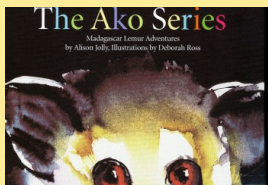




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Yale Researchers find sharing childcare duties helps lemurs



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The August edition of the Yale News features research about lemur parenting habits like sharing nests with other mothers and 'pooling' of infants by multiple mothers.

"Mothers that cooperate have more time to eat and take care of themselves and, in turn, their offspring are more likely to survive," said Brenda Bradley, assistant professor of anthropology and co-author of the study.

"And some mothers - but not all - end up moving in and creating communal nests to cooperatively raise offspring," said Andrea Baden, post doctoral researcher and first author of the study. "While two or three mothers are off fulfilling other needs, like foraging and socializing, one will stay behind to babysit and protect infants in the nest, including those that are not her own."

Yale researchers not only observed lemur behavior in the wild but conducted genetic tests on the lemurs to determine whether the nest sharers were related and simply creating a sort of family compound. Intriguingly, non-relatives and kin both share nests.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)



LCF Intern Research Projects

Did you know that, in addition to their hard work in animal husbandry or other special focus areas, our LCF interns conduct some inspiring and important research at the LCF Myakka City Lemur Reserve?

Alison Zak studied Mongoose parenting, with special interest in paternal contributions to lemur infant development:

Ms. Zak's project is intended to increase understanding of mongoose lemur infant development and parental care. No prior research has focused on these aspects of this species' life history. To accomplish her research goal Ms. Zak used basic behavioral data to develop an activity budget and explored the extent to which mongoose lemur males are involved in the care of their infants compared with females. She observed infants in their family groups for periods of time and noted the frequency of specific behaviors.

"The mongoose lemurs at the Myakka City reserve are housed in groups that take into consideration the social structure of wild Eulemur mongoz. In the wild, bonded male-female pairs live in small, primarily monogamous groups with their immature offspring (Curtis 1999). Primates considered to be monogamous often exhibit characteristics such as pair-bonding, paternal care, and territoriality (Kleiman 1977). This project will assess the degree of paternal care in captive mongoose lemurs. Direct paternal care behaviors include transporting, feeding, grooming, and defending, and agonistic aid (Kleiman 1977, Strier 2007). According to the parental care theory, a species with increased paternal certainty should provide increased paternal care. (Moller 1998). Male mongoose lemurs living in

monogamous pairs have increased paternal certainty and would therefore benefit from directly participating in the care of their offspring. So, it can be suggested that male mongoose lemurs will spend a significant amount of time participating in paternal care, though the mother is still the primary provider of infant care. Data on adult and infant behavior, parent-infant social interactions and proximity will be collected and analyzed to assess the accuracy of this claim with regard to *Eulemur mongoz*."

[CLICK HERE TO READ ABOUT OTHER INTERN PROJECTS AT LCF](#)

Your support helps LCF provide education opportunities for young scientists, and helps us ensure a bright future for lemurs. [DONATE HERE](#) to support our education and conservation programs.



Dr. Natalie Vasey Joins the LCF Scientific Advisory Council

Dr. Vasey is Associate Professor of Biological Anthropology at Portland State University. Prior to arriving in Portland, she was a faculty member in the Howard University College of Medicine and a Research Associate at Pennsylvania State University. She earned an undergraduate degree from the University of California, Berkeley and a Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis. Dr. Vasey is an accomplished scientist and educator and a dedicated conservationist.

Her research explores the behavioral ecology, life history adaptations, and evolution of primates with a focus on the endangered and recently extinct primates of Madagascar. She has authored over 30 publications and co-edits two monograph series, "Cambridge Field Studies in Primatology" (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming) and "Primate Field Studies" (Prentice Hall, 2004-2009). Her research on variegated and white-fronted brown lemurs of the Masoala Peninsula, northeastern Madagascar began in 1993 and is among the only multi-decade studies of rain forest lemurs in eastern Madagascar. Dr. Vasey has been affiliated with the Lemur Conservation Foundation since 2006 when she piloted a field school at the Foundation's Myakka City Lemur Reserve. Since 2009 she has directed and taught a field training course at the Reserve every year, introducing talented students to field-based primatology. In 2009 she began visually documenting the lives of lemurs from the rain forest canopy. Future plans involve bringing attention to vulnerable rain forest canopies in northeastern Madagascar through documenting canopy biodiversity at large.

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