

Primate Communities

Although the behavior and ecology of primates has been more thoroughly studied than that of any other group of mammals, there have been very few attempts to compare the communities of living primates found in different parts of the world. In *Primate Communities*, an international group of experts compares the composition, behavior and ecology of primate communities in Africa, Asia, Madagascar and South America. They examine the factors underlying the similarities and differences between these communities, including their phylogenetic history, climate, rainfall, soil type, forest composition, competition with other vertebrates and human activities. As it brings together information about primate communities from around the world for the very first time, it will quickly become an important source book for researchers in anthropology, ecology and conservation, and a readable and informative text for undergraduate and graduate students studying primate ecology, primate conservation or primate behavior.

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Preface

During the last four decades, the primates of Africa, Asia, Madagascar and South America have been the subject of hundreds of field studies involving millions of hours of observation. Despite this remarkable effort, there have been only a handful of attempts to undertake broad comparisons of the primate faunas in different biogeographical regions in order to document and understand their similarities and differences. This volume is an effort to make a start in addressing that major gap in our understanding of primate evolution. By bringing together a group of researchers with many decades of combined experience in all the major regions of the world inhabited by primates today, we hoped to summarize our current understanding of the factors determining primate community biology, highlight the many lacunae in our knowledge, and provide a baseline for future research in the area.

Like many projects of this nature, this one has a long history and has only been possible through the efforts and generosity of many people and organizations, especially the citizens and governments of countries inhabited by non-human primates today who have permitted and supported the research by primate field workers that ultimately formed the basis of the studies summarized here. The Wenner–Gren Foundation provided funds, and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin provided the space, for a workshop on “Primate Communities” in 1996

that enabled many of the authors to discuss this topic face-to-face over three intense days in Madison, Wisconsin. We especially thank Dr Sydel Silverman, President of the Wenner–Gren Foundation, and Drs Karen Strier and Margaret Schoeninger for their support of the workshop. Joan Kelly was indispensable in organizing the workshop.

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