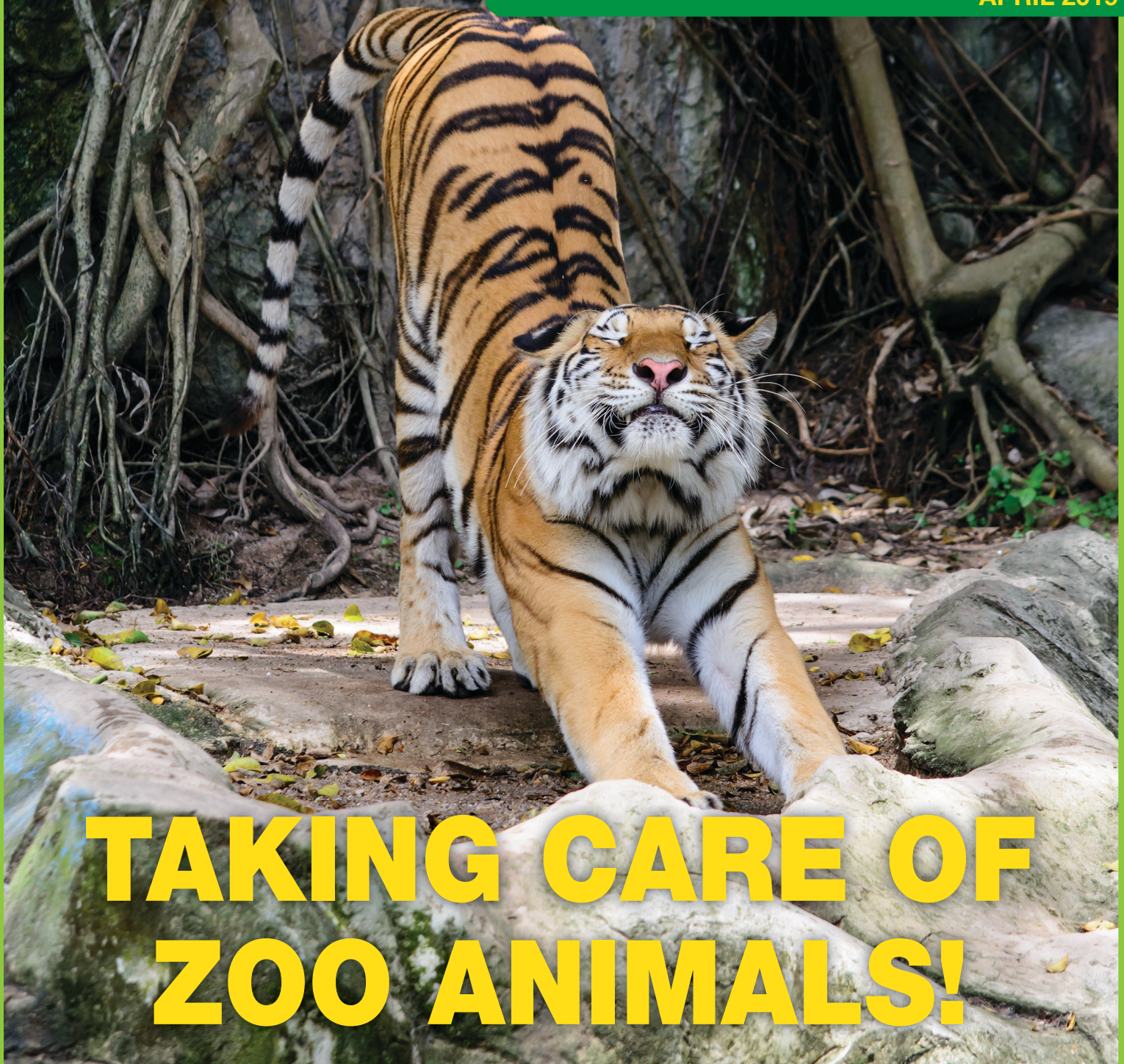




Jr. Animal Scientist

APRIL 2019



TAKING CARE OF ZOO ANIMALS!

