

Multivariate Analyses of the Activity Pattern and Behavior of the Lesser Anteater on Open and Closed Days at Córdoba Zoo, Argentina

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Resumen

The human factor is one of the major determinants of animal welfare in zoos. Assessing changes in activity patterns, behavior and space use due to human presence might help understanding visitors' influence on these animal welfare indicators. In Córdoba (Argentina), we assessed the activity pattern and behavior of *Tamandua tetradactyla* (lesser anteaters; $n = 5$) during natural light/dark phases and the animals' use of space. We analyzed responses of lesser anteaters to humans in days open to the public (Sundays and Tuesdays) and days closed to the public (Mondays), collecting data at 5-minute intervals during 12 days, for each animal. Data were analyzed at two temporal scales: a 24 h period and visiting hours. Multivariate analyses showed no differences in activity pattern, behavior and space use among days, exhibiting a consistent response of each individual over the studied days. Principal Component Analysis showed differences between female and male behaviors. Based on these results,

the visitor effect on these lesser anteaters would appear to be neutral, indicating that the presence of visitors is at most, a minor concern in the housing and management of these individuals in Córdoba Zoo.

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