

ANT 3514 – Introduction to Biological Anthropology
Primates Handout
LAB 3, Week of 1/19/04

Sampling Methods and Data Collection

Data on primate (and other animal) behavior are usually collected using established sampling rules and recording rules. Sampling rules tell you which animals to watch and when while recording rules tell you how to record this information (Martin and Bateson 1993). For this lab we will be using **ad libitum** (ad lib) sampling and **instantaneous focal animal** sampling.

Ad lib sampling: no specific constraints are put on what is recorded or when. Observers write down anything that seems relevant or interesting at the time. Ad lib sampling is most useful in recording rare events such as copulations or predation that might be missed in focal animal sampling.

Data collected ad lib might look like this:

1020: adult male grooms other adult male.
1114: monkey eats caterpillar.
1205: subject visually scans sky for 30 seconds.

Instantaneous focal animal sampling: This is really made up of two parts – instantaneous sampling and focal animal sampling. Instantaneous sampling is a recording rule that tells you how to record something. Focal animal sampling is a sampling rule that tells you what animal to watch and when.

Focal animal sampling means that one animal is observed for a period of time and its behavior is recorded. Focal animal sampling should be used when you need to know how often something happens. With this method, you can tell how much of their time an animal might spend resting or feeding, as all of their time is accounted for.

Instantaneous sampling means that at designated time intervals the behavior being observed *at that instant* is recorded. Data collected this way might look like the following:

Start time: 1030 Focal animal: juvenile male

Interval 1: scratch
Interval 2: move
3: move
4: drink out of hole in tree
5: drink

6: rest
7: rest
8: catch grasshopper
9: eat grasshopper

These are just two examples of many data collection methods.

Social Systems:

These are the most common types of primate social systems:

One-male group: Single adult male living with several adult females and their offspring

Fission-fusion society: large group splits into smaller subgroups, which usually consist of an adult female and her offspring or a group of adult males. The large group will join together again at particular feeding spots.

Monogamous Family: one adult male, one adult female and their offspring.

Multi-male group: Several adult males and females and their offspring

Polyandrous: One reproducing adult female and her offspring plus several sexually active males