

Mixed species exhibits; an enrichment for who?

Marc Damen
Chairman Dutch Zoo Federation



A little wrap-up of the conference so far

Animals should be kept in enclosures that resemble nature as much as possible

Enclosures should have a lot of built-in enrichment

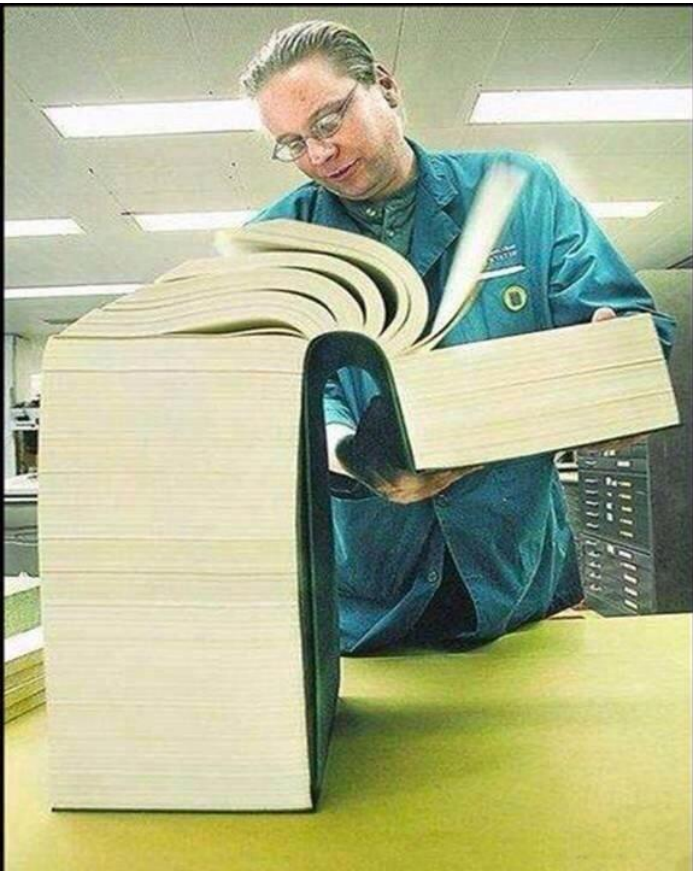


Built-in enrichment....



Other individuals are enrichment!

They can be of the same species



The book
"Understanding
Women" has
finally arrived in
book stores.



Or of different species



Mixed species exhibit:
enclosure where two or more different
species have the possibility to share the
same space at the same time together



1) Why do we want that?

2) Pros and cons for various stakeholders?

3) How to successfully set up such an exhibit?

Do not over-estimate mixed species !



Why do we want a mixed species exhibit?

- 1) To create naturalistic environments
- 2) To show more biodiversity
- 3) To show more natural behaviour
- 4) To have more active animals



Why don't we want a mixed species exhibit?

- 1) To avoid stress / killings in animals
- 2) To avoid stress (not killings) in staff
- 3) To have more control (diets and so on)
- 4) To save money



Pros and cons for various stakeholders

Which stakeholders ?

Animals

External people (visitors, media)

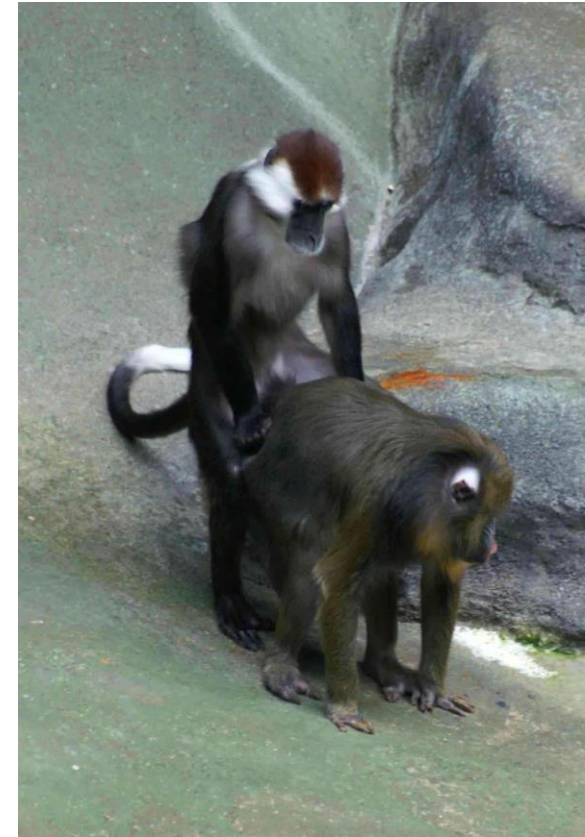
Staff (all!)



