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Behavioural observations of Perth Zoo collection animals for animal welfare purposes and establishment of baseline data



CF-2018-115

Perth Zoo Science

Team

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Project Lead Approval ✓

Business Area Lead Approval ✓

Directorate Approval ✓

Background:

To ensure Perth Zoo is maintaining or improving animal welfare, behavioural observations of collection animals will be conducted periodically. Many observational studies conducted on Perth Zoo collection animals in the past have provided Zoo staff with insight into animal behaviour and generated recommendations on how to improve quality of life (e.g. through specific enrichment or modifications to enclosures or husbandry practices), as well as data to allow comparisons to be made for individual animals over time.

Each species will be individually assessed (as well as considering information regarding the relationships between individual animals) and a tailored methodology will be prepared to accurately address the specific aims for each species.

Aims:

1. To determine what behaviours are exhibited by certain individuals or species of Perth Zoo's animal collection, and at what frequency.
2. To compare current data with past studies to see if animal behaviour has changed from what might be expected over time.
3. To observe the effects of the current behavioural enrichment programs on behaviour in Perth Zoo's collection animals.
4. To observe the effects of Perth Zoo visitors on the behaviour of Perth Zoo's collection animals.

Null Hypotheses:

1. There is no change in the frequencies or types of behaviour observed in individuals of the same species.
2. There is no change in the behaviour of an animal or a group of animals over time.
3. Changes in Perth Zoo's behavioural enrichment program have no effect on animal behaviour.
4. The density (number of) and intensity (volume/level) of Zoo visitors have no effect on animal behaviour.

Expected Outcomes:

Conducting scientific analysis on appropriately recorded animal observations will allow the welfare of Perth Zoo's collection animals to be assessed, with the hope of using this information to maintain or improve animal welfare in the future. Our findings will be compared to existing literature to determine if the behaviours demonstrated by Perth Zoo's collection animals suggest they are experiencing a high level of welfare.

Strategic Context:

Conducting scientific analysis on appropriately recorded animal observations will allow us to 0.05determine what behaviours are exhibited by Perth Zoo’s animal collection, at what frequency and to observe the effects of behavioural enrichment and changes to husbandry and enclosure design. We will also be able to compare current data with past studies to see if animal behaviour has changed from what might be expected over time.

Expected Collaborations:

Opportunities will likely arise to engage tertiary students to undertake some aspects of this project as part of Honours or post-graduate research projects.

Staff Time Allocation:

Role	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Scientist	0.05	0.05	0.05
Technical			
Volunteer			
Collaborator			

Budget:

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Consolidated Funds (DBCA)	Perth Zoo operating budget	Perth Zoo operating budget	Perth Zoo operating budg
External Funding			somehow this will wo out well, you will see

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