



Yerevan Zoo Animals play with Boomer Balls



Lately Yerevan Zoo has acquired eight so called Boomer Balls from abroad for the Zoo animals. These special balls serve as toys for the Asian Elephant, Siberian Tiger, Lynx, Leopard, Hippopotamus, Bear and other animals. The balls of different sizes are not only extremely solid, but also made from a special material harmless for animals.

For already one and a half year Yerevan Zoo implements an enrichment program and the Boomer Balls have been obtained within this project. As a result of the program the animals in Yerevan Zoo have become more active and cheerful. The Zoo staff members are doing their best to organize activities for the animals enabling them to display natural behavior.



"The enrichment methods were first applied in Yerevan Zoo during the animal feedings for example in the tiger enclosure by hanging the food on a hook fixed four meters above ground. At first it was hard for the Siberian Tigers to jump and catch the meat, but in a short period of time they have overcome the difficulty and can reach the meat easily now" - explains chief zoologist Anna Asaturyan. A special enrichment method is used for each species. The same games are played once in 3 weeks, so as to give the animals the opportunity to look for food by doing physical and mental work. "To hide food from Siberian Tigers we use fir branches and put the meat in a pumpkin, a box, inside snow, etc. And for the Royal Bengal Tiger we fix a sack filled with grass at a metal spring" - noted Arpine Shahbazyan, a staff member of the Science and Education Department of the Zoo. The Head of the Predators Department Yunona Khanzadyan notices changes in the animals' behavior and believes that the animals have become more active after the enrichment program has been launched. In the frame of the enrichment program special activities for lions, the hyena, as well as for some monkey species, like Hamadryas Baboon, Papio cynocephalus, Varecia variegata, and Macaca mulatta were developed.

The implementation of the animal enrichment program and ongoing education of our specialists are mandatory requirements for becoming a full member of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA). Currently being a candidate member of EAZA gives Yerevan Zoo access to a huge international network and to gain capacity and skills in different spheres: Zoo planning and management, protection and rehabilitation of endemic species, improvement of animal welfare, animal enrichment, and environmental education. Projects in all these fields are currently implemented by the management and the staff.

Yerevan Zoo gave special prizes to winners of the 5th Pan-Armenian Painting Contest and 3rd Animal Carnival



On March 11th the results of the 5th Pan-Armenian Painting Contest and 3rd Animal Carnival were summarised during an award ceremony. These colourful and exciting events were organized by the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) and its general partner VivaCell-MTS. As both events focused on animal welfare and wildlife protection, Yerevan Zoo was involved in their implementation. Hence Yerevan Zoo also bestowed special prizes for the winners of the contests.

The head of the Yerevan Zoo's department for science and methods, Hripsime Khachatryan, awarded the winners with these prizes.

The first prize was received by Arpi Yesayan, 8 years from Yerevan. She won a certificate which entitles her to visit the zoo together with her parents. The certificate is valid for one year. During her visit she will receive a special souvenir and get a special tour guided by the Zoo Director.

The second prize was awarded to 12-year-old Nvard Manoukian, who lives in Masis.

Her prize entitles her to have visits with her parents and a one-time free entrance for an entire school class during the upcoming 6 months. Her award also includes a special guided Zoo tour, as well as one Zoo souvenir.

The third prize was received by Anais Der-Hakobyan from UK. Her prize gives her the right to visit the zoo with her parents as well as a one-time free entrance for an entire school class during the upcoming 6 months. Her award also includes a special guided Zoo tour, as well as one Zoo souvenir.



As Yerevan Zoo highly appreciates events raising awareness for animals, the institution will also in future join activities, events and projects in this very field.

Increasing and improving the Zoo's green areas



Yerevan Zoo is not only a place to encounter wild animals but also a center of Eco-education focused on South-Caucasian biodiversity as a whole. In this concept flora has its important place. The improvement of the zoo's landscape design as well as the enlargement of the green areas is going hand in hand with the improvement of the animals' living conditions.

Already in 2012 several big trees growing in the currently not-used spaces of the zoo were dug out and relocated in some animal enclosures - for example in the deer enclosure. These enclosures before looked very bleak. But the new trees enhance not only the design of the enclosures but also create an environment more close to the natural animal habitat. Hence in the hot summer times the animals now can rest in the green shadow of the trees. In 2013 it is intended to relocate some of the big trees growing near the zoo lake in order to use them for new enclosures.

Landscape gardening projects will also be organized on the higher and steep territories of the zoo in the upcoming months. Many years ago several trees were planted in these areas but because of the absence of an irrigation system they didn't survive.

The installation of an irrigation system is a priority task for the zoo in 2013 as according to the master plan the zoo will expand and use the steeper rocky territories for the construction of new enclosures and the development of accessible green areas. This year several new tree species, scrubs, and flowers will be planted in the zoo and public tree plantings will be organized. Already in spring almost 12 tree and 150 scrub species will improve the quality and size of the green areas in the zoo.



Improvements in Yerevan Zoo's Aqua-terrarium



The Yerevan Zoo has four departments: The departments for hoofstock, predators, birds, and the Aqua-terrarium. The collection of the latter includes 34 snakes representing 19 species, 6 lizards representing 4 species, 38 turtles representing 3 species. Among the turtles are also counted the 10 baby turtles born last year.

Of course the departments of the 70 years old Zoo - including the Aqua-terrarium - are not free of problems. However step-by-step they are getting solved. Thus in spring 2012 a major problem of the Aqua-terrarium for many years was resolved when a new ventilation system was installed. Due to this renovation the air in the Aqua-terrarium is now always clean regardless the number of people in there and the weather.

Just recently infrared lamps have been installed in the Aqua-terrarium. This innovation contributes tremendously to animal welfare for the reptiles as the infrared lamps imitate the sun light and warmth. Reptiles are quite literally solar powered; every aspect of their lives is governed by their daily experience of solar light and heat, or the artificial equivalent when they are housed indoors.

Also energy saving daylight bulbs have been deployed. These bulbs not only withstand the humid condition in the Aqua-terrarium's enclosures but also make the presentation of the reptiles more attractive for visitors.

The safety for the visitors in the Aqua-terrarium has in the last year also been improved by the installation of unbreakable, fireproof security glass.

Additionally also special tools were purchased from abroad to make the work with the reptiles easier. In future is planned to obtain more of these tools.

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