

# Investigation on Live Feeding in the Wildlife Parks of China (2005)

**Environment and Animal Ethics Group (EAEG)**  
**“China Zoo Watching”**

## **Part One: General Introduction**

In the past 11 years, since the first wildlife park appeared in China in 1993, about 30 wildlife parks have been setup one after another. Starting from Shenzhen Wildlife park, which first imported the safari park mode, namely, confined visitors watching animals at large, wildlife parks are getting increasingly popular. According to incomplete statistics, there are still over 5 parks about to be constructed in near future. Owing to the reason that the wildlife park construction are regarded as an attractive tour resource and important business project to be developed, more and more regional governments and businessmen have their own plan to build wildlife parks. It has become a somewhat trend that each province should have at least one wildlife park. However, the heavy commercial pressure to earn more has led to the prevalent truth that animal welfare is seldom considered. Although animals' living space is enlarged to some extent, various kinds of maltreatment to the animals exist in these parks, such as the “animal combats” and the animal acrobatic shows. These shows not only hurt the animals seriously but also have negative influences on the youth especially little children.

For instance, initially it was the wildlife parks that first introduced the bloody programs of feeding predators with live animals, and it was still those wildlife parks that force the animals to perform dangerous shows to the public. A great number of media have already made it exposed, and the public opposes such bloody shows as well, but such programs and shows continue to exist in most of wildlife parks as a

major draw. The poor situation of the animals seldom catches the attention of the authorities, and is quite hard to be improved.

Out of a deep concern, we organized an investigation group with the aid from WSPA. The group has been to the wildlife parks and some local zoos in main cities of China, made observations and record to the parks for the purpose of waking up the public to pay attention to the animals in the cage, and stop the brutality. From Jan.2003 to Oct.2004, we observed and investigated most of wildlife parks, and the result of the investigation is horrendous. Thereby, we made two appeals here to the authorities as:

- Stop the trend of building wildlife parks blindly, close non-qualified wildlife parks that are lack of basic welfare conditions to the animals, and provide better administration to those parks so that they can improve the welfare of zoo animals.
- Stop the live feeding shows, and prohibit the dangerous animal acrobatic shows and the group photographing of the baby animals.

## **1. The main problems of the wildlife parks:**

### **a) Driving by the profit expectation both in the commercial sense and in terms of regional economic, the number of the wildlife parks increased quickly**

Wildlife parks are generally built and owned by both the investor and the local landowner together. The operating expenses depend mostly on the investment and the income of selling the tickets, therefore, the tickets are usually quite expensive. For example, Shang Hai Wildlife Park got the income of 23,000,000 yuan from selling the tickets in the first year. The temptation of high profit made lot of other places follow the trend of wildlife park building. For local governments, economic development is always the main consideration, leaving issues such as animal welfare in a marginal state. As a result, wildlife parks were built repeatedly, whether they are qualified or not. In the region of Yangtze River, there are already too many wildlife parks such as Shanghai Wildlife Park, Shanghai Gong Qing Wildlife Park, Nanjing Pearl Font

Wildlife Park, Hangzhou Wildlife Park and so on. Some media reported that the opening of Hangzhou Wildlife Park was a great challenge to Shanghai Wildlife Park since 60% visitors of Shanghai Wildlife Park are from Jiangsu Province and Zhejiang Province.

The situation of other provinces are similar. Just in the city of Wuhan, there are totally 4 parks: Wuhan Forestry Wildlife Park, Wuhan Jiu Feng Forestry Zoo, Wuhan Sheng Shan Happy World, and Wuhan Cai Dian Wildlife Park, thus a severe competition has emerged. Problems such as short of income, poor maintenance, terrible living condition of animals and insecurity (in the summer of 2003 an accident occurred that visitors were hurt by predators) are common in all the parks. Animal welfare cannot be assured at all. In Sichuan province, altogether 3 parks were built . They are Chongqing Yong Chuan Wildlife Park, Chengdu Wildlife Park and Bi Feng Xia Wildlife Park. Among those parks, the income of Bi Feng Xia is the lowest, even the most basic living conditions for the animals cannot be guaranteed.

At present, wildlife parks are mostly operating in the form of enterprises aiming at profiting as much as they can. The living conditions of the wild animals have to depend on the financial condition of the zoos. No money would be reserved for the animals in case there is any emergency, therefore, when accidents do happen, animals would be seriously affected and many animals would die. The typical example is Xiamen Hai Cang Wildlife Park. During the period of SARS in 2003 when the income of the park slumped quickly, the food supply for the animals was reduced to one third during one month, which caused a lot of animals starved to death. Many tragedies happened: the tigers fight with one another, a mother lion devoured her baby, several lions killed one lion for food and so on.

**b) The amount and the species of animals are huge**

Many wildlife parks tend to make themselves “peculiar” in order to make more profit, so they import more and more rare foreign species and take it as a kind of flaunt, seldom thinking about the injury caused to the animals during the long distance transportation, and never considering whether those animals are fit for the local

weather and climate. Lots of media have reported that some kind of animals imported from Africa, such as lions and giraffes, were already dead or injured as they arrived at the port.

There are many wildlife parks claiming to possessing over 10,000 animals, for example, Shenzhen Wildlife Park, Beijing Wildlife Park, Jinhai Hu Water Bird World Exposition Garden, Shanghai Wildlife Park, Panyu Wildlife Park and so on. There are tens of parks which keep 3000 to 5000 animals. The parks, which are still under construction, such as Yunnan Wildlife Park, Changsha Wildlife Park, Xinjiang Tian Shang Wildlife Park and Bao Er Tu Wildlife Park, all profess to be huge-scale ones. Bao Er Tu Wildlife Park, for instance, has not even started construction actually but only exists on the Internet as a kind of signboard to attract investments. As is showed on the Internet, Bao Er Tu Wildlife Park will be built in a wasteland, and over 10,000 kinds of local animals and other animals, including the African animals will be exhibited openly. Bao Er Tu is located in the outfield of Xinjiang Province, not easy to access. According to the observation of our team, the local residents occupied most of the land, while only few wild animals and migratory birds could be caught sporadically there. It is not suitable to set up a large wildlife park there at all, because not many visitors will be willing to drop in during 10 months of the year. So the problem they will face is how to ensure the survival of 10,000 animals. It will be at most a jail for wild animals, if they really want to protect the local animals and birds as they promised. Actually, reducing the interference from outside as much as possible is the best way to protect the local wild animals. Such governmental program is based on immature considerations.

Let's take Jinhai Hu Wildlife park as an instance. This park plans to import 150 kinds of domesticated water birds with the total amount of 300,000. Up to now, they have imported 70 kinds of birds. In Panyu Fragrant River Wildlife Park in Guangdong, the total species are over 300. The park even claimed that their free-breeding style of the African animals "fills up the blank of Chinese wild animal protection", and 6 African white tiger were purchased together at one time.

