

BEHAVIOR BASICS

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What is behavior?

“STATES”

- Feelings
- Activities
- A way to get things
- Emotions
- Wants, Desires
- Postures
- Chain of actions

“EVENTS”

- Actions
- Stimulus/response
- Instinctive reflexes
- A movement
- A sound
- Gesture
- Expression

OBJECTIVES

- Discovering questions
- What to record
- How to observe

DISCOVERING QUESTIONS



Basic Questions

What?

Why?

Who?

How?

When?

Where?

How to find answers?

Decide what to record

- Activity States
- Action Events

Decide how to observe

- Ad libitum (freestyle)
- Focal individual
- Group scan

WHAT TO RECORD?



Activity States

- Feeding
- Resting
- Locomotion
- Vigilance
- Social
- Grooming
- Agonistic (fight/flight)
- Exploration

Action Events

- Step
- Chew
- Ear flick
- Lie down
- Stand up
- Raise head
- Lower head

Measurements

➤ Activity States

- **Duration:** number of seconds (or min.)
- **%:** time feeding/ total observation time

➤ Action Events

- **Count:** frequency of events
- **Rate:** # of steps/ observation time

HOW TO OBSERVE?



Group Scan

Activity State Species	FEEDING	NOT FEEDING
ELK	////	///// //
BISON	///// /	///// /////

Focal Individual

Sample #	Activity State Duration of feeding	Action Event Count the steps (left rear foot)
Sample 1	3 secs.	8 steps
Sample 2	5 secs.	15 steps

Ad Libitum (freestyle)

Time	Description of behavior
00:01	5 elk bunched together, 2 wolves running around them
00:05	Wolves wander off, elk stay bunched, calf in center
01:15	Wolves stay away, appear uninterested in elk, sniff, wander
08:25	Wolf goes into forest; direct trot

SUMMARY

➤ **Discover questions**

- ✓ Ad libitum observations (e.g. wolves & elk)

➤ **What to record**

- ✓ Activity states- duration (seconds)
- ✓ Action events- counts (# of steps)

➤ **How to observe**

- ✓ Focal Individual (e.g. single elk)
- ✓ Group Scan (e.g. elk and bison)

SOURCES

- www.tamu.edu/ethology
 - Courses=>WFSC 422- asking questions
 - Courses=> WFSC 620- lab exercises
 - Courses=> WFSC 622=>apply
 - WWW links=>Fun Stuff
 - ABS/SCB=> educational materials
- Martin & Bateson (1993) Measuring behaviour. Cambridge Univ. Press