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# ANIMAL KEEPERS' FORUM



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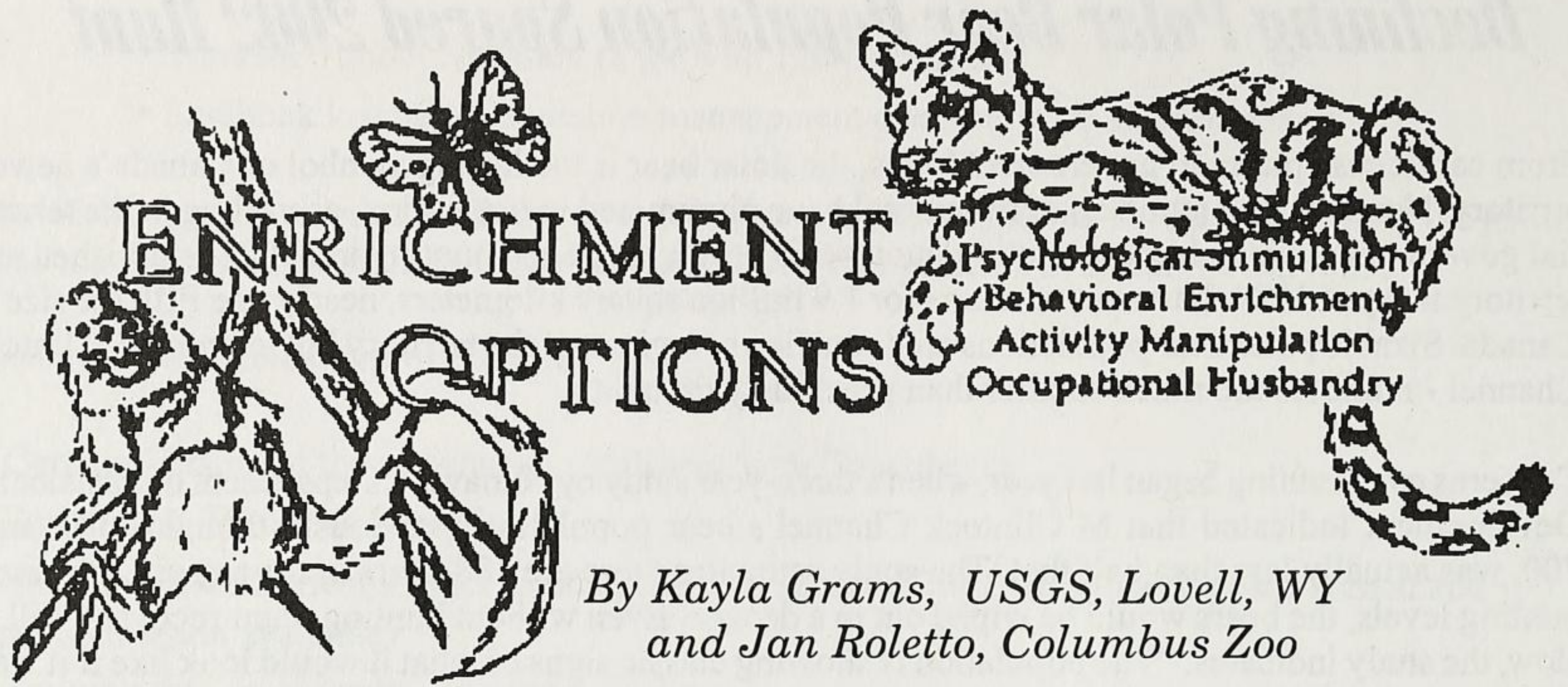


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# ENRICHMENT OPTIONS

Psychological Stimulation  
Behavioral Enrichment  
Activity Manipulation  
Occupational Husbandry

