

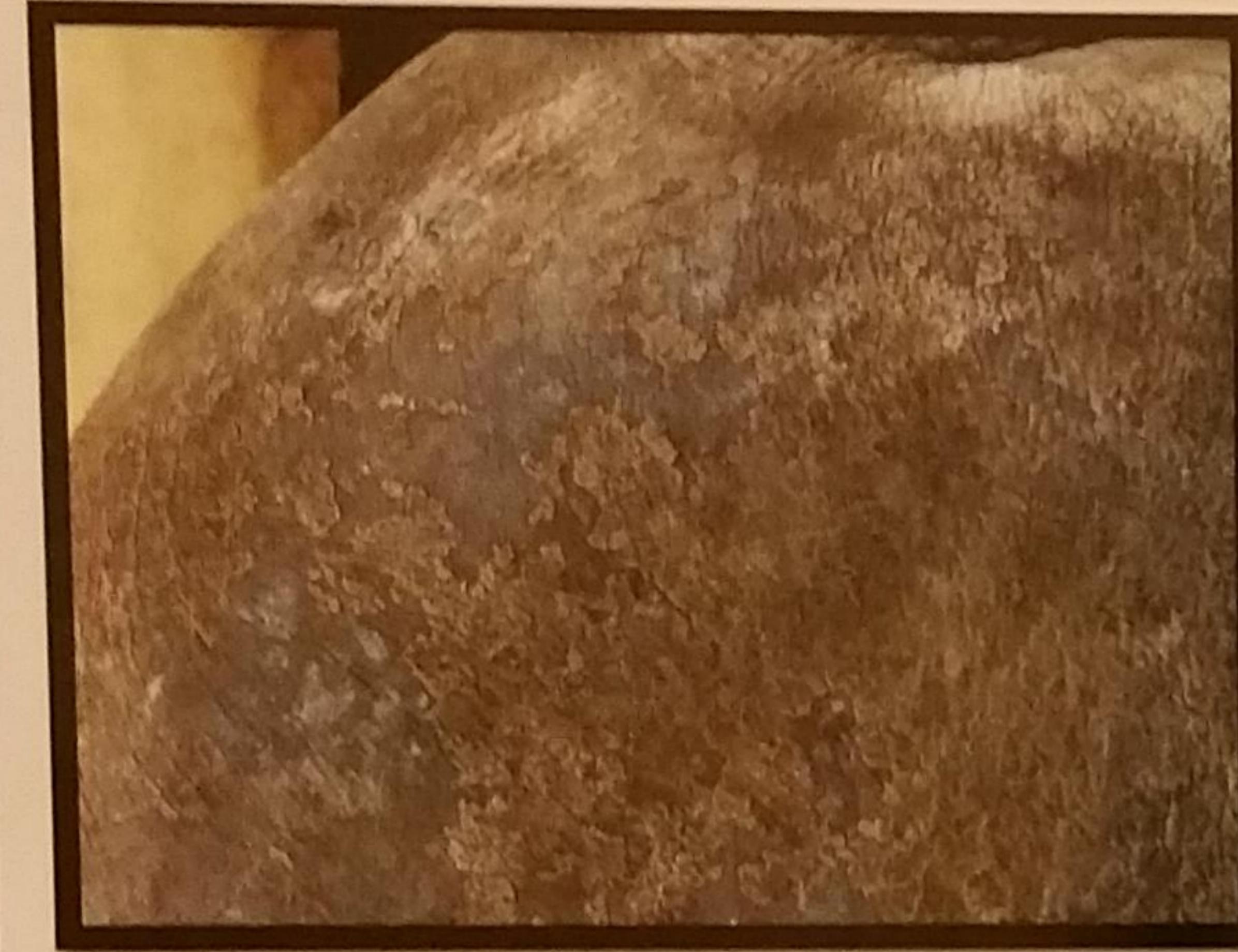
