

White, F. J. Ecological correlates of the female bonded social system of pygmy chimpanzees.

Pygmy chimpanzees (Pan paniscus), like common chimpanzees (P. troglodytes), have a fission-fusion social organization. The two species, however, differ in social structure and details of ecology. This paper reports the results of a two year field study of the behavioral ecology of Pan paniscus in central Zaire. Unlike common chimpanzees female pygmy chimpanzees are highly social in their grouping patterns and rarely spend time alone. These socially bonded females show high levels of affiliative behavior including frequent groomings and mutual homosexual behavior. A major part of the diet of Pan paniscus comes from many species of large fruiting trees. These trees contain many feeding sites and often produce fruit for extended periods. Feeding party size and the frequency of affiliative behavior was related to the amount of food in a tree. This work was supported by NSF research grants BNS83-11251 and BNS83-11206 and a grant from the Boise Fund.

Presented at the XIth Congress of the International Primatological Society, Gottingen, Germany. 1986.