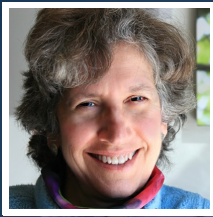


Monkeying Around with Social Evolution



Marina Cords

Professor of Ecology, Evolution & Environmental Biology and Anthropology

CURRENT RESEARCH

Reaping the benefits of a long-term primate study in Africa

Primates are highly social animals with much to tell us about the evolution of social systems. Much of our knowledge of primate social behavior comes, however, from a limited set of species, chosen either because of their close relatedness to humans (e.g. chimpanzees) or because they are relatively easy to see in open habitats where they live (e.g. baboons and certain macaques). However, primates are fundamentally forest-dwelling animals, and knowledge about species living in forests is much more limited. Dr. Cords' team examines the social and reproductive strategies of individual forest-dwelling blue monkeys in the context of their social groups, including patterns of social exchange, feeding behavior and reproduction. The team keeps up long-term individual-based data collection on basic life history events (births, deaths, immigrations and emigrations) that facilitates shorter-term aims.

Dr. Marina Cords, Professor of Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology at Columbia University, began studying blue monkeys thirty-five years ago, when almost nothing was known about the social behavior of these primates. Today, her study population is the only one (for any guenon), and one of only a few primate populations worldwide, in which there is deep background knowledge of individually recognized animals that allows researchers to assess animal age and kinship, two central variables that explain social patterns.

The presence of Dr. Cords' long-term project in the Kakamega Forest has also played a valuable role in forest conservation. Over the years, Dr. Cords has constructed three "conservation education resource centers" equipped with a library and educational materials for the Kakamega Environmental...

AFFILIATION



Columbia University

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. in Zoology 1984, University of California, Berkeley
- B.S. in Biology 1978, Yale University

AWARDS

- Elected Fellow, American Association for the Advancement of Science, elected 2006
- Outstanding Academic Title 2003, Choice Book Award (American Library Association), for Glenn, M.E. & Cords, M. (editors), 2002
- Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Society, elected 1985
- Phi Beta Kappa, Yale University, elected December 1977

RESEARCH AREAS

Environment, Ecology

FUNDING REQUEST

Your donations would help continue the important longitudinal research on this wild primate population. Dr. Cords' work is ongoing and requires a minimum of \$20K per year for field assistants, travel, supplies, infrastructure repair, and permits. An additional \$15K would fund more field and computer-lab assistance, while an additional \$60K would allow her to hire specialized staff.

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