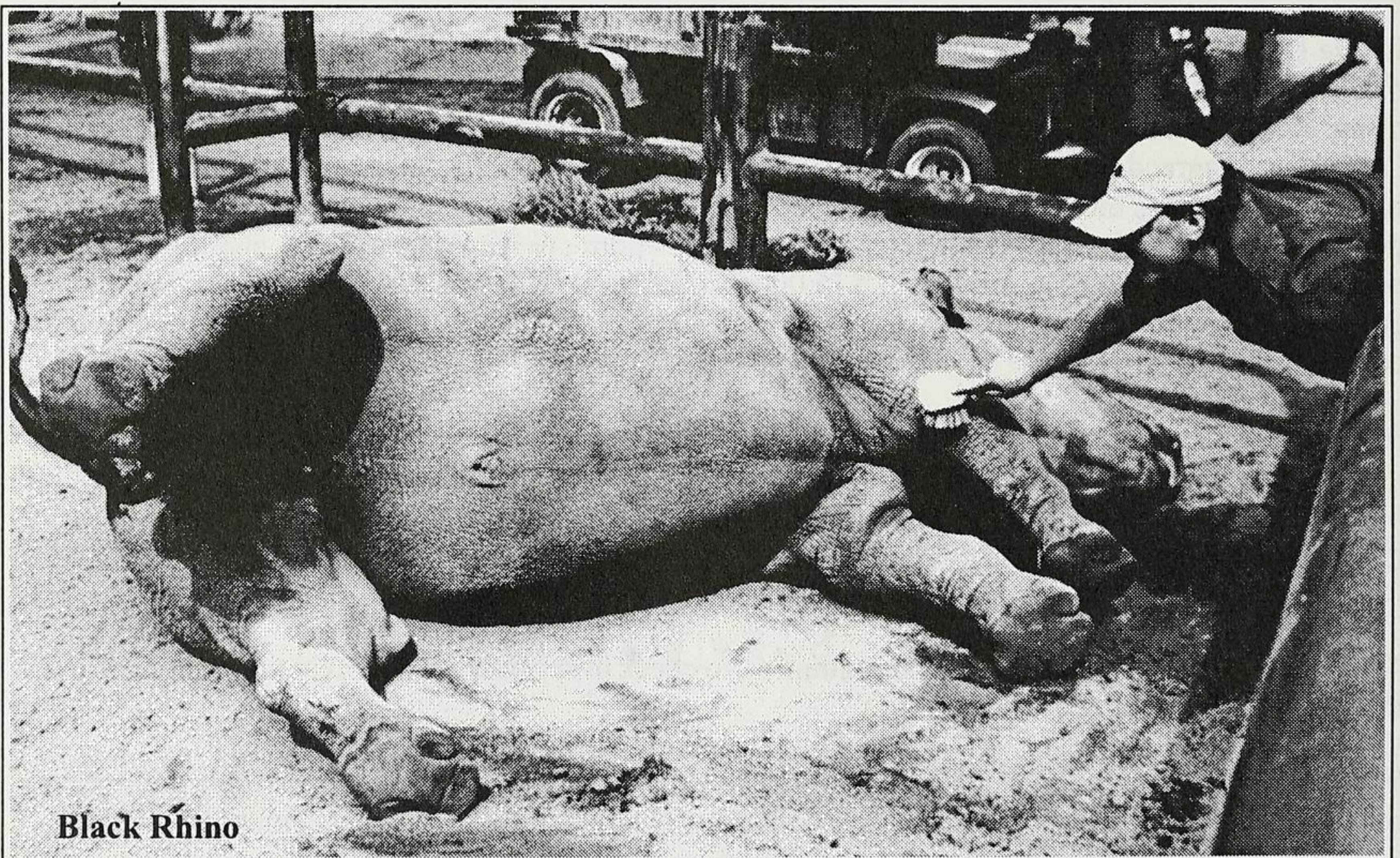
*By Kayla Grams, USGS, Lovell, WY  
and Jan Roletto, Columbus Zoo*

The following are examples of environmental enrichment ideas at Potter Park Zoo, Lansing, MI. They were designed and implemented by zoo interns, Katya Woloschko and Rebecca Harry, both students at Michigan State University.

**Tamarins:** Exhibit modification of the tamarin exhibit, including rearranging already existing perches and the addition of grapevine to allow the tamarins access to previously unattainable locations of the exhibit and to increase climbing surface area.

**Rhinos:** A 55-gallon barrel filled with water was placed in their outdoor exhibit for an object to manipulate and play with. Water was chosen because it provided unpredictability in movement, stimulating the natural curiosity of the rhinos.

To foster the relationship between rhino and keeper we periodically bathed, brushed and hand-fed each rhino. This one-on-one interaction provided emotional and physical stimulation that made the powerful rhino easier to work with.



To provide for variety in diet, various types of browse were given to the rhinos daily. We found the

