

Animal Enrichment

How to maintain the mental health and well-being of zoo animals

Animal Care

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the session:

- ✓ All students will understand the importance of enrichment and its benefits for animals.
- ✓ Most students will understand the process involved in establishing a successful enrichment programme.
- ✓ Some students will understand how different situations and circumstances will require different forms of enrichment and how to implement them successfully.

Session Outline:

The session starts with a comparison of what animals need to do in the wild (e.g. find food, avoid predators, defend territory, etc.) vs animals in captivity (which will always have food, are safe from predators and have secure territory). This leads into a discussion on abnormal behaviours and the role enrichment can have in preventing or reducing abnormal behaviours. The session then looks at the five main enrichment categories, food based, social, sensory, physical habitat and cognitive enrichment. Examples of these categories are then shown from zoos and aquariums from across the world. After this the session walks through the planning process used to make enrichment as affective as possible using the S.P.I.D.E.R. method. This planning method is discussed by using a case study on how to reduce/remove pacing in a giant anteater. The second half of the session involves a tour of the zoo to witness real-world examples of aspects covered in class with the opportunity to ask questions to qualified animal keepers.



Key Points Covered:

- Enrichment
- Sensory, novelty, physical, social, problem solving enrichment
- Abnormal behaviour
- Record keeping and monitoring
- S.P.I.D.E.R.