The Evolution of Problem-solving Abilities in Carnivores: Badgers and Bears to Snow Leopards and Spotted Hyenas

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THURSDAY, JULY 30th 2015, 5:30pm

“The evolution of problem-solving abilities in carnivores: Badgers and bears to snow leopards and spotted hyenas”

Sarah Benson-Amram, Assistant Professor
University of Wyoming

How do you give a hyena an IQ test? How do you design an IQ test that is fair for both a 1-pound dwarf mongoose and an 850-pound polar bear? In this talk, Dr. Sarah Benson-Amram will discuss her attempts to solve these problems. Specifically, this talk will summarize several research projects: one study that investigated whether wild spotted hyenas can count the number of intruders in their territory, a second project that examined whether wild and captive spotted hyenas can solve a puzzle they have never seen before and identified what distinguished successful from unsuccessful individuals, and a third project that investigated the problem-solving abilities of 43 species of carnivores in zoos and asked whether a species’ brain size predicts it’s ability to solve a novel problem.

Barbecue at 5:30 with hamburgers, veggie burgers, hot dogs, chips, salads and dessert for a $5 donation. The talk starts at 6:30 in the historic Berol Lodge at the AMK Ranch. Turn right when entering Leek’s Marina parking lot in Grand Teton National Park. Reservations not required.

For further information contact Harold Bergman or Michael Dillon – (307) 543-2463 – Bergman@uwyo.edu

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