How Can We Modify Zoo Environments To Improve Animal Welfare in Gorillas?

Due to adaption to their varied environments, zoo-housed and wild Western lowland gorillas have different lifestyles.

Gorillas in the wild
Foraging: 70%
Resting: 21%

Gorillas in the zoo
Foraging: 25%
Resting: 54%

Enrichment Program
3 adult female western lowland gorillas
1 male silverback

Enrichment modification - one new form of enrichment per week

6 Weeks

Observations over 6 weeks

Activity levels
- Average increase: 47.48%
- Average: 23.96%

Foraging levels
- Largest increase: 27.87%
- Average: 8.15%

Measurement of...
- Activity level
- Foraging level

Largest increase in activity and foraging levels

Use of automatic belt feeder

Providing a variety of environmental enrichment to gorillas housed in zoological facilities increases foraging and activity levels, and improves animal welfare.

Impact of Different Forms of Environmental Enrichment on Foraging and Activity Levels in Gorillas (Gorilla gorilla gorilla) 
Charmoy et al. (2015) | Animal Behavior and Cognition | DOI: 10.12966/abc.08.03.2015

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