

Gorilla enclosure

August 2026

Category: Large enclosure

Animals: Gorilla

Indoor Area: 500m²

Total Substrate Depth: 70-100cm

CASE STORY Western lowland gorilla enclosure

- Case story from GIVSKUD ZOO

The enclosure was designed to accommodate a deep layer of bedding-material when it was built in the late 1990s. The facility consists of five rooms, each equipped with a central drain to remove excess water if the bedding becomes too wet. The bedding layer is approximately 70-100 cm deep, as the floor is built with a slight slope.

Easy to maintain

The bedding is watered every two or three days, depending on the need. Normally, it takes no more than 10 minutes to water a room, as the bedding should not become too wet, as this will cause it to decompose too quickly. To save time, the watering can be automated using a garden sprinkler. Furthermore, it is very easy to clean the equipment and walls without having to worry about the bedding getting wet, which is particularly useful as these surfaces often need to be cleaned in primate enclosures. Daily maintenance consists of raking together the "sleeping" material, such as wood wool, and removing feces and leftover food.

New bedding material is added continuously when there is extra time or whenever needed. A pile of material is always kept outside the enclosure, making it easy to use a wheelbarrow to add more material as required. The bedding has only been completely replaced a couple of times over a period of 25 years, and only when this was genuinely necessary for operational reasons. It has never been emptied simply to replace it with new material, as this has not been necessary. The system works well by continuously adding new material on top as the existing bedding gradually decomposes.

Better welfare for the animals

The bedding system works exceptionally well for the animals' welfare, as it makes it easy to maintain a high level of humidity, which is important for the skin of primates. The animals have never shown any signs of dry skin or excessive scratching, which can be indicators of insufficient humidity in the enclosure.

Furthermore, the bedding reduces the amount of dust and odors in the enclosure, ensuring a healthier environment for both the animals and the zookeepers.

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