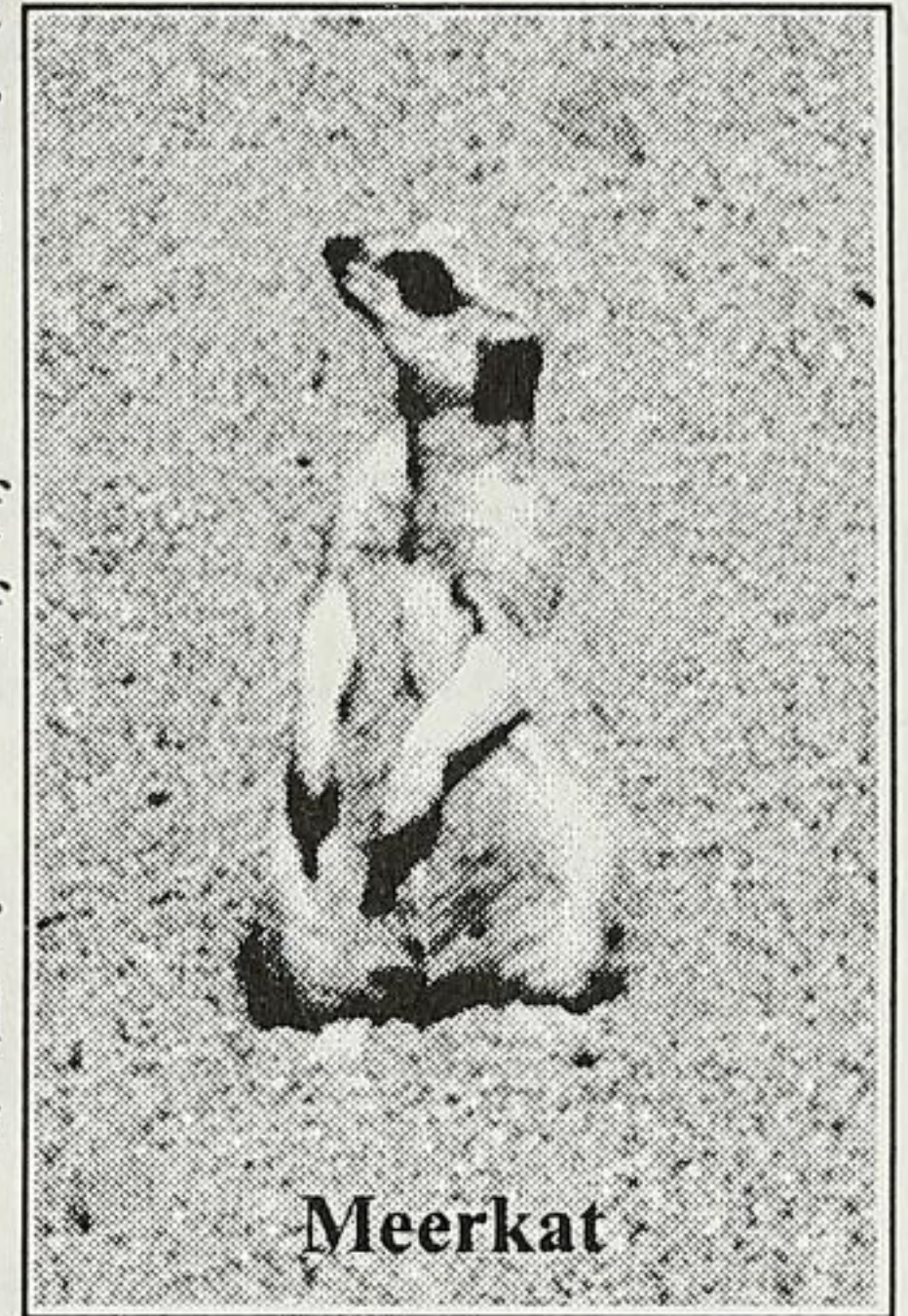


following species to be a favorite of the black rhinos: crabapple, grapevine, tulip poplar and aspen.

**Meerkats:** The exhibit was lacking aesthetic appeal, so natural tall grasses were planted throughout the exhibit. This also served as enriching for the meerkats by providing a hiding place for scatter food and smelt. As the meerkats were searching for the different types of scatter food, they proceeded to dig underground tunnels beneath the roots of the grasses.

Already present, hollow logs were rearranged to provide a change of environment. The meerkats immediately began to create a new network of tunnels under the logs. This kept them occupied for days.

