

The role of a good zoo

This trail will take you round part of ZSL Whipsnade Zoo to find out about the role of a good zoo. You will need to be very observant; looking at the animals, their enclosures and information signs. Before you starting the trail write down what you think zoos actually do in the space below.

1) In your opinion what do you think zoos do?

2) The chimps



Find your way to the chimps and walk around the enclosure. Spend some time observing the chimps and read any signs you come across. Use the information you have gathered to answer the following questions:

2a) What are the chimps doing?

2b) What does the enclosure include to keep the chimps active and entertained?

2c) What does ZSL stand for?

2d) Why are chimpanzees and other primates under threat?

2e) How is ZSL helping to reduce the threat posed by the bushmeat trade?

2f) List three objectives of ZSL's Bushmeat and forest conservation programme.

3) Zoo vets

Find the antelope house which is near to the white rhino paddock and the reindeer enclosure. Inside the house there are posters about the life of a zoo vet for you to look at.

3a) Find out about the vast range of jobs zoo vets have to undertake and make a list in the space below.

3b) How does this list compare to what you thought a zoo vet would do?

4) The giraffes

Go into the giraffe house and look at how it has been designed. What do you notice about the design of the house and why do you think the house was designed like that? (think about it from the animals, keepers and publics point of view)



4a) Why is the design of the house good for the giraffes?

4b) How does this design make it easier of the keepers to look after the giraffe?

4c) Why is the design good from the general public's point of view?

5) The oriental short-clawed otters

Find your way to the otters and have a look round their enclosure. Other than food, what does a zoo need to provide to keep the otters happy? Make a list of the items that they have in their enclosure in the box below. Then number the items you have listed in order of importance.

(1 - being the most important item to have in their enclosure)



6) Siberian tigers

The Siberian tiger's enclosure is close to the railway station. Find your way to the enclosure and read all the information signs to help you answer the following questions.

6a) Why is it important to breed tigers in captivity?

6b) Name a sub species of tiger that has become extinct in the last 50 years.

6c) How many tigers are thought to be in zoos around the world and how does this figure compare with the numbers of tigers in the wild?

7) Elephant house

Find your way to the elephants and have a look round their enclosure and their house reading all the signs as you go.

7a) What are the four different methods of enrichment?

1) _____

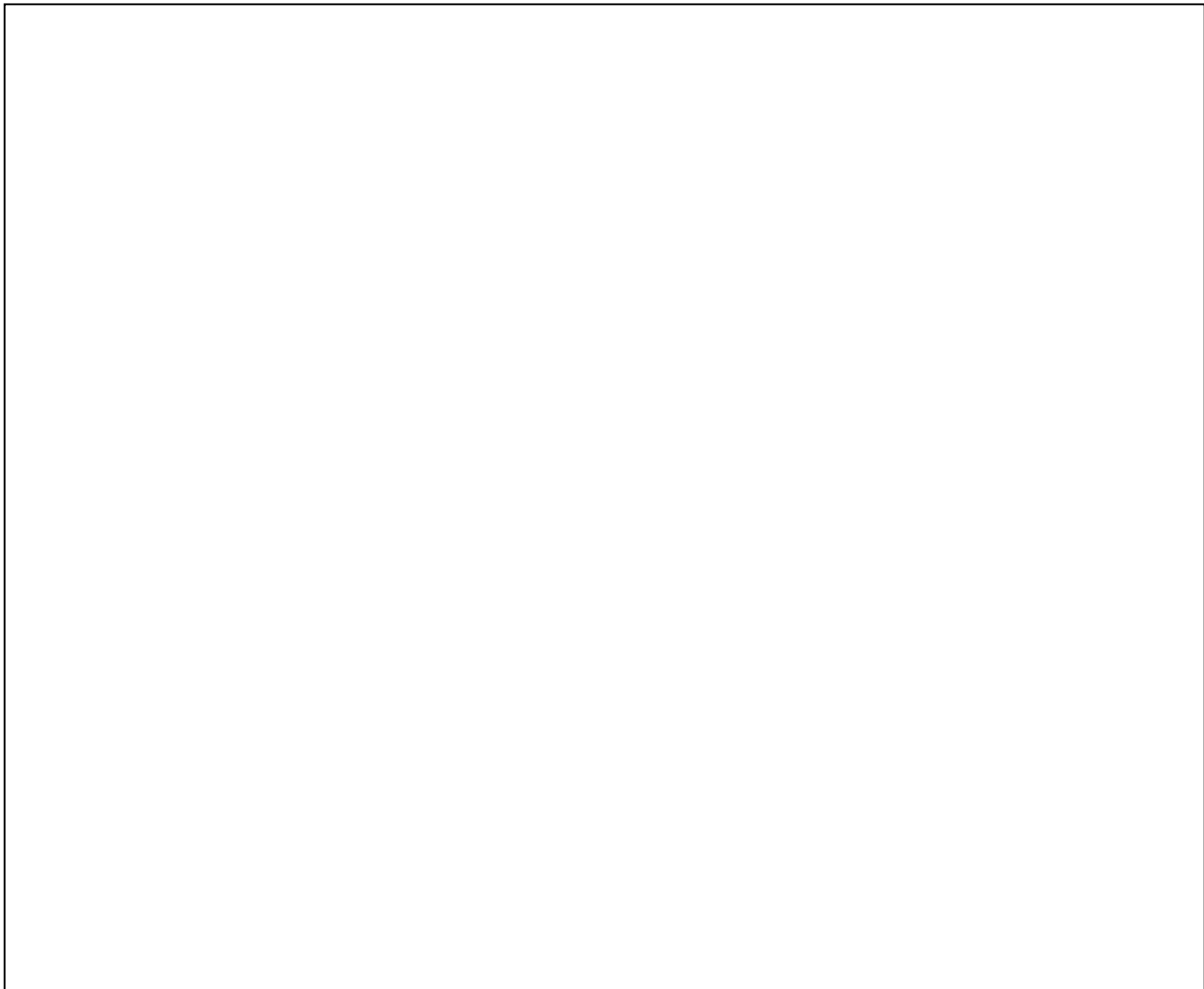
2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

