



ADVANCING
CONSERVATION
THROUGH
**EMPATHY FOR
WILDLIFE™**

Empathy Evaluation Toolkit

February 2025

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www.zoo.org/empathy

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this toolkit

This toolkit was created in 2024 to support empathy evaluation capacity-building among Advancing Conservation through Empathy (ACE for Wildlife) Network Members and Affiliates. It was compiled by an Evaluation Specialist at Woodland Park Zoo drawing from resources from across our Network Organizational Partners. The instruments included can be used as is or adapted to meet the unique needs of the program, project, or experience being evaluated. The goal of this toolkit is to serve as a resource for all organizations and individuals interested in evaluating their use of empathy effective practices and/or their impact on audiences' empathy for wildlife, regardless of evaluation capacity or prior experience. This is not an exhaustive list of all tools that can be used to evaluate empathy, and users should feel empowered to use these tools as is, adapt them to meet their specific needs or capacity to collect and analyze data, or simply take inspiration from them in creating a new instrument.

Additional evaluation resources

Outside of this toolkit, the ACE for Wildlife Network has several additional resources on empathy evaluation available at aceforwildlife.org. These include future empathy evaluation Learning Groups and Coffee Chats as well as recordings of past events and evaluation reports from projects at multiple Network Partners. Network Members and Affiliates are also encouraged to share evaluation questions, ideas, and tools in the Evaluation channel of the Discussion Board. For further questions and support, you can also contact empathy@zoo.org to connect with an Evaluation Specialist at Woodland Park Zoo.



How to Use this Toolkit

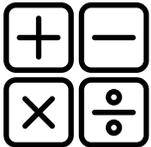
This toolkit is a compilation of tools for evaluating expressions of empathy by zoo and aquarium audiences and the use of empathy-related practices by staff and/or volunteers. Successfully utilizing these tools for empathy evaluation requires varying amounts of time, staff capacity, and analysis knowledge. The symbols below are used throughout the toolkit to indicate tools that require significant time, staff, or analysis expertise.



Tool may require significant time for data collection or analysis



Tool may require significant staff capacity for data collection (e.g., additional staff member needed to collect data during a program)



Tool may require significant data analysis knowledge

For further guidance on developing the data collection and analysis skills that may be required to utilize some of these tools, see the following resources:

[Better Evaluation](#)

[Evaluation Resources Spreadsheet](#)

[Evaluation Toolkit for Museum Practitioners](#)

[North American Association for Environmental Education eeVAL](#)

[My Environmental Education Evaluation Resource Assistant \(MEERA\)](#)

[University of Wisconsin Extension - Program Development and Evaluation](#)



HOW CAN I ADD TO THIS TOOLKIT?

If you have a resource that you think would be a beneficial addition to the empathy evaluation toolkit, please reach out to us at empathy@zoo.org.





Evaluation Background

Why evaluate empathy?

Evaluation enables us to demonstrate the effectiveness of programs and experiences at achieving desired outcomes. As zoos and aquariums increasingly focus on fostering empathy for wildlife, there is a need to better understand what types of practices or experiences are most effective with different audiences and animals.

Evaluation Approaches & Methods

When people think of evaluating an experience, the first thing that comes to mind is often surveying participants, but evaluation can include a wide variety of methods like embedded activities, observations, and interactive question prompts, many of which are represented within this toolkit.

Evaluation can also take place at various stages in a project. It can be formative, taking place before or during a project to inform decision-making, or summative, taking place after a project is completed to assess its impacts. The choices you make about when to evaluate and what tools to use should be guided by the specific questions you want to answer. The level of detail and complexity of evaluation can also vary based on both the questions being addressed and staff time and capacity available to collect and analyze data. For more information on how to select which evaluation methods to use, see this [methods selection cheat sheet](#).