The Five Freedoms of Welfare in Zoos

Zoos are a great way to learn about animals and their habitats. Millions of people visit zoos every year to meet animals and support conservation programs to protect wild animals. Zoos have two main goals: to educate the public and to provide valuable information to scientists. Zoo animals can show us how their wild counterparts eat, play and raise their young. Understanding how these species survive is the first step in properly maintaining the animal's **welfare**.

When we talk about animal welfare, we like to think of five “freedoms” that the animals should have:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom to express natural behavior
4. Freedom from fear and distress
5. Freedom from pain, injury and disease

The Five Freedoms are globally recognized as the “gold standards” in animal welfare. These freedoms keep animals healthy and happy.

Freedom from hunger and thirst

It is important that animals always be provided with the proper diets that provide the same nutrients they would receive in the wild. Animals in zoos should be able to drink clean water whenever they want and eat the feed they need, just like people do. If an animal goes hungry or thirsty for too long it will negatively affect their welfare. Nutritious feeds help animals to maintain proper health.

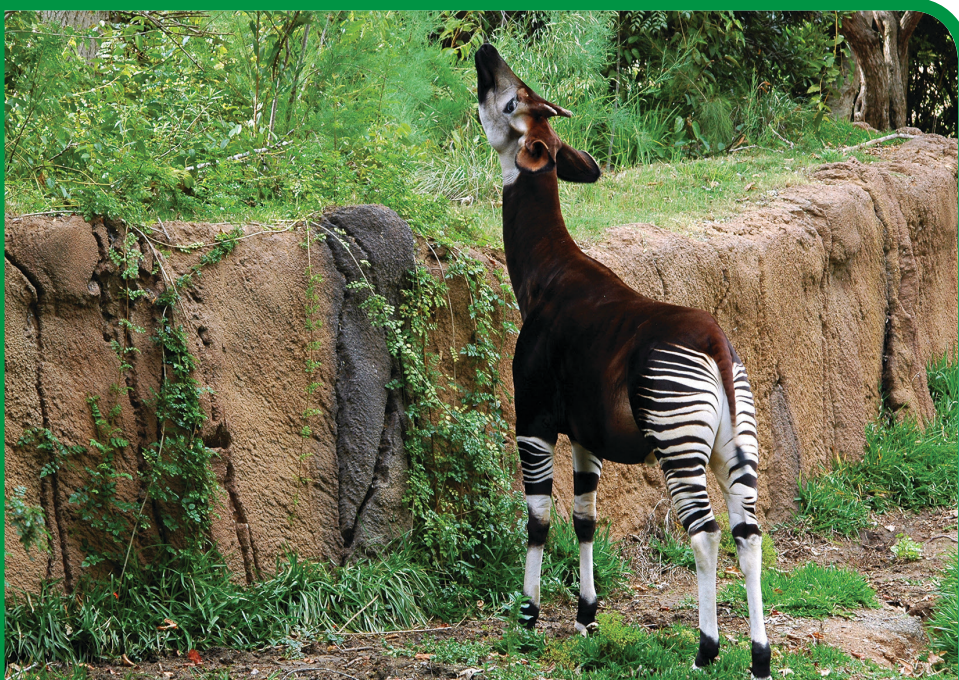


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In the wild, animals have to hunt or search for their feed. Many animals even travel miles in a day just to find water. In zoos, zookeepers provide animals their food and a constant supply of fresh water. However, since hunting or searching for feed and water is natural for animals, zookeepers need to recreate this time for them in captivity. They do this by providing complex ways to find and receive their feed.

Freedom from discomfort: Creation of appropriate habitat

Freedom from **discomfort** means zoos must provide suitable shelter from the rain or cold, provide shade from the sun and a place to get away.

