Studying Primates

“Which one is better?”: It depends on the situation and the researcher and the time time constraints

**Captive**

* Pros
  + Greater access to primates
  + More and easier observation
    - They are contained and cannot leave
  + Controllable environment
    - Temperature, disease, diet, intra-specific conflict (conflict between members of the same species)
  + Manipulation (experiments) is possible
* Cons
  + Artificial stresses
  + Cannot study ecology
  + Impacts life history and behavior
* In captivity (like a zoo or cages)
* Not natural

**Semi-free-ranging**

* Pros
  + Greater access to primates living in groups and sometimes foraging in natural habitats. Observation and population measure facilitated by known range (e.g. an island)
  + Tagging organisms is easier
* Cons
  + The limited range or habitat of the population, food supply (provisioned by experimenters) may present an evolutionary novel and mismatched problem

**(Free living/wild primates) or Field Study**

* Pros
  + Can study role of **ecology** on behavior and **sociality**.
  + Can study socioecology
* Cons
  + Habituation (to primatologist) may cause stress and takes a long time
  + Once habituated, behavior may be different
  + Observation may be infrequent