



# Animal Observation

Although zoo animals are not in their natural setting, they increase our understanding of animal behavior in the wild and how to study them in the field. You will be observing an animal using an observation technique called **instantaneous sampling**. This means behavior is measured at interrupted times.

Primates provide the best observation opportunities. Please look on your map for the capuchin monkeys, cotton-top tamarins, ruffed lemurs, squirrel monkeys, spider monkeys or black and white colobus monkeys.

The behaviors you will look for are *grooming, foraging and other*. Review all the behaviors and their definitions below before you begin so you are familiar with the terms and their meanings.

1. Use the **Monkey Observation Worksheet** to complete this activity. You will record a behavior every 30 seconds over a period of 10 minutes. **Your leader will need to have a stopwatch or a watch with a second hand to keep track of 30 second intervals.**
2. Select ONE monkey to observe during this time period.
3. When your leader tells you “time,” record the behavior you observe at the exact time. It will either be grooming, foraging or other.
4. Do this every 30 seconds until all 20 lines have been filled.
5. At the end of your observation, total each column and figure out the number of times your monkey spent grooming and foraging, as well as any other behaviors you observed. Note that sometimes the monkeys aren’t very active. This is natural with all animals at certain times. Record the numbers you have above the number 30 in the boxes at the bottom of the chart where it says “totals.”

## Behaviors

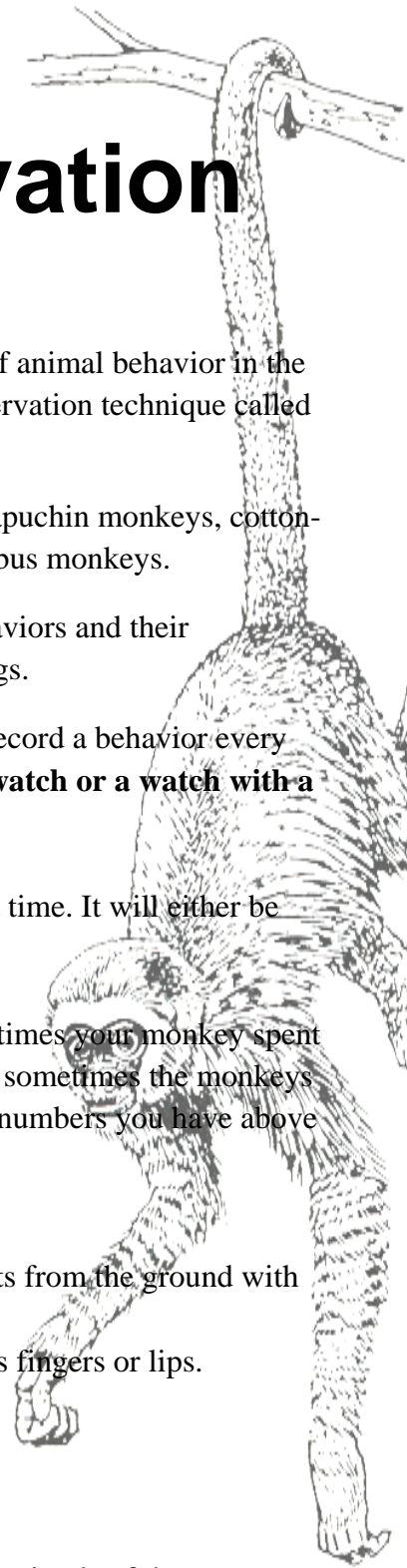
**Foraging:** When a monkey picks up small objects such as a grass blade, seeds or insects from the ground with its hands.

**Grooming:** When a monkey parts fur with its hands and removes fine particles with its fingers or lips.

**“Other”:** Behaviors might include

- **Branch shaking** – Shaking a branch is a display to attract attention.
- **Climbing** – Any movement on vertical surfaces.
- **Resting** – Animal is standing, sitting or reclining. It is inactive and still.

**Social behavior** – Any contact between the animal under observation and one or more animals of the same species.





# Monkey Observation Worksheet

Primate being observed: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of observed animal: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Weather: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of observed animal: \_\_\_\_\_



**Ready, Get Set, Go!**

Time	Grooming	Foraging	Other
:30			
1:00			
1:30			
2:00			
2:30			
3:00			
3:30			
4:00			
4:30			
5:00			
5:30			
6:00			
6:30			
7:00			
7:30			
8:00			
8:30			
9:00			
9:30			
10:00			
<b>TOTALS:</b>	— 30	— 30	— 30

Why do you think observing the weather is important during your observation?

What did you learn from this activity?

