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Tourism, leisure and zoos - an outline of the problem on the example of Poland

Abstract: Despite often polarized opinions, zoological gardens are among the most frequently visited tourist attractions in the world and there is no indication that they will cease to exist in the coming years. This article presents the zoological gardens from the point of view of tourism and leisure in the light of opinions expressed by visitors in Poland. The aim of this study is to examine what role zoological gardens play in tourism and how they are perceived by visitors to these places in Poland. There are 25 zoological gardens in the country, and they are visited by a total of around 4 million people every year. Attendance in the largest of them reaches over 1.6 million visitors. In the research proceeding the opinions of visitors to Polish zoos were analysed. For that purpose data from the online services Tripadvisor and Google Maps have been gathered. The results show that visitors generally judge the visited places well, and in their opinions they refer mainly to organizational issues, prices and service, rarely paying attention to animal welfare and only occasionally to issues concerning the realization of the educational or conservation function.

Keywords: tourist attractions, zoological gardens, zoo in Poland

1. Introduction

The subject of zoological gardens is an interdisciplinary issue tackled in various fields and scientific disciplines. However, it is treated marginally in relation to tourism itself. Attempts to draw attention to this gap have been evident for several decades. For example, in 2000 Mason reviewed the purpose and role of zoos, outlining the nature of zoos as tourist attractions and providing a profile of zoo visitors (Mason, 2000). Although more than 20 years have passed since Mason's paper, the statement posed in the title of his publication "Zoo Tourism. The Need for More Research is still relevant". There is still very little research on zoos and aquariums published in the tourism literature, and this lack of research is even more striking if we compare it to the hundreds of studies in other fields related to nature-based tourism, such as national parks (Frost, 2011). Additionally, the topic generates heated debates among supporters and opponents

of this form of leisure. The former point out that the popularity of animal-based tourism is associated with significant risks to the welfare of these animals (von Essen et. al., 2020). Defenders of animal rights, on the other hand, call for a boycott of zoos. Sometimes the zoos are compared to circuses or fur farms which, in turn makes it necessary to intensify efforts to justify their existence (Jedzok, 2019). The issues of a critical analysis of the contradictory roles of zoos and current practices in zoos from the point of view of tourism research is another aspect that has been signalled among researchers (e.g., in a publication edited by W. Frost), but they also require further analysis. Meanwhile, research conducted at these sites provides a valuable foundation for the growing field of nature tourism (Ballantyne et. al., 2007). While the problem is sometimes mentioned in the world literature, in Poland it appears rarely and in principle is not analysed-

from the point of view of tourism. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to examine what role zoos

play in tourism and how they are perceived by people visiting these places in Poland.

2. The development and role of zoos

Humans have long sought to keep animals around, and zoos themselves have been known since ancient times. As early as 2000 years before our era they were known in China, Egypt and Assyria (Symonides, 2014). Over the years they have changed the nature of their activities. In the past, they were inaccessible to the public because they were pets and menageries belonging to people of high social status. On the one hand, wild animals held in captivity satisfied the caprices of the nobles, and on the other hand sometimes served the entertainment of the general public by performing in the Roman arenas. Over time, menageries were opened to the general public for other purposes. The first garden made accessible to the common people was opened by Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna (Symonides, 2014). It was not until the 18th century that they began to serve an educational function, and the first garden with such ambitions was the zoo opened in 1726 in Paris (Symonides, 2014). A hundred years later similar institutions were established in London (1828), Amsterdam (1838), Berlin (1843), Melbourne (1857), Moscow (1864), Philadelphia (1974), Buenos Aires (1888), Cairo (1890) (Symonides, 2014). The second half of the 20th century was a time of intensive development and it was then that most Polish zoological gardens came into being. Towards the end of the last century, zoos began to come together and develop operational standards, and by the turn of the century, more and more attention was being paid to education and didactics.