Pros and cons for various stakeholders

Animals

- + Benefit from presence other species
- More animals, more conflicts
- Enclosure less optimal
- + More variety in enclosure/food
- + More distraction
- Veterinary issues



Pros and cons for various stakeholders

External people (visitors, media)

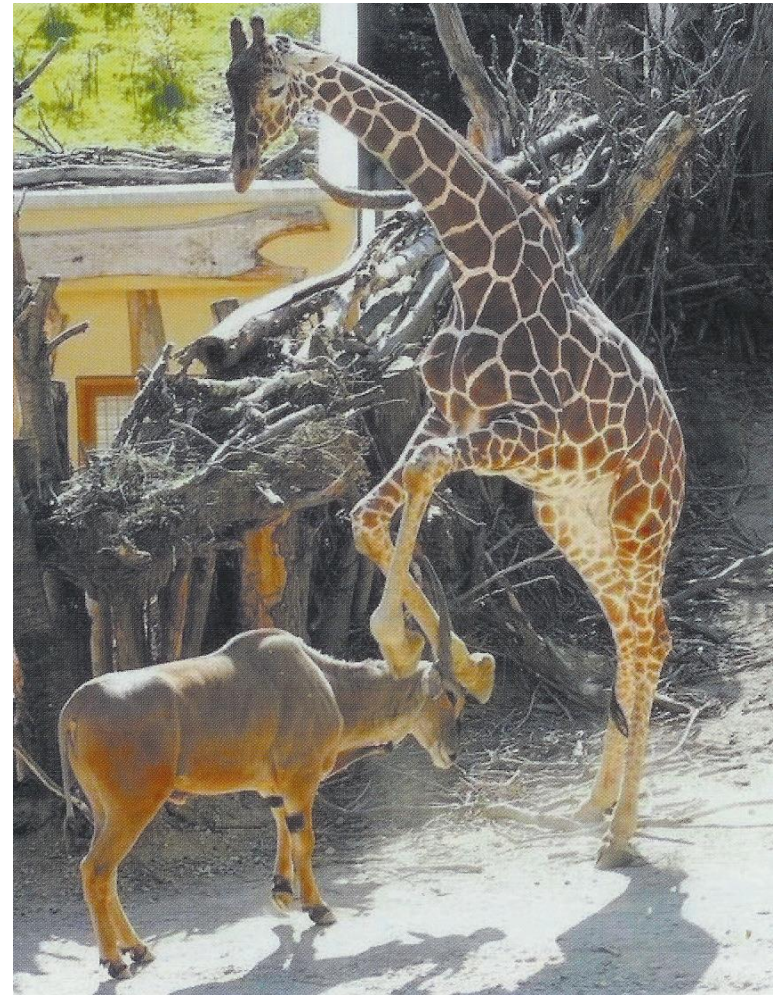
- + Can observe more active animals
- + Can observe more natural behaviour
- Can get wrong impression of nature
- Negative PR in case of conflict



Pros and cons for various stakeholders

Staff (all!)

- + / - More challenging life
- Higher working pressure
- What if animals are killed



It can go seriously wrong



How to successfully set-up such an exhibit?

Involve all internal stakeholders directly
(make them feel responsible)

Try to find out what has been done

Learn from ('mistakes' from) others

Think of biology of
each species

Don't be shy (you're
the expert!)



Never mix pinioned birds with hoofstock !