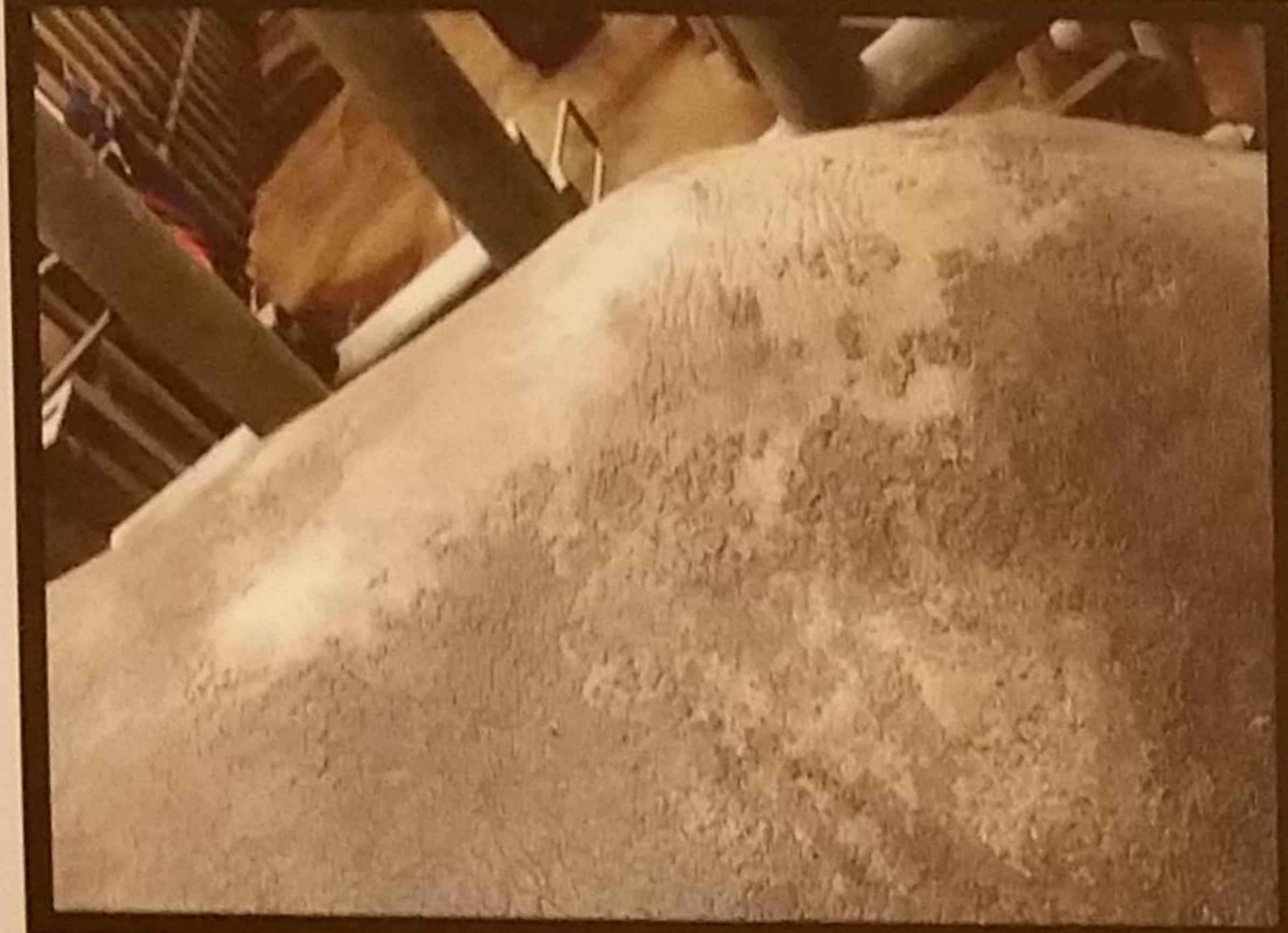
"NO SKIN OFF MY BACK!"