The current rationale for zoos is based on their capacity to act as places of nature conservation (Carr and Cohen, 2011). Every self-respecting modern zoo, if it wants to be relevant on the European or world stage, must fulfil a number of conditions – protect rare, endangered species, carry out educational activities, engage in scientific research using its own resources and, at the same time, offer a promise of time well spent, i.e. fulfil a recreational function. The task of a contemporary zoo is therefore to educate the public in a pro-ecolog-

ical way, disseminate knowledge about nature, conduct scientific research and support activities for the preservation of endangered animal species, natural habitats and ecosystems. However, not everyone agrees with such a vision of zoos. The article by Jedzok (2019), states that between 3.000 and 5.000 healthy animals are still killed in European zoos each year. On the other hand, zoos have for some time been developing gene banks, frozen tissue stocks, are known to pursue breeding of endangered species on an international or global scale, and are becoming better coordinated. There is still a gap between the rhetoric and the reality of modern zoos, which must carefully balance the demands of the paying visitor with the necessity to maintain credibility as conservation- and education-oriented organisations (Turley, 1999). Zoos are often portrayed as places of last refuge for animals at risk of extinction, but this is a view that is sometimes challenged especially since, historically, zoos have performed relatively poorly in species conservation. Nevertheless, there are examples that show success in these endeavours (Frost, 2011). In recent years, many zoos have demonstrated a much greater commitment to conservation through a wide range of programmes. Zoos contribute to the conservation of several endangered species, both in their natural habitat state (in situ conservation) and in captivity (ex situ conservation) (Catibog-Sinha, 2011). The reintroduction of captive animals has also been criticised in the literature due to the alterations in the behaviour of captives, and due to attempts at reintroduction ending in failure. The practice of exhibiting animals in captivity is often defended as a necessary form of education for the general public and a way to increase public awareness of conservation (Shani and Pizam, 2011). Zoos can take direct action to conserve species through education and conservation programmes, and these programmes can be integrated into zoo tourism (Catibog-Sinha, 2011). However, this role is also subject to much debate. There is no doubt

that zoos are important places for tourism and recreation.

Today, zoos open to the public can be found in virtually every country in the world. They are the most frequently visited tourist attractions, both by the inhabitants of the places where they are located and by domestic and foreign tourists. The visitors of the London Zoo, for example, are 87% British, with the remaining 13% being foreign visitors (Frost, 2011). Every year 750 million people visit zoos worldwide, with

300 million visitors to Europe alone (Warsaw Zoological Garden, n.d.). The largest zoos, such as the San Diego Zoo in California, host over 4 million visitors. Zoos also have an impact on the economy as they create jobs, provide goods and services, and stimulate tourism, which in turn influences the development of regional accommodation, catering, retail and tourism businesses and can stimulate employment in other sectors of the economy.

3. Zoos in Poland

In the case of Polish legislation, "A zoo is an area arranged and managed together with technical infrastructure and buildings functionally connected with it, where live animals of wild species are kept and exhibited for at least seven days a year" (The Act of 16 April 2004 on the Nature Conservation, 2004). Exceptions are circuses, animal shops and places where no more than 15 species of such animals and no more than 50 reptile, bird and mammal specimens in total are on public display. The establishment and operation of a zoo requires a permit from the General Director for Environmental Protection (The Act of 16 April 2004 on the Nature Conservation, 2004).

Animals kept in zoos must be provided with conditions appropriate to their biological needs, in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of the Environment of 20 December 2004 on the conditions for breeding and keeping particular groups of animal species in zoos. The regulation defines the conditions, necessary premises and technical equipment for animal enclosures, minimum space for breeding and keeping animals of individual species or groups of species, as well as necessary conditions for reproducing animals. In addition, zoos are obliged to meet the health and safety requirements related to the breeding of animals, in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister for the Environment of 10 December 2003 on health and safety at work in zoos. The facilities in question may keep and breed only animals born and raised outside the natural environment that have no chance of survival or if it is required for the protection of the population or the species, or for scientific purposes. The Law on Nature Conservation also

contains penal provisions relating to zoos (The Act of 16 April 2004 on the Nature Conservation, 2004). Undoubtedly, one of the main elements that affect the maintenance of a high level of welfare is the conditions in which animals are kept (Habel and Mroczkowski, 2015). The audit carried out by the Supreme Audit Office in 2011, investigating the ten largest zoological gardens in Poland in terms of both numbers of animals and surface area (in Chorzów, Gdańsk, Kraków, Łódź, Opole, Płock, Poznań, Warsaw, Wrocław, and Zamość), found that none of the zoological gardens provided the minimum space conditions for breeding and keeping of certain animal species, as required by the regulation of the Minister of the Environment. Irregularities in this regard involved the lack of outdoor or indoor enclosures, and the failure of the existing enclosures to meet the minimum space standards (Supreme Audit Office, 2012). Five of the inspected zoological gardens showed deficiencies in the provision of facilities required by law, mainly in terms of mandatory equipment enabling the fulfilment of natural animal behaviour (Supreme Audit Office, 2012). In addition, a shortage of funds hindered the development of zoos with regard to their participation in scientific research and programmes for the conservation of species in the wild. However, despite the indicated limitations, the zoos carried out tasks for the conservation of endangered species, promoted the idea of nature conservation and educated the public on animal biodiversity (Supreme Audit Office, 2012).