Zoos are often the safest places for animals that have been born in captivity or animals that can no longer take care of themselves in the wild. In the wild, animals run and seek shelter from noise, but zoo animals are only given so much space. Zoos can also be loud, with unfamiliar noises and sights.

If animals cannot get away from bad weather or noisy people, they may become stressed or sick. But we want animals to be healthy, so zoos work to give animals a comfortable environment that includes protection from disturbances.

Animal scientists work to understand how to make zoo habitats better for animals. For example, arctic animals like polar bears should be kept cold and given access to hidden areas so that the animal can hide comfortably from view and the public.

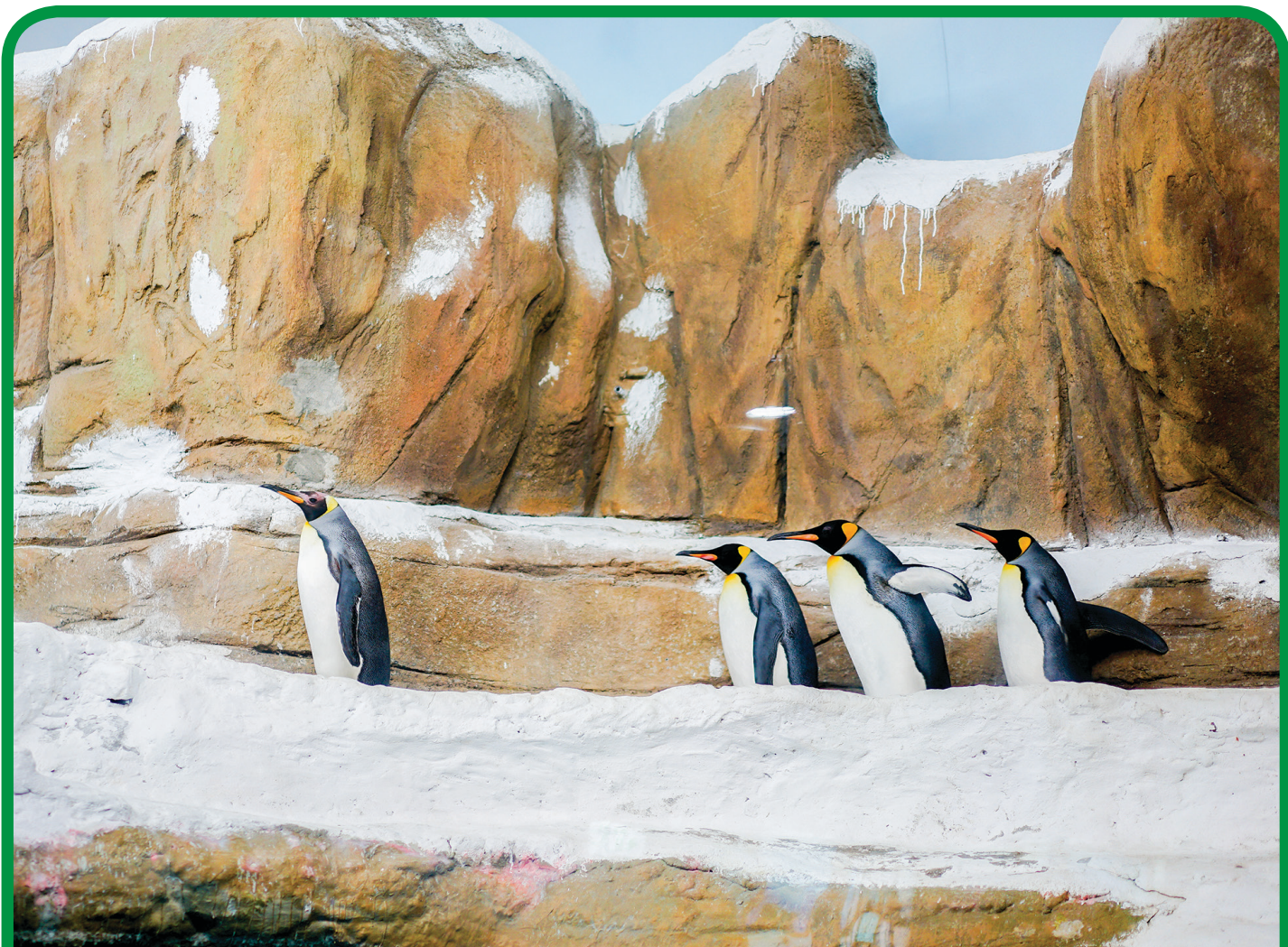


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Freedom from fear and distress

What does this mean?

It is the responsibility of the caretaker to ensure an animal in captivity free from fear and distress. These means keeping an animal safe from loud noises or dangerous conditions that might stress or alarm an animal.

Why is this important?

Animals in captivity are unable to remove themselves from things that scare them or cause stress. A zoo enclosure design should encourage an animal's natural behavior. Some animals, such as large cats, are most comfortable when they can spend time alone, so their enclosures have private areas where they can relax. Other animals, like monkeys, like living in large groups, so their enclosures include areas for the animals to interact and play together.



