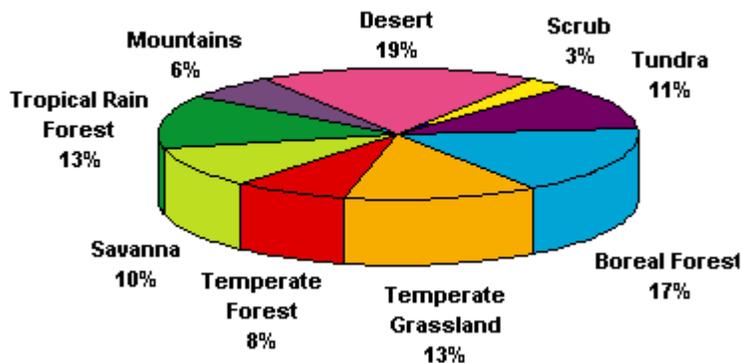


## Zoos and Aquariums

Zoos and aquariums may be excellent entertainment, but sometimes not to the animals. Little animals need to know how to take care of themselves instead of the zookeepers taking care of them. It is the same way with the larger animals, but they also have no room to roam. The habitats are so much better than they used to be, but they aren't doing anything as far as letting the animals have good well being and happiness.

According to “ The Virtual Zoo: Habitats ” these are the current World Biomes.



Zoos need to imitate the world biomes. For example 19% of the world is desert. The zoo should follow that too. The animals should have a similar environment and vegetation like what they would have in the wild. Another example is that there is 6% mountains. The zoos should make their habitats just like that, so that once they bring in animals it feels like home to them. Zoos should also add in natural shelters and privacy areas when they reconstruct exhibits.

"Some people think the key to zoo animal welfare is to provide large, natural enclosures," said Jon Coe, senior principal at CLR Design in Philadelphia. An exhibit at Sea World in Florida is doing that by throwing the food in the water and letting the animals find the food and eat it just like they would do in the wild, which helps them keep their animal instincts. The Louisville Zoo has used

rotation design in the Islands Exhibit. The zookeepers move the animals among four areas within the habitat at certain times of the day. These animals appear to be healthier and show more natural behaviors that had not been seen before these rotations started.

Other zoos, on the other hand, do not. People think zoos and aquariums have advanced, but as Coe said, it doesn't do much if it doesn't help the behavior and provide novelty and variety for the animal. If just one zoo or aquarium did what Sea World did, it would be a start in the right direction. They could inspire other zoos and aquariums to do the same thing. Animals would behave better and be happier.

Some people might say that animals should not be held in captivity at all because it is abusive. They think that animals should be living in the wild on their own. If the aquariums and zoos let the animals go, we might not be able to see them as much. Zoos and aquariums should keep their animals to help endangered species or injured creatures. The Mote Marine Aquarium in Sarasota, Florida rescues, cures, and releases injured sea life. Employment is important too. The economy is not the best right now and if zoos and aquariums let the animals go and close them down, then a lot of people would lose their jobs.

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) has a committee called the Animal Welfare Committee (AWC). The AZA assists members of the AWC to help the welfare of animals in their care. They also come up with guidelines for welfare assessment and measure what is decent well-being. They are making a real effort to try to help this situation.

In conclusion, we should encourage the aquariums and zoos to start making their habitats better by taking baby steps. Then we need to keep animals to help them if they are hurt or an endangered species, and help us study their behaviors. Zookeepers can assist the process just like at Sea World in Florida. Once they do that maybe they could try to make their habitats fit the description of what the AWC says is a useful habitat. Then add things in the habitat little by little so that it feels more like home to the animals who live there.

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