



WILD DISCOVERIES

The effect of social interaction on vocalization in horses

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The proposed research is to measure and evaluate whether horses vocalize more when groups with others, or when isolated. Horses were observed in solitary and group settings for hour long periods throughout the week in order to collect efficient data. Each vocalization was recorded after each occurrence along with the time, temperature, horse description, type of vocalization, and any comments. Isolated vocalization occurrences were not common in the collected data. A total of 164 vocalizations were recorded, of which 33 were recorded in isolation and 131 were recorded in a group setting ($P < 0.05$). A total of 9 neighs and 24 snorts occurred when isolated, compared to a total of 38 neighs and 93 snorts in the group setting ($P < 0.01$). The average number of vocalizations per hour when alone was 1.27 compared to 1.68 in a group setting ($P < 0.05$). Overall, our findings supported our hypothesis that horses were more vocal in a group setting, compared to being isolated. Vocalizations were more pronounced when horses ate hay in vicinity from each other.