Some parks not only purchase the wild animals caught from the wild and

imported the endangered species, but also reproduced the animals by themselves. As a result, many endangered animals such as tigers and lions are bred artificially to be superfluous. All the animals do not have any abilities to live in the wild but can only live in the park and bear the suffering forever. The parks argue that the purpose of artificial breeding is for protection and to enlarge the population of the species, but actually, it is for profit. The “surplus” animals would be sold to the circuses. The destinies of these animals are all extremely miserable. Tigers and the elephants will be forced to work to death, while many other animals are spanked everyday during daily trainings. Such kind of tragedies exist in lots of parks such as Guilin Lion and Tiger Garden, and Heilongjiang Dong Bei tiger Garden.

In China, with the absence of proper legislation, these wildlife parks are poorly regulated. The animals are regarded as “assets” and tools to earn money. The public is kept uninformed of animal welfare issues and animals’ destiny.

**c). The main problem is poor regulation; even basic animal welfare could not be guaranteed**

The blindly building of wildlife park has led to a widespread maltreatment of animals. Many places rush to give green lights to wildlife parks without even the least qualifications, which makes a large number of animals imprisoned in awful environments. In some of the parks, the death rate of the animals is stunningly high due to poor caring of the animals; some other parks even do not have any veterinarians to provide the sick animals with basic medical care; and still some other parks keep lots of animals in a chronic hunger due to financial problems. We should pay close attention to this “chronic” hunger, because the animals imprisoned can hardly get the notice and they are in endless pains and are slowly dying.

According to our observation, many wildlife parks occupy large spaces, only for the benefit of the visitors. Those wild woodland and natural field are meaningless for the animals, because most of the animals are still kept in little paddocks or small huts day and night. Many animals, which are over bred artificially and impossible to be exhibited, have to be locked crowdedly in limited spaces, just like the lions and tigers

in Ba Da Ling Wildlife Park, which are all imprisoned in a small room hardly able to be noticed by the visitors. A great number of animals are locked in small cages all the year round without any chance to be released to outside or get some tiny bit of freedom, except during show times and the training times.

Some scholars argue that it is completely inappropriate to build wildlife parks blindly in China, not only because of the substantive expenses taken to breed the animals but also because of the environmental damages. There are only 6 parks in the U.S, a developed country. But in China, within 10 years, over 30 large-scale wildlife parks have been built, with the number of wild animals kept in the parks increased to hundreds of thousand.

Purchasing wild animals will encourage hunting and threaten the survival wild species eventually; Importing endangered species from other countries will impulse the international endangered animal trade and do harm to the wild animal protection work of other countries, which is against the principles of CITES. Furthermore, during the capture and long distance transportation, animals suffered from great fright and hurt, which is responsible for increasing the death rate.

We appeal hereon that the concerned governmental departments should examine the application of wildlife parks and city zoos more strictly and reduce the number of the parks, strengthen the management, close those parks with very poor conditions or give the order to make necessary improvements, help rearrange the animals, and keep the animals in good welfare. Simultaneously, they should control the amount of animal breeding, put more investment into the protection of the habitats of wild animal, and try to make China to a more humane country in which all the lives could be respected.

## **2, The observation to the animal shows and the live feeding program**

So far, the inspection group has investigated 20 parks approximately, including wildlife parks such as *Beijing Ba Da Ling Wildlife Park*, *Beijing Da Xing Wildlife*

*Park, Shanghai Wildlife Park, Hangzhou Wildlife Park, Nanjing Pearl Font Wildlife Park, Hefei City Zoo, Wuhan City Zoo, Wuhan Forestry Wildlife Park,, Wuhan Sheng Shan Happy World, Wuhan Jiu Feng Forestry Zoo, Guangzhou Pan Yu Wildlife Park, Guangzhou Chang Long Animal Night World, Shenzhen Wildlife Park, Xi'an Qin Ling Wildlife Park, Chengdu Wildlife Park, Chongqing Yong Chuan Wildlife Park, Sichuan Ya'an Bi Feng Xia Wildlife Park, Shenyang Wildlife Park, Heilongjiang Tiger Garden, Xinjiang Bao Er Tu Wildlife Park, Hefei Wildlife Park, Shanghai Youth Wildlife Park and so on;* and city zoos such as *Beijing Zoo, Wu Lu Mu Qi Zoo, Hefei Xiao Yao Jin Zoo and so on.* Most of wildlife parks have the live feeding programs openly, and all the parks and zoos have the so called animal shows and group photographing with the baby animals, some of the performances are extremely dangerous for the animals, but there are no protection measures for all those animal actors.

Live feeding is to feed predators with the live animals such as chickens, ostriches, rabbits, ducks, goats, or even cows. The live feeding programs with cattle is the most breathtaking one. Many wildlife parks are busy building special live feeding “arenas” for the “combats” between the cattle and the predators. This kind of killing in public, which will be watched by all the people including the children, is as bloody as the beast fighting in ancient Rome. All over the world nowadays, such kind of large-scale beast fighting is very hard to be found except in China.

The animal show is to force animals to do the acrobatic performances. Although quite common in other parts of the world, the scale of the shows and the extreme maltreatment both physically and psychologically is still worth of attention. Many shows are very dangerous and frightening for the animals, they have to bear the great pressure day after day. Some training methods are totally against the animals’ nature and are inhumane.

According to our investigation report, we suggest here:

1. Ban all the inhumane animal shows, and replace them with “boutique circuses” performed solely by human actors, or animal film screening.
2. Ban live feeding programs, and replace it with meat or other food feeding to the predator.

We consider that it is only the first step, and the most important step is that the wildlife parks should try to improve the general maintenance. Wildlife parks and zoos are places popular with children, and almost all the parks claim that they have the obligation to educate the public to love and protect animals. But it will never be true if the parks do not commit self-examination on what they have brought to the youth. Faced with such a situation, what kind of education can the youth get from such parks and zoos?

The zoo animals, especially the show animals, are unable to lead their lives in accordance with their nature. They only have artificial lives, the kind of life forced onto them by humans. They are not free and wild anymore but only the poor creatures living in the confined cage all their lifetime. If this is a kind of education what will the children study from it? Is it right that the animals are leading such an awful life? In the zoos, the birds cannot fly; the beasts cannot hide themselves or mark their territory, or naturally breed their offspring, but can only alter their nature to fit the environment forced onto them. The animals have to be not only exposed to the public and watched by visitors everyday, but are also compelled to receive more and more difficult training to give performances. However, the injury, the pain and the death that animals suffer during the training courses can hardly be seen by the public.

## **Part Two: Observations on Live Feeding**

“Ancient-Rome-Style Animal Combats”. This is an activity held in an east China wildlife park during the 2004 spring festival. You will not believe that the two kinds of animals involved were tigers and ostriches, animals that never meet in natural world. And again you will not believe that ostriches, as a kind of regular exhibited animal in the zoo, would be deliberately put together with the tigers to be devoured and torn apart right in front of the public.

