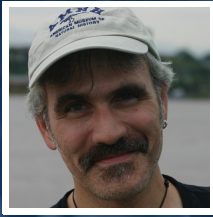


Understanding the Origins of Human Behavior Through Neotropical Primate Studies



Anthony Di Fiore
Professor, Department of Anthropology

CURRENT RESEARCH

Observing the social interactions and behavioral strategies that New World monkeys share with humans

Nonhuman primates, our closest mammalian relatives, have long been studied to understand the evolution and patterns of human social interactions. While our close relatives—chimpanzees and gorillas—are often used as models in such studies, Dr. Anthony Di Fiore, Professor in the Department of Anthropology at University of Texas at Austin, focuses on species from a different lineage of primates from the neotropics, known as the New World monkeys, or platyrrhines. These species are only very distantly related to humans, sharing a common ancestor with us about 40 million years ago. But these New World primates converged independently on some of the same patterns of behavior and sociality that arose in the human lineage. Dr. Di Fiore and his colleagues conduct long-term behavioral and ecological field research on several species of wild primates in the hyper-diverse Yasuni Biosphere Reserve in lowland, Amazonian Ecuador, looking at aspects of social interactions and behavioral strategies they share with humans, including their grouping patterns, mating systems, and patterns of parental care. Studying these topics helps us better understand the ecological and social factors that underlie these behaviors, without the confound of a shared recent evolutionary history.

To get a long-term perspective on what a nonhuman primates' social system looks like, animals must be studied in their natural environment for a significant period of time. Dr. Di Fiore has worked in South America studying primates for more than 25 years. He collaborates with a large group of graduate students, assistants, and fellow academics, many of whom are from primate habitat countries in South and Central America (Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia,...

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AFFILIATION



The University of Texas at Austin

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. in Anthropology 1997, University of California, Davis

RESEARCH AREAS

Environment, Ecology, Sociology, Genomics / Congenital

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will help fund Dr. Di Fiore's continued research on the social and behavioral systems of New World primates. Costs for Dr. Di Fiore's field team of 4 researchers are ~\$15K per person per year, and material costs are \$1.5K per year. Specialized GPS collars for animal tracking costs ~\$3K each. To support lab research, your donation will help fund the \$30K/year for one postdoctoral researcher, and \$5K/year for lab materials, including reagents, DNA extraction, PCR, and sequencing materials.

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