

**TESTING METHODS FOR ASSESSING THE REINFORCING EFFECTS OF CHOICE IN PRIMATES**

J. Moody<sup>1</sup>, N. Perriello<sup>1</sup>, C. McCann<sup>1,2</sup>, E. Metzger<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Wildlife Conservation Society/Bronx Zoo, Bronx, New York, USA*, <sup>2</sup>*New York Consortium in Evolutionary Primatology, New York, New York, USA*

*Presenter's Email: [jmoody@wcs.org](mailto:jmoody@wcs.org)*

For animals in captive environments, choice-making opportunities are significantly more limited. It is therefore often suggested that one will improve welfare by providing individuals with increased opportunities to make choices. The effects of providing choice-making opportunities to humans and animals have been investigated using a variety of procedures but with inconsistent results. Consequently, there is a strong need to develop experimental and analytical frameworks to objectively measure the impact of such strategies employed to improve welfare. This research addresses the question of whether there is inherent value in access to choice in primates; and how reinforcement rates may vary across species [*Trachypithecus cristatus* (n=4); *Gorilla gorilla gorilla* (n=4)] and social rank. We utilized a concurrent chain procedure in which preference for conditions in a terminal link was measured by the relative rate of responding in the initial link. While data collection is still underway, we hypothesize that, if the act of choosing is intrinsically reinforcing, then individuals should show a preference for a "choice" condition over a "no choice" condition, even when the consequences of each are equal. Furthermore, we attempt to determine if the value of access to choice varies as a function of social rank; hypothesizing that the value of choice is inversely correlated with an individual's social rank. This study complies with the WCS animal care and use guidelines.

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