Food Preference In Captive Meerkats (*Suricata suricatta*)

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Background

Selective feeding is found in many animal species.
Food preference is known, in some species, to be transferred between individuals by social learning.

Aim

To investigate the food preference in captive meerkats

Method

3-choice food test
• Protein (cricket, zophoba larvae and egg)
• Fruit (apple, banana and orange)
• Vegetables (carrot, tomato and cucumber)
• Combined to make 84 combinations

Results

The food preference has a high positive correlation with protein content ($R_{s=}0.933$; $p<0.01$)
A comparison between individuals showed that the oldest individuals have the most amount of correlations of their food preference to other individuals. Which may indicate social learning

Conclusion

The meerkats prefer food with a high protein content.
They also show social learning from older to younger individuals

Corridor
Bowls
Door
Sluice
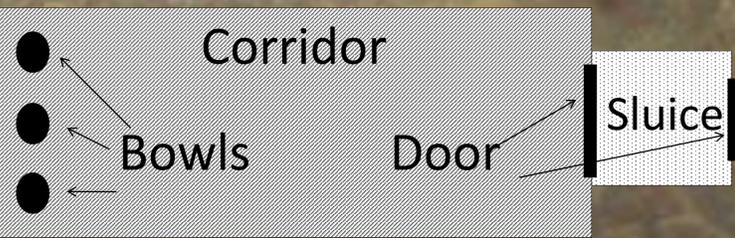
The test arena used. The food items were presented in the bowls. The sluice was used to let the right meerkat in