

CEE Seminar: SEB building, Room 122. Thursday November 12, at 10 am

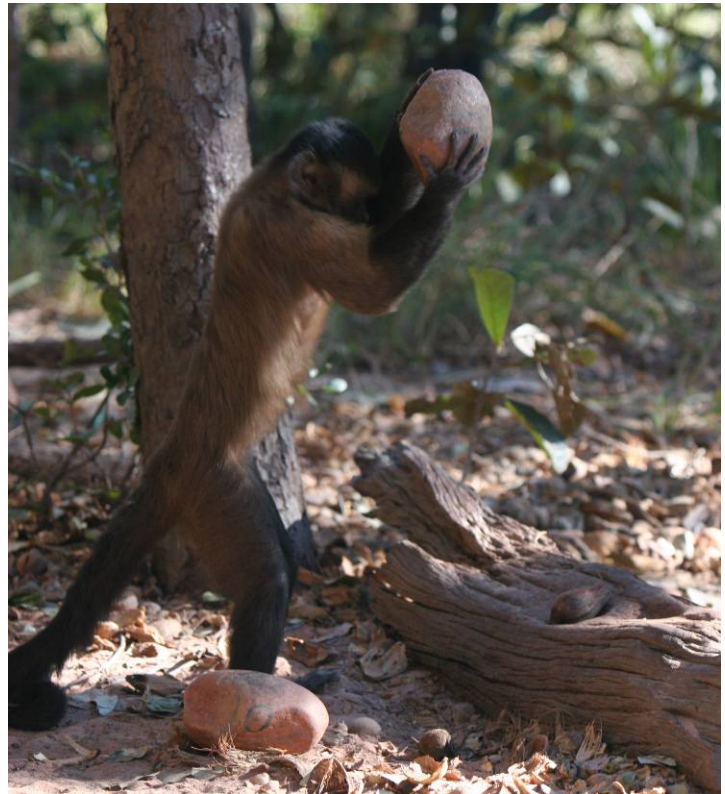
**Hercules with a tail:
A natural history of nut-cracking
in bearded capuchin monkeys**

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In 2004, Dr. Fragaszy and colleagues described for science what local residents had known for centuries: that wild monkeys in the Cerrado of Brazil routinely use stones as hammers to crack tough palm nuts on anvils. Percussive tools are the first kinds of tools documented in the archeological record of our ancestors, and chimpanzees living in western Africa use percussive tools. However, we thought that monkeys did not do so. Routine tool use of any form in wild South American monkeys came as a surprise, causing deep reappraisal of the biological foundations and contexts of percussive tool use in extant primates and human ancestors, as capuchins are remotely related to apes and humans, and as they are a mere 5% of the mass of humans and chimpanzees (2 - 4 kg, vs. 40 - 80 kg). Since 2004, the EthoCebus research team has documented many facets of the biology and behavior of the nut-cracking monkeys in the Cerrado, and examined the ecology and geology of the area.

In this presentation Dr. Fragaszy will explain when, where and how the monkeys crack nuts; describe the nuts, hammer stones and anvils that they use, where they find them, and how they transport stones and nuts to anvils. Dr. Fragaszy will describe field experiments and discuss lines of inquiry for which she seeks collaborators with different skill sets than biologists bring to the task.



For more information: e-mail jcs@gatech.edu or call ph: 404-894-7605