

Preface

Zoo biology is the scientific study of animals that live in zoos. This book is intended to provide students and zoo professionals with an introduction to zoo biology and an understanding of the way the zoo community functions. In particular it considers the role of zoos in conservation, including education, captive breeding and research, along with their obligation to assure high standards of animal welfare. It was designed to meet the needs of students following programmes of study in a wide range of animal-related subjects, including animal care, animal management, and zoo biology. I hope it will also be useful to zoo professionals, especially those who are in the early stages of their careers.

This is a small book and zoo biology has become a large subject. No textbook is ever perfect. I have attempted to include a wide range of topics of interest to those who either work in zoos or aspire to do so. This has meant that relatively little space has been devoted to some areas in order to make room for others. I hope I have succeeded in summarising the major principles of each area covered, but in any work of this size the content is inevitably a compromise between what I should like to have included and what can reasonably fit into a relatively small volume. Readers may detect in the text a small bias towards my own areas of interest. I make no apologies for this and hope that this book will encourage you to develop your own special interests.

I have drawn examples of good practice from zoos around the world, but have concentrated on zoos in the UK, Europe, the USA and Australasia. It goes without saying that this is not because these are the only countries with good zoos. I have also discussed some of the controversy surrounding zoos because it is important to remember that some people oppose the very existence of zoos in principle and some sophisticated organisations campaign vociferously against them.

I have made reference to a number of veterinary, enrichment and other practices, and the use of particular drugs and other products, techniques and procedures in zoos. This should not be taken as a recommendation or endorsement by the author or the publisher. I have also referred to the law in various countries. To the best of my knowledge and belief the statements made were accurate at the time of writing. However, it is in the nature of law that it changes from time to time and the reader should check authoritative sources when necessary.

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