When designing exhibit, think of all species

Determine the core species

Get everybody supporting the idea

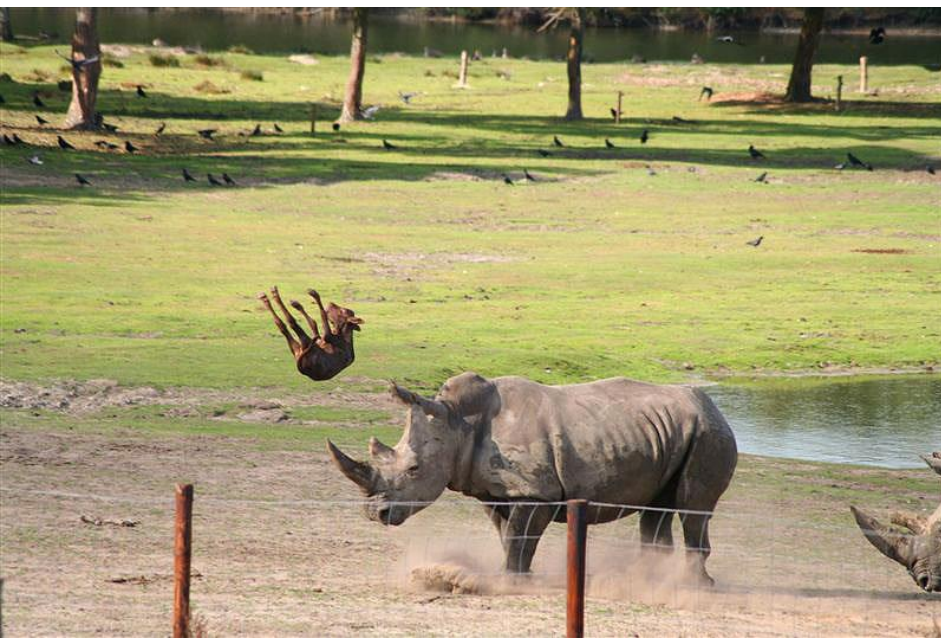
Make a clear plan for introducing species

Make notes, recordings and so on



How can it go wrong?

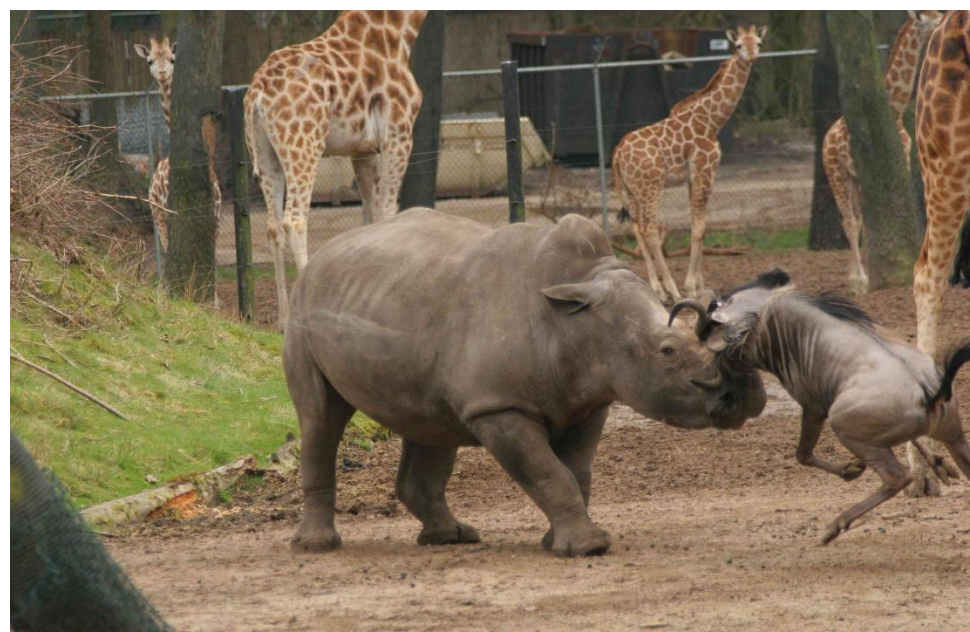
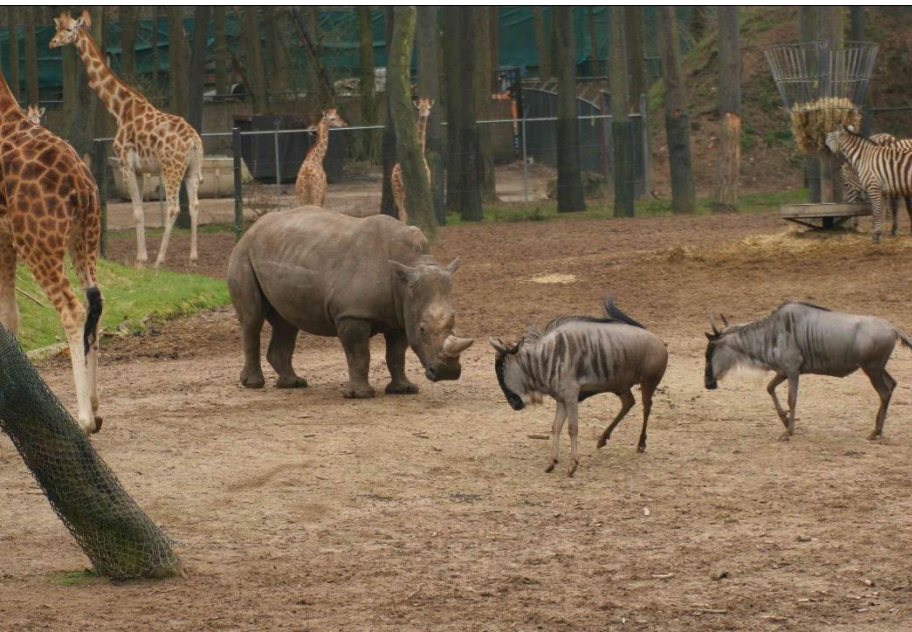


