

Community involvement in behavioral enrichment at the Phoenix Zoo.

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In 2003, the Phoenix Zoo developed its proactive, structured, and documented Behavioral Management Protocol. The comprehensive management protocol outlines the philosophy and standards for a general behavioral enrichment protocol for all species, and a specific primate behavioral enrichment program. The primate enrichment protocol presents captive husbandry guidelines for the care and psychological well-being of nonhuman primate species at the Phoenix Zoo. These guidelines have been developed in accordance with the USDA animal Welfare Act (Environmental Enrichment for Nonhuman Primates Resource Guide January 1992-February 1999; Final Report on Environmental Enhancement to Promote the Psychological Well-being of Nonhuman Primates July 15, 1999 and the AZA Zoo Standards for the Housing of Nonhuman Primates (unpublished report).

The Management of the Phoenix Zoo maximally promotes behavioral enrichment by providing a successful, goal-oriented, self-sustained program that integrates into the daily management of the animals. This is accomplished by:

- Supplying staff with the information and materials to help with their work (Behavioral Management Coordinator; Training and Enrichment Resource Office).
- Finding adequate incentives to motivate staff: fully incorporating behavioral enrichment into the keeper's job description. Participation in the enrichment plan is closely related to one's personal evaluation.
- Individual involvement in the behavioral enrichment program that expands the diversity of responsibilities provides more daily stimulation and therefore, creates more opportunity for professional growth. This in turn allows staff to feel as though they are contributing more to the overall goal or mission of the Phoenix Zoo.
- Recognizing and rewarding the extra efforts (Personal Evaluation, Excellence Reward System).

The Behavioral Enrichment Committee is actively involved in supporting and implementing programs. Benefiting from a variety of small, but institutionally approved, fund raising options, the committee allocates financial resources in support of small and medium-sized projects. Keepers submit a written proposal to the committee specifying their proposed behavioral project considering the animal's natural history, individual history, behavioral architecture, specified behavioral goals and budget. The committee has the authority to support projects that otherwise might not receive attention in the larger budgeting process.

We also have developed a new position called the Behavioral Management Coordinator, to advise staff in training and enrichment planning and problems. We have a Training and Enrichment Resource Office with available publications and videotapes in training and enrichment and an Enrichment Library to provide enrichment items for daily use.

Environmental enrichment is a tool that can be used to improve the animal's psychological and physical well-being. Encouraging natural behavior is just as important when maintaining the animal's everyday life, as when we rescue them from their destroyed habitats. Captive animals have a small chance of survival when they are released and reintroduced to the wild unless they have kept their natural behaviors, such as ability to mate, to rear young, to hunt or forage, escape predators or have fear

of man. If the animals maintain natural behaviors in captivity, they will be valuable for education and research programs, welcoming our visitors and volunteers to become involved in individual and group activities.

Exhibition, conservation, animal rescue, captive breeding, rehabilitation, reintroduction and public involvement are components that require managing animal behavior through environmental enrichment.

How do the Phoenix Zoo's enrichment programs for animals affect the guest's interest in the animals or exhibits?

When animals maintain a wide range of species appropriate behaviors in captivity they significantly enhance the guest's experiences and their perception of the zoo, and are more capable of supporting:

1. Engaging experiences for the public:

- Interactive exhibits that create stimulating environment for both animals and guests
- Behind the scene tours for the general public are focusing on introducing our behavioral management programs to guest and by doing so creating a special bond and interest of caring about them. Some animals were adopted through our SPOTZ (Special Parents of the Zoo) animal sponsorship program after guest participated in our tours.
- VIP tours for donors, the Phoenix Zoo Guardian and Antler Members tours organized by the Development Department and/or by keepers include a private behavioral enrichment activity with the animals and a personal keeper talk. Admission to such events was a donation to purchase several enrichment items.
- Cool B.E. day, known as Winter in July, draws large number of visitors to the zoo in the hottest time of the year.
- Various holiday enrichment days such as Cinco de Mayo, Halloween and Christmas brings a lot of visitors to our zoo to watch keepers giving behavioral enrichment (piñatas, pumpkins and pine trees) to their animals.
- Lots of enrichment items are donated by our members. The members are informed of what items we need through the enrichment wish list published in our in house Wild Times magazine. Also members when they renew their membership can choose to donate money to our behavioral enrichment fund. Our members are greatly involved in our enrichment programs.
- Night Camp provides animal encounter programs, where kids have the opportunities to feed and to give special enrichment presents to our animals.
- Outrageous Otter Breakfast is another program offering behavioral enrichment items to our otters.
- Wallaby Breakfast where children offer browse to wallabies
- Tortoise Breakfast where children feed carrots to Galapagos and Aldabra tortoises
- In our Birthday parties the birthday kids and there friends make special behavioral enrichment presents for certain animals of their choice.
- Farm Food and Play classes for preschoolers allow children to participate in making an enrichment item relating to the days food theme and end their class by giving it to a variety of animals including, cows, porcupines, ocelots, siamangs and wallabies.

2. Providing a resource for animal behavior classes :

- Critter Care and Horse Hands are programs that focus on care giving for house hold animals such as horses, rabbits, chickens, goats, etc. However these classes also explore

basic animal behaviors and how to enrich them. In Critter Care, children participate in creating behavioral enrichment items and distributing them to animals on Harmony Farm.

- Behavioral Enrichment for Pets is specialized on teaching the general public recognizing basic animals' behaviors and how to care for their pets' mental health in their home.
3. Research programs such as the elephant foraging and social studies are usually done outside in front of the guest, drawing their attention to difficulties we encounter and how we are planning to resolve them. In the case of our elephant behavior modification program we are continuously explaining the process to our guests and they are able to show the great effects of the implemented behavioral enrichment on the elephant's lives.
 4. The Phoenix Zoo's website contains a section on behavioral enrichment that reaches out to a wider population. Through this webpage guests have the opportunity to ask questions from the behavioral management coordinator regarding pet enrichment.

Enrichment benefits not only the animals, but the general public as well. The presence of enrichment serves as a tool in explaining an animal's natural history. The medium for conveying this information can be standard graphics, personal interpretation, or interactive. The forms of interactive educational programs and workshops channeling information are endless. Collated information of this kind can be shared in valuable mediums such as local newspapers, enrichment newsletters, conferences and seminars.



Volunteer Wess Press during observation ,
photo by Hilda Tresz



Author Hilda Tresz and Program instructor
Melanie Nelson teaching Rabbit Enrichment
class, photo by Liesl Pimentel



Trail Teens are educating visitors about wildlife, photo by Dan Miller



Night camp kids have the opportunity to provide behavioral enrichment to our animals, photo by Liesl Pimentel



Horse Hands class focuses on providing care for household animals, photo by Melanie Nelson