

# 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants 2019

## Zoo Domination of Elephants Must End

For elephants, life in a zoo is one of continual domination by humans. Placed on perpetual display in cramped enclosures, deprived of purpose and subjected to endless boredom, unable to choose their mates or friends and often separated from those with whom they have bonded - these defining features of captivity demand the ceaseless bending of elephants' wills to their human captors. The cumulative effects of domination contributes to the physical and psychological trauma that often leads to illness and premature death.

The zoos on this year's 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants list are striking examples of the different ways that zoos harmfully dominate elephants, including separating long-bonded individuals and family members, repeatedly forcibly inseminating females, and condemning others to lives of extremely unnatural solitude. In cold-climate facilities, elephants spend winters shut inside cramped indoor enclosures, many of which force elephants to stand on unyielding concrete which can lead to debilitating foot and leg diseases and even death.

Zoos often downplay animal welfare concerns and conceal their harmful domination of elephants from the public. Through campaigns of misleading advertising and skewed educational programs, zoos frequently depict elephants as content, and pretend that elephants somehow agree to, and even enjoy these living conditions. Yet in reality, captive elephants suffer as many of their needs go unmet.

Physical and psychological harm is virtually unavoidable in zoos' domination of elephants and is the reason zoos are unable to improve the health and wellbeing of elephants under their control. No amount of space, financial investment or "enrichment" in public display facilities takes away the daily

pain that zoo captivity inflicts on elephants.

Fortunately, the public is growing more aware of the inherent cruelty of captivity. The year 2019 saw a number of important developments that have increased elephant protection. The state of California, the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, and the township of Whitemarsh, Pennsylvania passed laws banning the use of elephants and other exotic animals in circuses, and more cities and states are considering similar action. Riverbanks Zoo, a facility listed on a previous 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants list, shut down its elephant exhibit.

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) this year finally instituted a bullhook ban, planning to phase out the weapon by 2023. This is a step in the right direction, but it remains unclear whether all facilities will end use of bullhooks entirely since certain AZA member zoos continually violate elephant welfare standards without losing accreditation.

Another encouraging development came with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) ban on the live trade of wild African elephants—something that both the U.S. delegation and the AZA opposed. The decision—if adhered to—will effectively stop the capture and export to zoos in the U.S. and elsewhere.

No self-aware, intelligent, highly social and emotional individual desires a life of abject subjugation. It is time for zoos to stop pretending that elephants do not notice their constrained lives. It is time for the captive animal industry to stop breeding elephants, to phase out exhibits, and to send elephants to sanctuaries accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries, which are designed not as exhibits for people, but for the elephants themselves.

## **2019 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants in North America**

### **#1 Worst Zoo**

**Pittsburgh Zoo, Pittsburgh, PA**

## ***Life Behind Bars in a Decrepit and Decaying Exhibit***



*Pittsburgh Zoo's inadequate elephant prison is the pits*

*Credit: In Defense of Animals*

Pittsburgh Zoo and its International Conservation Center (ICC) harm elephants in an unbroken pattern of negligence that defies even mainstream zoo norms. In Defense of Animals' investigations have exposed this Zoo's substandard elephant barn and found new information about its separation of three elephants who have been together for around a quarter of a century. Pittsburgh Zoo easily earned its place as the #1 worst zoo on this year's list of the 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants in North America.

In December 2019, our investigator found elephants pacing around their tiny enclosure for hours, pressing their trunks to a series of small holes in the



wall that were the only visible water source in that confined area. Dogs were observed within close proximity to the elephants, despite a previous USDA citation highlighting the possible "undue stress" caused by the dogs and their aggressive behavior toward the elephants at the direction of Zoo staff.

During Pittsburgh's cold winters, the elephants are kept indoors on unyielding concrete floors, a common cruelty inflicted on elephants in cold weather zoos everywhere. Concrete flooring is a cause of debilitating foot and leg disease. In addition to Pittsburgh Zoo's harmful flooring, the elephant enclosure walls were dirty, and paint on walls and barrier bars was worn and peeling. And to top it all off, outdated signage nearby claims the Pittsburgh Zoo is an AZA-accredited facility—despite the fact that Pittsburgh Zoo left the AZA in 2015 because of the Zoo's refusal to implement "protected contact," a safer system for handling elephants.

