



I-INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF ANIMAL SCIENCE IN SEMI-ARID REGIONS

Universidade Federal do Agreste de Pernambuco – UFAPE
July 03rd to 05th, 2024, Garanhuns-PE

Work area: Companion and wild animals

Barriers to food access encourages the use of tools by captive Capuchin Monkeys (*Sapajus libidinosus*)

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It is known that capuchin monkeys (*Sapajus libidinosus*), in natural habitat, have the ability to obtain and process food, developing the skill to tools use to eat foods of varying hardnesses. Notably, this species stands out for its ability to use and make refined tools, to overcome environmental limits to access the resources, although there are doubts regarding the preservation of this ability in specimens born and held in captivity. Therefore, this study aimed to evaluate the skill to make and tools use tools capuchin monkeys (*Sapajus libidinosus*) born and kept in captivity. The study was conducted with a population of 12 capuchin monkeys in Dois Irmãos State Park, located in Recife - PE. The experimental period was 20 days, with daily observation of one hour, after meal. To evaluate tool making, stones and small tree branches were available and, as items to encourage their use, whole fruit of macaúba (*Acrocomia aculeata*), of oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*), and larvae of mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*) and rat neonates, deposited on bamboo stakes with side holes of about 2 cm in diameter. The observations allowed us to verify that, although the animals never had contact with the natural environment, the news items encouraged the curiosity, manipulation, and tools production, increasing in time spent eating. It was also possible to note that the use of this practice allowed the animals to expand the range of stimuli and experience. It was found that the technique allows the transmission of knowledge between individuals, when young animals, after observing hierarchically superior animals tools use, repeated them until they were successful, although some gave up before thriving. Therefore, this practice of environmental enrichment is an important tool for reducing the monotony in the enclosure, as it allows animals to exhibit more complex behavioral profiles, consistent with ones in nature.

Keywords: environmental enrichment; well-being.; ethology

Acknowledgements

This study was supported by the UFAPE, UFRPE and Dois Irmãos State Park.