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Freedom to express natural behavior

What does this mean?

Animals in captivity should be free to express their **natural behavior**. This means giving them enough space to move around and company of their own kind. Their **habitat** should not restrict their normal behavior.

Why is this important?

Animals can get stressed and sick if they do not have a chance to use their natural behaviors. For warthogs, a natural behavior is to dig in the dirt with their noses. For an elephant, a natural behavior is to roll in mud.

How is this done?

Enclosures are designed to represent a similar environment as the wild. Zookeepers provide **enrichment** to the animal by stimulating their natural behaviors. For example, an animal that spends the majority of their time in trees will need some type of tree or climbing device in their enclosure. However, a zebra needs lots of space for grazing.



Freedom from pain, injury and disease

Most zoos have staff veterinarians that maintain the care and health of the animals.

Addressing potential problems before they happen is the best way to ensure freedom from pain, injury, and disease. Zoo veterinarians can give animals routine vaccinations and physical exams to keep them healthy. Animals who are treated for a disease are kept in isolation to reduce exposure to other animals. In addition, animals with injuries are kept separate so they can heal properly.



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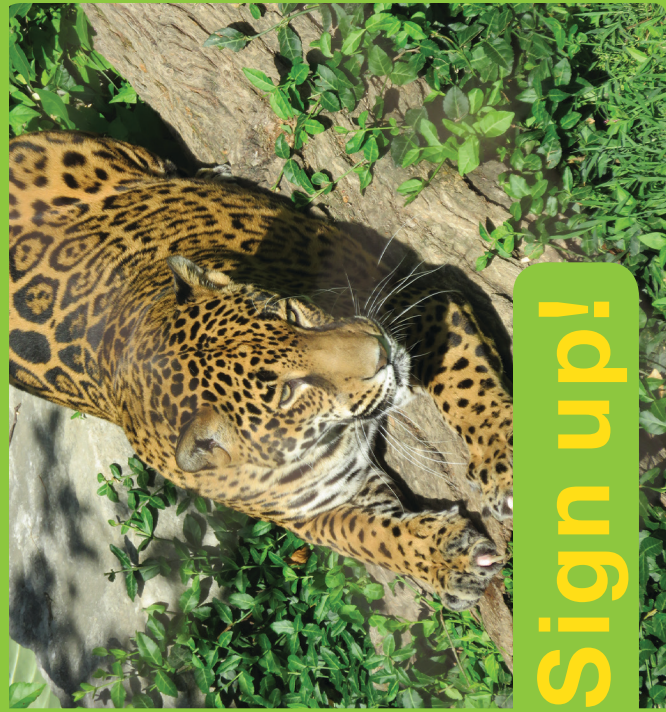


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