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Mahale Chimpanzees: 50 Years of Research

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Most academic disciplines can point to a small group of founders from whom a diaspora of researchers carry on, expanding and challenging the founders' early ideas. For the study of wild chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) – a discipline that transcends the traditional boundaries separating psychology, anthropology and biology – Toshisada Nishida (and Jane Goodall) is more than a founder; he is a pioneer, having initiated one of the great longitudinal studies of a generation. The contributions of Nishida continue despite his death in 2011, revealing themselves in modest and major elements of contemporary research into the great apes, especially chimpanzees. Such intellectual reach, encapsulated in *Mahale Chimpanzees: 50 Years of Research*, contributes to our understanding of chimpanzee adaptation and behaviour. It simultaneously informs us about the evolution of humans and the protection of wild chimpanzee populations [Caldecot and Miles, 2005; Hockings et al., 2015]. Chimpanzees, like all large mammals, are long-lived, and so insights into their complex social worlds can be achieved only through meticulous study of individuals across decades, involving generations of both chimpanzees and academics [Clutton-Brock and Sheldon, 2010].

Longitudinally, *Mahale Chimpanzees* covers a half-century of dedicated research (work began in 1965), one of the longest continuous studies of any wild mammal. Subsections of the book cover social organization, ecology, life history and behavioural diversity amongst others, representing nearly every aspect of chimpanzee life. It is one of the most encyclopaedic collections to date on a single community of animals. On top of vivid descriptions of intracommunity dynamics, the editors include long-term environmental data, for example 30 years of monthly rainfall (1983–2013), as well as providing comprehensive flora and fauna lists, contextualizing chimpanzees within a broader, diverse ecosystem within Mahale Mountains National Park. Whilst some of the work has been published previously, there is new material as well as translations of earlier work.

The volume is appropriate not just for the chimpanzee enthusiast (for whom it is a must), but also for anyone interested in animal sociality. The text is scientific, informative and accessible. Despite the multiple authors, there is a unifying tone and rhythm to the chapters and by the end of the book, one feels immersed in the M group community.

I have only two issues with the volume, both minor. First, the editors cleverly celebrate 50 years of research with 50 different chapters. However, some of the chapters are short and qualitative (chapter 39) or describe topics not well represented at Mahale (chapter 32). At times, these read more like descriptions of chimpanzee behaviour, rather than a history of data from Mahale. Second, after more than 650 pages of rich and informative text, the volume closes with a brief (9 pages) summary on 'Conservation and the future' (chapter 50). Naturally, working in a national park, the contributors have not focused on the plight of Tanzania's extrapark chimpanzees. However, given the threats confronting these populations – namely from expanding human settlements and forest degradation – I would have liked to read more about how research can inform conservation planners or policy. If we want to ensure that Mahale chimpan-

zees do not follow Gombe's into near geographic isolation, the cumulative knowledge summarized in this volume will be critical to protecting the neighbouring chimpanzee communities [Zamma and Inoue, 2004].

These issues notwithstanding, *Mahale Chimpanzees* is an illuminating and exhaustive trek through the lives of a chimpanzee community, which we now likely know better than any other single group of animals. In so doing, the book commemorates Toshisada Nishida's vision and legacy, both of which continue to inspire generations of scientists and help protect the chimpanzees they study. May the next generation of chimpologists be so lucky to read the sequel that marks the centennial of Nishida's pioneering work!

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