

STONE TOOLS FOR NUT CRACKING AND FOR DIGGING ROOTS AND TUBERS BY WILD CAPUCHIN MONKEYS IN SERRA DA CAPIVARA, BRAZIL

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The spontaneous use of stone tools to crack encapsulated food is rather the rule than the exception among wild tufted capuchin monkeys (*Cebus libidinosus*) inhabiting savannah-like environments such as Brazilian cerrado and caatinga. Populations in Serra da Capivara National Park (Piauí, Brazil), though, exhibit a seemingly unique tool-kit, including not only the use of sticks as probes (to access bee nests or dislodge small animal prey from rock clefts), but also the use of stones for a variety of purposes, such as cutting plant parts or digging out roots and tubers. The explanation for this enhanced tool-kit is still unclear, but could be related to larger group sizes (optimizing the conditions for the dissemination of behavioral traditions) and/or to the abundance of potential stone tools. Learning to unearth underground plant storage organs could be facilitated by the observation of wild peccaries' foraging. The use of stick probes by archaic capuchin populations, as happens to most organic tools produced by extinct hominins, is "invisible" in the archaeological record; the use of stone tools, on the other hand, can in principle be detected by archaeological techniques. Considering that Serra da Capivara is one of the most important archaeological sites in Brazil, and that nut cracking and digging tools are important items in the tool-kits of early American *Homo* populations, the proper identification of this lithic tools and the species responsible for its use is of utmost importance both to human and nonhuman primates' archaeology [Funding: FAPESP, CNPq, CAPES; support: FUMDHAM].

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