



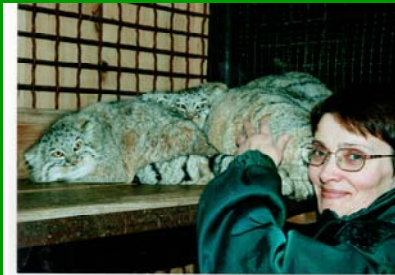
# Training Pallas's Cats for Veterinary Procedures without Physical Restrain or Anaesthesia

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If behavioural enrichment is defined as any measure aimed at improving the animals' psychological welfare, then avoiding or easing some unpleasant procedures that the animals have to be subject to in the course of captive husbandry can be regarded as an important step in the right direction.



Animal training has long been the solution used by zoos faced with problems that are routinely encountered in the daily care, veterinary procedures or research. A method that works best with some species is training the animals step by step to remove the element of fear, while using their natural habits. This is the kind of work we have been conducting with Pallas's Cats.



Previously, even to conduct the simplest medical procedures, like vaccinations, animals were captured with a net and wrapped tightly to stop their vigorous resistance, and after being released, they displayed all signs of extreme stress, and would run and hide.

But by using their tendency to hide and adjusting the construction of nest boxes accordingly, aided by simple devices, and acting gently and gradually, we have achieved considerable results.



At this time, we are able to give injections and treat small wounds with almost no restraint by covering the animal's head with a piece of thick fabric, even if the treatment takes a long time.



A male Pallas's Cat with diabetes required insulin therapy for three years. He had to be given subcutaneous injections one or two times daily, and once a week he was bled from his ear in order to determine the sugar level in his blood.



Pallas's Cats often suffer from ear infections, and we have trained our cats to subject themselves calmly to ear treatments, with the keeper's hands removed from the animal's head to a distance of only about 10 to 15 cm.



We can also weigh the animals, administer oral medications, and groom their fur without psychologically traumatizing them.

The fact that the animals show no resistance during these procedures, and don't run away and hide after their completion, but eat calmly if they are fed immediately afterwards, proves that they have not been subject to stress.