The Pittsburgh Zoo's deplorable treatment of elephants extends beyond its deficient living conditions. In 2019, the Zoo sent female African elephant Thandi to the frigid Granby Zoo in Ontario, Canada, for breeding purposes—cruelly taking her away from her companions Seeni and Sukiri, who'd been together for around 25 years since they were rounded up in the wild after their families were killed in separate slaughters in the early 1990s.

Pittsburgh Zoo was our #2 Worst Zoo for Elephants in 2017 for impregnating Seeni, separating her from her female calf within one day of her birth, and putting the vulnerable calf on display too soon after. The calf sickened and was euthanized at just three months old. Not only does Seeni now have to endure the loss of her companion Thandi a year after her baby was taken from her, but In Defense of Animals investigators have uncovered an agreement to ship Seeni herself to the Milwaukee Zoo in Wisconsin. Soon she will likely be separated from Sukiri as well. Sukiri could remain at Pittsburgh Zoo's ICC without her lifelong companions or be sent to yet another zoo.



Separating Thandi, Seeni, and Sukiri makes it abundantly clear that Pittsburgh Zoo does not recognize or respect herd bonds among its elephants, despite what it claims on its website. Nor does it respect elephants' physical and mental wellbeing, as evidenced by the conditions documented at their indoor enclosures. This is Pittsburgh Zoo / ICC's fourth time on In Defense of Animals list of 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants in North America.

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## **2. Zoo Miami, Miami, Florida**

### ***A Fight to the Death***



*Elephants' days are numbered at Zoo Miami*

*Credit: Colleen Plumb*

Over the past several years, Zoo Miami has had one of the worst track records of any North American zoo for keeping its elephants alive, with four dropping dead since 2012. The Zoo also has a problem with elephants behaving aggressively toward one another, leading to painful injuries and at least one death.

In February, an African elephant named Cita succumbed to her injuries after being attacked and knocked down by an African elephant named Peggy. She remained on the ground, unable to right herself, for over 14 hours before she died. Medical records obtained by In Defense of Animals show that this was at least the **fourth** time Peggy had attacked Cita (although it was likely the fifth). In a previous incident, Cita sustained a deep ear injury which hurt her for over a week, and in another she was on the ground for over an hour.

Zoo Miami started housing Cita with Peggy full-time after Cita's companion, Lisa, died in 2017. Like Cita, Lisa had been knocked down by another elephant—likely Peggy. Months later she was again found on the ground, turning in circles for a substantial period of time before being raised with a hoist system. She died from twisted intestines about a month afterward that incident.

In wild elephant herds, females do not kill one another. When aggression does arise, they have the space they need to escape and de-escalate from other elephants. But the restricted confines of zoo exhibits deny elephants this option. The results can be fatal.

For the multiple deaths and its inability to provide elephants with the choice to escape conflict, Zoo Miami earns a spot on our list of the 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants in North America.

### **3. Bronx Zoo, Bronx, NY**

#### ***Dominating Elephants and Deceiving the Public***





### *Solitary Patty in the Bronx Zoo*

*Credit: Gigi Glendinning*

The Bronx Zoo, operated by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) on behalf of New York City, continues to deny the physical and psychological needs of Asian elephants Happy and Patty, while misleading and hiding information from the public. Roughly 14 months after the Zoo euthanized Maxine, it has also yet to follow through on an assurance it made in 2006 that once another elephant died, the Zoo would end its elephant program.

Bronx Zoo earned the unenviable #1 spot on last year's list of the 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants in North America due to its mistreatment of Happy, whom the Zoo has kept in constant isolation for 13 crushing years, and Patty, who lost her only elephant companion, Maxine, in November 2018. The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is unwilling to enforce its own elephant standards that require a minimum of three elephants at Bronx Zoo, as it does other zoos. The standards explicitly state that human



interactions with staff are not sufficient substitutions for elephant-to-elephant interactions. Added to Happy and Patty's misery are the long, cold winter months when the Zoo forces them to spend much of their time locked inside buildings.

