

September 15, 2009

Chuck Doyle  
Director  
Rosamond Gifford Zoo

**Via e-mail:** [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Doyle,

I am writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 2 million members and supporters—including thousands in the Syracuse area—to ask you to replace the zoo's captive penguins with the lifelike robotic penguins that were recently developed by the German engineering company Festo. PETA is even offering to make a donation toward fundraising for the project by pledging the first \$2,000.

While zoos claim to be educational, a true understanding and appreciation of wildlife cannot come from looking at bored animals who are confined to cramped enclosures that can never replicate the animals' real home environments. Captive animals are denied any semblance of a natural life, and virtually every facet of their existence is controlled. The only thing that people can learn from a visit to the zoo is how animals behave when held in captivity.

Penguins are avid swimmers and divers, and their need to roam in open water cannot be met in a small enclosure. They are good parents and form monogamous pairs, working together to care for their young. In zoos, their mates are often chosen for them through breeding programs, and in many cases, their chicks are removed. The physical and mental frustrations of captivity commonly lead to abnormal, neurotic, and even self-destructive behavior known as "zoochosis." And while zoos tout species preservation, the fact is that captive-breeding programs do little if anything to protect wild populations. Warehousing penguins in zoos is not the solution to saving their counterparts in the wild.

Festo's robotic penguins move, swim, and even communicate just as real penguins do, and visitors who observe the robots will be able to learn about penguin behavior without inflicting additional stress on captive live birds. This will be particularly true if you also erect a sign that reads, "This zoo does not house real penguins because we recognize that we cannot adequately replicate their natural environment or provide them with a satisfying life." Please see the attached article about these fascinating robots. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Tracy Reiman  
Executive Vice President