Solving the exfoliative dermatitis conundrum at the Toronto Zoo

Deserrai Burke, Keeper Gr. 3
Africa Savanna – Toronto Zoo

PROBLEM

Massive patches of dry, peeling skin starting along spine and rump, progressively peeling downwards over winter months



METHODS FROM 2013-2015

Treatment of Symptoms

TOPICAL APPLICATIONS:

- Shea Butter, Zinc Oxide Cream (with Lanolin) and/or Mineral Oil



HUSBANDRY CHANGES:

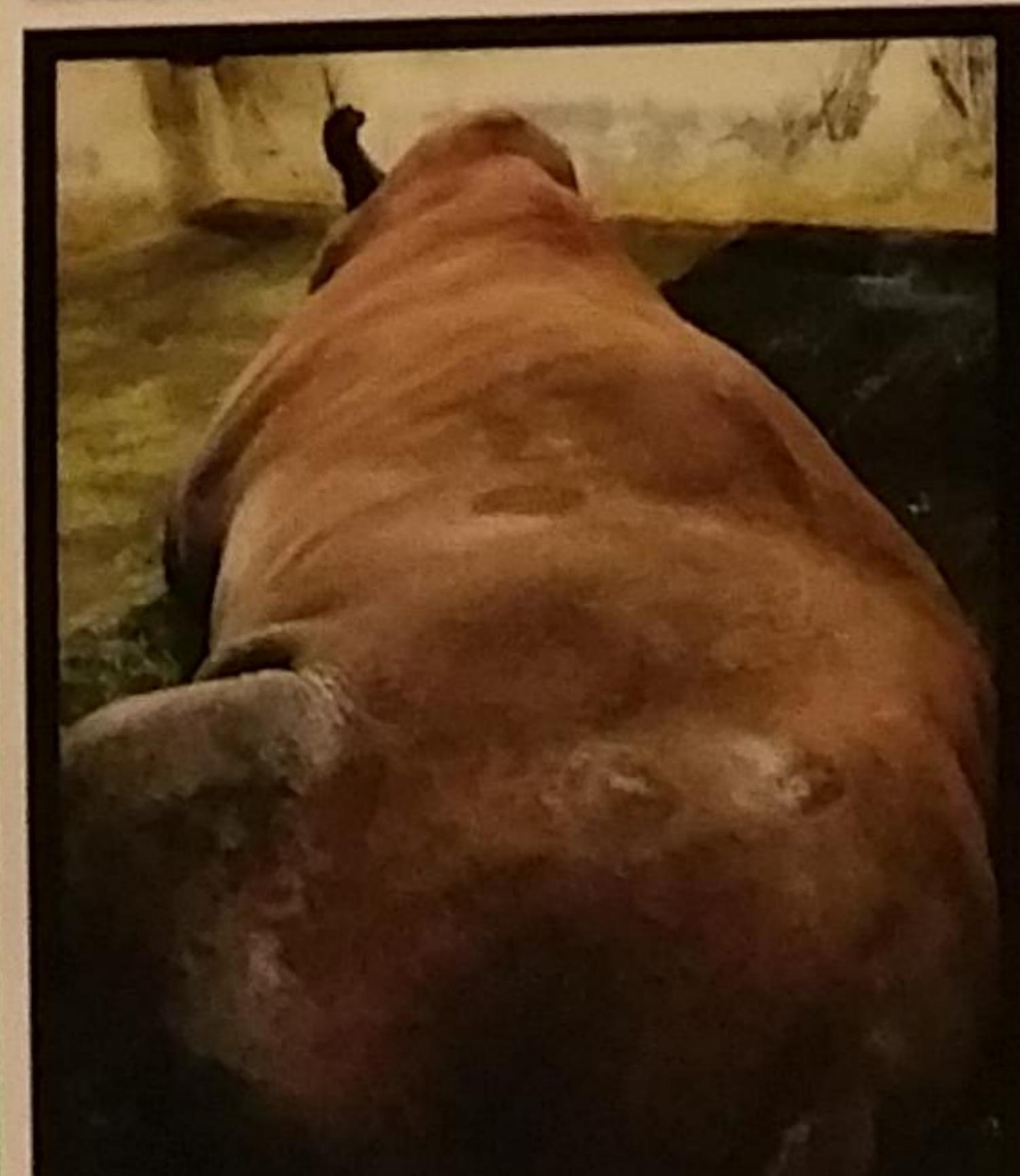
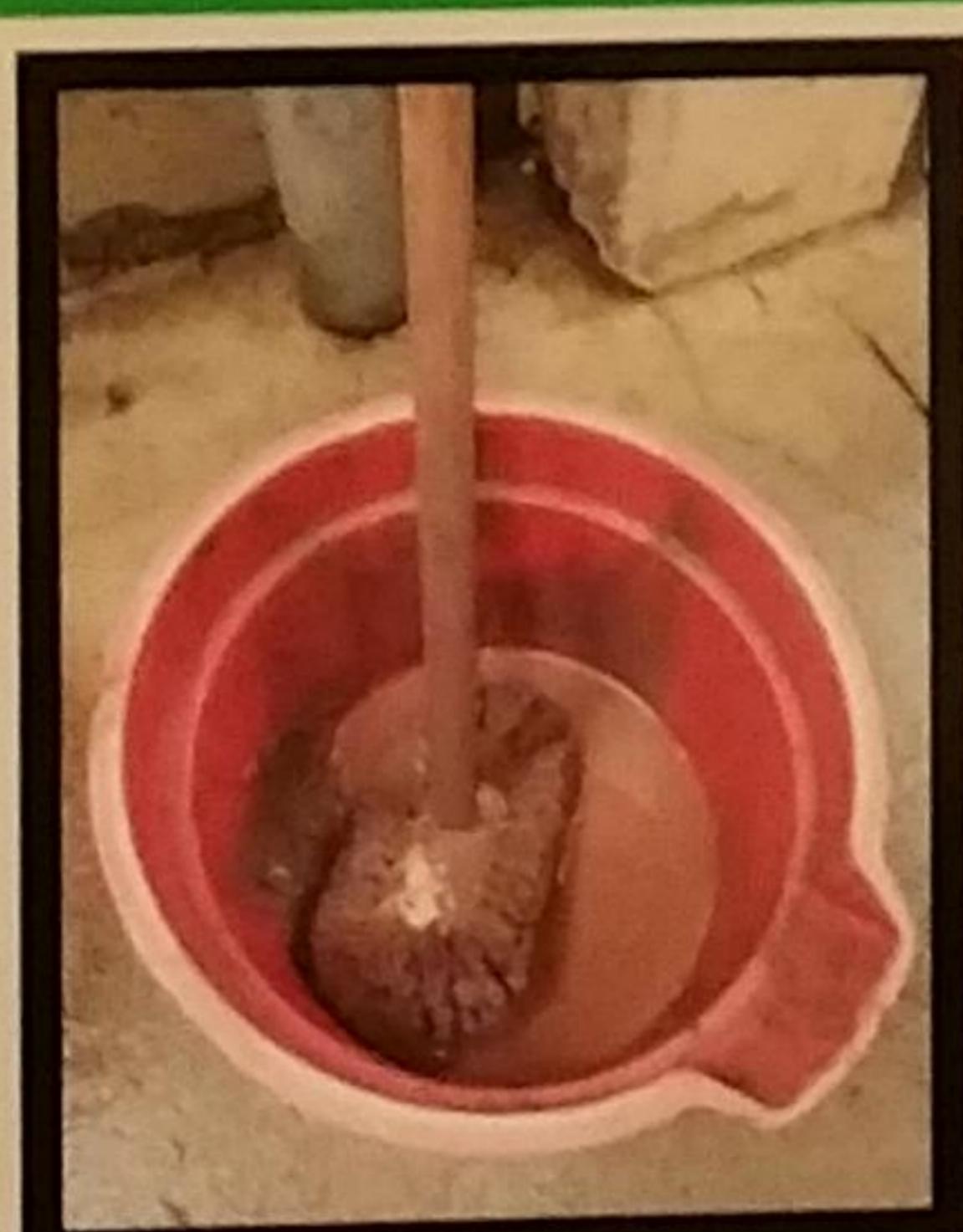
- Decrease showers to 1 x week in winter months
- After a shower, a topical treatment must be applied to the rhinos based on individuals needs

HOUSING CHANGES:

- Winter Temp lowered to 16-19 degrees Celsius
- Mister set up overnight to increase humidity within the barn above 25% r/h

IMPROVEMENTS/ADDITIONS 2016-Present

Although the topical solutions, husbandry and environmental changes helped, keepers came up with the theory that the dry skin may not be due to factors brought on by winter housing but possibly by sunburn incurred in the late summer/fall months. Therefore the focus from 2016 to present has been to prevent dry skin from occurring in the first place. A topical application of clay is manually applied by keepers along the spinal area from shoulders to rump starting when exhibit access is started for the spring.



DISCUSSION

The 2.2 White Rhinos at the Toronto Zoo have not incurred any patchy, dry skin over the past two winters with keepers having manually applied clay to their backs starting each spring/summer. There were also improvements made to the wallows on exhibit including the addition of clay to the previous sand/dirt mix.

