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Behaviors of endangered Malayan tapir (*Tapirus indicus*) in relation to ecological, climatic and anthropogenic factors: Implications for captive management and conservationKalai Arasi Arumugam¹, Wan Norhamidah Wan Ibrahim¹, Christina D Buesching² and Geetha Annavi¹¹Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia²University of Oxford, UK

Changes in the living environment such as restricted space, continuous stream of visitors and being under the management of humans have been shown in many other wild animals to cause significant changes in their natural behaviors that can result in stress, breeding difficulties, poor health and repetitive stereotypic behaviors. However, it is still unknown whether the above factors can also affect the Malayan tapir (*Tapirus indicus*). Therefore, we undertook a study to investigate the potential stressors in both male and female captive Malayan tapirs by evaluating the effect of enclosure type, enclosure size, climatic and human factors on behaviors that were quantified through direct and indirect observations. Analysing our data using Generalised linear mixed-effects model, glmer, we found that enclosure type had a significant effect on feeding behavior where tapirs in semi-wild enclosures fed more frequently than tapirs in captivity. We noticed significant adverse effects from visitors and background noises that caused increases in vigilance behavior and reduced the time spent on resting in captivity. We also observed stereotypic behaviors in captivity such as frequent pacing and sleeping under water while holding their breath for over one minute at a time. From this study, we conclude that the enclosure with improper enrichments and surroundings with loud sound exposure are potential stressors that will affect the welfare of Malayan tapir.

Biography

Kalai Arasi Arumugam is a Master in Science graduate in Wildlife Ecology and Management. Her great passion towards animals had aspired her to work towards conserving wildlife and understanding their needs and welfare through behavioral study. Her current research focused on the behavior of endangered Malayan tapir and their ex-situ management in captivity. In the future, she is looking forward to studying more wildlife in both captive and wild via ex-situ and in-situ conservation.

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