



Apr 17th, 1:15 PM - 2:30 PM

Intervention Across the Zoo Day: Environmental Enrichment in Malaysian Sun Bears

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Poster Presentation P30

**INTERVENTION ACROSS THE ZOO DAY: ENVIRONMENTAL
ENRICHMENT IN MALAYSIAN SUN BEARS**

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It has become increasingly important to provide enriched environments for captive wild animals. Research suggests that enriched environments may reduce unwanted behavior (i.e., repetitive pacing). The present experiment reports on an ongoing program of environmental enrichment for Malaysian Sun Bears. During baseline sessions, data were collected across the 7-hour zoo day using a set of fourteen behavioral categories. Included in the fourteen categories were several types of repetitive, stereotypical behaviors identified in earlier studies. During intervention sessions, a set of foraging tubes were hidden in the bears enclosure, each containing a variable amount of a food item. The task required the bears to locate and open the tubes before consuming the contents. Previous studies in the zoo environment have shown the foraging tubes to be an effective means of reducing inappropriate behavior. In the present study, tubes were introduced at 2 p.m. in the afternoon, allowing assessment of the affects of using a particular intervention time. This research will lend information on the optimal time for tube placement within the zoo day. The results have implications for the study of captive Sun Bears, as well as for zoo animals in general.