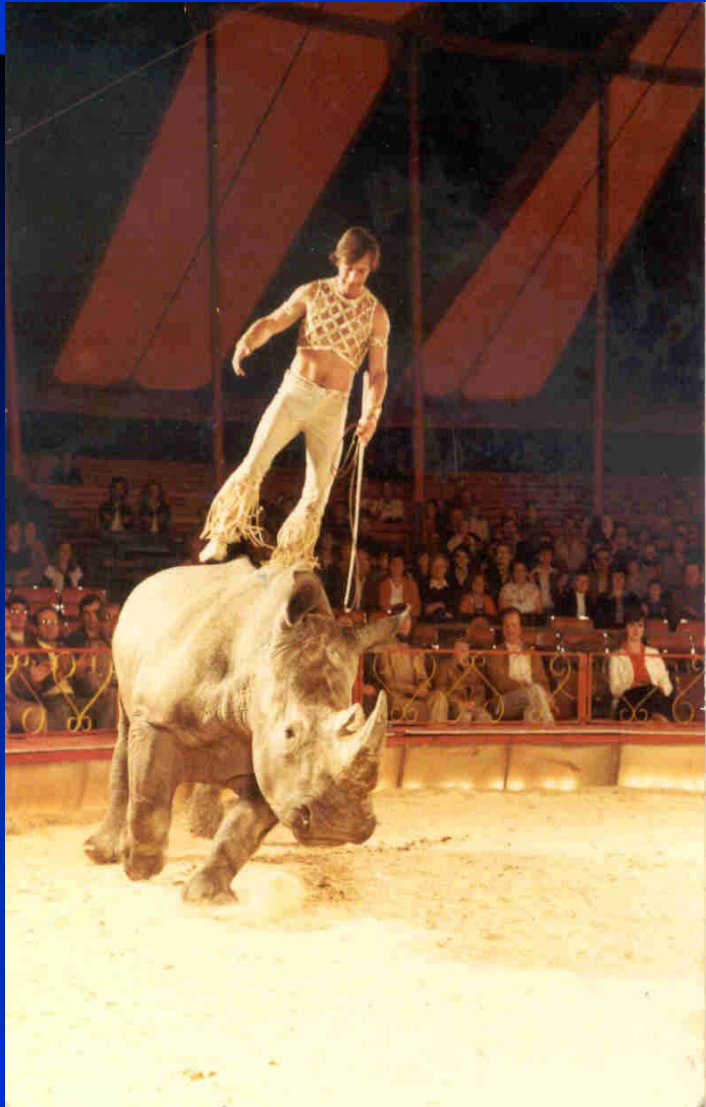
Australia Zoo – tourism and conservation?



Australia Zoo – tourism and conservation?



Or...commercial
exploitation?



Australia Zoo – The Results

Their Visitors – gave the highest ranking for:

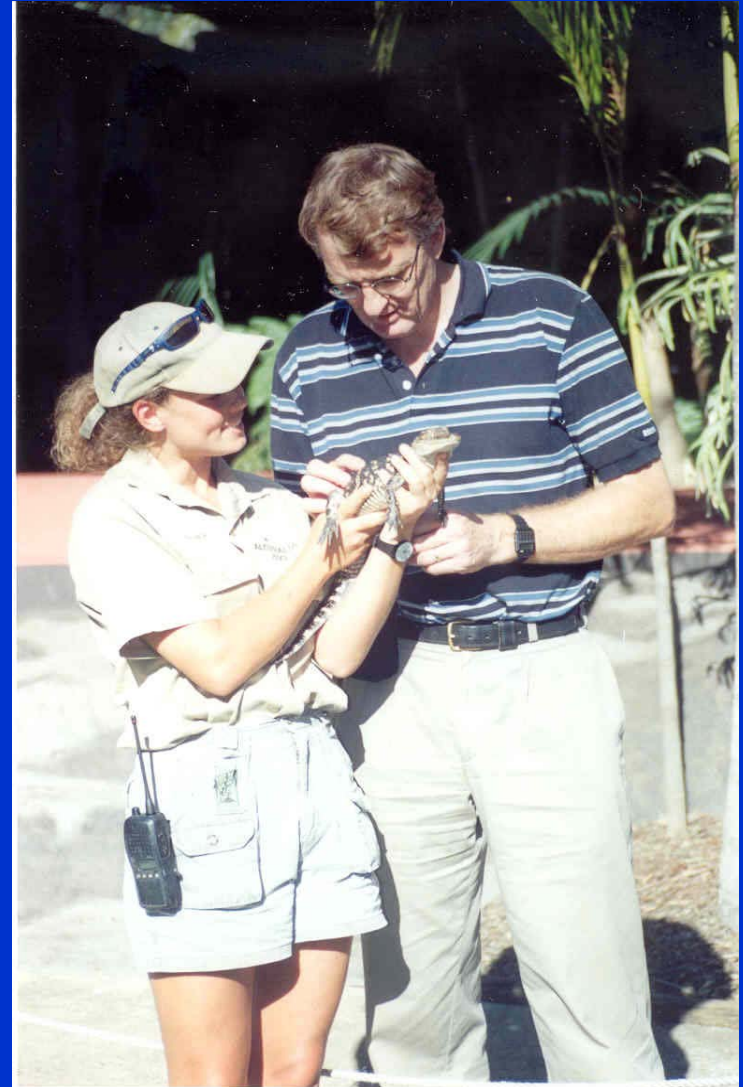
- Satisfaction with visit
- Conservation learning
- Zoo's contribution to conservation
- Importance of zoos for conservation
- Not returning if the zoo did **nothing** for conservation

AND.....

