

Pygmy chimpanzee nearest neighbors:
ecological and social effects.

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Data on spatial positioning and nearest neighbor choices of Lomako Forest pygmy chimpanzees were collected during 240 hours of focal animal sampling. The mean nearest neighbor distance was 5.5 meters. On average, animals were further apart during feeding (5.8 meters) than for other activities (5.1 meters). Regressions between feeding distance and food patch radius, party size and effective feeding party size each explained little (less than 6%) of the variation. Unlike common chimpanzees at Kibale (Ghiglieri, 1984) pygmy chimpanzees do not disperse as much as possible when feeding. Sex of neighbor influenced maintenance of proximity. When feeding samples were analyzed as time series, results showed that while female-female and male-female pairs remained in proximity, male-male pairs moved apart. Aggressive interactions reduced and aggressive interactions increased feeding distances.

Supported by grants from NSF
BNS8311251 and from the Boise Fund.