Zoo Animal Welfare

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Abstract. The research aim was to assess animal welfare in a zoo. The objectives were to evaluate shelter areas and to identify potential behavioral disorders.

Keywords: welfare, behavior, zoo animal, limited space, wolves.

Introduction. Animal welfare is the state of an animal as regards its attempts to cope with its environment (Broom, 1986). Behavior is a very useful tool in assessing an animal’s welfare (Hill and Broom, 2009). According to Waza Code of Ethics and Animal Welfare (www.waza.org): “All exhibits must be of such size and volume as to allow the animal to express its natural behaviors”.

Aim and objectives. The research aim was to assess animal welfare in a zoo. The objectives were to evaluate shelter areas and to identify potential behavioral disorders.

Materials and methods. The research was conducted at Turda zoo between August 2010 and May 2011. Zoo was closed to public in this period for reconstruction reasons. Shelter area conditions were compared to those required by the actual legislation (Order no. 1798 from the 19th of November 2007 for approval of Procedure for issuing the environmental permit). Observations and video recordings were performed also on wolves’ behavior ($\textit{Canis lupus}$).

Results and Discussions. It was found that shelters of seven mammal species did not correspond in area with legislative requirements, among them being also that of wolves. Observations and records performed in this species revealed a behavioral disorder in one animal (stereotyped walk), due to limited space (photos 1-8). Frézard and Le Pape (2003) emphasize the importance of space and of the possibility to "hide" from the visitors in the case of wolves kept in captivity. The second animal, that died subsequently, spent most of the time lying on the cage.

Conclusion
Due to the above mentioned observations, it may be concluded that wolves were in a state of poor welfare.

REFERENCES


Figure 1-8 Stereotyped walk