

White, Jessica, “Artificial Food Use by Five Wildlife Species in Three Restaurants in Punta Leona Resort, Central Pacific Coast, Costa Rica.” Advisors: Mike McCoy and Dr. Christopher Vaughan. Colorado College. 2011. 26pp.

Feeding behavior was studied of five wildlife species- white-nosed coati (*Nasua narica*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), white-faced capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*), long-tailed grackle (*Cassidix mexicanus*), and black iguana (*Ctenosaura similis*)- in acquiring artificial food in three restaurants in the Punta Leona Resort on the central pacific coast of Costa Rica. The study included direct observation of species in each restaurant and interviews with restaurant employees. All species were directly observed being fed by human visitors, except the long-tailed grackle. Of the species observed being fed by human-visitors, 40% were black iguanas, 40% were white-faced monkeys, 13% were raccoons, and 7% were coatimundis. Mean maximum group number according to long-tailed grackle gender was greater for females ($\bar{x}=2.85$) than males ($\bar{x}=1.32$). Employee response rate to restaurant with most species visitations was significantly greater in Carabelas ($P<0.0001$). Employee response rate to meal with most species visitations was significantly greater for breakfast ($P<0.0001$). Employee response rate was dependent on food acquiring strategy of each species. According to employees there are greater species visitations during the dry season than wet season. This study demonstrated consistent artificial food usage by five wildlife species and attraction to food in restaurants in Punta Leona Resort. Further research includes determining how this consumption of artificial food is affecting species diets and health, and testing solutions to manage species feeding in restaurants. Recommendations include decreasing habitat destruction by decreasing further development of Punta Leona, using wildlife deterrents such as electric pulses and sticky substances, and better informing resort guests of implications of feeding wildlife.