Master Thesis in Applied Ethology and Animal Biology 2014

The effect of visual barriers, outdoor housing and feeding enrichment on the behaviour of drills (*Mandrillus leucopheus*) at Parken Zoo

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Background

Animals held in captivity are confronted with potential stressors compared to in the wild, such as visitors and lack of environmental stimulation. These stressors can have a negative impact on the behaviour of the animals and may in turn affect their welfare.

Aims

Visual barrier project: To investigate the effect of visual barriers on the behaviour of the drills.

Enrichment project: To investigate the effect of outdoor-only access together with feeding enrichment on the behaviour of the drills compared to an indoor/outdoor access without enrichment.

Methods

The percentage of intervals each behaviour occurred in the drills were recorded in both projects. Wooden square-boards with peek holes were used as visual barriers in the visual barrier project. In the enrichment project, frozen fruit and tube feeders were used as enrichment.

Results

Visual barrier project: The drills showed to rest more and were less aggressive towards each other with visual barriers installed. Stereotypic behaviour was also shown to decrease.

Enrichment project: The drills were shown to be more active and forage more when being housed outdoors together with feeding enrichment. A decrease was shown in the remaining behaviours.

Conclusions

- Visual barriers is a relatively effective option to improve the behaviour of the drills at Parken Zoo.
- Outdoor housing together with feeding enrichment seem to be a valid option during summer season for the drills to engage more in their species-specific behaviours.