Australia Zoo – The Results

Their Visitors – gave the highest ranking for the importance of:

- **Entertaining visitors!**



Education and Engagement

FRANK BUCK'S
WILD ANIMALS GALORE

WILD ANIMALS GALORE

JUNGLELAND

REAL JUNGLE ATMOSPHERE

MRS. GIGGS - MAYOR OF JUNGLELAND

PERFORMING ELEPHANTS FROM INDIA

A 100 FOOT MONKEY MOUNTAIN WITH 1000 MONKEYS

FRANK BUCK
"BRING 'EM BACK ALIVE"

PERSONALLY PRESENTS AT THE
NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR THE GREATEST
WILD ANIMAL SHOW EVER PRODUCED.

DICK BOWMAN

N.Y. WORLD'S FAIR

**WORLD'S GREATEST
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Australia Zoo: Back to the future?



"Conservation through exciting education"

Future Research

- Critical assessment of the 'attractive' aspects of zoo displays
- Investigation of the impact of these displays on visitor behaviour
- Recognition/evaluation of the education/entertainment link


Questions?








The Staff

- 417 surveys
- 55% animal staff
- 61% employed for less than 5 years
- 69% believed conservation to be very important



QUEENSLAND WILDLIFE PARKS ASSOCIATION INC.

Who cares for wildlife?



We do - naturally!

The Staff: Attitudes to Conservation at their own zoo

- “Conservation is the main focus of our zoo” 42%
- “All staff working for our conservation goal” 22%
- “Visitors see all our conservation work” 12%
- “Govt conservation agencies appreciate us” 6%



The “Non-Zoo” Staff

- 101 surveys
- 75% employed for more than 5 years
- 80% believed conservation to be very important



Non-Zoo Staff: Attitudes to Conservation and to zoos

- “Zoos do a great deal for conservation” 12%
- “Conservation is the main focus of zoos” 8%
- “Govt conservation agencies appreciate zoos” 2%



What should zoos be doing?

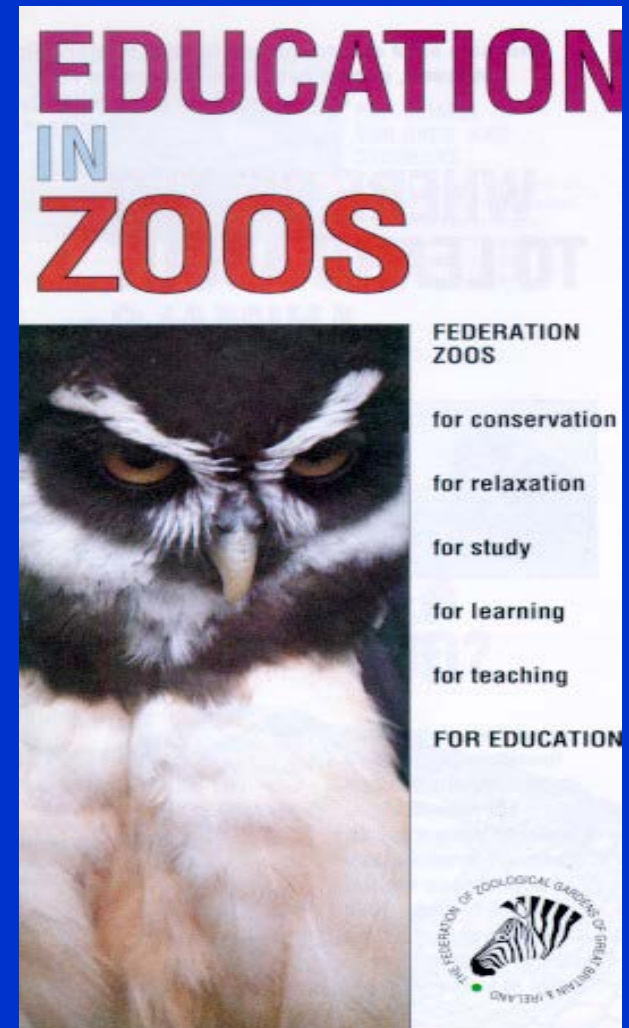
Zoo Activity	Visitors %	Staff %	Non-Zoo Staff %
Educate public	68	83	84
Breed endangered species	52	49	71
Support wildlife conservation	51	60	48
In situ conservation	18	30	10
Entertain visitors	17	8	6
Research	16	25	29

Who is important for conservation?

Organisation	Visitors %	Staff %	Non-Zoo Staff %
Zoos	70	64	22
National Governments	65	78	87
Conservation Groups	43	36	29
Local Governments	32	37	23
Business	27	18	16
Local Communities	22	18	14
Individuals	21	21	13

Staff Conclusions

- Less than half think conservation is main focus of their zoo
- Few felt their conservation efforts were appreciated
- Staff not working together for a common goal
- BUT - believe that zoos **are** important for conservation
- Little priority to visitor entertainment
- Most important activity for zoos:
education



Non-Zoo Staff Conclusions

- Few think conservation is main focus of zoos
- Few appreciate conservation efforts of zoos
- Believe that zoos are **less** important for conservation

BUT

- Most important activity for zoos:
education



Australia Zoo – The Results

Their Staff – gave the highest ranking for:

- Conservation being the main focus of the zoo
- All staff working towards a common goal
- Their zoo's contribution to conservation
- Importance of zoos for conservation

AND.....

Australia Zoo – The Results

Their staff – gave the highest ranking for:

- **Entertaining visitors!**