OBSERVING INDICATORS OF EMPATHY

Alaska SeaLife Center

- [Camp Observation Form](#)

Contact: Shana Kent - shanak@alaskasealife.org



Minnesota Zoo

- [Ambassador Animal Evaluation Tool](#)
- [Empathy Observation Tool for Virtual Programs](#)
- [Nonspeaking Cues for Empathy for Animals](#)

Contact: Liz Gilles - liz.gilles@state.mn.us



Woodland Park Zoo

- [Observing Expressions of Empathy by Visitors and Program Audiences: Guide to Creating an Observation Protocol](#)
- [Expressions of Empathy and Related Emotions towards Animals: Observational Framework and Code sheet](#)

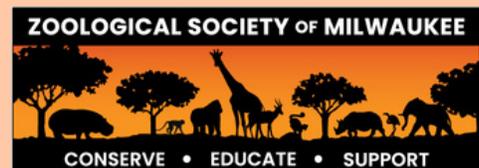
Contact: zoo.audienceresearch@zoo.org



Zoological Society of Milwaukee

- [Biofact Interpretation Observational Protocol and Rubric](#)

Contact: Shanna Hillard - shannah@zoosociety.org





VISITOR AND AUDIENCE SURVEYS AND SURVEY ITEMS

Como Park Zoo & Conservatory

- Visitor Empathy Survey 🕒 👥

Contact: Monica Digre - Monica.Digre@ci.stpaul.mn.us



Lake Superior Zoo

- Playspace & Nature Trail Stakeholder Survey

Contact: Sarah Wilcox - swilcox@lszoo.org



Racine Zoo

- Community Outreach Zoo Initiative Initial Program Survey
- Community Outreach Zoo Initiative Final Program Survey

Contact: Cassie Sanchez - csanchez@racinezoo.org





Roosevelt Park Zoo

- Biography Sign Interest Survey ⌚ 👥 + - x
- Biography Sign Pre Survey ⌚ 👥
- Biography Sign Post Survey ⌚ 👥

Contact: Travis Heil - travis@MinotParks.com



Woodland Park Zoo

- Empathy towards Animals: Pre/Post Survey Protocol and Instruments
- Semantic Differential Scales + - x
 - For ages 10-13
 - For ages 13 and up

Contact: zoo.audience@zoo.org



EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Lake Superior Zoo

- Modified Young Children's Empathy with Humans and Animals Measure ⌚ 👥 + - x

Contact: Sarah Wilcox - swilcox@lszoo.org



Woodland Park Zoo

- Friend By Nature Evaluation Instrument

Contact: zoo.audience@zoo.org





SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND CAMPS

Alaska SeaLife Center

- [Camp Drawing Worksheet](#) ⌚

Contact: Shana Kent - shanak@alaskasealife.org



Minnesota Zoo

- [Wildlife Trafficking Zoo Class Evaluation Activity](#) ⌚

Contact: Liz Gilles - liz.gilles@state.mn.us



Racine Zoo

- Camp Surveys: [First Day](#) & [Last Day](#)

Contact: Cassie Sanchez - csanchez@racinezoo.org



Woodland Park Zoo

- [Action Reaction Activity](#)
- [Conservation Pen Pals](#) ⌚
- [Empathy towards Animals: Pre/Post Survey Protocol and Instruments](#) ⌚ 🗂️
- [Living and Thriving in Class Pre and Post Activities](#) ⌚
- Meeting an Animal's Needs Worksheets [Pre](#) / [Post](#)

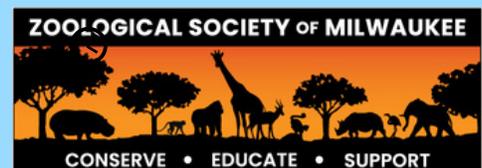
Contact: zoo.audience@zoo.org



Zoological Society of Milwaukee

- Animal Encounter Emotions Wheel
(adapted from Human Systems)
 - Version 1: [Simple](#)
 - Version 2: [Complex](#)
 - Version 3: [Complex with "why" prompt](#)

Contact: Shanna Hillard - shannah@zoosociety.org





STAFF AND VOLUNTEER EVALUATION

Lake Superior Zoo

- Zoo Crew Survey

Contact: Sarah Wilcox - swilcox@lszoo.org



Woodland Park Zoo

- Fostering Empathy Through Programs: Peer Feedback 

Contact: zoo.audienceresearch@zoo.org



Northwest Trek Wildlife Park

- Fostering Empathy for Animals: Naturalist Self-Assessment

Contact: Craig Standridge - craig.standridge@nwtrek.org



**Northwest Trek
Wildlife Park**
METRO PARKS TACOMA