The Bronx Zoo spins its deception and cruel decision to keep Happy and Patty in solitary confinement by misleading the public. Absurdly, Bronx Zoo Director Jim Breheny equated the Zoo's woefully inadequate exhibit with an accredited sanctuary. Further, both the Bronx Zoo and WCS have refused to provide medical records for these elephants to In Defense of Animals leading to our legal challenge through attorneys at Animal Defense Partnership and the law firm Sher Tremonte. By virtue of their institutional size and massive billion-dollar, tax-supported wealth, WCS and the Bronx Zoo seem intent on dominating Happy and Patty to death.

Happy and Patty have a right to be free from abusive isolation at the Bronx Zoo. This is the ninth time the Bronx Zoo and WCS have appeared on our list of the 10 Worst Zoos.

### **Urgent Opportunity to Free Bronx Zoo Elephants:**

## **4. Oregon Zoo, Portland, Oregon**

***Pregnancy leads to a mother's mistreatment***



*Chendra suffers at the Oregon Zoo*

*Credit: Free the Oregon Zoo Elephants*

2019 marks the Oregon Zoo's tenth appearance on In Defense of Animals' list of the 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants in North America—and this year is another sad one for the captives there.

The Zoo took unconscionable risks with 26-year-old Asian elephant Chendra. Despite her having been exposed to other elephants with tuberculosis (TB) in the past, she was bred to produce another calf for the zoo - a surefire way to boost attendance and revenues. According to FOIA

documents obtained by In Defense of Animals, Chendra was determined to be at least four months pregnant in the summer. She was then diagnosed with TB and later suffered a miscarriage, which resulted in months of bleeding and other medical issues. Because of Chendra's diagnosis, she was isolated from the rest of her companions for months. She lost her baby alone, in restricted confinement.

Chendra's pregnancy was potentially dangerous for both mother and calf because of the perils associated with interspecies breeding. Chendra is a Bornean elephant, a subspecies of the Asian elephant, who are much smaller in size than the other Asian elephants she is forced to live with at the Oregon Zoo. Yet Zoo staff reached out to experts after they determined she was pregnant. FOIA documents revealed how one expert told Oregon zoo staff of an interspecies pregnancy that resulted in a dead calf being extracted from the mother, who died 19 days after the procedure.

While the risk of elephants transmitting TB to humans is generally greater among those who work closely with the animals, it remains a serious, contagious disease. In 2019, eight staff members at the Point Defiance Zoo in Washington tested positive for latent TB.

The Oregon Zoo has staunchly wielded bullhooks to dominate elephants for many years, in the face of a tide of opposition. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Zoo says it will continue using these weapons under certain circumstances permitted by the AZA bullhook ban, despite the fact that the majority of other North American facilities have ceased using these weapons altogether.

The actions of the Oregon Zoo in 2019 have earned it the unenviable title of most shamed facility in the 16-year-history of the 10 Worst Zoos list.

## **5. Louisville Zoo**

### ***Domination Over Decency***





### *Louisville Zoo forces Mikki to endure a bittersweet motherhood*

*Credit: Matt Stone/Courier Journal, Louisville Courier Journal via Imagn Content Services, LLC*

After seven years of repeated and failed artificial insemination attempts by Louisville Zoo staff, 35-year-old African elephant Mikki finally gave birth to a calf this year. Baby Fitz is the Louisville Zoo's second elephant birth in its fifty-year history. In 2010, Mikki's calf named Scotty died at age three from colic.

Artificial insemination is an unnatural, invasive and likely traumatic experience for elephants. Their 4-meter long reproductive tracts are penetrated without their consent, often requiring their legs to be chained down—indicating that, if given the choice, individuals like Mikki would flee the procedure. Still, the Zoo subjected Mikki to six traumatic and invasive artificial insemination procedures in 2016 alone.

Like his mother, Mikki, and cell-mate Punch—who were both taken from the wild—Fitz will be robbed of the relationships he would naturally form with other elephants including other family members near his own age.

Asian elephant Punch is not the same species as African elephants Fitz and his mom, Mikki. This unnatural social grouping is utterly unsuitable for all the elephants but especially for Fitz since it fails to provide the vital kinship structure necessary to raise a healthy baby elephant. It also perpetuates a harmful and inaccurate picture of how elephants live in the wild, thereby negating any possible educational value while doing nothing at all to conserve these endangered and threatened species. When one considers the significant boost to zoo revenue that comes with the arrival of new elephant calves, Louisville Zoo's motivations become perhaps clearer.