“Barbarization Training”. This is the official name of the activities like the above one in most wildlife parks in China. By claiming that such activities help the predators regain their prey abilities, wildlife parks try to justify such activities.



However, what we would like to ask is: can these bloody activities really help animals such as tigers regain their preying abilities? Will such “combats” help build a healthy human-animal relationship? Are such activities a violation of the principle of loving and caring for animals, as should be (or at least professed to be) part of the core value of zoos all over the world? Is it a good education or an anti-education for children to witness these “combats”?

Live Feeding. During the past two years, the Wildlife Park Animal Welfare Inspection Group, a group consisted of 5 college students, has made an investigation on 18 wildlife parks in mainland China. Our focus is on “live feeding”, namely, feeding animals alive to predators (in most cases before a large audience), which is so widespread a practice in wildlife parks in China. Our aim is to reveal the horrible truth that is concealed from the public.

### General Condition

Number of Zoos Investigated	18	
Location of Zoos Investigated	Beijing	1
	Nanjing	1
	Shanghai	1
	Hangzhou	1
	Wuhan	4
	Hefei	1
	Guangzhou	2
	Shenzhen	1
	Xi'an	1
	Harbin	1
	Shenyang	1
	Chongqing	1
	Chengdu	1
	Ya'an (Sichuan Province)	1
Number of Zoos that have live feeding as a Programme	12	
Types of Live Feeding	Visitors feed predators with live animals ( or visitors pay the zoo staffs to feed for them )	
	Animal Combats	

Predators involved in live feeding	Lions
	Siberian Tiger
	Bangladesh Tiger
	Panther
	Leopard
	Asiatic Black Bear
	Ursus arctos
	Hyena
Preys involved in live feeding	Cattle
	Buffalo
	Goat
	Ostrich
	Chicken
	Duck
	Guinea fowl
	Rabbit

The investigation covers wildlife parks in northeast China (Harbin, Shenyang), north China (Beijing), east China (Shanghai, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Hefei), central China (Wuhan), south China (Guangzhou, Shenzhen), northwest China (Xi'an) and southwest China (Chengdu, Chongqing, Ya'an). Among these 18 zoos, only 6 do not have live feeding programmes. All the live feeding activities can be roughly divided into two types. The first one is that visitors can buy live animals (usually small sized animals such as chickens) to feed predators by themselves. Sometimes zoo staff will do the second part while the visitors are watching. The second type is the "animal combats", in which predators and prey animals are put into a sort of arena at a set time and the former will kill the latter in front of the zoo visitors.

The following table shows specifically what types of live feeding each zoo provides.

	BJ	NJ	SH	HZ	WH1	WH2	WH3	WH4	HF	GZ1	GZ2	SZ	XA	HB	SY	CQ	CD	YA
Type I	○		√	√	√	√	√					○	√	√	○	√	√	√
Type II		√		√		√	√							√				

Table 1 (○ represents "used to have"; √ represents "now existing")

A huge number of animals are involved in live feeding. In Type I, the prey animals are usually small animals such as chickens and rabbits. In Type II, larger animals such as cows and

horses are used. In both cases, predators include nearly all the carnivores you can find in a zoo, ranging from tigers to bears.

In Type II live feeding, the “prey ability training ground” is usually of very limited space, with barely any resemblance to the natural environment. In many cases, both predators and prey animals are subjected to captivity, and the cages are often poor-conditioned. In those activities, prey animals suffer greatly from unnecessary pains while the predators also have to face hunger, which is an intentional manipulation to make them fiercer in the combat.

Children make up the largest part of the audience of live feeding. Yet none of those investigated zoos take any measures to prevent or at least limit children from seeing those scenes. On the contrary, many zoos even tend to accentuate the violent part in their advertisement as a means to attract more visitors. We should be especially cautious of this tendency.

### **“Barbarization Training”: Humpty Dumpty’s Disconnect Dictum**

Almost all the wildlife parks that have live feeding programmes use “Barbarization Training” as an excuse. There is a billboard right outside the live feeding “arena” of Hangzhou Wild Animal Zoo, saying “...long term artificial feeding in zoos left the tigers deprived of their abilities to survive in the open. In order to revive their living capabilities and resume their lost powerful prestiges, Hangzhou Wild Animal Zoo comes with a series of training programmes for Manchurian Tigers.” Even if it is a widely acknowledged truth that captive tigers have lost their abilities to survive in the wild, it is still highly questionable whether such “training programmes” can really “revive their living capabilities”. Findings of the investigation challenges the zoos’ argument and opinions from animal experts further supports our view that live feeding hardly does anything good to the animals, both the predators and the preys.

Barbarization training or wilderness training should be a systematic and holistic process. Feeding captive tigers with live chickens in front of a large audience is not even close to that idea. On the contrary, this only makes the predators more accustomed to the presence of human beings instead of the wilderness, which, ironically, makes it more difficult for the animals to live in the natural environments. Rob Laidlaw, WSPA Project Manager (Canada), contended that live feeding is “at most a form of enrichment that keeps the tiger occupied for a short period of time”, moreover, “the predator/prey relationship is completely distorted and unnatural”. He also argues

that this kind of training will be totally meaningless if it is not part of a legitimated reintroduction programme. Since at the moment most Chinese zoos are not involved in any reintroduction programmes, we cannot see the point of doing such “trainings”.

To reintroduce predators into the wild, a basic requirement is an appropriate habitat with adequate space, including a stable source of wild animals as their food. As lions are not local Chinese species, there are certainly no space for them to be released. Actually it is even very difficult to find ideal places to release indigenous species such as South China tigers. If there are no proper habitats for those predators and it is just impossible for captive animals to learn from parents the abilities to kill because of broken social structure and long term captivity, then what are they barbarized for?

Wildlife parks do not conduct these “trainings” for nothing. In most cases, live feeding is a lucrative business. The investigation shows that the charges for this activity are often quite high. In Xi’an, feeding the tigers with a live horse costs a stunning 8888 yuan (about 1000 US dollars), and most zoos with live feeding programmes ask for about 50 yuan for a chicken. Strangely, with such a high price, no zoo can provide an official invoice for such activities, which makes one question the legitimacy of such activities. Dr. Zhang Li, Director of IFAW China, pointed out that “the so called ‘barbarization training’ cannot revive tigers’ prey abilities and it serves no educational end. It only provides the audience with a cruel, bloody show, which may severely harm the psychological well being of the children present”.

**The Live Feeding Sites**

In most cases the sites of live feeding are poor-conditioned, which not only cannot simulate the natural environment, but sometimes even pose a threat to the visitors’ safety. Through the following table, people can get a basic idea of what the situation is like, especially the animals’ condition.

