

CONTRACTOR

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Radiant floor heating goes to dogs, cats, elephants...

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WHEN I BEGIN to think of some interesting radiant floorheating installations, some of the funniest stories come from the jobs that have something to do with animals. Cold-blooded or warm-blooded, it doesn't seem to matter; they all equally enjoy the benefits of the radiant systems.

Lucy, who lives in the Zoo in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada is an Indian elephant who has lived in the elephant house for a number of years. She had the odd habit of standing with one foot off the ground, shifting from one foot to another throughout the day, and she would always sleep standing up.

Lucy is a popular attraction at the zoo, so when it came time to renovate the elephant house, zoo officials decided to install radiant floor heat. Well, the cold weather came, the system was activated and Lucy was in her house. All of a sudden the big animal went down to her knees, rolled onto her side, and stretched out and fell asleep.

The zoo keepers and spectators were alarmed. Lucy had never laid down since she was at the zoo. They feared Lucy was ill - she refused to stand up in her new home.

After careful examination it was found that nothing was wrong with Lucy at all, she just loved the new warm floors! So now, when it's viewing time for Lucy, the zoo keeper goes in and turns off the zone to her floor so she will return to an upright position.

Another group of animals living at the Minneapolis zoo in Minnesota who seem to be thriving in a climate that normally would be impossible for them.

When the reptile house was built, it was determined that radiant heating should be used. Consistent temperatures are important in helping to maintain healthy reptiles in captivity even though they are cold-blooded. It is a rather large reptile house so more than one zone was installed in the floor.

Once again the job was completed and the lizards and iguanas were introduced to their new habitat. Quite soon the keepers noticed that the reptiles were spending less time in the trees and bushes and more time on the floor in a somewhat dormant state. Could they be ill, is something wrong? Of course not! These cold-blooded creatures are simply enjoying the warmth radiating up from below. For them it is like spending a day out on the warm desert sands.

Since reptiles are normally slow moving - and there really isn't much action in the reptile house anyway - zoo keepers have devised a way to encourage more physical activity in the reptiles, which, in turn, makes it a more attractive exhibit. The floor heating system is now set up so that as one zone is turning on another is turning off. Usually the reptiles are sleeping or resting comfortably on the warm slab, usually all in the same section. Gradually the slab begins to cool down as it is shut off. The animals awake, stir, and quickly scurry about in search of the floor zone which is now warmest.

There are many other examples of utilizing radiant floor heating in animal habitats and the animals reaction to it.

Animals tend to migrate to the warm areas, such as the chicks in a chicken farm in Ontario, Canada, where they line up one behind the other in a spiral pattern that exactly mimics the tubing layout design preferred by the heating contractor.

Kennel owners find they too can keep the cages cleaner and also have more content dogs and cats. I guess it's safe to say that our animals friends enjoy and benefit from radiant floor heating systems as much as their human counterparts.

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