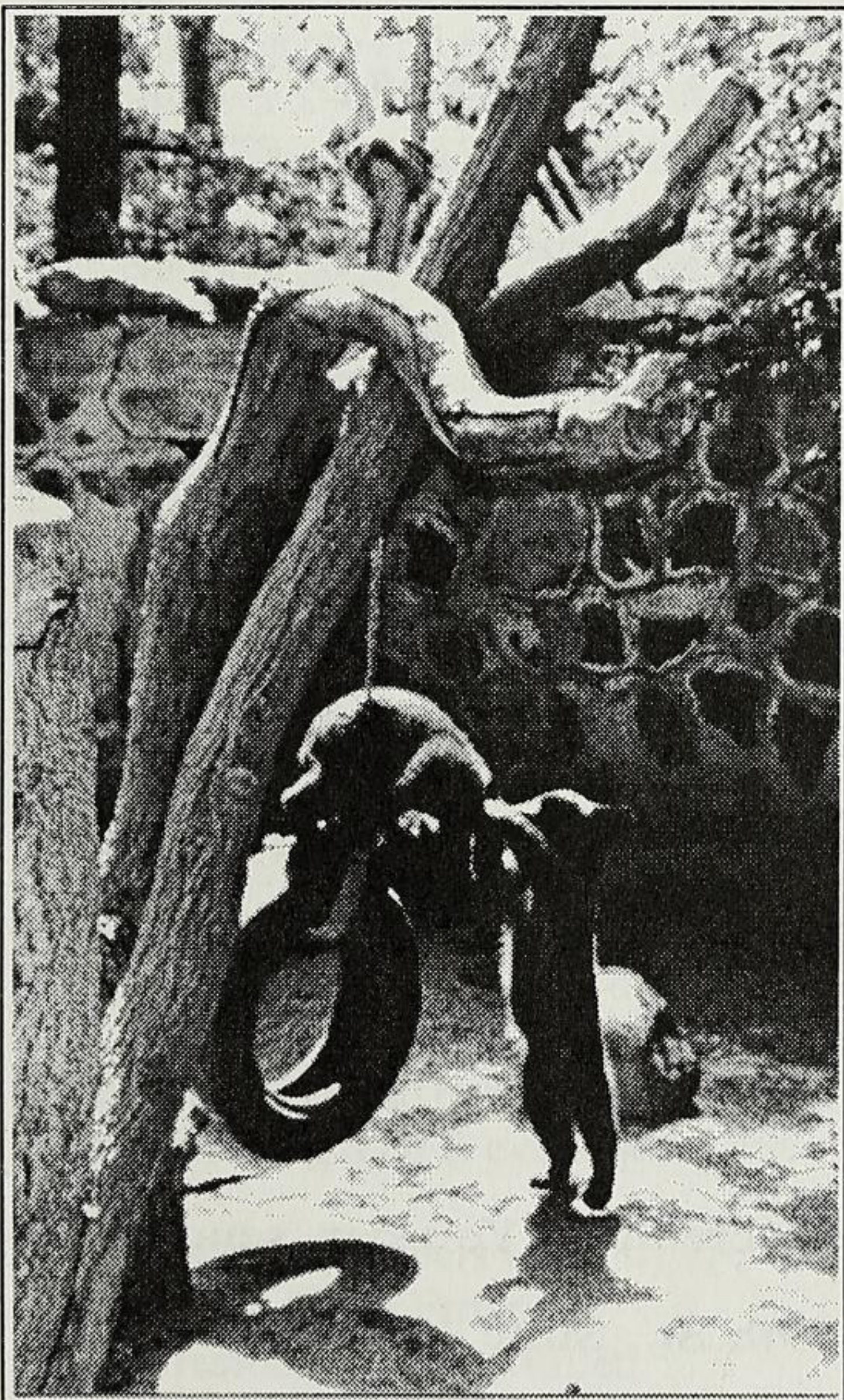
**Cats:** Fishing Cats in the wild dive down beneath the surface of the water to catch fish. We wanted to recreate this for our captive cats. We placed various fish in their pool, which is approximately two feet in depth. They eagerly jumped in the water to obtain the fish.



**Meerkat**

Our fishing cats are extremely shy and very fearful of visitors. We wanted to create a safe place for the cats to hide when scared. We loosely attached a burlap bag to an already existing elevated platform. They frequently crawled under it, like a housecat hides under a blanket. This provided them with security they had previously lacked.

Many attempts were made to interact with the cats to rid them of their intense fear of man. We successfully coerced them into playing with us. We used peacock feathers as lures and a pulley rope with toys fastened to the end. Eventually curiosity got the best of the cats. They approached the lures cautiously and began to play. By the end of the summer significant changes in their behavior were observed.



**Black Bear Cubs**

**Bears:** These playful, curious cubs are bursting at the seams with energy. Much of their time is spent playing with one another. However, as they aged, we wanted to direct their energy to new activities when they grew tiresome of one another. We froze water in large five-gallon buckets and placed these in their pool. They tirelessly attempted to pull them out of the pool. Just when they thought they were going to succeed, the blocks would slip through their paws time and time again. This entertained them until the moment the block melted.

Children's plastic hats were purchased at a garage sale. A fireman's hat and a hardhat were given to the cubs. These objects consumed all their attention. They competed with one another all afternoon ignoring their first two meals and were consumed entirely by the toys.

*Photos provided by the authors*