

ASSESSING WELFARE: A NEW COGNITIVE RESEARCH PROGRAMME FOR THE CHIMPANZEES (*PAN TROGLODYTES*) OF BUDONGO TRAIL, RZSS

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The Chimpcam Project examines chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) cognition with the use of cameras and computer tests. As with many cognitive studies, it started out with training and segued into cognitive testing. The goal of this study is to identify whether or not the introduction of a cognitive research programme elicits higher rates of self-directed behaviours (SDBs) than during other activities, as expected if the chimpanzees are anxious, uncertain or frustrated by the training. SDBs of 11 chimpanzees (six male; five female) collected during four studies over a 16-month period will be compared between conditions: (1) baseline (non-training/research situations) and two training/research conditions; (2) an ongoing, two-year programme of husbandry training (off-exhibit, i.e. station/stay while being closed into an area); and (3) training and research for cognitive testing (i.e. introducing new on-exhibit research areas and targeting to test windows and subsequent testing). Preliminary findings indicate that the mean rate per minute of SDBs during training for cognitive tasks did not differ from husbandry training, nor did SDBs during overall training differ from those exhibited during activities outside training. This suggests that the introduction of a cognitive research programme does not compromise welfare, but rather that the chimpanzees' repeated interest in the challenges offered, and their willingness to participate, implies that the training is enriching and mentally stimulating. The Chimpcam Project complies with the ethical guidelines of the University of Stirling and the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland ethics and animal care committees.

Keywords: cognition, training, self-directed behaviours, welfare