

TALK

HOW TO OBSERVE BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

Observing behavior is essential for understanding how individuals interact with their environment, navigate social challenges, and adapt to evolutionary pressures. However, behavior is a complex trait and rarely reproducible. Researchers therefore require systematic observation methods in order to collect reliable and standardized data and to draw meaningful conclusions. Using Japanese macaques (*Macaca fuscata*) as an example, we provide a comprehensive overview of established observation techniques used to study behavior in non-human primates living in large social groups. Our talk addresses the handling of field observations and video data, as well as the methodological applications on both the individual- and group level. While discussing the significance of behavioral studies and their methods, we also acknowledge limitations and challenges. Finally, we briefly introduce novel technologies, such as automated tracking systems and machine learning, which are gaining increased attention in the field of behavioral research.