

Circadian Activity Patterns in the Captive Pygmy Hippopotamus *Hexaprotodon liberiensis*

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Wild pygmy hippos have been found to be cathemeral, so this study investigated circadian behavioural patterns in captive members of this species to determine whether this was also true of these animals, which was confirmed. It was also found that there was no statistical difference between the lengths of time the female hippo studied was active for during the day and the night. Additionally, no statistical difference was found between the lengths of time the two hippos spent active during the day. This study identified the possibility that all pygmy hippos are cathemeral and have a similar day time energy budget, which may be partly explained by the diet and digestive system of these creatures acting as a selective agent over evolutionary time. A study of enclosure use was conducted alongside that focused on the circadian behavioural patterns, and found that the heated indoor pool was the area most commonly occupied by the hippos. Attention was drawn to the observation of stereotypical behaviour in these captive individuals, and the question as to whether this has impacted on breeding attempts in this pair raised. The role of zoos in conservation efforts to enhance species survival was also discussed.

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