It is worth emphasising that the tasks set for zoos necessitate cooperation and exchange of experience across organisations, as well as participation in programmes relating to the res-

toration of populations of endangered animal species for the purposes of species conservation. The organisation bringing together representatives of zoological gardens in Poland is the Association of Polish Zoological Gardens and Aquaria Directors, which was established in 2000, and which is a continuation of the informal Board of Zoological Gardens funded in 1981 (The Association of Directors of Polish Zoological Gardens and Aquariums, n.d.). Some of the Polish zoological gardens belong to

the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA, n.d.). These are the gardens in: Gdańsk, Toruń, Poznań, Płock, Łódź, Warsaw, Wrocław, Opole, Zamość, Kraków, Chorzów. Some Polish zoos are also members of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Since 1935, the aim has been to guide, encourage and support zoos, aquariums and like-minded organisations worldwide in the care and welfare of animals, environmental education and global conservation (WAZA, n.d.).

4. Materials and Methods

The research procedure employed a multilateral approach. In addition to the analysis of scientific publications, data obtained from the General Directorate for Environmental Protection were helpful at the stage of information gathering. In the study of reviews of zoos, the Tripadvisor portal was used, on which Internet users willingly share their opinions about visited places. The entries generated by Internet users form a dataset that, once organized, can be a valuable source of information on consumer preferences in the tourism sector (Minkwitz, 2018). Google Maps reviews were also used for comparison. Although both portals have slightly different functionality, in both cases users are eager to share their opinions about the places they visit. On Tripadvisor, users' opinions are collected in the form of ratings on a five-point scale, where 5 means "excellent" and 1 means "terrible". At the same time, each user has the opportunity to add a broader description of their impressions of the facility. As Minkwitz writes, the service allows one to obtain information about a specific area and tourist attractions, and thus it is possible to fill the gaps at the stage of primary data acquisition (Minkwitz, 2018). In addition, the specificity of data derived from social net-

works makes them more extensive than data collected by other methods considering databases of this type, and with recurrent updates they enable quick identification of emerging trends (Minkwitz, 2018). The research sample was primarily based on information obtained from Tripadvisor on all zoos in Poland listed by the General Directorate for Environmental Protection, but the number of reviews, which reflects the popularity of the studied facilities and the number of ratings it obtained, was also taken into account.

The time scope of the study includes all reviews posted by portal users until 11 December 2021. Based on the collected information, a table was constructed showing the interest in and rating of the zoo facilities by the users of the website. The sites that were identified in this way, along with the corresponding number of reviews and ratings, are presented in Table 2. Table 3, on the other hand, demonstrates the sites identified as the most popular and their ratings from Google Maps, retrieved on the same date as the Tripadvisor ratings pertaining to the same zoos. The analysis provided information on the most popular venues and how they are rated by visitors.

5. Results

5.1. Zoological gardens in Poland as tourist attractions

In 2021, according to the General Directorate for Environmental Protection, there were 25 zoos in Poland (Table 1). Polish zoological gardens are visited by a total of around 4 million

people every year (Warsaw Zoological Garden, n.d.). Some of the visitors are tourists and the rest are locals. Attendance in the largest of them reaches over 1.6 million visitors (the zoo

in Wrocław), which ranks it among the most visited tourist attractions in the country. The size of the animal population in this zoo has not changed since 2014 and numbers around 10.000 specimens, representing over 1.100 species (Braszka, 2019). The opening of the Afrykarium, has contributed to the increase in

attendance. In 2018, 1.632.374 people visited the Wrocław zoo, up from 1.685.926 the year before and in 2016, 1.609.554 visits (Braszka, 2019). According to the zoo's data, as many as 70% of visitors are from outside Wrocław, and almost 11% of them are foreign visitors (Braszka, 2019).

