

Integration of zoo-kept Przewalski horses into a herd of Przewalski horses living in a semireserve

Anne Berger, Mandy Wolfram
Forschungsverbund Berlin e.V. (IZW)

Naturally, horses live in groups in which all individuals are long-term acquainted with each other and a stable hierarchical system is established. In conservation management, introduction of horses into foreign groups is often required but will lead to fights, stress and increased health risks for the animals. We investigated the integration process of four Przewalski mares from the Zoo Leipzig into the herd of five Przewalski horses of the semireserve Liebenthal (Brandenburg, Germany). We observed changes in social hierarchy as well as a higher stress level (expressed by disturbed activity pattern and lower synchronization with environmental conditions) especially in the introduced horses (from Zoo Leipzig). We investigated the animals continuously over two years to detect what time is needed for a successful integration. Finally, we give some advice for the integration of Przewalski horses into a new herd to reduce the stress of the animals substantially.

Keywords:

Przewalski horse, introduction, stress

Corresponding author: