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# **A TALE OF TWO ZOOS: A STUDY IN WATCHING PEOPLE WATCHING ANIMALS**

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A thesis submitted in the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Museum Studies  
The University of Sydney



August 2007



**I love to watch the swallow skim  
The river in his flight;  
To mark, when day is growing dim  
The glow-worm's silvery light;**

**I love to hear the robin sing,  
Perched on the highest bough:  
To see the rook with purple wing  
Follow the shining plough.**

**The sea-gull whiter than the foam,  
The fish that dart beneath;  
The lowing cattle coming home;  
The goats upon the heath.**

Edward John Breilsford.  
(1841-1921).

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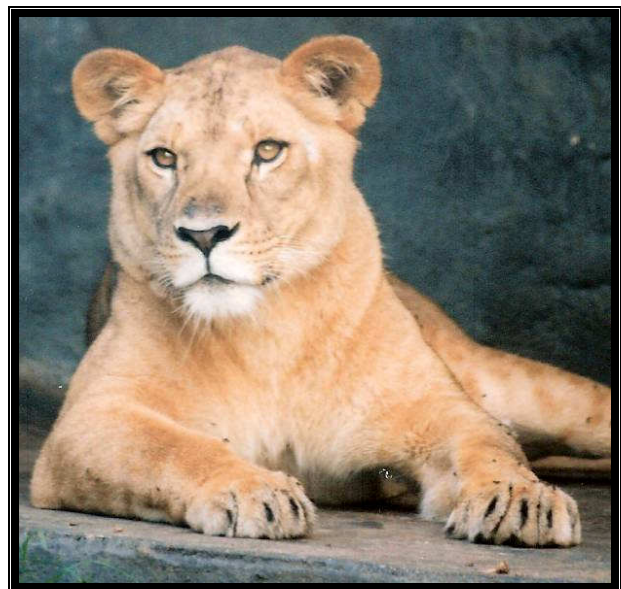
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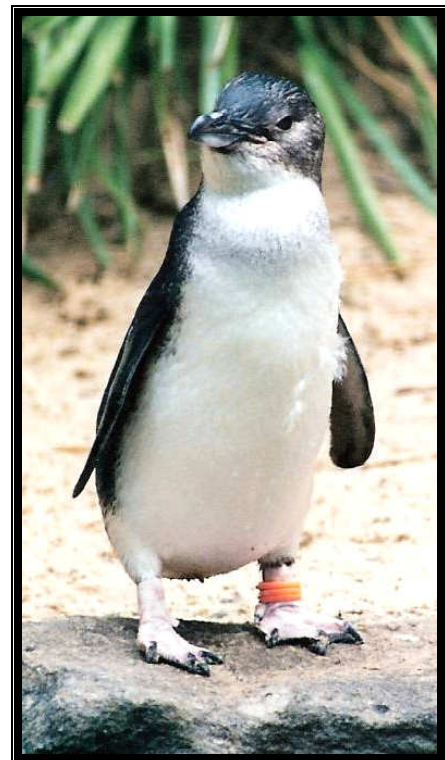
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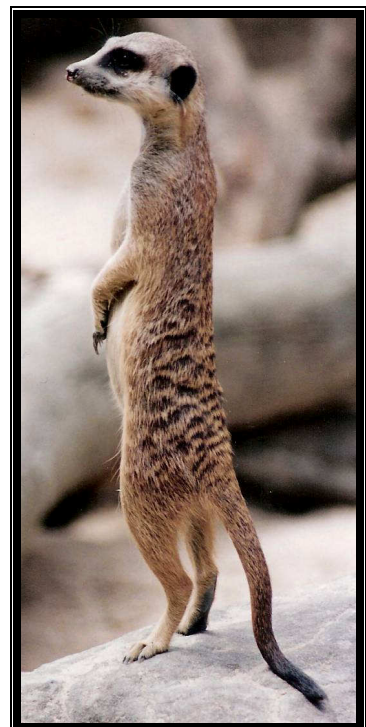
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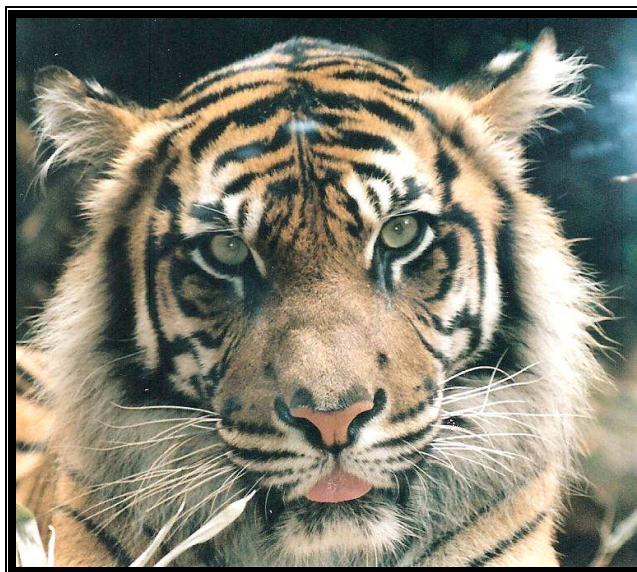


