

Struggling zoo 'plans to kill and feed animals to each other' amid coronavirus

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With the coronavirus lockdowns preventing families around the world from visiting zoos, one European tourist park is considering drastic action to keep its animals fed.

Neumunster zoo is home to large, expensive animals like this polar bear. Source: Getty

As funds become low, Neumunster Zoo, 58km north of Hamburg, is considering feeding some animals to others - according to local news sources.

The zoo is home to over 700 animals and offered an "unforgettable day" with wildlife before it became one of the countless non-essential businesses ordered to close by the German government.

With doors shut to visitors since March 15, park operators say they now only have funds to stay afloat until mid-May.

Neumunster Zoo spokesperson Verena Kaspari reportedly told Die Welt newspaper that they have produced a list of which animals they "will have to slaughter first."

"We have carnivorous animals, so this is nothing new," Ms Kaspari told German news agency DPA.

"Then you would have to consider whether more animals should be slaughtered in order to survive the predators."

"This is really the worst, worst case of all" if I no longer have any money to buy feed, or if it should happen that my feed supplier is no longer able to deliver due to new restrictions."

It's not the first time a European zoo has made headlines in regards to pragmatically slaughtering its own animals.

Copenhagen Zoo caused outrage in 2014 when it euthanised a giraffe to reportedly stop inbreeding within the park.

The two-year-old animal was then publicly butchered and fed to lions, despite a petition signed by thousands and an offer from a private individual to buy the animal.

Neumunster Zoo is home to more than 700 animals. Source: Getty

Verena Kaspari said Neumunster Zoo had been dependent on donations and is struggling to survive due to a lack of visitors. Source: Getty

Reports Australian zoos struggling to stay afloat

With no end to the coronavirus lockdowns in site, many zoos around the world are reportedly feeling the pinch, and while some have kept donations coming in through animal livestreams, others may need to get creative to stay afloat.

Ben Pearson from World Animal Protection is urging zoos to seek government funding and create care plans to ensure ongoing animal welfare.

“We’re hearing a number of reports from around the world of zoos, both public and private having difficulty,” he told Yahoo News Australia.

“Particularly zoos that keep big cats, giraffes, dolphins, stuff like that - these are expensive animals and we want to be assured that the state governments who are the regulatory authorities are talking to them and making sure that they’re helping them.

Sydney's Taronga Zoo has captivated audiences during the lockdown with livestreams. Source: Taronga Zoo via Storyful

“Certainly the last thing we’d want to see in Australia is animals being euthanised and we certainly would be supportive in Australia of state governments stepping in and providing financial assistance to avoid those outcomes.”

- Yahoo