Table 1. Number and area of zoological gardens in Poland by voivodeship (Source: General Directorate for Environmental Protection, n.d. Wykaz ogrodów zoologicznych w Polsce; <https://www.gdos.gov.pl/wykaz-ogrodow-zoologicznych-w-polsce>)

Voivodeship	Number of zoological gardens	Name of the zoological garden ¹
Dolnośląskie	3	ZOO Wrocław Sp. z o.o. ZOO FARMA Ogród Zoologiczny w Lubinie
Kujawsko-pomorskie	2	Ogród Zoologiczny w Bydgoszczy Ogród Zoobotaniczny w Toruniu
Lubelskie	2	Ogród Zoologiczny im. Stefana Milera w Zamościu Ogród Zoologiczny w Romanówce
Łódzkie	2	Miejski Ogród Zoologiczny w Łodzi Sp. z o.o. ZOO Safari Borysew
Małopolskie	1	Miejski Park i Ogród Zoologiczny w Krakowie
Mazowieckie	2	Miejski Ogród Zoologiczny w Płocku Miejski Ogród Zoologiczny w Warszawie
Opolskie	1	Ogród Zoologiczny Opole
Podlaskie	1	Akcent ZOO
Pomorskie	4	Akwarium Gdyńskie Gdański Ogród Zoologiczny Ogród Zoologiczny CANPOL Ogród Zoologiczny Dolina Charlotty
Śląskie	3	Śląski Ogród Zoologiczny w Chorzowie Leśny Park Niespodzianek Ogród Zoologiczny w Sosnowcu
Świętokrzyskie	1	Ogród Zoologiczny w Lisowie
Warmińsko-mazurskie	1	Park Dzikich Zwierząt w Kadzidłowie
Wielkopolskie	2	Ogród Zoologiczny – Poznań Ogród Zoologiczny w Nowym Tomysłu
Total	25	

¹ Names in Polish, list of the General Directorate for Environmental Protection

For a large number of children and young people, the gardens are a place of first contact with wild animals, providing an opportunity to actively spend time and observe animals as well as learn about activities aimed at protecting endangered animals, biodiversity campaigns and wildlife conservation habitats (The Association of Directors of Polish Zoological Gardens and Aquariums, n.d.). Zoological gardens cooperate with educational institutions as well as cultural and educational centres. They organize lessons,

training courses, workshops and lectures, as well as training for students and veterinarians as part of their specialisation in exotic animal diseases. Educational trails are created in zoos, including ones for the blind and visually impaired in Warsaw Zoological Garden (n.d.). Education in zoos in Poland takes place by placing information and educational boards with data on the name of the species, the place of its natural occurrence and general information about its lifestyle. It is also carried out in connection

with the organisation of school classes aimed at conveying knowledge on the role of zoos in saving endangered animal species, as well as raising awareness of the threats to and biodiversity of fauna. The zoos' participation in scientific research consists mainly in collaboration with other entities, including universities, and is

pursued, among other things, through the provision of materials for research, organisation of internships, placements, lectures and seminars for students. To offer comparison with Poland's most visited zoo, attendance at the Gdansk Zoo in 2018 was 471.298 visitors and 369.814 visitors in 2020 (Zoo w liczbach, n.d.).

5.2. Tourists' opinions about zoos

Due to their location, zoological gardens are often an attractive place for recreation, which is sometimes combined with education. For the youngest, they can be a place of their first contact with exotic animals. On the basis of

statements published by visitors to zoological gardens in Poland on the Tripadvisor portal, a table has been prepared presenting the number of opinions and the level of ratings of these places (Table 2).

Table 2. Zoos in Poland as rated by Tripadvisor users (Source: opinions from: Tripadvisor, n.d. Zoos in Poland; <https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g274723-Activities-c61-t134-Poland.html>)

