

Bonobos' tool use mirrors that of early humans

Bonobos can be just as handy as chimpanzees. In fact, bonobos' tool-using abilities look a lot like those of [early humans](#), suggesting that observing them could teach anthropologists about how our own ancestors evolved such skills.

Until now, bonobos have been more renowned for their [free and easy sex lives](#) than their abilities with tools. They have never been seen to forage using tools in the wild, although only a handful of wild populations have been studied because of political instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where they live.

As for those in captivity, [Itai Roffman](#) of Haifa University in Israel and his colleagues previously observed one captive bonobo, called Kanzi, [using stone tools to crack open](#) a log and extract food. However, it was possible that Kanzi was a lone genius, raised by humans and taught sign language, as well as once being shown how to use tools.

To find out if other captive bonobos shared Kanzi's aptitude, Roffman's team looked to animals at a zoo in Germany and a bonobo sanctuary in Iowa. The team gave them a series of problems that required tools to solve – for example, showing the bonobos that food was buried under rocks, then leaving a tray of potential aids such as sticks and antlers nearby.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Bonobos use a range of tools like stone-age humans](#)