

## Evaluating the Conservation Mission of Zoos, Aquariums, Botanical Gardens, and Natural History Museums

### Evaluación de la Misión de Conservación de Zoológicos, Acuarios, Jardines Botánicos o Museos de Historia Natural

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## Abstract

**Abstract:** *Collection-based institutions—zoos, aquariums, museums, and botanical gardens—exhibit wildlife and thus have a special connection with nature. Many of these institutions emphasize a mission of conservation, and, undeniably, they do contribute directly to conservation education and conservation science. They present an exceptional opportunity for many urban residents to see the wonders of life, and they can contribute to education and habitat preservation. Because many collection-based institutions now hold a stated mission of conservation, we suggest eight potential questions to evaluate actions toward that mission: (1) Does conservation thought define policy decisions? (2) Is there sufficient organizational funding for conservation activities? (3) Is there a functional conservation department? (4) Does the institution advocate for conservation? (5) Do conservation education programs effectively target children and adults? (6) Does the institution contribute directly to habitat protection locally and internationally? (7) Do exhibits explain and promote conservation efforts? and (8) Do internal policies and activities protect the environment? These questions are offered as a place to begin discussion. We hope they will help employees and administrators of a collection-based institution (and citizens of the surrounding community) think about and support their institution's conservation activities. Public support and praise for institutions that are striving toward solutions for conservation problems and*

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y la ciencia de la conservación. Brindan una oportunidad excepcional para que muchos residentes urbanos vean las maravillas de la vida, y pueden contribuir a la educación y a la preservación del hábitat. Debido a que en la actualidad muchas de las instituciones basadas en colecciones tienen una misión de conservación manifiesta, sugerimos ocho preguntas potenciales para evaluar las acciones hacia el cumplimiento de esa misión: (1) ¿Las consideraciones sobre la conservación definen las decisiones sobre políticas? (2) ¿Hay suficiente financiamiento organizacional para las actividades de conservación? (3) ¿Hay un departamento de conservación que funcione? (4) ¿La institución aboga por la conservación? (5) ¿Los programas de educación en conservación se enfocan eficientemente sobre niños y adultos? (6) ¿La institución contribuye directamente a la conservación del hábitat a nivel local e internacional? (7) ¿Las exhibiciones explican y promueven los esfuerzos de conservación? y (8) ¿Las políticas y actividades internas protegen el ambiente? Estas preguntas se ofrecen como un marco para iniciar la discusión. Esperamos que ayuden a los empleados y administradores de una institución basada en colecciones (y a los ciudadanos de la comunidad en la que se encuentra) a reflexionar sobre las actividades de conservación de su institución y lograr que las apoyen. El apoyo y el reconocimiento público de aquellas instituciones que pugnan por soluciones para los problemas de conservación y la presión sobre aquellas organizaciones que se están moviendo más lentamente hacia una orientación de conservación pueden ayudar a destinar más recursos para salvaguardar la naturaleza.

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