New website launches to help public flag animal welfare concerns

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Every year, global tourists and social media users share accounts of witnessing captive wild animals suffering in distressing conditions. Whether it's seeing a barren concrete pen at a dilapidated roadside zoo or a video from a tiger cub cuddling experience on social media, it's often difficult to know who to raise a concern with. Global animal charity, Wild Welfare has today launched its newly updated online Animal Welfare Concern Reporting Tool. This unique digital service allows anyone to take action when they witness potential animal welfare issues in-person or online.

The newly upgraded "Concern Navigator"provides a seamless central gateway for tourists or visitors to report uneasy or troubling experiences seen at zoos, aquariums, sanctuaries, or other animal related tourist attractions around the world. These concerns may include physical issues, such as chained animals or maltreatment, as well as environmental failings like cramped, unsuitable enclosures. It also helps to raise a red flag on 'hidden' suffering such as the overhandling of small mammals or reptiles, wild animals being used as photo props, or the psychological toll evidenced by stereotypic behaviours like pacing and repetitive head rolling.

Mainstream headlines are increasingly reflecting a shift in public perception and awareness of captive wildlife welfare, highlighted by recent high-profile stories such as the viral concerns for 'Baby Punch' the macaque at a Japanese zoo and the public campaigns about penguin welfare at a London aquarium. However, many people still feel powerless or unsure where to turn when they witness potential welfare issues or captive wild animals in distressing situations. Wild Welfare's Animal Welfare Concern Reporting Tool acts as a free and easy triage service accessible to all online around the globe.

Wild Welfare's online concern reporting service initially launched in 2018. Since then it has received over five hundred reports from concerned members of the public sharing experiences of potential captive wild animal abuse, inappropriate living conditions or poorly looked after wildlife. Upon receiving a report, the newly re-launched tool can provide immediate feedback, advising and signposting users to relevant legislative bodies, local authorities, or associations best positioned to address the particular issue most effectively.

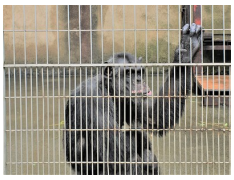
The website's re-launch is the result of collaborative input from global leaders in animal science and zoo management including experts at Zoos Victoria, Australia. Data collected through the tool continues to help fuel ongoing research initiatives at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) in the UK, allowing Wild Welfare to identify global trends in animal welfare concerns. The project hopes to aid the further development of evidence-based welfare solutions, while raising public awareness of identifying what sub-standard animal welfare might look like.

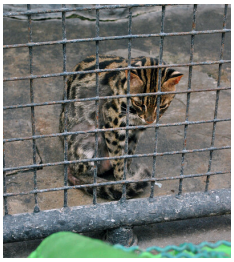
"Wild Welfare's philosophy is to work in collaboration with zoos, aquariums, and sanctuaries. Our initial concern reporting tool helped us to identify potential welfare issues and start addressing them by working with individual facilities, zoological associations, and governing authorities. By reimagining and re-launching this free online tool, we are helping to provide a voice for the voiceless animals around the world suffering as a result of inappropriate tourist activities and living in unsuitable conditions. We provide practical training and resources to address immediate welfare concerns and create institutional change, delivering long-term positive welfare outcomes for animals under human care" explained Wild Welfare Director, Simon Marsh.

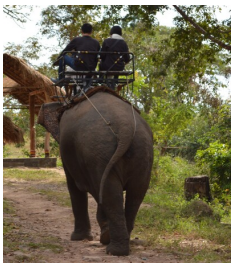
Wild Welfare is encouraging anyone who witnesses poor animal welfare to use the tool and flag their concern. Each report contributes to a global database that is helping Wild Welfare and their partners to advocate for stronger welfare legislation and better global husbandry practices.

The Animal Welfare Concern Reporting website is now live and can be accessed via the Wild Welfare website at https://wildwelfare.org/report-a-concern/

Media:







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