Zoological garden ¹	Average rating	Number of reviews	Excellent	Very good	Average	Poor	Terrible
Wroclaw Zoo & Afrykarium	4.5	2949	1985	699	167	44	54
Zoo Łączna	3.0	17	5	2	5	2	3
Zoo Lubin – Nature Education Centre in Lubin	4.5	33	26	5	1	1	0
Zoological Garden in Bydgoszcz	4.0	18	11	4	1	0	2
Zoo & Botanical Garden Torun	4.5	70	32	31	5	2	0
Zoo Zamość	4.5	109	67	34	5	1	2
Zoo Wojciechow	4.5	5	5	1	1	0	0
Lodz Zoo	3.5	149	28	43	51	17	10
Zoo Safarii	4.0	116	47	46	22	0	1
Ogród zoologiczny w Krakowie	4.0	530	249	180	61	20	20
Zoo Plock	4.5	144	80	52	10	1	1
Miejski Ogród Zoologiczny w Warszawie	4.0	818	337	299	125	32	25
Zoo Opole	4.5	367	272	79	14	1	1
Akcent Zoo	4.5	89	47	36	5	1	0
Akwarium Gdyńskie MIR	3.5	773	222	239	208	68	36
Oliwa Zoo	4.0	798	420	233	90	28	27
Canpol Zoo	4.5	2	1	1	0	0	0
Zoo Charlotta	4.0	49	14	18	11	4	2
Silesian Zoological Garden	4.0	128	42	43	32	6	5
Lesny Park Niespodzianek	4.0	482	256	133	60	23	10
Egzotarium	4.5	7	4	2	1	0	0
ZOO Leśne Zacisze	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Park Dzikich Zwierząt Kadzidłowo	3.5	243	91	64	41	23	24
Stare Zoo Poznan	4.0	328	152	90	65	16	5
Poznan Nowe Zoo	4.0	153	76	42	14	9	12
Zoo NowyTomyśl	5.0	1	0	0	0	0	0

¹ Spelling of names conforms to that presented on Tripadvisor.com

The biggest number of reviews was published for Wrocław Zoo (Wrocław Zoo and Afrykarium), making it the most popular facility of this type among visitors. Next are the zoos in Warsaw and Gdansk. Gdynia Aquarium was also found to be very popular, followed by the zoo in Krakow. With more than 8000 respondents, majority rated the visited facilities positively, and the number of “poor” and “terrible” ratings was relatively low. Of all the responses

classified as “poor” and “terrible”, a negligible number of people commented on animal welfare issues. Most of those who spoke negatively pointed to expenses/pricing and organizational issues. Comments from zoo visitors rarely touch upon conservation, educational, and research goals. To offer comparison, the ratings provided by Google Maps and their numbers are compiled in the table 3.

Table 3. Zoos in Poland according to the rating on Google Maps as of 11.12.2021 (Source: opinions from: <https://www.google.com/maps>)

Zoological garden ¹	Average rating	Number of reviews
ZOO Wrocław sp.z o.o.	4.7	80600
Afrykarium	4.8	41628
Zoo Łączna (Świat Lemurów)	4.4	2300
Zoo Lubin - Centrum Edukacji Przyrodniczej	4.8	6364
Ogród Zoologiczny w Bydgoszczy	4.4	1990
Ogród Zoobotaniczny w Toruniu	4.6	4672
Ogród Zoologiczny im. Stefana Milera	4.6	8202
Zoo Wojciechów	4.6	1298
ZOO w Łodzi	4.0	7550
ZOO Safari Borysew	4.5	11038
Ogród Zoologiczny w Krakowie	4.6	17927
Miejski Ogród Zoologiczny w Płocku	4.6	6793
Miejski Ogród Zoologiczny w Warszawie	4.5	36071
Zoo Opole	4.7	12428
Akcent ZOO	4.6	3258
Akwarium Gdyńskie MIR	4.1	25113
Gdański Ogród Zoologiczny	4.6	27091
ZOO Canpol	4.6	4812
Zoo Charlotta	4.0	2060
Śląski Ogród Zoologiczny	4.5	23024
Leśny Park Niespodzianek	4.5	9711
Ogród Botaniczno-Zoologiczny Egzotarium - Sosnowiec	4.4	1502
ZOO Leśne Zacisze	4.6	1894
Park Dzikich Zwierząt w Kadzidłowie	4.5	5134
Stare Zoo	4.4	8642
Nowe Zoo – Ogród Zoologiczny w Poznaniu	4.4	17211
ZOO Nowy Tomyśl	4.4	1237

¹Names spelled according to Google Maps

The presented comparison shows that, once again, the zoo in Wrocław enjoys the most popularity as it received the most opinions. The average score of zoo visitors in Poland is

between 4.8 for Lubin Zoo – Nature Education Centre, Afrykarium (Wrocław) and 4.0 for Charlotta Zoo and Łódź Zoo.

