



**PRIMATE BEHAVIOR: Spear-Wielding Chimps Seen
Hunting Bush Babies**

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different tack, according to lab officials. Brookhaven National Laboratory in Upton, New York, foresees a 20-week run of its Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider—which last year relied on a \$13 million private donation—but no new design work for the proposed \$775 million National Synchrotron Light Source II. A delay also seems likely for a suite of instruments known as SING-II at the Spallation Neutron Source at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, and a neutrino experiment called NOvA at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, Illinois. At the same time, the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility in Newport News, Virginia, hopes to press ahead with an upgrade of its CEBAF particle accelerator even if it means running fewer experiments this year.

NIH hopes to make an additional 500 research grants, including \$91 million for



Not yet. Brookhaven's proposed new light source is likely on hold for another year.

a new investigator fund, \$40 million for short-term, high-risk “junior pioneer” awards, and \$69 million for the National Children’s Study (*Science*, 9 February, p. 751). The 2% overall boost may look small for a \$28.3 billion agency, but it is a “tremendous victory,” says Jon Retzlaff, legislative director of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, compared to flat funding in the president’s 2007 request and some 450 programs that have been cut from 2006 levels.

NASA is among that group, and the chair of the agency’s spending panel, Senator

Barbara Mikulski (D–MD), apologized for not doing better during the negotiations. “This joint funding resolution is not what anyone wanted,” she declared immediately after the vote. The only silver lining Mikulski could find in a \$16.2 billion budget that falls \$400 million below 2006 levels is that science accounts were not raided to provide some \$460 million designated for new exploration vehicles.

Despite the expectation that 2008 will be another tough budget year, Pelosi’s spokesman, Drew Hammill, says that the 2007 budget “is the first step of good things to come for science funding.” Lobbyists sure hope he’s right. “Science continues to win bipartisan support,” says Joel Widder of Lewis-Burke Associates in Washington, D.C. “But the arithmetic still stinks.”

—JEFFREY MERVIS

With reporting by Adrian Cho, Jennifer Couzin, and Eliot Marshall.

PRIMATE BEHAVIOR

Spear-Wielding Chimps Seen Hunting Bush Babies

The right to bear arms has long been considered a distinctly human privilege. But apparently the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution applies to chimpanzees too, at least while they’re out hunting small game.

Researchers in Senegal recently spotted wild chimpanzees biting the tips of sticks, which they then used like spears to jab small primates called bush babies. Anthropologist Jill Pruetz of Iowa State University in Ames was astonished when her project manager saw a chimp thrust a sharpened stick into a hole in a tree and pull out a limp bush baby to eat, according to a report in the 6 March issue of *Current Biology*.

“This is stunning,” says primatologist Craig Stanford of the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. It’s the first time a nonhuman primate has been known to make a lethal weapon for hunting other animals, he says. “This is no anecdote, as they have 22 cases,” adds primatologist William McGrew of Cambridge University in the U.K. “Once again, chimpanzees



Bush baby, beware. Senegal chimps like this one attacked bush babies with sharpened sticks (inset).

exceed our imaginations.”

Anthropologists have known for some time that chimpanzees are adept at making and using stick and stone tools, for example to probe termite mounds or crack nuts. And researchers have seen gangs of male chimps kill monkeys by beating and biting. But they thought only humans used tools to hunt.

Pruetz’s team, working at the Fongoli research site in the wooded savanna of Senegal, observed chimps breaking off green branches and in four cases using their incisors to sharpen the points. The chimps,

which typically weigh 26 to 60 kilograms, were hunting nocturnal bush babies, 100- to 300-gram primates that hide by day in holes in trees. In all, Pruetz and Paco Bertolani, a graduate student at Cambridge University, documented 10 different chimps thrusting the tools into holes in 22 instances. “This is habitual,” says Pruetz, whose team logged 2500 hours of observations.

Other researchers were impressed by the observations, although some noted that the researchers saw only one bush baby actually killed. “Could they have been rooting around for something else?” asks primate behavior ecologist John Mitani of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Pruetz says the chimps’ intent was clear: They jabbed the sticks in the holes with enough force to injure prey and far more vigorously than when probing for termites. And bush baby remains were common in chimp feces, indicating they were regular fare.

In another surprising twist, most hunters were females. “It’s a double whammy,” says Pruetz. “It doesn’t fit the old paradigm of Man the Hunter.” Make that Chimp the Hunter.

—ANN GIBBONS

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