

Using networks to map the social lives of animals

September 2 2008

Dr Dick James from the University's Department of Physics has released a practical guide for biologists explaining how social network analysis, a method used widely in the social sciences to study interactions among people, can be used to study social structures within animal populations.

Traditionally, students of animal behaviour have looked either at interactions between pairs of animals, or at global behaviours of populations; however using social network analysis researchers are able to study social structures at all levels.

These methods have been used already to analyse data collected on the social behaviour of a wide range of animals including fish, insects and mammals. The guide gives an introduction to these methods for researchers and students with no prior knowledge of network theory.

The book, "Exploring Animal Social Networks" was written in collaboration with behavioural ecologists Dr Darren Croft from the University of Wales, Bangor and Prof Jens Krause from the University of Leeds and is available now from Princeton University Press.

Source: University of Bath

Citation: Using networks to map the social lives of animals (2008, September 2) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2008-09-networks-social-animals.html>

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