

### **Animal Enrichment Overview**

Animal welfare is considered to be the degree to which an animal can cope with challenges in its environment. The psychological well-being is dependent on there being the opportunity for animals to perform strongly motivated species appropriate behaviors. (AZA Animal Welfare Committee 2001) When thinking of behavioral husbandry, animal enrichment and training comes to mind; enrichment and training are two of the many tools that are thought to enhance animal welfare.

Animal enrichment is defined as a dynamic process which structures and changes an animal's environment in a way that provides behavioral choices to animals and draws out their species appropriate behaviors and abilities and enhances their welfare. Training can be defined as a type of learning. Learning is broadly defined as a change in behavior resulting from practice or experience: when this practice is dictated by humans the process is called -training.- (Mellen & Ellis. -Training is Teaching- Ken Ramirez)

### **Virginia Zoological Park Enrichment Mission Statement**

Animals in our facility will be provided with the richest possible environments for their mental and physical health. In turn, they will be provided with the opportunity to display a richer repertoire of natural behaviors and demonstrate more of their physical, social and cognitive skills. Our behavioral husbandry program will synthesize current scientific approaches to animal behavior and new technology in a strong behavioral and environmental enrichment program. This program will enable us to maximize interpretive and educational opportunities through graphics and live interpretation about enrichment and training within the exhibits. Zoo visitors will have an enriched experience, and more fully appreciate the natural behaviors and abilities of animals. The results of this enrichment program present our animal ambassadors in the best possible light and will inspire people to care about wildlife conservation.

**APPROVED ENRICHMENT ITEMS**  
**Elephants**

Empty plastic 55 gallon drums

Browse (see approved browse list)

Beer kegs (attached with chain, clevises, rings, I-bolts)

Elephant tambourine (large pipe with circular lengths of chain through holes in pipe)

Barrel (with or without holes drilled, with cut produce inside) attached to chain

**Scents/Spices :**

Lemon juice, cinnamon, allspice, cloves, vanilla, almond extract, oregano, fennel, rosemary.

Urine from pig, prehensile tail porcupine, and tigers.

Street sweeper

Large tractor tires

Old fire hose with metal ends removed (tied in knot to bars, used with supervision)

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## Behavioral Enrichment Proposal and Evaluation

**Date:** October 6, 2000      **Species:** Elephant   **String Keepers:** Kim, Heidi  
**# of animals in enclosure:** 0.2

### Materials Needed:

Empty plastic 55 gallon drums

### Description of Enrichment Practice:

Supervised play with barrels to throw around, scratch bodies with, kick, make noise. Keeper should be aware that the barrel can and will be used to knock down hot wire, thrown into the pool, or end up outside of the exhibit and into public areas. Caution must be taken to ensure safety of both elephants (inspect condition of barrel prior to) and public.

**Approval:** AS Supervisor ✓ [Signature]      Veterinarian [Signature]  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Observation on initial reaction of enrichment: (15-minute observation)

1. Did animal go right to the enrichment? yes
2. Did all animals in enclosure react to the item? yes
3. Was there any negative response to the enrichment? Yes If yes, explain.  
Because of the social structure of the elephant hierarchy Monica dominates play with the barrel at first. After she has her fill then Lisa is allowed to play with it. When Monica has it initially she will create quite a lot of noise and ruckus which excites Lisa and she will exhibit mild stress.
4. How long did the animals utilize the item? Only given when supervised by keeper through the day. Have observed the elephants playing with the item for lengths of time up to 2 hours maximum, after that they lose interest and move on with something else.

### Description of behavior upon seeing enrichment item:

Monica get pretty excited and goes right for it. She will toss it around, sometimes over her head. Kicking and smashing it under her feet she seems to enjoy. She will put the smashed barrel between her body and the building wall to scratch her belly. Lisa will become more excited, vocal, increased activity levels. Lisa will be allowed to play with it for short periods and she will throw it around as well.

### Observations made throughout the day of the enrichment practice:

Only given with supervision during the day. Maximum effectiveness to elicit response would be under 2 hours.

# Behavioral Enrichment Proposal and Evaluation

Date 8/20/00 Species: elephants  
# of animals in enclosure 0-3

## Materials Needed:

chain  
barrel with holes drilled in it

## Description of Enrichment Practice:

elephant "punching barrel" Suspended barrel filled with  
produce.

Approval: AS Supervisor [Signature] Veterinarian [Signature]

## Observation on initial reaction of enrichment: (15-minute observation)

1. Did animal go right to the enrichment? Yes No
2. Did all animals in enclosure react to the item? Yes No
3. Was there any negative response to the enrichment? Yes No

If yes, explain on back.

4. How long did the animals utilize the item? \_\_\_\_\_

## Description of behavior upon seeing enrichment item

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## Observations made throughout the day of the enrichment practice:

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## Follow Up

1) How often is this item offered?

Notes/Problems:

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Final Approval: AS Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Fill out form and submit to Supervisor and the veterinarian. Try enrichment item and write up results. Return to supervisor. Place original in your diet notebook and one in master enrichment book.