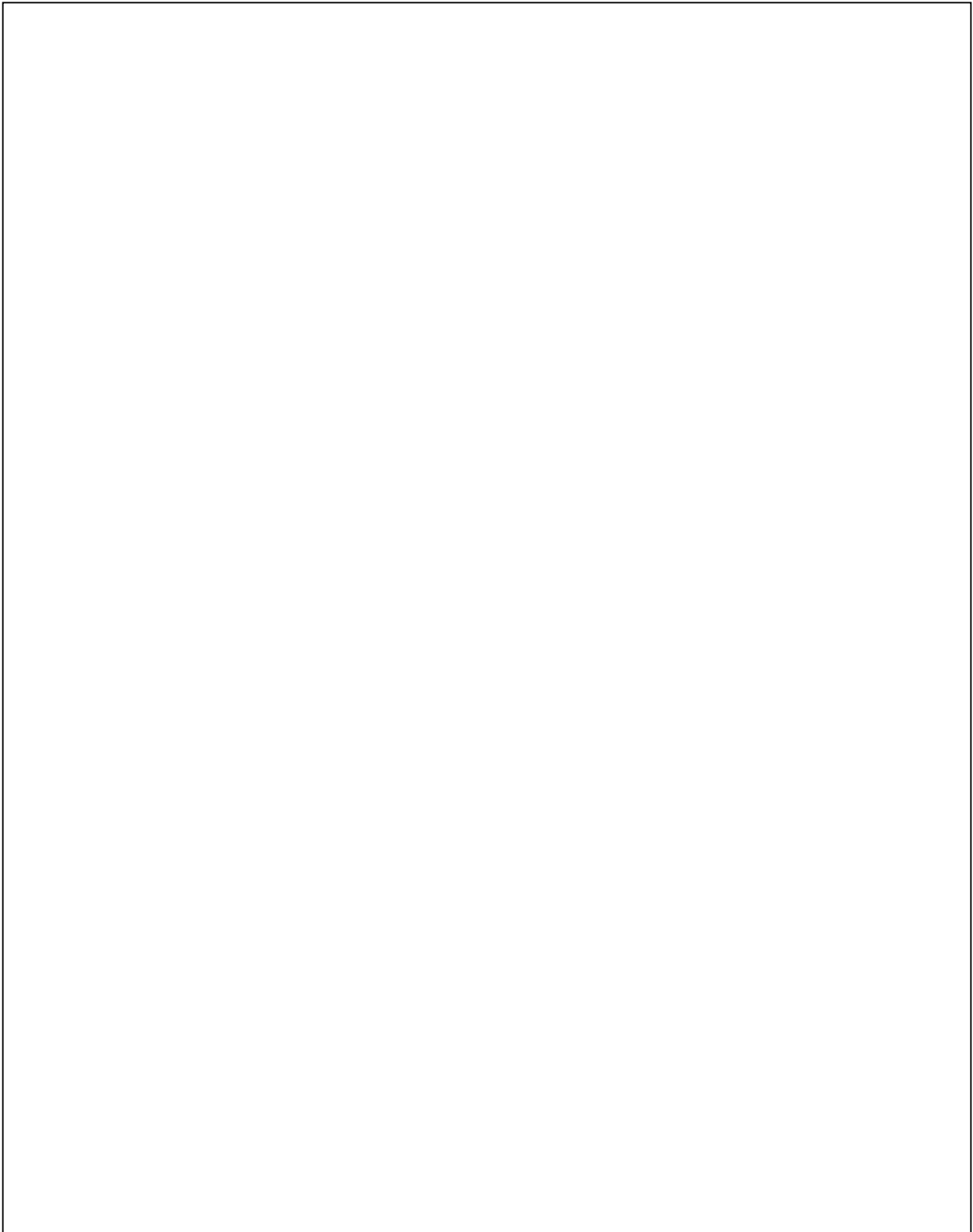
7b) Why is enrichment important?

7c) Have a good look at the elephant's enclosure and make a note of the enrichment activities that have been provided for the elephants. *Add some sketches to your notes as this will help you with the next activity.*



8) Designing enrichment

Pick an animal in the zoo and spend some time observing it and looking at the enclosure. You have to design an enrichment activity to keep the animal you have chosen active. The enrichment activity could be something that is food related or just a game to keep the animal amused. Use the space below to draw a labelled diagram of your design. Make sure you say which animal it is for and explain how the activity would be used by the animal.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing a diagram of an enrichment activity. The box is currently blank.

9) Questions to contemplate

At the end of your day at the Zoo think about all the things you have seen and learnt today.

9a) Zoos have a very wide and varied role to play. From what you have seen and heard today, put the roles in order of importance. (there is no right or wrong answer to this it is your own opinion)

- Conserving species in the wild
- Conserving species in captivity
- Education
- Keeping the animals happy
- Entertainment
- Keeping the public happy
- Research

9b) If someone asked you what the role of a zoo is what would you say? (in a couple of sentences)

9c) In the space below explain why animals are threatened in the wild and how zoos are helping to conserve endangered species. (Try and write about species in general but include an example.)