	NJ	SH	HZ	WH1	WH2	WH3	SZ	XA	CQ	CD	YA	HB
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Type	Whether		N	N	N/A	N/A	N	N/A	N	N	N	N/A	N
I	there are places for Prey Animals To Escape or Hide												
	Whether Prey Animals Can Witness or Hear Others being killed		N	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y

	Whether Predators are able to perform a complete predating action	N	N	N/A	N/A	N	N/A	N	N	N	N/A	N
	How the Audience is fenced	Bus (Hands allowed to stretch out)	Ditch (3m)	N/A	People Can Walk Through The Carnivore Zone	Ditch	N/A	Car	Car	Bus (Hands allowed to stretch out)	N/A	Bus (With Steel Fences)
Type II	Whether there are places for prey animals to escape or hide	N	N		N	N						N/A

Whether Predators are able to perform a complete predating action	N		N		N	N							N/A
How the Audience is fenced	Iron Grid		Iron Grid ( 3 m high )		Iron Grid	Iron Fence							N/A

Table 3

The condition of these sites differs according to the types of live feeding. Type I activities usually take place where the predators are raised. This makes the situation vary greatly among different zoos. For example, in Hangzhou Wild Animal Zoo, animals such as tigers and lions are raised in areas with very limited space (in this sense they are more like traditional zoos instead of safari parks as they profess to be), usually with a space no more than that of a circle with a diameter of about 50 meters. People can throw prey animals into that area. Between the visitors and the predators there is only a narrow ditch with some water in it. In most cases the prey animals are already half dead after dropping on the ground, which makes the capture effortless for the predators. This bears no resemblance to a capture that happens in real nature, where both sides have to struggle a relatively long time before the final killing. Even in zoos where the raising areas

for predators are quite large, specific feeding manners makes it impossible for a natural capture. In Shanghai Wildlife Park for instance, chickens are held upside down outside the bus window with a rope tightened around their feet when doing live feeding. In Beijing Wildlife Park, live chickens are held by something like a fish pole to attract the tigers. In Harbin, there were not only cases where chickens were kept in open boxes to be torn apart by predators, but also cases where one cow was released into a group of 12 tigers. It is not difficult to imagine how the situations were like.

In zoos that provide Type I live feeding activities, because the live feeding sites are usually very close to places where prey animals are kept (actually these animals are often kept in small cages just beside the sites), it is highly possible that the prey animals can witness the process of their partners being killed. Moreover, many live feeding sites pose threats to the visitors. Too narrow ditches (WH3) or buses that allow people stretching their hands out to feed animals (SH, BJ,HB) are all very dangerous. Wuhan Forestry Wildlife Park (WH2) even permit visitors to walk through areas that have carnivores in it, where an accident has already occurred.

Animal combats (live feeding type II) are usually held in a set place at a set time everyday or every several days. Usually the sites are just open spaces (30-40 meter wide) with barely any vegetation, the only advantage of which is to make it easier for more people to watch the fight clearly. Not a single indication of wilderness simulation can be found. The fences that separate people from the bloody fights are often very low, allowing people to throw things such as stones or Coke cans to disturb the animals inside (HZ).

What is especially hypocritical is that although most zoos try to justify live feeding by emphasizing its “barbarization” function, in fact the involved predators are often subjected to a long time of caged life.

		NJ	HZ	WH1	WH2	WH3	SZ
Type I	Prey Animals		Chicken	chicken	chicken	chicken	chicken



	Cage Condition		1.5mx1.5mx0.3m >10 chickens no overshadow		N/A	N/A	0.5mx0.5mx0.3 m >5chickens	N/A
	Food& Water		None		N/A	N/A	None	N/A
Type II	Whether predators Are kept in cage	Y	Y			N/A	Y	
	Predators kept in cage	Siberian Tigers Lions	Siberian Tigers	Lions		N/A	Lions	
	Number	Tens of	1	2		N/A	N/A	
	Cage size	5mx5m	4mx4m	N/A		N/A	2.5m x 3m 1-3 lions	
	Food & Water	N/A	N/A			N/A	N/A	
	Whether there are abnormal behaviours	Y(stereotypic Behavior )	Y(stereotypic Behavior)			N/A	Y (stereotypic Behavior)	

		XA	CQ	CD	YA	HB
Type I	Prey Animals	chicken	Chicken goat	rabbit	N/A	chicken
		rabbit				
		Goat				
		horse				
cow						
	Cage Condition	No overshadow	No overshadow	With overshadow		0.4mx0.4mx0.6m>2 chickens
	Food & Water	None	None	None	N/A	N/A
Type II	Whether predators Are kept in cage					N/A
	Predators kept in cage					N/A
	Number					N/A
	Cage size					N/A
	Food & Water					N/A
	Whether there are abnormal behaviours					N/A

Table 4

Before live feeding, predator animals are often kept in the cages. For example, in Hangzhou Wild Animal Zoo, there is a small house adjacent to the “arena”. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004, when live feeding would be held in the afternoon, investigators found a tiger being kept in cage in that very morning. Within one hour, the tiger walked the “8” shaped route for 480 times, a remarkable sign of long time captivity. What’s more shocking is that in the same house two lions were found held in a dark cage. According to the agenda provided by the zoo, there would be no live feeding activities for lions that afternoon or in the future. It is still not clear why the two lions were in that house. Moreover, some zoo staff even admitted that in order to make the “combat” more exciting, they would intentionally keep those animals in hunger. What we have found is that after all those “combats”, the prey animals will be take away, no matter dead or alive, rather than

becoming food for the predators. Zoo staff in Hangzhou Wild Animal Zoo said that the tigers would be fed with a meal later in the evening. But the truth is never known. In some zoos, investigators already found animals suffering from cataract, a clear sign of mal-nutrition.

Since the visitors' attention is always on the predator animals, the experiences of prey animals, which are treated as mere "food", are ignored in most cases. The chickens and ducks are often squeezed into very small cages without water, food and overshadowing. There are even zoo staffs who held chickens upside down in the hand for a very long time until it was finally bought by a visitor to be thrown into the tiger zone. (WH2)

**Bleeding Wounds: Animals Tortured in Live Feeding**

How Animals Are Tortured

		BJ	NJ	SH	HZ	WH1	WH2
Type I	Prey Animals	chicken		chicken	chicken	chicken	chicken
	How they are fed to the predators	Held by fish pole		Held upside down with rope	Thrown over ditch	N/A	Thrown over ditch
Type II	Whether prey animals are killed quickly		N		N	N/A	N
	Whether injured animals are treated in time		N		N	N/A	N
	Whether prey animals are repeatedly used		N/A		N/A	N/A	Y

		WH3	SZ	XA	CQ	CD	YA	HB
Type I	Prey Animals	chicken	chicken	chicken goat horse cow	Chicken Goat	rabbit	N/A	Chicken Duck cow
	How they are fed to the predators	Thrown Over ditch	N/A	Released By zoo Vehicle Into Predator zones	Released By zoo Vehicle into predator zones/ Thrown into cages of predators	Thrown out of the bus	Held by fish pole	Held in open boxes outside the bus/ thrown from high places
Type II	Whether prey animals are killed quickly	N						N
	Whether injured animals are treated in time	N						N
	Whether prey animals are repeatedly used	N/A						N/A

Table 5

Captive animals are brought up in an artificial environment, therefore, most of them do not acquire prey abilities as their wild relatives do. In most cases they are not able to kill preys efficiently. Rather, they often attack those parts of the prey animal that are not fatal. This will bring great pains to prey animals. For example, in Nanjing Pearl Stream Wild Animal Zoo, 3 tigers could not kill a cow in 20 minutes. In Hangzhou, 2 tigers kept biting the back of a cow for 15 minutes, left it undead. There was even a case in which 12 tigers attacked a cow in turmoil without killing it.