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## ABBREVIATIONS

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ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AMARC	Australian Museum Audience Research Centre
ARAZPA	Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria
AWA	Animal Welfare Act
HSI	Humane Society International
ICOM	International Council of Museums
IFAW	International Fund for Animal Welfare
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
IUDZG	International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens
MA	Museums Australia
RSPCA	Royal Society Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
RZS	Royal Zoological Society
WAZA	World Association of Zoos and Aquariums
WPZ	Western Plains Zoo
ZPBNSW	Zoological Parks Board of New South Wales



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## STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

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I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work. To the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by any other person, nor any substantial material previously submitted for the award of any degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement and reference is made in the text.

David Frede  
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August, 2007.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The completion of this research would not have been possible without the help and assistance of a number of people and it is difficult to express thanks adequately to all the individuals who assisted in so many ways. Their support has been greatly appreciated.

The granting of an Australian Postgraduate Award from The University of Sydney significantly assisted the development of this research.

I gratefully acknowledge the input of my two supervisors, Dr. Jennifer Barrett (Director of Museum Studies) and Associate Professor Deirdre Dragovich (Associate Dean of the Faculty of Science). This thesis benefited appreciably as a result of their invaluable guidance, constructive criticisms and insightful suggestions.

Considerable support was given by authorities at Adelaide and Taronga Zoo, specifically Kevin Evans and Dr. Greg Johnston (Adelaide) and Guy Cooper and Cameron Kerr (Taronga), who were responsible for organising the support which allowed me to conduct the research in these two outstanding institutions. In particular, I should like to thank all the members of staff and volunteers at Adelaide Zoo for their friendship and kindness in assisting 'a foreigner from interstate' to successfully complete this research in their beautiful zoo.

A number of people assisted by making various sources of information available, in particular Lynda Kelly (The Australian Museum Audience Research Centre), Chris Read (State Library of South Australia), Silvia Muscardin (Librarian, Royal Zoological Society South Australia), Margaret Miller and Laura Quaass (Taronga Zoo Archival Division).

Thanks are due to more than 3,000 unknown visitors to Adelaide and Taronga Zoos who gave of their time in responding to the various surveys and provided so many thoughtful and astute comments. Their actions supplied the necessary data and information required for the analysis in this work.

The presentation of this thesis has been improved greatly, thanks to assistance received from a number of people, particularly friends at The Australian Museum and

Taronga Zoo. Sophie Masters provided invaluable help with computer and photographic techniques. Alison Orme showed considerable interest and her suggestions have been very much appreciated. Mary Peacock followed the fortunes of this research from the initial stages and the text benefited considerably from her input. Libby Sakker, who was initially responsible for instilling in me an interest in the pursuit of zoological knowledge, greatly encouraged me at all times throughout this research and provided several useful thoughts and suggestions. Finally, Joan Rosenthal proved to be an excellent proofreader and guide through the fine detail of academic writing. The final text benefited substantially from her perceptive comments and thoughtful input.

I should also like to thank sincerely my family, for their constant support and understanding throughout the entire research period. In particular, my daughter Helen assisted appreciably with the development of the maps, photographs and the general presentation of this thesis.

Finally, and possibly most importantly, thanks to Kartar (at Adelaide), Victoria (at Taronga) and all their friends from the animal kingdom, who spend their days in the confines of a zoo, unaware of the number of problems that confront their endangered relatives in the natural world. Their actions and behaviours have proved to be so important in attracting the interest and attention of visitors, which has been the foundation for this entire research.



