

Cooperative behavior of captive primates.

Anna-Sophie Haider
haider-anna@aon.at

Diploma Student
Advisor: Helmut Kratochvil

This diploma thesis looks at potential cooperative behavior in three captive primate species, namely *Cebus apella*, *Saimiri boliviensis* and *Lemur catta*. Current scientific data from previous studies about the cooperative behavior of *Cebus apella* have ambiguous results, whereas data about cooperative behavior of *Saimiri boliviensis* and *Lemur catta* appears to be omniscient. In order to fill this gap of knowledge, an experiment in which the primates had to act cooperatively to solve a task was conducted with all three species in the “Tiergarten Wels”. During the experiment, the monkeys were presented with an experimental apparatus that had two handles that needed to be pulled simultaneously for solving the task. The handles were attached to a paddle where a reward and weights were located, with the weights having the function that one individual could not pull the reward closer on its own, but needed a partner. There were two main research questions, namely whether the monkeys could solve the task by cooperating and if not by cooperation, which other attempts for solving the task are there. While all three species failed to understand the cooperative task, numerous different alternative solutions, which provide insight into the cognitive abilities of the monkeys, could be observed. The information gained from this experiment can help provide captive primates of the respective species with appropriate enrichment and adds to the current body of knowledge.

Key words

Cebus apella, *Saimiri boliviensis*, *Lemur catta*, cooperation, pulling task, tool use