The investigation shows that wild animal zoos pay no attention to the suffering of prey animals. There are great number of ways prey animals are fed to the predators, all of which bring great torture and pain. In many zoos, chickens are thrown directly towards the predators (HZ, etc.). Other zoos come up with the idea of holding small animals upside down with ropes when feeding predators.(SH, etc.) . Zoos in Beijing and Ya’an even provide fish poles to hold small animals, as if they were baits. In “animal combats”, zoo staff will deliberately separate predators and preys to prevent the latter being killed, only in order to lengthen the “performance”. For example, in Wuhan, tigers were driven away by a jeep when they had already leveled a scalper. Minutes later

they are re-released into the combat. After these fights, those prey animals that are severely injured receive no medical care. For instance, in Hangzhou, the bleeding scalper lay on the ground for nearly 40 minutes before staffs pull it ruthlessly onto a cart. In Harbin, a cow was seriously injured, with its intestine out of the body, after being attacked by 12 tigers. Yet the jeep still tried to pull it so as to attract the attention of the tigers. There are even zoos that repeatedly use the same prey animals in different fights. In Wuhan Forestry Wildlife Park, investigators found a buffalo full of scars and wounds which were bound on a tree outside the “arena”, waiting for another “combat”.

### Barbarizing Who?

The Audience

		SH	HZ	WH1	WH2	WH3	XA	HB
Type I	Whether there are children present	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	Y		Y
	Whether There are children feeling uncomfortable	Y(Children not daring to watch)	N	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A
Type II	Number of audience present		> 1000		> 2000	About 1000		About 300
	The proportion of children		About 50%		About 20%	About 20%		N/A
	Whether there are children feeling uncomfortable		Y (children cried and left)		N	Y(children crying)		N/A

Table 6

Because zoos are always resorts of families, children constitute a large part of the live feeding audience. However, among all the zoos investigated this time, no zoo takes any measure to limit children from watching it. In Hangzhou, Wuhan and Harbin, children cried when seeing the bloody scenes, some of them turned away from the live feeding sites. But there were also

children who enjoyed the show under the encouragement of their parents (WH3). According to a report from the Nanjing newspaper *Modern Express* (Oct 7, 2002), a research company conducted a survey on the live feeding issue. The result shows that the respondents who chose “against” and “strongly against” add up to about 88% of all those interviewed. Among those who are against live feeding, 46% thought that barbarization should be carried out in alternative ways, 26.7% thought it “inhumane” and 23.3% considered it too bloody, not appropriate to be carried out before the public. 3.3% of the respondents saw barbarization as completely pointless.

A disturbing fact is that many zoos intentionally emphasize the violent side of this activity to attract the audience. This is demonstrated in special words and expressions used in their promotion tools such as posters. Hangzhou wild animal zoo highlighted the words “kill”, “big fight” and even tried to remind the visitors that this is a combat “like those happened in the Colosseum of ancient Rome”. Harbin Siberian Tiger Zoo even states clearly in its pamphlet that this program will “let the audience experience true excitement without limitation”.

When almost all the zoos acknowledged that they are responsible for giving children a good education on environment and animal protection, live feeding, whose cruelty and bloodiness only scare children away, makes the animals-are-our-friend banners look more hypocritical. Under the name of “Barbarization training”, we wonder who are actually barbarized?

### **Please Stop Live Feeding!**

Based on the findings of this investigation, Environment & Animal Ethics Group concludes that the live feeding activities going on in many wildlife parks in China are inhumane and will have negative influences on children. We strongly demand that:

1. Stop all the live feeding activities that are open to the public (if animals such as reptiles do require live feeding, please do it during non-visiting hours).
2. The government should introduce more strict regulations on wildlife parks to prevent the latter from abusing animals.
3. Wildlife parks should take their social responsibility and do their best to establish a healthy human/animal relationship. They should provide people with an environment to really get close to animals and they should also provide animals with a place where they can lead a healthy and secure life.

**Alternatives:**

An interesting finding of the investigation is that among all the zoos investigated, the most popular zoo, Guangzhou Changlong Wildlife Park, does not have live feeding programmes. This indicates that live feeding is not at all a “must” of wildlife parks, although many zoos seem to rely on this programme as a major draw to visitors. We really suggest wildlife parks to adopt alternative programs in the place of live feeding to make their money less blood-tainted.

There are a lot of ways a wildlife park can attract visitors to come. For example, the open spaces for animal combats can be used as playgrounds for children to play with small, herbivore animals. Or it can be used as open theatres for educational films about animals. There are plenty of alternatives and actually live feeding is only found in Chinese zoos. In other parts of the world such as north America, the major draw of wildlife parks or safari parks is always the opportunity to get close to animals. Not many zoos dare to compare themselves to “Ancient-Rome-Style Animal Combats”. We sincerely hope that the wildlife parks in China will take the healthier path of development, a path leading to civilization instead of barbarism.

## Appendix:

# The Integrative Statistic Report on Live Feeding in China Wildlife Parks

The audiences we interviewed are the adults watching the live feeding show. The questionnaire was made out by the audiences themselves and collected by the investigator. The target of making the statistic chart is to realize what about the opinions of common people with different background to the live feeding, so that we could make the educational plans on the animal protection accordingly.

