

Exhibit use and activity budget of Yellow-throated martens (*Martes flavigula aterrima*) kept in zoos



Linköping University
expanding reality



Angelica Åsberg, Supervisors; Mats Amundin, Kolmårdens Djurpark & Ewa Wikberg, Nordens Ark

Introduction

The Yellow-throated marten is rising in popularity in European zoos and is said to be more social and arboreal than other *Martes* species. It is diurnal, which is a positive exhibit asset. The population is suffering from high neonatal mortality which may be correlated to the populations severe inbreeding, but also to inappropriate exhibit design. Hence collecting data on exhibit use and activity budget is urgently called for.

Method

A questionnaire was sent out to all holding institutions to collect information about their exhibit design and husbandry routines.

Four exhibits, two open air, >500m² exhibits and two roofed, <50m² exhibits, were used for collecting data on exhibit use, activity budgets, social interactions and stereotypic behaviours.



Example views from exhibits >500m².



Example views from exhibits <50m²

Conclusions

Based on the results, the species should be;

- Kept in pairs since they are highly social
- Provided with plenty of climbing opportunities, especially in <50m² exhibits

Results

The activity budget did not differ significantly between exhibit categories whilst the exhibit use did (Fig. 1). Martens in exhibits <50m² engaged significantly more in behaviours at the Tree level than did martens in exhibits >500m².

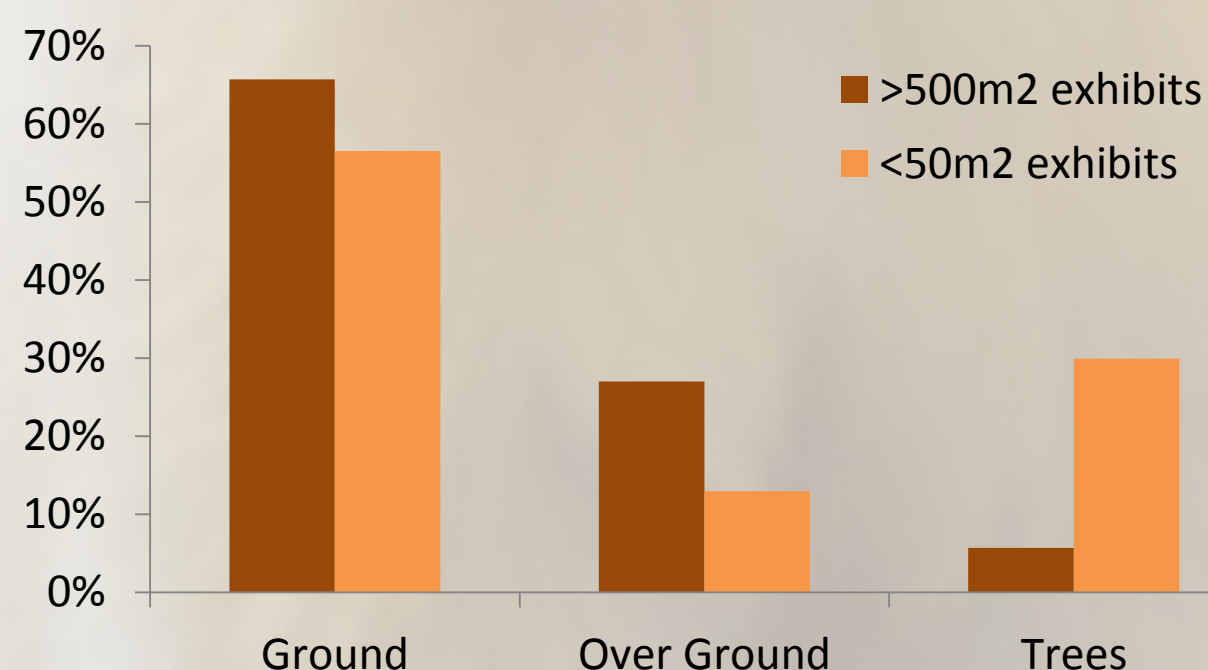


Figure 1. Percent of total time spent on the different levels "Ground", "Over Ground" and "Tree" in >500m² exhibits and <50m² exhibits.

All marten pairs spent significantly more time together than each of them being on their own.

The amount of stereotypic behaviour did not differ significantly between exhibit categories.

