



Could splitting a safari Park White rhino
(*Ceratotherium simum simum*) enclosure
encourage more natural behaviour in an adult
bull?



Introduction to our Rhino

- * Currently Knowsley Safari hold 1:6 Rhinos
- * Three breeding adult cows aged 24, One breeding age adult cow aged 10, One juvenile female aged 4 and one female calf aged 2
- * We also have one breeding bull called Sharka aged 24





(C) DEBS HAYNES 28TH SEPT 2014


Introduction to Section





© 2015 Google
Image © 2015 DigitalGlobe

Google earth

Imagery Date: 4/19/2011  2000

53°26'54.05" N 2°48'56.69" W elev 84 m

Eye alt 736 m 



Sharka: A brief holding history


- * Sharka had spent a lot of time housed with another male with no access to females.
- * They were rotated daily as to who was given access to the paddock.
- * Sharka then spent some time on his own.
- * Once we had moved on our other breeding bull Sharka was moved out of his old holding area and put onto the main reserve.
- * When not mixed with the females for breeding Sharka spent a lot of his time on the yards





Image © 2015 DigitalGlobe

Google earth

Imagery Date: 4/19/2011  2000

53°26'50.96" N 2°48'48.85" W elev 86 m


Eye alt 244 m 







Image © 2015 DigitalGlobe

Google earth

Imagery Date: 4/19/2011 2000

53°26'54.01" N 2°48'53.95" W elev 82 m

Eye alt 244 m



Section Split





What we aimed to achieve


- * Better Visitor Experience
- * More natural breeding behaviour
- * Better animal management
- * More natural feeding opportunities

Behavioural Change


What has the split achieved

- * Ritualisation of previously random behaviours.
- * Affiliative play between Sharka and the calfs
- * Decreased persistent and aggressive behaviour from Sharka towards the females.



Imagery Date: 4/19/2011  2000

53°26'46.58" N 2°49'01.06" W elev 81 m

Eye alt 537 m 





Affiliative Play

Affiliative: To bring into close association or connection.

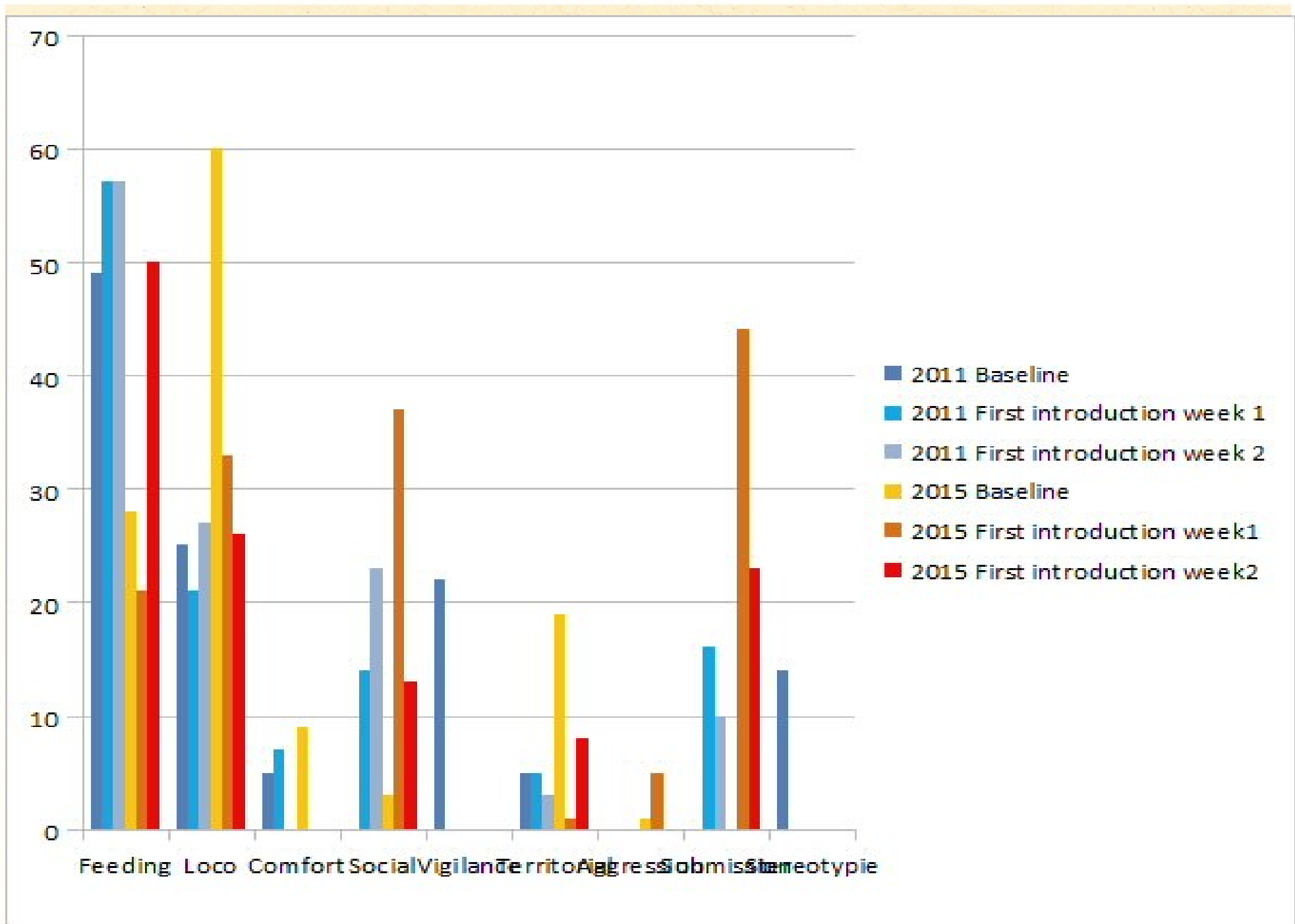
Sharka has been observed playing with the calves in order to be allowed closer to the females.



