

## Book Reviews – Buchbesprechungen – Livres nouveaux

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D. M. RUMBAUGH (ed.): **Gibbon and Siamang**. Evolution, Ecology, Behavior, and Captive Maintenance, vol. 1. Karger, Basel 1972. X + 265 pp. Sfr. 135.–.

The fact that the hylobatids are often called the lesser apes may be excused by their lesser size in comparison with the great apes and perhaps by the lesser cost involved in obtaining and maintaining them, but certainly not because they are less lively and graceful than orangutans, less noisy than even chimpanzees, or less specialized in some features than pongids are in others. Since our scientific knowledge of the 'lesser apes' is even less complete than that of the great apes, this new collection of studies on gibbons and siamangs will be highly welcome. In the first chapter of 89 pages GROVES deals in great detail with the systematics and phylogeny of gibbons. Based upon his review of a relevant literature of 144 titles and his own examination of much material, including the rarer species, GROVES proposes to recognize only one genus *Hylobates*, divided into 3 subgenera (*Nomascus*, *Symphalangus*, *Hylobates*), and to retain it in the family Pongidae. For a variety of reasons the fossil *Pliopithecus* (including *Limnopithecus*) is regarded as not representing an ancestral form of *Hylobates*. The recent species and subspecies are all described as far as possible and compared by many characters of very uneven taxonomic significance. Not all of these systematic conclusions will be accepted by other students of the hylobatids, who may not follow GROVES' tendency to 'lumping' or doubt that such features as the length-breadth index of the baculum or the highly variable relative size of some intestinal parts in merely a few specimens should be given any consideration. As a careful compilation of data and stimulating discussion of their interpretation this chapter will be very helpful for further attempts to solve the difficult problem of the evolutionary history of the gibbons and siamangs. The latter is still far from a final solution; this is shown by the brief contribution of CHIARELLI on the karyotypes of the gibbons, which have so far been studied in only 23 specimens. Based upon this evidence the author suggests that the hylobatids resemble the Colobinae more closely than the Pongidae.

The chapter by CHIVERS is a very interesting comparison between the ecology and behavior of the siamangs and gibbons in the Malay Peninsula, describing many unexpected differences. The observations for the white-handed gibbon had been collected by ELLEFSON and the new and hence specially valuable ones for the siamang by CHIVERS. The full report on the latter will soon appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Bibliotheca primatologica*.

The functional and evolutionary biology of the hylobatid hands and feet is discussed in a scholarly report by TUTTLE, based upon his extensive comparative anatomical studies on the relevant musculature and new observations on the use of the distal limb segments in locomotion. This author's concluding speculations about evolutionary trends, indicated in fossil and recent Hylobatidae, contain some challenging new arguments which do not coincide with the corresponding conclusions of GROVES' preceding

chapter. The numerous, clear and well-chosen photos and the extensive bibliography of this chapter deserve to be specially mentioned.

From their own experience and a thorough review of the literature (of 154 titles) KEELING and MCCLURE have contributed a highly useful chapter on the captive maintenance, clinical management, diseases and pathology of gibbons and siamangs, adding suggestions for their diet, housing, etc. After reading particularly the lists of zoonoses and of the great variety of bacterial and viral diseases, parasites, etc. which do afflict these primates, nobody will want to keep gibbons just as domestic pets. For that reason the final entertainingly written essay by E. HAHN on her experiences with such a pet seems to be rather superfluous. At least it adds nothing new besides the fact that she succeeded in stopping her darling gibbon from biting her by biting him herself!

A. H. SCHULTZ, Zürich

F. JANTSCHKE: **Orang-Utans in Zoologischen Gärten**. Piper, München 1972. 251 pp. DM 19.80 (paperback).

This book gives a thorough account of the author's long-continued, systematic observations on the behavior of altogether 42 orangutans in several German and one Indonesian zoological garden. While many of the detailed records on such activities as locomotion, feeding, nest-making and body-care may have been influenced by the conditions of captivity, they could certainly be more accurately followed than in the jungle. Further sections of this volume contribute careful descriptions of the different, mostly very modest, sounds with their motivations, the kinds and the importance of play in correlation with age and sex, the surprisingly varied modes of sexual activities, as well as the relations between parents and offspring. The evidently very prominent role of curiosity in the life of orangutans has been given its due attention and studied in different situations with the introduction of new objects. From the reports dealing with the use of tools the reader gains even more respect for the remarkable intellectual versatility of orangutans. Most of these varied observations are effectively illustrated with simple, clear outline drawings, based upon photos. Whenever possible, the author compared his findings with the still very limited corresponding information from field studies, which are all included in the extensive bibliography. In the final conclusions of this valuable publication it is emphasized that the typical behavior pattern of orangutans differs in many respects very markedly from the patterns of the African great apes and most likely in consequence of special adaptations of these unusually heavy arboreal primates.

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