

Monkeying around in Belgian zoos brings girls out on top

August 24 2011, by Yann Ollivier



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A female bonobo has been named "the world's smartest ape" after beating chimpanzees distracted by male rivalry in a contest between two Belgian zoos, whose results took scientists by surprise.

The chimps, generally a more aggressive, male-dominated species than bonobos, were expected to take the title.

But the winner turned out to be a non-dominant female named Djanoa who showed proof of uncommon patience and perseverance, said Jeroen Stevens, a [primatologist](#) with the Royal Society of Zoology of Antwerp.

Or, maybe she just liked nuts more than the others, he added.

"Now the real research begins" on personality and social order and .. snack food preference in the monkey world, he said.

The match this summer was organised "above all as a game", said Stevens.

It pit the [bonobo](#) team at Planckendael Zoo in Mechelen against the chimp team at Antwerp Zoo, both in Belgium's northwestern Flemish region, just as the latest incarnation of the Planet of the Apes movies was to hit big screens the world over.

The initiative meant to draw attention and raise funds for a campaign aimed at cutting down on monkey hunts in Cameroon, where "bush meat" is often considered a prized delicacy.

Inspired by a popular Flemish quiz show, "The Smartest Person in the World", the contest put the two closely related species through six tests in which the apes had to use rudimentary tools like branches to extract nuts or oranges from hiding places.

Citation: Monkeying around in Belgian zoos brings girls out on top (2011, August 24) retrieved 30 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-08-monkeying-belgian-zoos-girls.html>

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