The Louisville Zoo should release all three elephants to an accredited sanctuary where they will have acres of forests, hills, meadows, and ponds to roam and live free from fear of invasive physical domination. The Louisville Zoo's degrading and unconscionable treatment of Mikki, her calf, and Punch earns a place on our list of the 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants in North America for the third year in a row.

**Act now for captive elephants:**

## **6. Natural Bridge Zoo, Natural Bridge, Virginia**

***Lonely Life Spent as a Carnival Ride***





*The Natural Bridge Zoo renamed her Beautiful, but the domination of Asha is as ugly as ever*

*Credit: Free All Captive Elephants*

African elephant Asha was recently renamed "Beautiful," yet this change certainly doesn't reflect her living situation since she continues to be held in solitary confinement by the Natural Bridge Zoo in Virginia. Denied the companionship of even a single other elephant for roughly two decades, Asha spends her winters alone in a small, barren enclosure. During the summer, she is forced to give thousands of people rides on her back while under the constant threat of being beaten or stabbed with a bullhook.



The Natural Bridge Zoo boasts that it is one of the few zoos in the United States where visitors can ride an elephant—yet this is not something to be proud of. The majority of other facilities in North America abandoned both elephant rides and bullhooks long ago due to the dangers they pose to both elephants and humans. This blatant disregard for Asha's well-being is what lands the Natural Bridge Zoo on our list of the 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants in North America for the sixth consecutive year.

Natural Bridge Zoo also serves as a prime example of how agencies tasked with protecting elephants repeatedly fail them. Neither the U.S. Department of Agriculture nor the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries have shown any concern for Asha as they rubber-stamped Natural Bridge Zoo's exhibiting licenses and permits for yet another year in 2019, despite a [billboard](#) placed by In Defense of Animals and Free All Captive Elephants which exposed the Zoo for over 100 violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act.

The Natural Bridge Zoo's "rebranding" of Asha to Beautiful might distract the public from her miserable living conditions, but it does nothing to improve her dominated existence. We continue to demand that Asha be released from her solitary confinement and sent to experience a life of increased freedom at an accredited sanctuary.

## **7. Edmonton Valley Zoo, Alberta, Canada**

***Too Late For Lucy?***





*The Edmonton Valley Zoo abuses sick and lonely Lucy*  
*Credit: Lucy's Edmonton Advocates' Project*

The Edmonton Valley Zoo has refused to rehome its ailing Asian elephant, Lucy, for many years. She could now be doomed to die in her freezing prison. Lucy is held in solitary confinement and is forced to endure frigid Canadian winters, where temperatures regularly range between 14F (-10C) and -31F (-35C). During winter, she is mainly confined to a small barn, except for brief exercise periods when she's walked across snow and ice to another indoor exercise area—but even then, she's under the constant threat of bullhooks.

Lucy's health has declined seriously over the years of living in Edmonton, and has recently taken a turn for the worse. She is on a cocktail of anti-inflammatories and opioids to manage her pain, and has been since 2016. These medications commonly cause serious stomach problems, which Lucy is now experiencing. These drugs have caused her to fall over in the past

year... but without them, she would be unable to stand due to arthritic pain. Lucy's health is in a downward spiral, which will probably lead to her untimely death.

For years, local activists have been lobbying for Lucy to be released to a sanctuary, but the Edmonton Valley Zoo has repeatedly refused. The Zoo has claimed that Lucy is too sick to be moved, but remains apparently uninterested in improving Lucy's situation. In 2016, ZooCheck and Voice for Animals filed a lawsuit on Lucy's behalf. Unfortunately, the City of Edmonton (which owns and operates the Zoo) successfully argued that provincial animal welfare laws governing zoos are unenforceable. This shocking ruling has set a dangerous precedent that responsible agencies cannot act to protect animals, correct violations, or even confirm that zoos are in compliance before granting permits. Numerous animals, in addition to Lucy, will be harmed by the precedent.

After years of stalling her release to a sanctuary, the Edmonton Valley Zoo might finally see Lucy die in its prison. Hopefully Lucy will serve as a reminder of the suffering caused by zoos that exploit elephants for profit and ignore the pleas of advocates fighting to do what's truly in the best interest of these magnificent animals.