Aggression

- * The first year we let him out he was very inexperienced and as a result his persistent behaviour caused aggressive situations leading to him being out on the yards.
- * Since the split we have noticed that a lot of the aggressive behaviour is instigated by the females and not by Sharka
- * Could it be that giving him his own territory has allowed him to become more dominant?





Aggression Scale

Aggression Level	Definition of aggression	Keeper Intervention Required
Level 1	Rhino are charging/mock charging but no physical contact is made	Close observation to make sure it doesn't escalate. No Keeper intervention required
Level 2	Rhino are charging each other with physical contact. Both have heads low and using a sideways clubbing action. Minor cuts/scrapes to the face /head	Close observation. Time at level recorded. Ensure one rhino is allowed to retreat with no pursuit. No Keeper intervention required.
Level 3	As Level 2 with cuts and scrapes to the body as well as the head and face. Still minor injuries	Very close observation. Time at level recorded. If aggression escalates, if both rhino refuse to retreat or if one retreats but is pursued keeper intervention may be required.

Aggression Level	Definition of aggression	Keeper intervention required
Level 4	Charging and/or pursuit has escalated to the point one or both rhino have been knocked/ almost knocked to the ground. Cuts and scrapes are deeper. One or both are attempting to hook the front or rear legs using the horn to up end the other. Includes attacking from the side or rear. Attacks also include upward thrusts/ stabs with the horn	Keeper intervention required. Section vehicle should be positioned between both rhino until aggression levels drop. If it persists one rhino should be removed from the area as soon as possible. Physical barrier maintained at all times. Remove both rhino from section if both require treatment.
Level 5	Levels of aggression and pursuit have escalated to the point that one or both have deep wounds or arterial blood loss	Keeper intervention is required, rhino section should be locked down to prevent damage or injury to the public. Both rhino must be kept apart at all times by physical barrier. One rhino should be removed from the area as soon as possible and secured in a safe location. Remove both if medical attention is required.



(C) DEBS HAYNES 28TH SEPT 2011



DEBS HAYNES 28TH SEPT 2011



(C) DEBS HAYNES 28TH SEPT 2011



Discussion

Has it been an increase in experience that has led to Sharkas change in behaviour or has managing his own territory allowed him to develop a more natural behaviour??