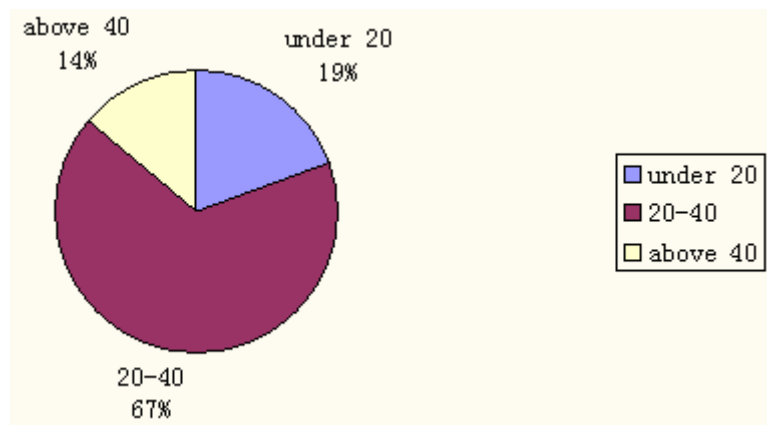
*\*The sum of valid questionnaires: 78*

### 1. Personal materials

#### a) Age of the informants

Option	Under 20	Between 20 to 40	Above 40
Amount	7	24	5

Fig. Age of the Informants

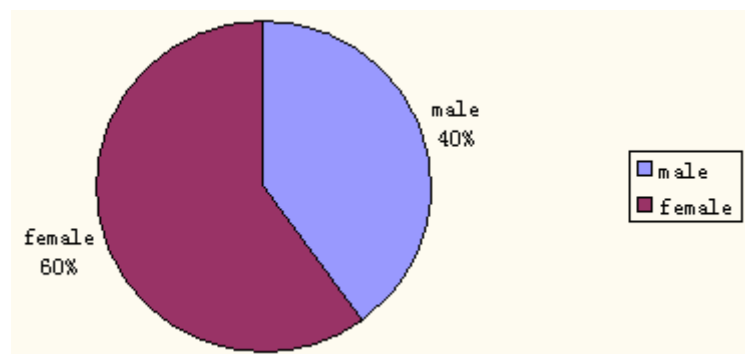


#### b) Gender Proportion of the Informants



Option	Male	Female
Amount	14	21

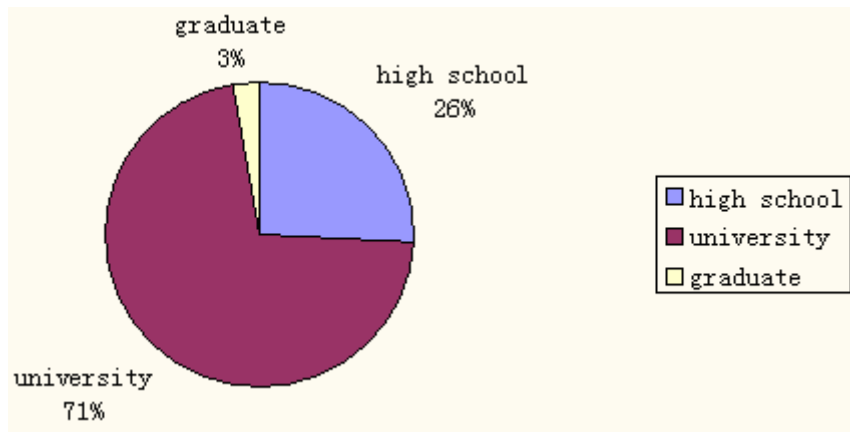
**Fig. Gender Proportion of the Informants**



c) Educational background

Option	Middle school	Graduate	Postgraduate
Amount	9	25	1

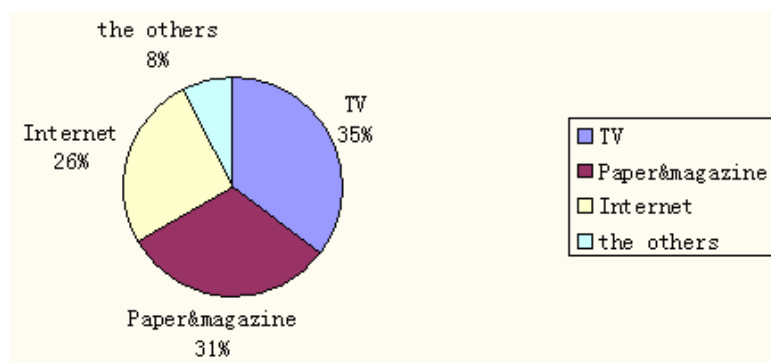
**Fig. Educational background**



2. How you get the information from:

TV	Book and the press	Internet	Others
37	33	27	8

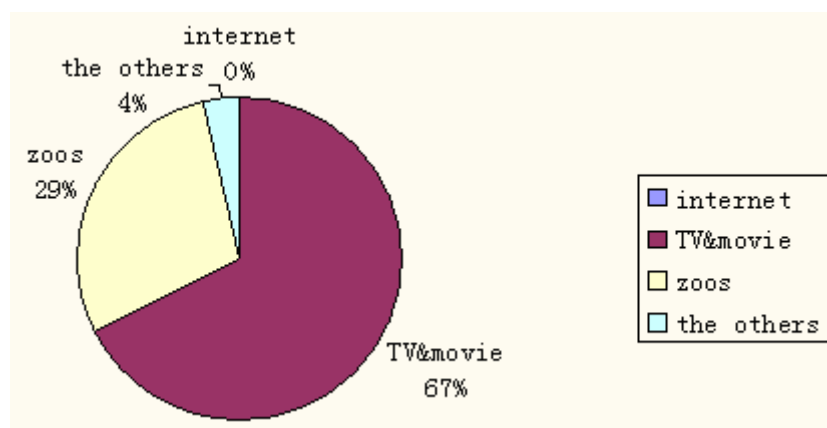
Fig. How to get the information?



3. How you know about the animals:

Internet	Film and TV	Zoo	Others
9	56	24	3

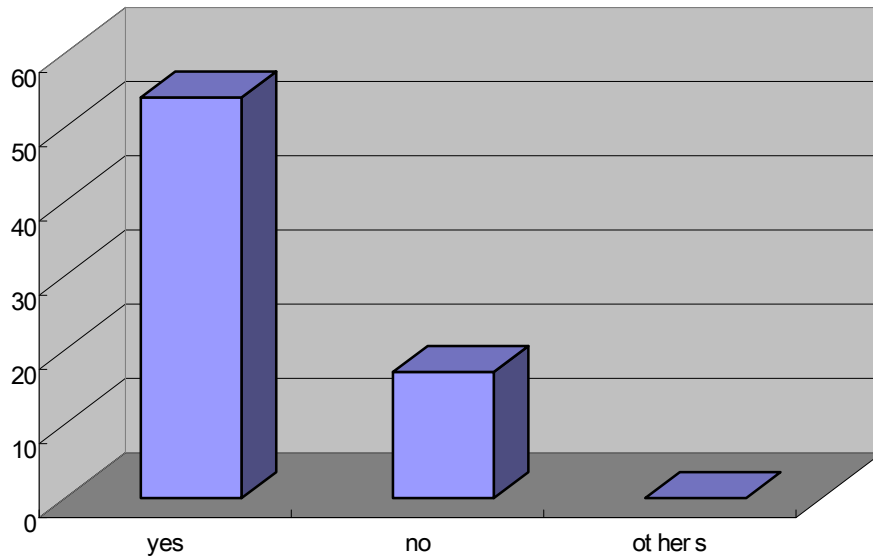
Fig. how the informants knowing about animals



