

STUDY REPORTS

1. Title : Individual Behavior patterns and 24-Hour Activity Rhythms of Captive Slow Lorises.

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Objective The behavior of the slow loris, Nycticebus coucang, a prosimian primate indigenous to Thailand and Malaya, has not previously been studied in the laboratory. This series of observations was a first look at the major activity patterns seen in laboratory cages with an emphasis on 24-hour cycles.

Description Three adult males and three adult females were the subjects. They were housed individually in steel framed 28" × 24" × 21" mesh wire cages, each of which was covered on all sides, except the front, with opaque paper and lit inside with a dim red bulb. The cages were empty except for the animal and a food bowl.

The observer sat behind a black curtain, 8 feet from the animals and observed the animals through a small hole in the curtain. A red light over his head provided illumination. A check-list procedure was employed for the observation. At intervals of five minutes, the experimenter glanced at each animal long enough to determine which activity it was engaged in at the moment and noted on a time-ruled check-list the particular behavior observed. The following major categories of behavior were used: Locomotion (Walking, climbing, rub perineal region on floor = RPR); Sleeping posture (sitting with head between thighs; lying stretched out); Non-sleep, non-locomotory posture (sitting anterior part body raised; crouched with thigh, knee and elbow joints flexed; all fours; standing erect with hands on wall of cage; sitting with hands on wall of cage); Grooming and cleaning (Scratch with hind foot; lick self; lick and wipe); Ingestion (dip hand in milk and lick; lap with tongue; hold food off floor; hands on food on floor; touch food with mouth not hands; eat feces); Elimination (Defecate; urinate without RPR); Look out front of cage.

During the period August 22–31, 1967, 72 hours of observation were carried out, three observations of each animal for each hour of the day and night.

Results The major results are presented in Figures 1 and 2. The picture of Nycticebus coucang as a nocturnal, light shunning animal with a simple behavior repertoire was confirmed. The data indicate that even when food is freely available, the slow loris remains active throughout the night with no important changes of any particular behavior as the hours progress. Since activity onset and decline are rather abrupt and associated respectively with the hours of sunset and sunrise, it is likely that illumination level is an important determinant of activity level in the slow loris. This notion is reinforced by the observation that turning on the fluorescent white lighting of the animal room at night caused all of the animals to assume a sleeping posture within a few minutes.

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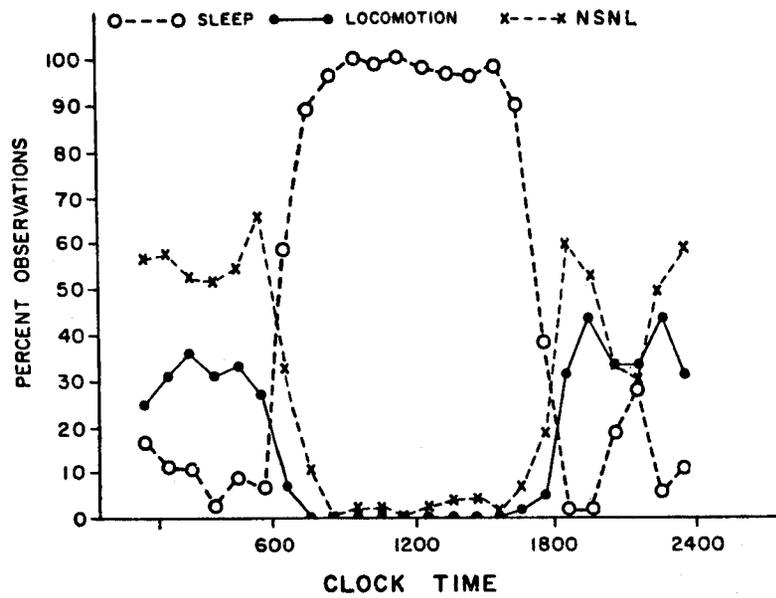


Fig. 1. — Changes in Sleeping posture, Locomotion and Nonsleep, Nonlocomotory patterns during a 24—hour period.

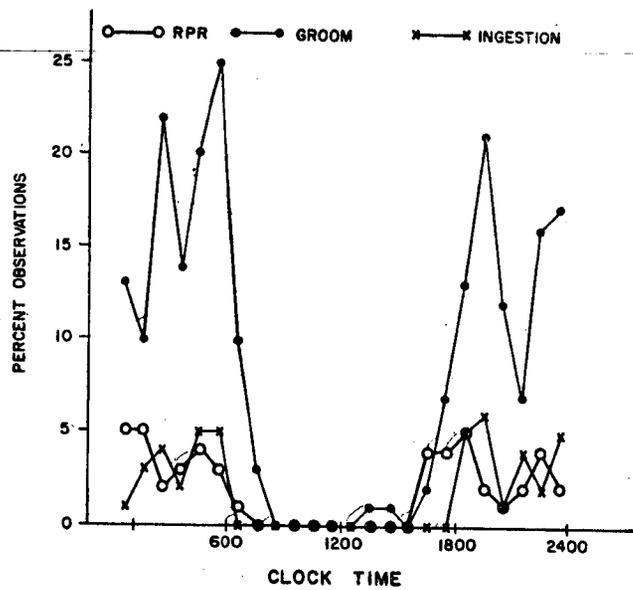


Fig. 2. — Changes in marking (RPR), grooming and ingestion behaviors during a 24—hour period.