**Help elephants like Lucy:**

## **8. Utah's Hogle Zoo, Salt Lake City, Utah**

***Depressing Desolation for Mother and Daughter***





*Utah's Hogle Zoo forces Christie and Zuri to live cold, lonely lives*

*Credit: Paul T. Derdzinski*

Utah's Hogle Zoo has kept African elephants Christie and her ten-year-old calf Zuri in an exhibit all by themselves since 2015 when their companion Dari died. Christie found herself at Utah's Hogle Zoo after she was violently abducted from the wild in South Africa as a calf. Now she and her daughter spend their days close to a multi-lane highway, where they are ogled by zoo-goers.

Holding elephants in small, unnatural groupings is one of the worst cruelties imaginable for this social species. The herd dynamic forms the very core of elephant life and is essential to meeting their deep need for emotionally rich and deeply complex social structures. For elephants, living without a herd is the definition of loneliness and an empty life. Young Zuri has never had another calf to play with, nor a group of related females to help nurture her

and teach her about what it means to be an elephant. Elephants have demonstrated self-awareness, which means that they likely understand they are alone and suffer greatly because of it.

This is part of the reason why the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) requires, and is supposed to enforce, social groupings of a minimum of three compatible elephants together. The Hogle Zoo is yet another tragic example of the AZA's failure to enforce its own low standards.

Life as a captive at the Hogle Zoo means there is no freedom of choice to find or spend time with other elephants. There is no wild, species-appropriate landscape of size and ecological complexity to explore or find social opportunities. It also means this mother and daughter are forced to live at a high elevation where the average low temperature in winter is below freezing three months of the year and below 38 degrees five months of the year. The Zoo, unwilling to acknowledge how wrong it is to keep elephants in cold Utah, instead confines Christie and Zuri inside barns for much of their lives.

This is Utah's Hogle Zoo's first time on our list of the 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants in North America. If it doesn't find an accredited sanctuary solution for Christie and Zuri, it won't be the last.

## **9. San Diego Zoo Global, San Diego, California**

### ***Breaking Up Brotherhoods***





*San Diego Zoo Global often treats male elephants as expendable sperm donors*

*Credit: Colleen Plumb*

San Diego Zoo Global represents big business in the elephant captivity industry, which means severing bonds and treating elephants like expendable assets—particularly the males. This entity operates the San Diego Zoo and the San Diego Safari Park, and maintains ownership of a satellite herd at Reid Park Zoo in Tucson, AZ—a facility that has earned a place on our list of the 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants in North America multiple times.

In 2019, Zoo officials decided to break up a "brotherhood" of four males who were all born at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park. In April, nine-year-old male elephants Mac and Emanti were sent to the Caldwell Zoo in Texas. Then in June, 10-year-old Ingadze and nine-year-old Lutsandvo were sent to the Birmingham Zoo in Alabama. Both of these zoos have appeared on



our list of the 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants in previous years. In addition to the brothers, wild-caught African elephant Msholo was sent to Zoo Atlanta in Georgia in July, after ten years at the Safari Park, for the crime of never having fathered offspring.

Breeding numerous elephant calves without adequate space or social structures is irresponsible. It is well-known that captive breeding results in a higher ratio of male births—something no zoo is prepared to accommodate. Since males are generally considered less valuable than females, who can be bred to produce crowd- and revenue-attracting calves, these young males were treated more as afterthoughts. Elephants depend strongly on their social structures and severing their decade-long bonds has likely caused them trauma.

Zoos regularly attempt to justify moves like these by pointing out that wild male elephants leave their families at about age 13. However, in nature, young males separate gradually from their families—they are not suddenly ripped away from them to be transported across the country, or even across continents.

San Diego Zoo Global lacks adequate space and social structures to house more elephants. It should stop breeding elephants and stop pretending elephants don't notice or care when their companionships are broken apart.

**Take action to end elephant suffering:**

## **10. Rosamond Gifford Zoo, Syracuse, New York**

***Where a Mother's Love is Disposable***



*Elephants are callously used for breeding at Rosamond Gifford Zoo*  
*Credit: In Defense of Animals*

In January 2019, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo publicly celebrated Asian elephant Mali's birth of a male calf, named Ajay. The Zoo hailed his birth as a triumph, placing him on exhibit five months later. While a newborn elephant is cause for celebration in the wild, Rosamond Gifford's fanfare obscures a legacy of family tragedies perpetuated by this Zoo's wholesale disregard for elephant autonomy.

