ZOOLEX : http://www.zoolex.org/zoolexcgi/view.py?id=544

The Colobus Walk-Through enclosure can be seen at the famous Allwetterzoo Münster; Address : Sentruper Straße 315, 48161 Münster, Germany, Phone: 0049-251-89040 Fax: 8904-90; URL: http://www.allwetterzoo.de. The web article is by Dag Encke (author) and edited by Monika Fiby, Carlyn Worstell (editors). ZOO LEX is a non-profit organisation which tries to make useful information on exhibit design using modern principles and animal welfare to the world.

Family: Colobidae
Species: *Colobus guereza*
Common Name: Black-and-white Colobus

In 1998 and 1999 two visitor-accessible outdoor enclosures with a substantial growth of natural vegetation were completed at Zoo Muenster, one for lemurs and the other for colobus monkeys. Both enclosures are based on a zoological park concept that offers these animals enclosure space that has been designed based on their natural environment.

The colobus monkeys moved into their new outdoor enclosure in June 1999. In order to establish this new exhibit an existing green area was partially fenced in and partially delineated with 3 to 4 m wide water moats. About one-third of the enclosure is covered by trees. Visitor access is via a wooden bridge with metal planks. Colobus tend not to walk on metal grating, so they do not cross the bridge and leave the island. The rails of the bridge have hot wire embedded in them. This is turned on only at night or occasionally when the exhibit is closed, but the animals remain accustomed to not touching the bridge.

A separate 300 m^2 large outdoor facility was established next to the new colobus building. It has access from off-exhibit cages in the building and serves for species appropriate husbandry in the event that particular animals have to be separated from the group. It also gives the animals an opportunity to go outside during the winter, when the moats have become frozen over and the island cannot be used. The colobus group was newly assembled in the separate facility and only then introduced into the large enclosure.

While the colobuses can use the entire outdoor area, visitors have to remain on the footpath. The indoor enclosure is part of the primate building.

The old-growth stand in the Colobus enclosure consisted mainly of beech, hornbeam, maple, elderberry as well as remnants of dogwood and rose. The existing vegetation was further enhanced through new plantings of Pterocarya, honey locust, black locust, linden, willow, elderberry, barberry, and numerous aquatic plants. The largest part of the area is covered with grass. Experiences with Colobus monkeys have shown that the Pterocarya is not eaten at all by the animals. The plant list specifies the Latin names of the plants used for this exhibit.

Colobus utilise the natural vegetation in the enclosure as a food source, for shade and to keep away from visitors that are on the island. Visitors can move through the outdoor enclosures of the colobus and so experience the proximity of the animals directly without a separating, physical barrier. A large sign explains the natural history and the behaviour of colobus.

Mechanical damage caused by the enormous leaping activities of the animals is very substantial. Nearly all trees under 5 m in height and a trunk circumference of less than 45 cm were completely stomped into the ground and thus destroyed by the monkeys. Especially juveniles prefer the young and elastic branches for their frolicking play. All trees and shrubs newly planted in 1998 were destroyed. Then, in the autumn of 1999 and spring 2000 additional honey locust, black locust and *Pterocarya* of more than 5 m height were planted, behind the green backdrop of the old-growth vegetation—as a preventative measure.

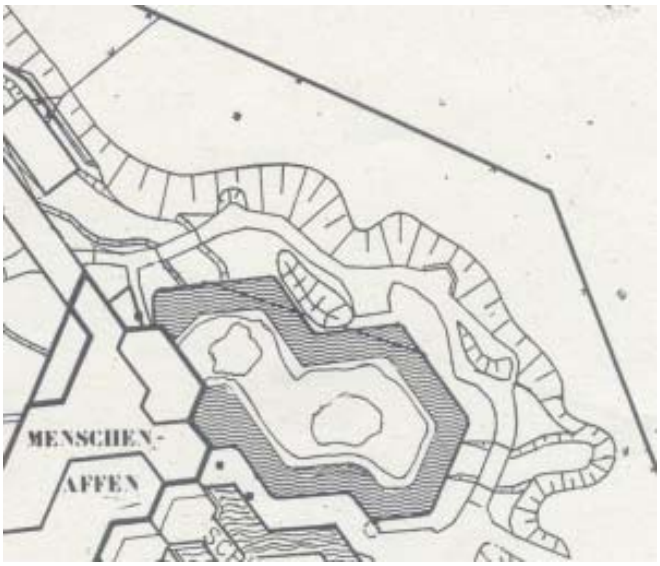
The only tree species not touched by colobus monkeys is *Pterocarya* while the large thorn cover of locust does not seem to have any deterrent effect on the animals. Apart from *Pterocarya, Carpinus* specimens also remained largely untouched. Birch trees are eaten only in spring. Two old *Fagus sylvaticus* specimens that were growing in a separate outdoor enclosure were the animals lived for a year, where also partially defoliated and debarked, but not killed. Since this also happens to be the case - so far — with trees in the current enclosure, it gives rise to the assumption that.

Colobus monkeys instinctively maintain the vegetation available to them in their habitat. There have not been any sites where a branch or tree trunk has been completely ring-barked, but instead always only in longitudinal strips, so that neither branches nor trunks will die off. However, this does not assure that in the long-term the leaf volume remains sufficient to keep the plants alive. It was also interesting to observe that new willow tree shoots (the favourite food tree of colobus monkeys) remained untouched for weeks, only to be suddenly eaten up completely within three days.

So far the Colobus monkeys have been fed throughout the entire winter and during the initial growth period in spring (until the middle of May) with willow tree leaves and branches. This may then be the explanation for only minor feeding damage to the buds. Another reason could be the animals' amazing preference for grass: the entire meadow area of about 2,500 m^2 is grazed down by the animals. In future the feeding of green foods to the animals is to be extended in to the summer months.

Funds available for re-planting are to be used initially mainly for establishing Pterocarya. Suggestions from colleagues to plant large stands of blackberries and raspberries for use as winter feed, is also to be followed up on.

A separate outdoor enclosure allows much flexibility in managing the animals. New arrivals can be introduced in 2.5 meters distance to the main enclosure or right on the other side of common fence. When the moat of the island is frozen during the winter this enclosure can be used instead.



Site Plan

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Hello ZooLex Friend,
We have worked for your enjoyment!

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NEW EXHIBIT PRESENTATION

The Colobus Walk-Through is very popular with visitors to Allwetter Zoo Muenster as is the Lemur Walk Through next to it which was previously presented in ZooLex. In both cases, experiments with plant use were very helpful for the creation of appropriate environments for the primates. We would like to thank Zoo Muenster for sharing their experiences with the use of live trees in a colobus walk-through exhibit:
http://www.zoolex.org/zoolexcgi/view.py?id=544

The German original is here:
http://www.zoolex.org/zoolexcgi/view.py?id=578

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WAZA CONFERENCE

Monika Fiby will give a presentation at the WAZA Conference in Leipzig, Germany, on "How zoo staff uses ZooLex". We hope that more zoo directors will prompt their staff to submit presentations of new exhibits for the ZooLex Gallery when they have evidence how their institution can profit from the ZooLex database.

When you use ZooLex for your work in a zoo, please send us an email telling for which purpose and in which way you profit from the ZooLex website. We appreciate anecdotes and images that illustrate your work. We will of course use your story anonymously if you prefer.

Please share your experiences with us, preferably by mid August 2006.
Contact: monika@zoolex.org

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We keep working on ZooLex ...

The ZooLex Zoo Design Organization is a non-profit organization registered in Austria. ZooLex runs a professional zoo design website and distributes this newsletter. More information and contact:
http://www.zoolex.org/about.html