

Chimps may possess ‘theory of mind,’ are capable of understanding minds of human

A chimpanzee, a scientist with a stick and a researcher in a King Kong suit may sound like the setup for a bad joke, but it is in fact the basis of a recent study that provides the first evidence that great apes—that is, bonobos, chimpanzees and orangutans—possess an understanding of false belief, a hallmark of “theory of mind.” This ability to understand that others have mental states and perspectives different than our own has long been considered unique to humans.

In the study, published Thursday in *Science*, a team of scientists recorded the eye movements of three great ape species while the animals watched videos of a man searching for a hidden object that had been moved without his knowledge, and found that they looked more frequently at the location where the man expected the object to be (a belief the apes knew was false), even though the object was no longer there. The findings suggest the apes were able to intuit what the human was thinking.

Frans de Waal, a primatologist who studies social intelligence at Emory University and was not involved with the work, wrote the study design “is a genuine breakthrough...”

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Chimps May Be Capable of Comprehending the Minds of Others](#)**