



Proud Parents -Promoting Breeding in a Pair of African Grey Crowned Cranes

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Problem

A pair of 17 year old African Grey Crown Cranes had never hatched offspring. The pair had not laid eggs since 2011.

Goal

Understand what is required to promote healthy crane breeding, and ultimately have successful reproduction and viable offspring.

Research

- Information was collected from zoo staff about the cranes history and their daily life .
- Research was conducted to learn about the Grey Crown Cranes life and reproduction in the wild
 - Crown cranes reproduce during the raining seasons
 - Crown cranes live in large groups until it is time to mate. Crown cranes then break from the group into their lifelong pairs.
- Contacted other zoos to learn what has worked in the past to promote breeding
 - Suggestions included enrichment and privacy
- Observed cranes over one month and following each change to their exhibit.

Changes Made

- Enclosure was covered with black tarp for greater privacy
- Grey Crown Cranes reproduce in African wetlands during the rainy seasons and to replicate that a water feature was repaired so that the cranes had man-made pond and a stream.
- The cranes were given meal worms and crickets as enrichment.
- A nest was built out of hay with a wall in front to provide privacy from zoo staff conducting daily maintenance.
- A fake egg was placed in nest to stimulate cranes to incubate the egg



Figure 1. A temporary wall and nest were built in the enclosure



Figure 2. A pond water feature in the enclosure

Outcome

Four eggs were laid the third week in July.



Figure 3. Weighing a crown crane egg

The first egg hatched on August, 13 2013



Figure 4. A two day old crown crane chick explores the nest as the parents wait for more eggs to hatch

The second egg hatched on August 17, 2013



Figure 5. Two crown crane chicks explore their enclosure

Recommendations for the Years to Come

- Greater enrichment for the cranes
 - Sprinklers could be placed in the ceiling to create a moist natural breeding environment
 - Cover the enclosure in July
 - Build a nest and privacy wall

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