

Evaluation of varied enrichment schedules for two feline and one primate species at Parken Zoo

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The aim was to explore and evaluate the behavioural effects of the enrichment regimes for three different species at Parken Zoo in Eskilstuna.

Conclusions

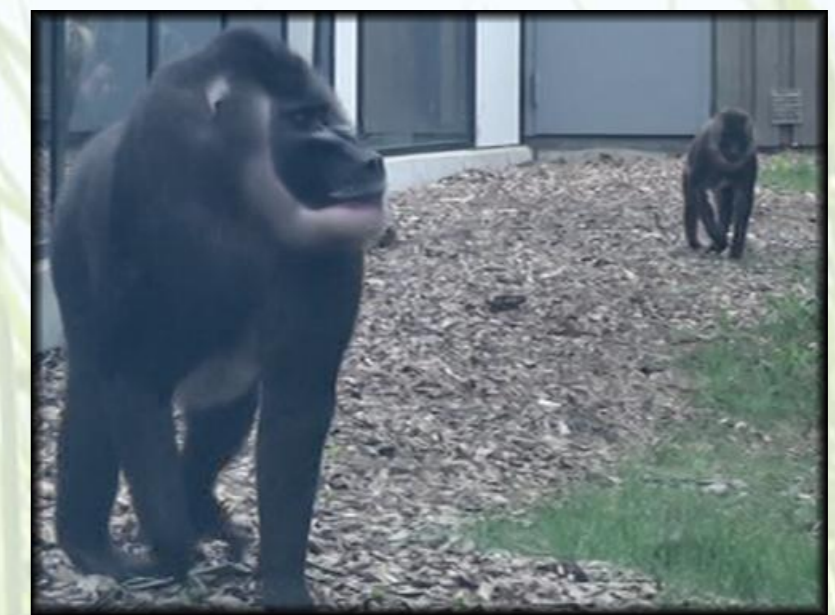
- The animals didn't show any significant signs of increased stress or agitation due to expectation of the enrichment.
- However both the Pallas's cats and the cheetahs showed non-significant patterns of negative behaviours in relation to the enrichment. These findings warrant further investigation.
- Two consecutive days of withheld or delayed enrichment might not be the optimal way of introducing variation in the schedule.



Pallas's cat (*Otocolobus manul*)
A female/male pair, female shown in picture



Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*)
Two males



Drill (*Mandrillus leucophaeus*)
A female/male pair

Background

When fed at the same time every day captive animals might easily learn when to predict this event. Such expectation may lead to negative or even harmful behaviours.

To remove this predictability a degree of variation can be introduced into the schedule. Such variation was applied to the enrichment schedules at Parken Zoo, and the task was to evaluate its behavioural effects. The enrichment given during this study always consisted of food in one way or another.

Method

Behaviours were observed for the species Pallas's cat, cheetah and drill. Each of the respective species were enriched at the same time five days a week, while the remaining two days differed.

- Pallas's cat - two consecutive days with enrichment delayed four hours.
- Cheetah - two non-consecutive days with withheld enrichment.
- Drill - two consecutive days with withheld enrichment.

Results

- When comparing the sessions just prior to when enrichment was given to the same period on the days when enrichment was either delayed or withheld, none of the species showed any difference in activity or negative behaviours. This suggests that there is no increase in stress level depending on treatment.
- The drills were significantly less active on the second day of withheld enrichment compared to the first.
- The Pallas's cats only displayed aggressive behaviours during the sessions just prior to and past enrichment, no such behaviours were observed during the other sessions.
- Aggressive behaviours in the Pallas's cats during the session just after enrichment would normally have been given were only observed on days when enrichment was delayed.
- In the cheetahs pacing (aimless walking along a set route) was only observed at days with enrichment. Interestingly the mere part was observed at morning sessions.

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