

WELLINGTON

ZOO

ANIMAL  
BEHAVIOUR  
STUDY

The Keepers at Wellington Zoo spend a lot of time monitoring the animals to make sure that they are behaving as they should and are always alert for any unusual behaviour.

**Now that you're spending time at home, you have the chance to be like a Zoo Keeper and observe your pets like a Keeper does.**

Don't worry, if you don't have a pet at home you could just as easily study the birds outside your window, a spider on your fence, or even one of your primates at home (brother or sister). This activity can be easily adapted for all ages, and all it takes is a keen eye and a lot of patience.

You will study your subject using a time budget while on the lookout for different behaviours. Your time budget might be a day, a week, or even a month! And remember this activity is all about gathering data so the more you do it, the more data you will collect.

Once you've decided how long your study is going to run for, and how often you are making observations it's time to work out what you're looking for.

Start by looking for some of these common behaviours: like **resting, grooming, eating, locomotion** (moving around), and **playing**. Don't forget to include any other behaviours you notice too!

## Recording the Data in an Ethogram

An **ethogram** is a cataloguing technique used by researchers to examine how groups of animals or individuals behave.

Ethograms can be used when watching behaviour in time budget studies to record data on how animals spend their time.

The data obtained from these behavioural studies can be used in conservation work - both ex-situ (in zoo) and in-situ (out in the wild!).

- **What can you use this data for?**  
You can find out which parts of the house or garden your subject spends the most time in. Is this behaviour what you expected, or is there something that might make another part of the house more desirable?
- **When is your subject most active; morning, afternoon, evening, or a combination of all three?**
- **How does your subject interact with others, and can you think why this might be?**

TIME	BEHAVIOUR ABBREVIATIONS					NOTES: Is there something affecting this behaviour, eg. It's dinner time
				N/V	Other	

Print out the ethogram template on the next page to get you started!



# ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR STUDY ETHOGRAM

## 1 DETAILS

Name: .....

Animal Species: .....

Number of Animals: .....

Date: ..... Time: .....

Weather: .....

Other Info: .....

## 2 ABBREVIATION KEY: THIS IS WHERE YOU RECORD THE CODE WORDS THAT YOU USE TO DESCRIBE THE ANIMAL'S BEHAVIOR

ABBREVIATION	BEHAVIOUR	EXPLANATION OF BEHAVIOUR
N/V	Not Visible	Animal goes out of sight

## 3 ETHOGRAM: THIS IS WHERE YOU RECORD ALL OF THE ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR DATA

TIME	BEHAVIOUR ABBREVIATIONS							NOTES: is there something affecting this behaviour, eg. It's dinner time
						N/V	Other	

Put a tick in the appropriate box