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## ABSTRACT

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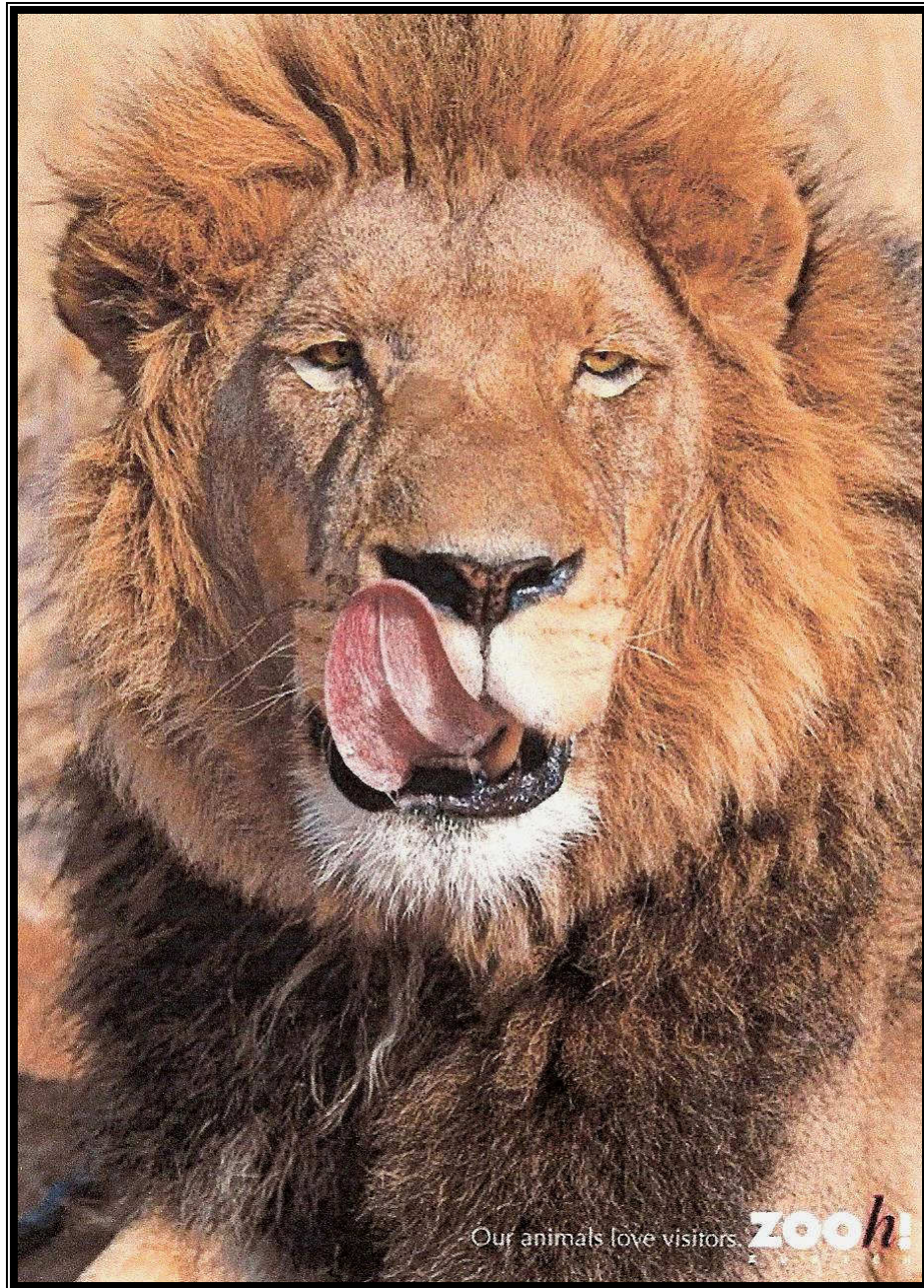
Zoological gardens, or zoos, keep and display wild animals, mainly for the purposes of education, conservation and biological research. However, it is evident that a significant component of zoos is the vast number of people who visit them, since without the support of visitors, zoos would not be financially viable and would cease to exist. This research investigates the behaviours of these visitors and develops an understanding of their awareness relating to what they see and do while they are in the zoo, along with their motivations for visiting. The study focuses on two major metropolitan zoos in Australia: Adelaide (in South Australia) and Taronga (in Sydney, New South Wales). A brief historical account contextualises changes, raising awareness of the significance of visitors to the livelihood of zoos.

More and more zoos are integrating into their management routines different programmes that relate to the care and welfare of the animals. Despite recent growth in scientific attention, which has focused on human-animal relationships, little research has been conducted relating to the human visitor in the zoo. To date, decisions made by administrators have been based upon assumptions of the visitors' understanding of the work of zoos rather than on actual quantitative findings.

This empirical research is significant in that it uses both quantitative and qualitative methods to appraise factual data and information. The data from unobtrusive tracking observations at different exhibits, combined with the results of questionnaire surveys, are used to explore and assess the perceptions of visitors. In developing a demographic profile of the people who visit zoos, this work considers the motivations and the frequency of visitors. Various factors that influence the viewing patterns of visitors are explored to assess the popularity of exhibits, and the perceptions of visitors relating to animals and enclosures are investigated, to assess the diverse levels of satisfaction.

Case studies explore the perceptions and understandings of visitors towards the use of enrichment items, the use of signs and labels, and a hypothetical approach to the feeding of carnivores in zoos. The results are important in that they contribute essential knowledge that describes the perceptions of a wide range of people who visit zoos, along with their expectations, since it is crucial for these institutions to maintain their popularity with the public.





**“Our animals love visitors”**

**Promotion by Zurich Zoo**

Source: <http://haha.nu/crestive/zoo-in-zurich>.