

**SOCIAL FACILITATION OF LEARNING OF A COMPUTER-BASED TASK IN CAPTIVE GROUP OF MANDRILLS (MANDRILLUS SPHINX)**

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There are few studies on the behavior of mandrills because of the difficulty of studying them in the wild. To investigate their cognitive abilities, we started training a group of captive mandrills with a touch-sensitive screen in April 2008. At the beginning of this study, the group consisted of a pair of adults and their offspring. All subjects were naïve to cognitive testing. We trained them in their outdoor enclosure, where visitors could see the experimenter as well as the animals. The experimenter presented a monitor to the subjects. The subjects were not isolated and all of them had the opportunity to touch the monitor. During the first phase, the adult male was the only individual who partook in the training. Even though other individuals showed some interest towards the food reward, they did not touch the monitor. During the subsequent training phases, the rewarded stimulus on the monitor was gradually reduced in size by a half, a quarter, and a sixth of the monitor screen. As the task difficulty increased, the adult male lost his motivation and finally gave up on the training. At that time, a 10-month-old infant spontaneously started to touch the monitor. From the start, the infant showed a much better performance than the adult male. After 16 months, an 8-month old infant, born in April, 2009, also started touching the monitor spontaneously and showed no difficulty in contacting the stimuli. This study highlights effects of dominance, age and social facilitation in task acquisition in mandrills.

Keywords: mandrill, cognition, touch-monitor, social facilitation