

POSTER PRESENTATIONS April 7 & 8, 1988

1. Linda Pierson [Museum of Science & Space Transit Planetarium, Miami, FL], "Drawer Utilization in Discovery Rooms."
2. Ross Loomis, Marc Fusco, & Ruth Edwards [Colorado State University]; Melora McDermott [Denver Art Museum], "The Visitor Survey: Front-End Evaluation or Basic Research?"
3. Rosalyn Rubenstein [Consultant, Toronto, Canada], "Applying Results of Audience Research to the Design of an Exhibition."
4. Don Thompson & Steve Bitgood [Jacksonville State Univ.], "Total Words, Type Size, and Position: How They Influence Sign Reading."
5. Jerry Carnes & Steve Bitgood [Jacksonville State Univ.], "Professionals' Attitudes Toward Exhibit Evaluation."
6. Mary Brong [University of Illinois], "Man and Animal in the Wildlife Park."
7. Janis Kieft [Minnesota Landscape Arboretum] & Sue Weidemann [Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign], "The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum - What Do Our Visitors Think?"
8. Michael Pierce [Anniston Museum]; Steve Bitgood and Don Patterson [Jacksonville State Univ.], "Evaluation of the Alabama Cave Exhibit."
9. Steve Bitgood, Don Patterson, Grant Nichols [Jacksonville State Univ.]; Michael Pierce and Pete Conroy [Anniston Museum], "Visitor Behavior in the Egyptian Mummy Exhibit Area."
10. Melisa Barlow, Keith Southern, & Steve Bitgood [Jacksonville State Univ.], "An Evaluation of 'Attack and Defense' at the Anniston Museum."
11. Eileen Walker & Leslie Munro [Royal Ontario Museum], "Evaluating Visitor Preferences from Front-end Evaluation."
12. Jerry Carnes, Steve Bitgood, Angela Nabors, & Don Patterson [Jacksonville State University], "Visitor Control: Touching, Feeding, and Littering"
13. Don Thompson, Steve Bitgood, & Don Patterson [Jacksonville State University], "Research on Exhibit Labels."

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NONCOMPLIANT BEHAVIOR IN SAN DIEGO ZOO VISITORS

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From V. Thompson (1984). Noncompliant behavior in zoo visitors. *Zool. Garten* 54(3): 177-190.

Introduction

A 10 week observational study was conducted at the San Diego Zoological Gardens during the summer months of 1977 to investigate the nature of noncompliant behavior in zoo visitors. Noncompliant behaviors included distracting, teasing, feeding, or attempting to injure the animals. Five different primate exhibits and an elephant enclosure were observed in a varying sequence for a total of 135-minute time blocks each day for a total of 42 days. Observations were scheduled so that the data for each exhibit would have equal representation across all times of day, 7 days per week.

Results and Discussion

The degree and type of noncompliant behavior was found to vary, depending on the age and sex of the zoo visitor, the type of social group the zoo visitor was in, the size of the crowd in the exhibit area, and the nature of the exhibit itself (including the type of species exhibited). On the whole, males exhibited more noncompliant behavior than females, however, this was not consistent across all age categories. A clear majority of the zoo visitors exhibiting noncompliant behavior were of the juvenile age classification, with most of these being males. Very few zoo visitors exhibited noncompliant behavior when alone, however, noncompliant behavior was not more prevalent in excessively large crowds. Family groups supervised by both parents exhibited more noncompliant behavior than family groups supervised by only one parent. There were no consistent peak hours or diurnal trends in the frequency of noncompliant behavior.

As a result of the study, several possible ways of alleviating the problem of noncompliant behavior in the zoo became apparent. Controlled public feeding, issuing self-quiz sheets as an alternative behavior, and increased public education were among the alternatives. The advantages and disadvantages of these alternatives were discussed.