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The effect of a putative pheromone on the behavior of rescued big cats in a sanctuary, before and after a transition into a new enclosure

Victoria Svensson

Supervisors: Johan Lind & Sara Sequeira



Background

The **putative F3p pheromone** is commonly used and is commercially sold as a tool to reduce **unwanted** and **abnormal behaviors**. The **outcomes** of previous studies **vary**, leaving a **big uncertainty** of the effect that a putative pheromone may have on behaviors. **Stimulating the limbic system** with a **putative pheromone via the olfactory system** is a **less-used method** for managing **stereotypic behaviors** in big cats.

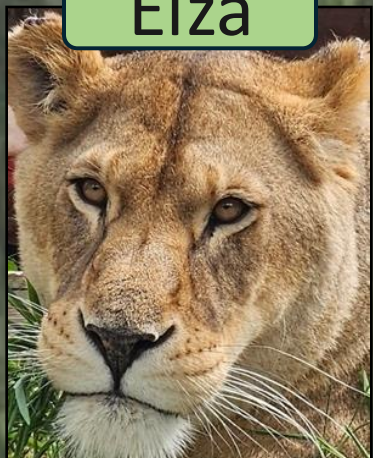
Aims

1. This study aimed to assess the effect of the **putative F3p pheromone** on **behaviors** of four captive big cats.
2. If the **putative F3p pheromone** has an effect on the behavior of big cats, namely in **reducing stereotypic behaviors**, when animals **transition from an old enclosure to a new one**.

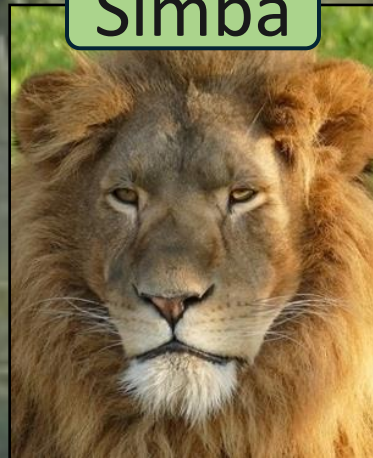
Methods

Behavior sampling of four big cats was conducted with **instantaneous recording** during **test- (putative F3p pheromone)** and **control (water)** periods, alternating according to a **pseudo-random schedule**, and collected with **ZooMonitor** according to a **standardized ethogram**.