4. Do you know about the live feeding existing in the parks?

Yes	No	Others
54	17	0

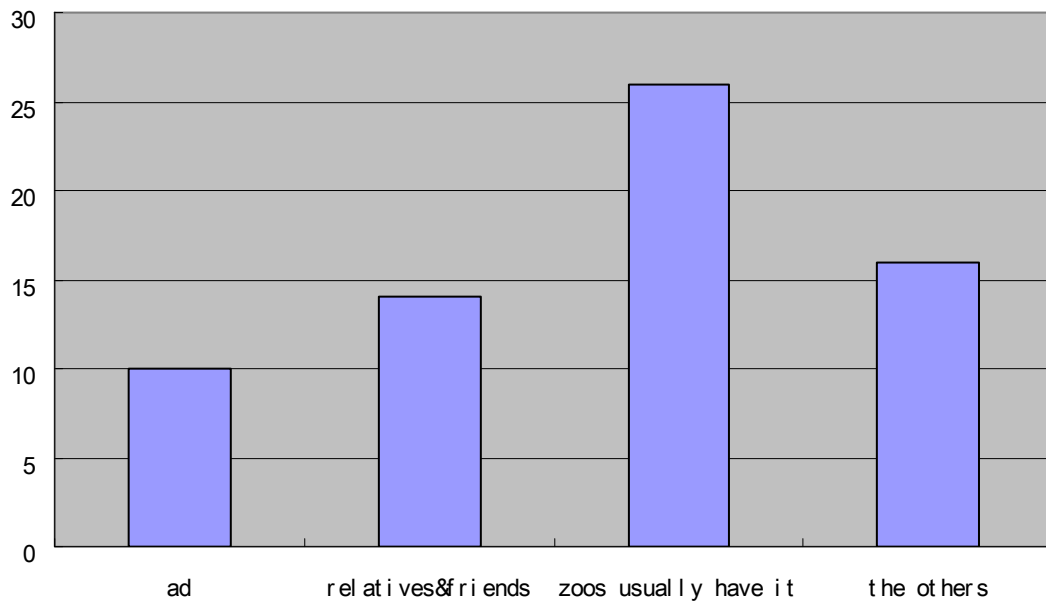
Fig. Do you know about the live feeding existing in the parks?



5. If you know, how?

From the Adv.	From relatives & friends	All the parks have such show	Others
10	14	26	16

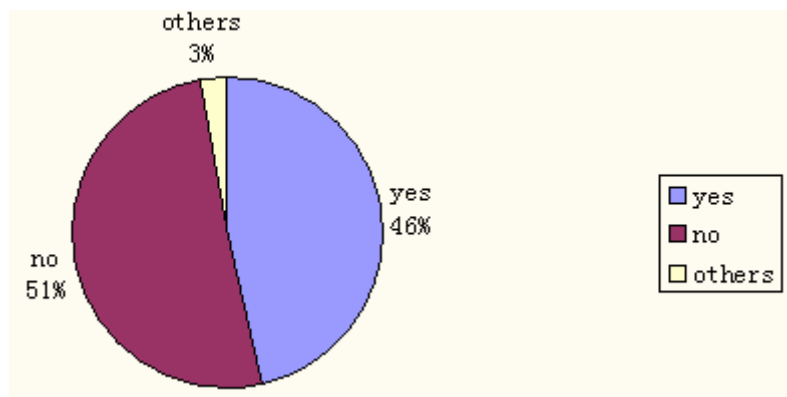
Fig. If you know, how?



6. Will you buy the live animal to feed the predator without considering the problem of money?

Yes	No	Others
33	36	2

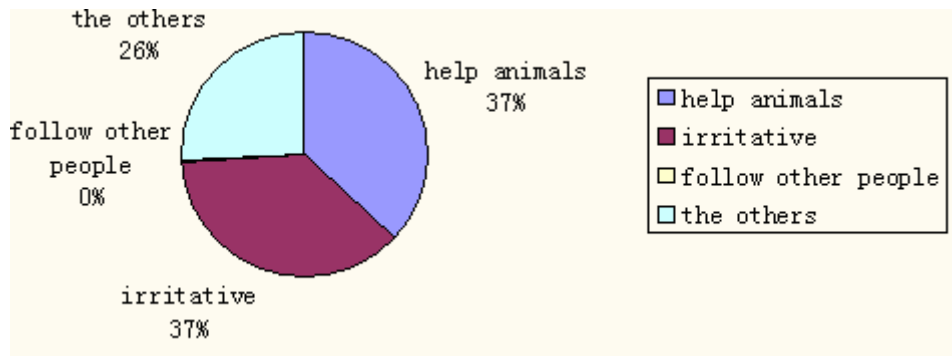
Fig. Will you buy the live animal to feed the predator without considering the problem of money?



If yes, why?

Help the animal	Everybody does	Excited and funny	Others
19	19	0	7

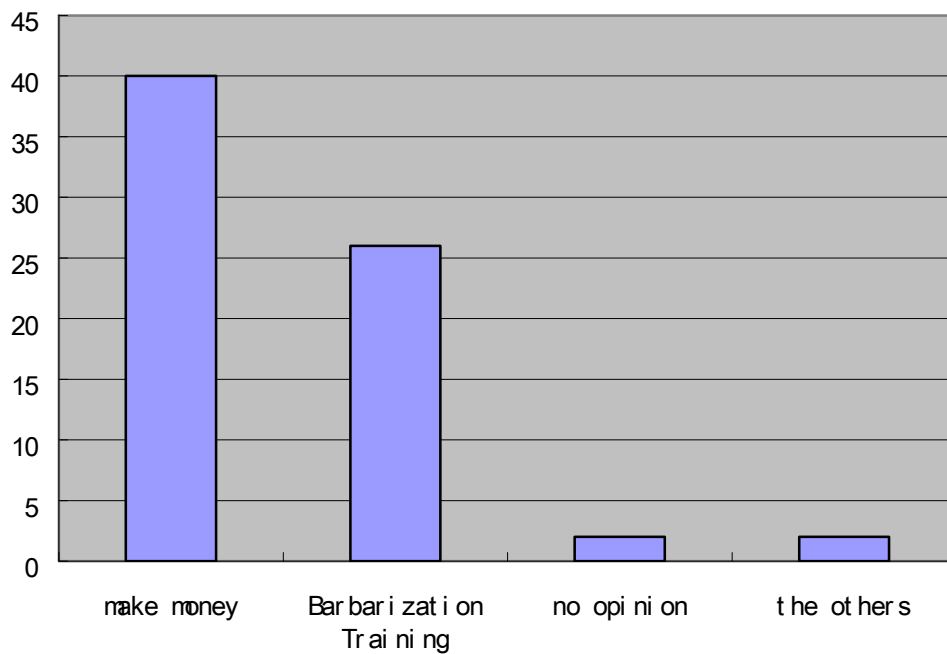
Fig. The reason why people buy the animal to feed the predator



