
David Powell, Ph.D.

Bronx Zoo

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Faculty Research Area

General Area of Research

Behavioral ecology of mammals in the wild and in zoos, with emphasis on social behaviors, mating systems, systems of dominance/subordinance, animal personality, and welfare

Description of Current Research

Areas of interest where ABC students can focus: assessment of personality characteristics in animals, application of personality data to captive management and well-being, or other compelling welfare research, population and demographic research in zoo animals. Also interested in studies of zoo breeding programs and factors affecting sustainability.

Requirements and Benefits for Student

Essential and Desirable Background Knowledge and Skills

Essential: Strong quantitative skills (statistical programs and data manipulation in Excel) and critical thinking ability including the ability to identify and evaluate relevant literature. Previous coursework in animal behavior and statistics.

Desirable: programming skills, familiarity with automated data collection tools (e.g. Observer, JWatcher).

Expected Responsibilities

Students wishing to conduct research at the Bronx Zoo should be prepared to meet regularly with zoo staff and collect their own data. Regular communication is critical to the success of a master's thesis.

Expected Benefits

Students will be exposed to many aspects of captive animal husbandry and the operations of a world class zoological facility as well as have access to a very diverse mammal collection for study.

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