This tragic family history begins In 2001, when Ajay's grandmother, Targa, suffered a miscarriage. Four years later, her second calf, Kedar, died at just 4 days old. Targa was then cruelly separated from her companions and shipped with her daughter Mali to the African Lion Safari in Canada. There, Mali gave birth to her first calf, named Chuck, and five years later, all three elephants were returned to the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. Yet after just three years, Chuck was cruelly separated and shipped back alone to Canada in

2014, at the tender age of six. We can only imagine the dismay and disruptions all these moves and family separations have caused these elephants. Now, while Rosamond Gifford Zoo visitors gawk at her new son, Mali might be wondering how long it will be before he's also taken from her.

Ajay's father, named Doc, shares a similarly sad history. He was brought to Rosamond Gifford Zoo in 2012 as part of a breeding partnership with the notoriously cruel Ringling Brothers Circus. Sadly, an In Defense of Animals investigator recorded zoo staff saying he will soon be separated from his family and deposited at yet another zoo for continued breeding exploitation. Zoos often treat male elephants like semen dispensaries and ship them around to different facilities whenever one is needed for breeding purposes. Transportation decisions can be made almost solely based on the individual's value in terms of breeding, with little regard for friendships or family relationships. Our investigator also documented Doc swaying back and forth almost constantly throughout the day. This is stereotypic behavior that is attributed to stress.

Elephant births in captivity are no cause for celebration. Like his father, Ajay will likely be treated like a breeding machine, sent from zoo to zoo, where friendships and families may be formed and cruelly broken. Ajay's birth should be mourned as another tragedy in the making—until he and his companions are sent to accredited sanctuaries.

## **Dishonorable Mention:**

### **Roger Williams Park Zoo, Providence, Rhode Island**

#### ***Crafting the Narrative of Domination***





*Roger Williams miseducates and misleads*

*Credit: In Defense of Animals*

Last year, we spotlighted The Roger Williams Park Zoo as one of the 10 Worst Zoos for Elephants in North America for its use of bullhooks, which are metal rods resembling fireplace pokers that are used to dominate elephants through fear and pain. In 2019, the Zoo announced that it will abide by a new Association of Zoos and Aquariums policy requiring zoos to phase-out this cruel device, which we applaud. However, concerns about this facility remain, including the Zoo's spreading of troubling misinformation.

An investigation by In Defense of Animals found that the Roger Williams Park Zoo disseminates information to the public that is often inaccurate, lacks scientific merit, and crafts a self-serving narrative that elephants need to be dominated.

Zoo staff portrayed African elephants as destructive animals who only walk long distances because of the damage they do to their natural environments.

**"They only walk those distances to find food, and the reason they need to do that is elephants are extremely destructive."**

**– Roger Williams Park Zoo elephant keeper, during public tour**

In fact, elephants are a keystone species who play a critical role in the healthy functioning of an ecosystem, keeping grasslands open and available for herbivores, dispersing seeds, and maintaining biodiversity.

Zoo staff also stated that elephants in zoos don't need to walk long distances because zoos provide them with food. However, elephants' bodies are adapted for near-constant movement across vast areas. Walking is essential for elephant health—and not just for food consumption. Lack of space for movement causes complications such as arthritis and foot disease—the leading causes of death for elephants in captivity.

Other miseducation included attempts to explain frequent back and forth rocking by an elephant named Alice as comparable to a child innocently sucking on a thumb. Anyone responsible for elephant care should be aware that these aberrant behaviors—which are virtually unseen in the wild—indicate distress.

Roger Williams Zoo misleads visitors with further false statements about bullhooks. The Zoo justifies its use of bullhooks with wholly made-up claims that equate these weapons with how elephants may use their tusks to "guide" one another. This is a ridiculous statement with no scientific merit that shows how this Zoo still clings to the idea of managing elephants through domination and fear.

Until the Roger Williams Park Zoo stops spreading misinformation, it can expect to be a candidate for the list of 10 Worst Zoos list again.



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