7. In your opinion, what's the main target of wildlife parks providing live feeding?

Getting Commercial profit	Barbarizing training	Ignorance	Others
40	26	2	2

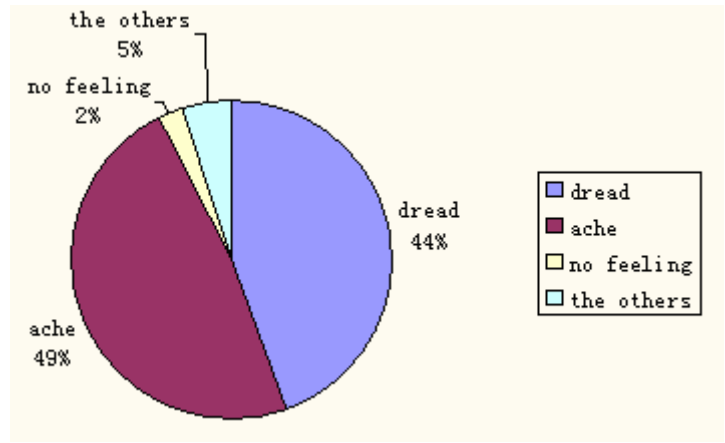
Fig. In your opinion, what's the main aim of wildlife parks' providing live feeding?



8. What you think about the feels of the preys?

Fear	Pain	No sentience	Others
36	39	2	4

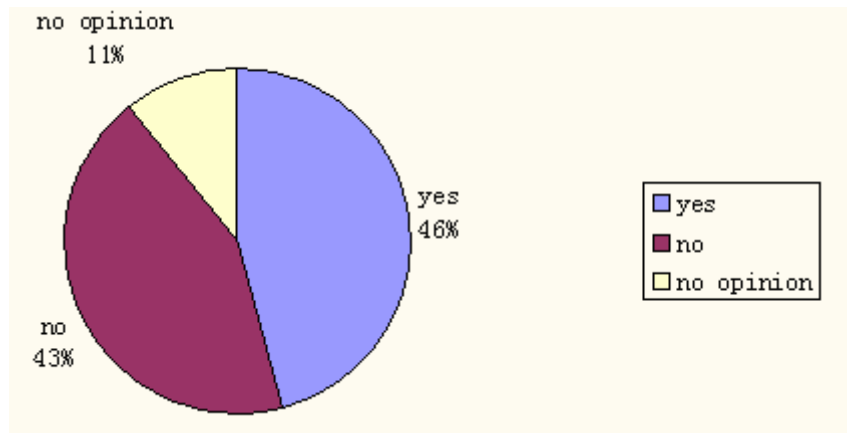
Fig. What you think about the feel of the preys?



9. Do you think such kind of feeding would help the predators return back to the nature?

Yes	No	Ignorance
34	32	8

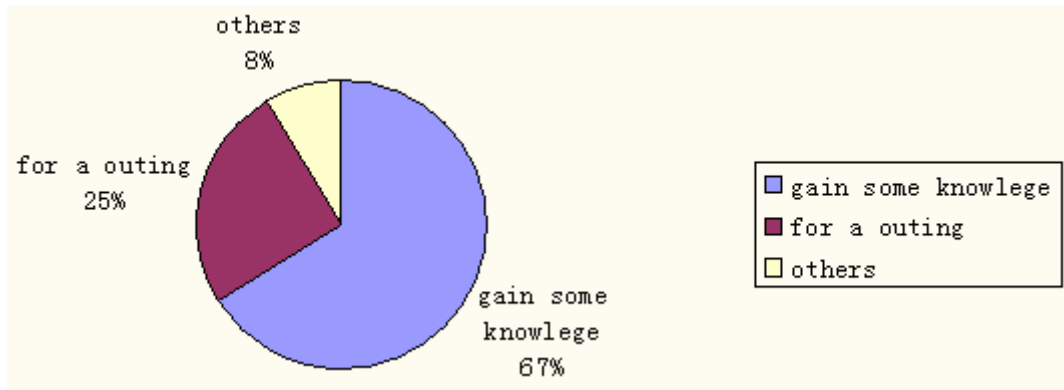
Fig. Do you think such kind of feeding would help the predators return back to the nature?



10. Why you bring the children watching the live feeding show?

Get some knowledge	Relaxing	Others
39	15	5

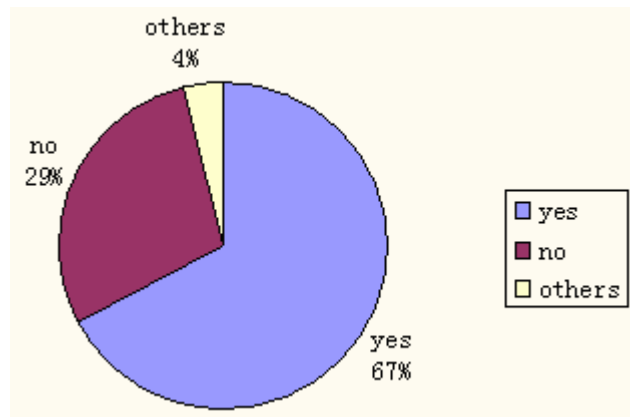
Fig. Why you bring the children watching the live feeding show?



11. How you feel as you watching the live feeding show? What you can get from such kind scene?  
 12. Will you come to enjoy the live feeding show again next time?

Yes	No	Others
35	15	2

Fig. Do you want to enjoy the live feeding activity next time?



**Notes:**

1) At the beginning of 90's, there were 40 zoos in China, which means that almost each big city of China has their own zoo. According to the record of Chinese Zoo Association, the amount of the members has reached to 157 until 1990's, including a inner small zoo in a park. The traditional zoos exist generally in the large cities and managed by the local government like Gardens Bureau, and take the capitals granted by the government and ticket selling as the main resources of income. The animals are mainly kept in the cages with very small spaces and poor environment; the visitors can watch them closely, some vicious one can hurt animals and feed them non-eaten

things very easily.

2) The wildlife parks in China exist in the suburbs of downtown mainly, the visitors can move freely around a large area. Some of the parks take the free setting system to the animal, which is different with the traditional city zoo, but still not as same as the wildlife conservation totally. The target for the conservation is to protect the whole species living in the original habitat, and divide a special area for the wild animals to prevent the poach or other interfering from human. But almost all the wildlife parks in China have no such target and functions. They built a park designedly on a field without any wild animals living there and try to pull people come and visit, only their target is to get the most commercial profit.

**Environment & Animal Ethics Group (EAEG) “China Zoo Watching”**

Members of Group : Mang ping, Wang pei , Liu Yuyi, Ma Tianjie, Shen jian, Shen cheng

Participants of the investigation: Liu Yuyi, Ma Tianjie, Shen jian, Mang ping

Participants of part of the investigation : Wu Yin、 Zhang jing

Translator : Wang pei, Ma Tianjie, Shen jian