

Primate Behavior & Culture

We study primates to understand our own behavior

Why are most primates social?

- That is how they learn different behaviors.
- Learning starts with mother/infant pair bond.
- Size of group determined by several factors:
 - Body size, diet, predators, and activity patterns (I.e. time of day/night they are active).

Advantages of social groups (Helps primates to survive)

- Protection from predators
- Controlling food source
- Easy to find mates (important for reproduction and carrying out genes)
- Share information (if someone know where food is share it and make new territory)

Advantages of solitary living

- Less individuals make less noise
- Don't need to share (whatever they have is their's)
 - Food
 - Mates
 - Territory
- Less spread of disease (less contact with others therefore less change of dying from disease.)

Dominance (for social groups)

- Helps maintain order
- Less physical violence
- Can move up or down the social standing if they are smart and strong enough.

Aggression

- Groups still experience aggression.

- Usually over resources or mates.
 - Resolved through one individual submitting or via non-peaceful means.

Affiliation

- After aggressive periods, a group will re-enforce their bonds
 - Grooming
- Altruism
 - When one individual performs an entirely selfless act knowing it will be to their detriment.
 - True altruism is very rare (**I think help without return *recheck**)
 - Reciprocal altruism is more common (if you help one, he will help you in the future)

Sexual selection

- One way to determine a more dominant individual is through sexual selection.
- For males it's about competition
 - Goal is to have as many offspring as possible without having to worry about rearing them.

Behavior to increase fitness

- Recall: what is fitness?
- Example: Howler Monkey

Protect resources

- More food
- More mates
- More offspring

Behavior, Evolution and Humans

Behavior is a continuum that builds from non-human primates, to early hominins (our ancestors), to humans.

What we know is that primates need the parental bond and physical contact, otherwise their social learning will suffer and in some cases they will die.

Primate Culture

- Culture is a shared or learned behavior
- Regional variation in their culture
- Tool use

Culture: Monkeys

Japanese macaques have some culture

- Bathing in hot springs.
- Cleaning sweat potatoes in water.

Culture: Capuchin Monkeys (out of all the monkeys they have the most passed out behavior)

- Have the most culture of all monkeys.
- Nut crack using rocks (tool use).
- Use leaves as sponges to soak up water from tree holes.
- Smack a clam against a tree trunk until it opens up so that he can eat it.

Culture: Gorilla

- At least one has been recorded testing water depth
- May have been using the stick for balance and stabilization

Culture: Orangutans