

Study: Chimps don't care about friends

October 26 2005

University of California-Los Angeles scientists say helping others is apparently a uniquely human habit -- or, at least, not a habit shared by chimpanzees.

Joan Silk and colleagues conducted a behavioral study and found chimps are not interested in doing a good deed for a neighbor, even if it would cause them no inconvenience or harm.

The researchers presented captive chimpanzees with an apparatus that gave them a choice: a chimpanzee could serve only itself with food, or it could select an alternative option giving both it and another chimp the same food.

The scientists report the chimpanzees were no more likely to choose the second option, even though they could see it would help a friend at no cost to themselves.

The results suggest chimpanzees' actions are not motivated by other-regarding preferences. And the researchers said the lack of such consideration for other chimps was especially surprising since the chimpanzees used in the study had been living together in stable social groups for many years.

The study is detailed in this week's issue of the journal *Nature*.

Copyright 2005 by United Press International

Citation: Study: Chimps don't care about friends (2005, October 26) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-10-chimps-dont-friends.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.