6. Controversy over the role of zoos in relation to tourism – discussion

Zoos are probably the most widespread and accessible form of nature tourism in the world, offered in all cultures and at all socio-economic levels (Tribe, 2004). They are also very popular in Poland, and visitors to these places willingly share their opinions and experiences on the Internet. Visitors to Polish zoos generally rate these places well. Most of those who spoke negatively pointed to expenses/prices and organisational issues. The percentage of visitors who would refer to animal welfare in their opinions is negligible. Zoo animal welfare is still a contentious issue, and the role of zoos in conservation is not yet fully understood and acknowledged (Tribe, 2004). Results presented in *Checking out of cruelty* indicate that most travellers do not recognise or respond to signs of negative impacts on wildlife welfare at tourist attractions (World Animal Protection, n.d.). It is also significant that visitors to Polish zoos rarely refer to educational aspects in their opinions.

The places in question are also less often seen as conservation centres, although they are promoted as such (Ajayi and Tichaawa, 2020). This poses a challenge for zoos to raise conservation awareness and education among visitors (Hermann and du Plessis, 2014). This is confirmed by research conducted in other countries. The five highest rated reasons for visiting zoos are, respectively from highest to lowest: to strengthen relationships with friends/family; to experience something unique; to spend time with family/friends; to see exotic animal species; and to learn about endangered animals (Mkhize, 2020). Research by Frost (2011) also confirms that people value recreation more than conservation activities in zoos. Similar conclusions have been reached by Ryan and Saward (2010), who point out that zoos are primarily places for relaxation and family outings. It is hard to deny that for many people zoos are simply an attraction, like an aquapark

or a cinema. And there is something ethically questionable in this very objectifying view. As Carr and Cohen (2011) write, “Although the public may seem more enlightened today when it comes to animal rights, what most people play with and how they perceive animals may not have changed that much in reality”. One might get the impression that the visitor, having bought the ticket, expects the animals to play the roles which they are stereotypically associated with (Jedzok, 2019). Carr and Cohen (2011), point out that zoos present a conservation message to the public that lacks depth, and that the images presented on the websites of zoos have a strong emphasis on entertainment.

One study conducted in the UK questioned the education strategy and found that more than 80% of visitors did not read information past the name of an animal (Wearing and Jobberns, 2011). Modern technologies, such as the development of film, television and the internet, have increased public awareness of global phenomena and the consequences of human impact on the environment. This has led to a growing determination among the public to take measures before it is too late raised questions about the need and right to cage creatures that belong in the wild (Mearns and Liebenberg, 2018; Lever, 2007). Pressure on zoos is exerted by the public opinion on the one hand (to which the zoo institution has repeatedly had to adapt), and by animal rights groups on the other (Jedzok, 2019). This situation is also evident in Poland, where zoos are becoming more modern and more conservation-oriented, albeit there are also some instances where animals live in less suitable conditions. An opportunity and a challenge for zoos today is to transition from traditional, static animal exhibit collections to true conservation centres where their message is communicated more effectively through a combination of entertainment and education (Tribe, 2004).

7. Conclusions

Zoological gardens in Poland are visited by a grand total of around 4 million people every year. Attendance in the largest of them reaches

over 1.6 million visitors yearly (Wrocław Zoo), which places them among the most visited tourist attractions in the country. The analysis

shows that visitors are generally positive about these facilities. Less favourable opinions mostly concern organizational issues or ticket prices. In their evaluations, respondents relatively rarely pay attention to animal welfare and only occasionally evoke issues related to the realization of the educational role of zoos. However, the establishments in question certainly strive to be recognised for such endeavours. Analyses indicate a necessity to intensify efforts towards better education of tourists. At the same time, it is tourism that can help generate funds to support the role of zoos in conservation, education and research. Thus, if zoos in Poland

continue to exist – and nothing suggests they will cease operating – the emphasis in these facilities should be placed on developing methods to provide visitors with opportunities to learn while having fun, and consequently move towards balancing the educational and entertainment functions of zoos.

The conducted analyses indicate a need for more research on this issue, not only to identify and address the core expectations of tourists, but also to determine how zoos can better combine their role in conservation with their recreational offer.

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