Elza



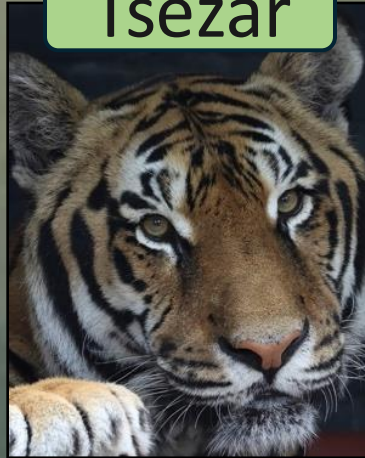
Simba



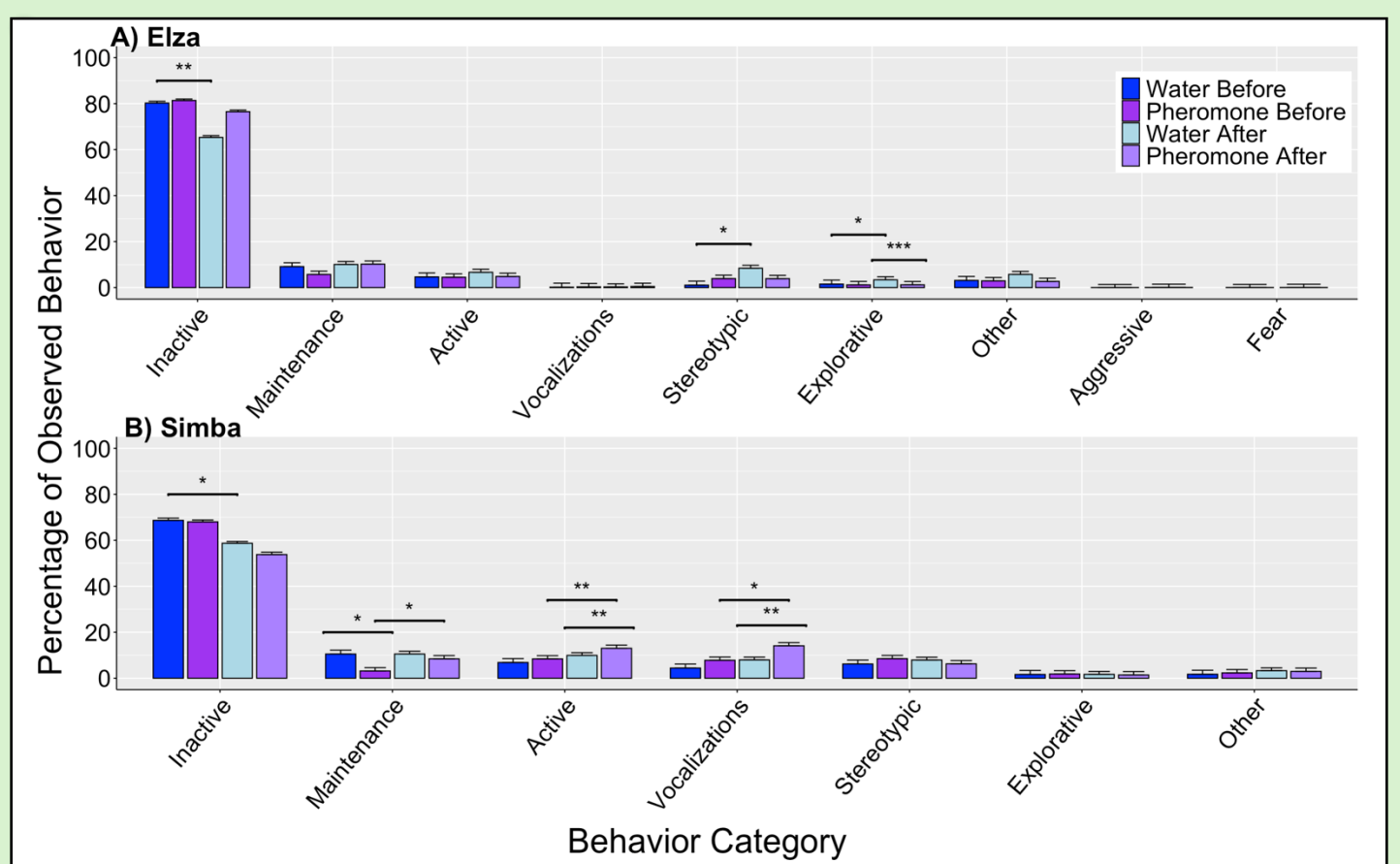
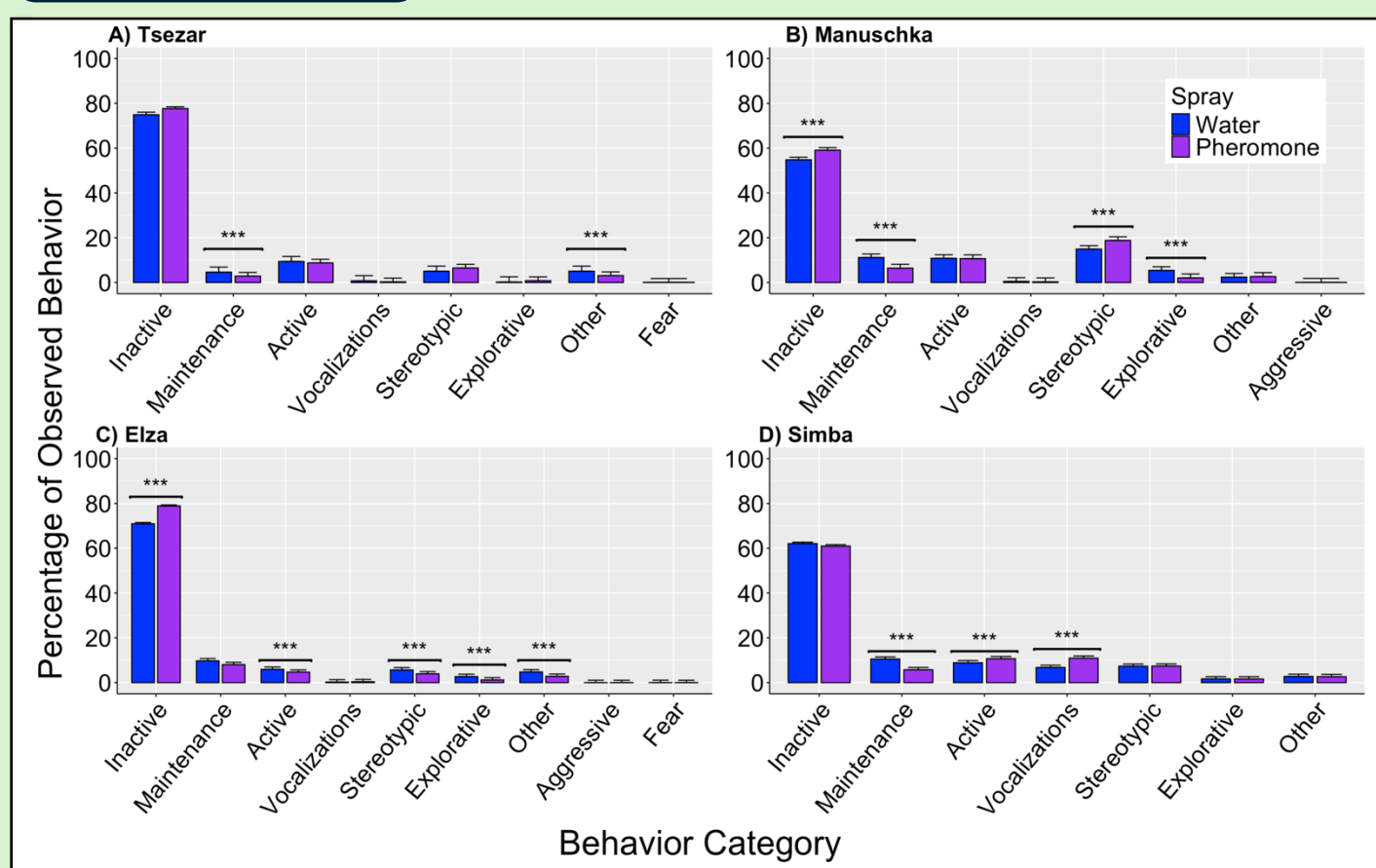
Manuschka



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Results



- 🐾 A **significant increase** during the **putative pheromone** treatment was found for the behavior categories **inactive**, **stereotypic**, **active** and **vocalizations**.
- 🐾 A **significant increase** during the **water control** was found for the behavior categories **other**, **maintenance**, **explorative**, **active** and **stereotypic**.

- 🐾 **No significant difference** was found for the behavior category **stereotypic** when comparing **before** and **after** the move for the **putative pheromone** treatment.



Conclusion

- 🐾 The results shown between species and individuals may be impacted by **predisposed stereotypic behaviors**, **personality traits**, **individual response to stress** and behaviors that **cannot be removed or reversed**.
- 🐾 Although there is a significant difference between spray types for certain behaviors, **the effect of the putative pheromone is rather small**.
- 🐾 The results suggest that the **putative F3p pheromone** has a **small effect on certain behaviors** of big cats and their **welfare**.