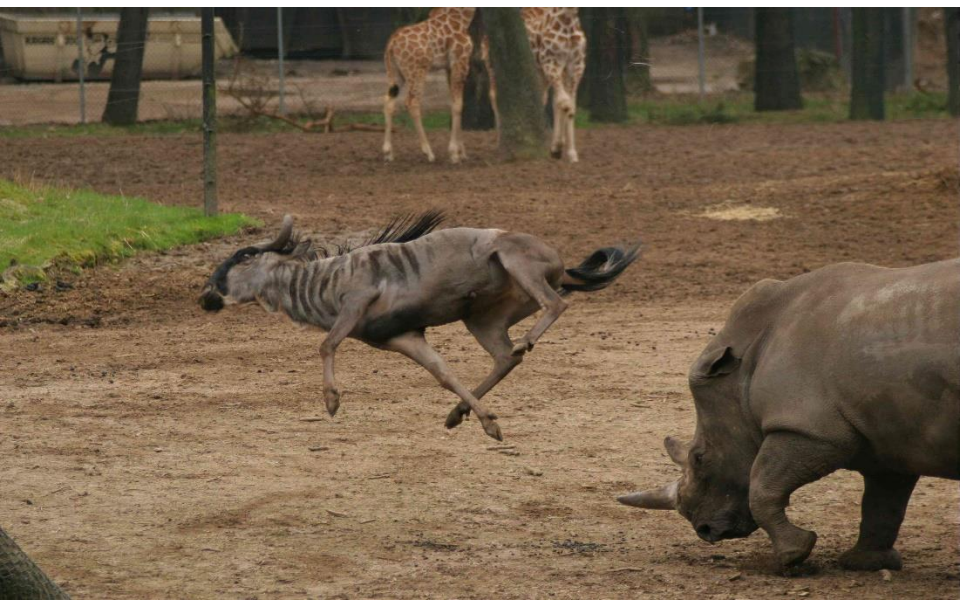


Some combinations that (seem to) work



Behaviour can change....





Mixing species can be an enrichment for all

But more natural → more challenging

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES
(especially what went wrong)



Thank you for your attention

m.damen@nvddierentuinen.nl