

Using a Natural Behavior Orangutan Show to Promote Orangutan Conservation

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How it Began

- In 2008, our Director, Bob, had the idea to start doing animal shows.
- Many of us had reservations at first.
- We sat down with Bob and discussed what he wanted from the shows and what our concerns were.



“Natural Behavior” Shows

- To get guests excited about conservation by showing them how amazing our animals are!
- Creating something educational while still keeping guests entertained.
- Making sure to train behaviors and create dialog that inspires respect and appreciation for the animals.

Getting Started



- Zoo created Animal Behavior Programs Manager position
- Hired Natural Encounters, Inc. (NEI)

Working with NEI

- Keeper staff attended lectures with Steve Martin.
- Many different staff from NEI came to the zoo over a four month period.
- One NEI staff member, Wouter, stayed at CMZ for the entire four months.
- Everyone on staff benefitted from our time with NEI, and especially our time with Wouter.

Stuck in a Rut



- Primate World Keepers had been doing training with our animals for a long time.
- Mostly stationary husbandry behaviors.
- Trainers and animals needed to start thinking in a different way.

Challenges

- Getting the animals up and moving away from us.
- Changing some of our bad habits.
 - Intermittent reinforcement schedule
 - Just clicking away
- Exhibit design for the behaviors.

What Worked

- Changing to a 1:1 reinforcement schedule
- Stopped using clickers
- 101 things to do with a _____.



Why Orangutans?

- Some species were chosen because of certain conservation programs going on at CMZ.
- Orangutan show was a “must” because of CMZ’s commitment to orangutans and orangutan conservation.



Creating Our Show

- Showcase how strong, smart, and generally amazing orangutans are!
- Show how well adapted orangutans are to living in the rainforest.
- Give guests a chance to connect with an individual orangutan.
- Talk about how dependant orangutans are on their forests and how people can help them in the wild.

V-hang



Cross the Log



Tool Use



Head Covering



Arm Span



Swing



Swing



The Purpose

- The main purpose of any talk or show we do is to inspire people to take action.
- We hope people will find a connection with those animals and want to do something to help.



A Positive Experience

- Positive feedback from guests about what they have learned during shows.
- Increase in animals' activity levels.
- Encourages thinking and creativity in animals.
- Trainers' creativity and skill level has improved, which carries over into all training.

THE END

