

ROLE OF PERSONALITY IN BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES TO NEW ENVIRONMENTS IN CAPTIVE *PANTHERA LEO PERSICA*

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Studying personality in captive animals may enable the development of more individual-based management decisions in terms of husbandry, enrichment, and breeding, which may help to improve overall animal welfare. The Asiatic lions (*Panthera leo persica*) at London Zoo represent an opportunity to research an understudied species' response to new environments. In the last few years, these lions have experienced several social and physical changes, such as new enclosures and increased social interaction with humans. This project aimed to investigate the role of personality in behavioral responses to these new environments. Lion personality questionnaires completed by keepers and direct focal animal observations were used to create personality profiles. Time budgets and enclosure use were determined and compared between control nights and human social event nights, and between the lions' previous enclosure and their new one. The results showed a lack of a difference in time budget and enclosure use between control nights and social event nights, and overall the Spread of Participation Index values revealed the lions use their enclosures unevenly. Personality profiles identified various traits (e.g., curious and eccentric) that could assist with individual-based management decisions, such as enrichment strategies. As the first study to assess Asiatic lions personality, this research contributes to the creation of consistent and valid methodology for evaluating captive animal personality. Personality assessment may help to improve husbandry and welfare protocols for individual lions, leading to the improved health and success of the species.