

The Social Value of Zoos

Zoo workers and wildlife enthusiasts can use *The Social Value of Zoos* for book clubs and learning circles. The following starting points are designed to spark dialogue and ongoing learning in the zoo and aquarium field, or in the broader areas of informal learning and conservation.

Chapter 1: Context

- What's interesting, to you, about how zoos have changed over time?
- What are popular perceptions of zoos? How might these perceptions be useful or harmful to zoos and zoo workers?

Chapter 2: Ontology

- How are zoos and aquariums different from other types of museums and cultural institutions? How are they the same?
- What is the role of conservation education in zoos and aquariums? How has that role changed over time?

Chapter 3: Learning

- How do learning processes play out as people experience the zoo?
- How do learning processes vary for different people?
- Thinking about the learning process and zoo mission, what are the advantages and limitations of exhibits? Of programs?

Chapter 4: Morality

- What do zoos contribute to public dialogue and civic participation? How has that changed over time?
- Zoos' display of wild animals has been criticized in a wide range of ways. What do you think are the most important critiques to understand?
- How can zoos learn from ethical critiques? How can those understandings help zoo workers continue to improve their work?

Chapter 5: Pleasure

- What is positive psychology and in what ways is it relevant to zoos?
- How are having fun and learning related?
- How can zoo workers use and apply research on play, lust, and fear?

Chapter 6: Meaning

- What is known about the discourses zoogoers arrive with and develop on site?
- How might zoo spaces and zoo workers facilitate dialogue that advances conservation efforts and outcomes?

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Chapter 7: Bonding

- Why is bonding a critical activity?
- What was interesting or familiar to you regarding the ways bonding takes shape in zoo settings for different groups?
- How does bonding differ for different groups at different times?

Chapter 8: Connectedness

- What are the types of connections people have with wildlife?
- What can we learn from zoo workers' connections to animals?
- What beliefs, values, and experiences shape people's connections to animals?
- How can zoos better support people's connections to animals and nature?

Chapter 9: Identity

- What types of identity come into play in zoos?
- What attributes of zoos help people learn about themselves?
- How can zoos support their audiences' identity journeys?

Chapter 10: Activation

- What are the links between people's values, identities, and the possibility for doing more for conservation?
- What can zoos do to activate conservation action? What are the barriers?

Chapter 11: Impact

- What do the authors mean by collective action? What collectives are already at work at zoos?
- What can zoos do to help people move from individual concern to collective action?
- Can you think of other types of organizations that can work for collective action? What are their characteristics?

Chapter 12: Integration

- What are you thinking about the potential of zoos for the future?
- Thinking about the zoos you're familiar with, what do you think they could learn from this book?