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**MACAQUES OF A FEATHER? DO MIXED SPECIES ASSOCIATIONS INDUCE BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES IN ONE OF THE PARTICIPATING MACAQUE SPECIES?**

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The formation of mixed troops – a stable assemblage of individuals of two different species within the same social group – among primates constitutes an intriguing phenomenon in animal behavioural ecology. Such mixed troops appear to be particularly common among sympatric macaques in different parts of Asia, but have remained virtually unstudied. Most mixed troops usually involve the stable integration of a few individuals of one species into the troop of another, sometimes producing hybrid individuals through successful interbreeding. In central India, rhesus and bonnet macaque form mixed troop associations, a surprising finding as they belong to different species-groups within the genus. We conducted a preliminary, two-year study (September 2006 to August 2008) on the social behaviour of two such troops, in each of which an adult rhesus macaque female had integrated into a bonnet macaque group. Our study, which used instantaneous scan sampling and focal animal sampling, revealed no difference in the allogrooming, affiliative and agonistic behaviour displayed by each of the well-integrated rhesus macaque females in the mixed troops with those in a typical rhesus macaque troop. The bonnet macaque females in these mixed troops, however, differed significantly in their behavioural repertoire from those in a neighbouring bonnet macaque troop. An important question that now arises is whether the difference in behavioural patterns exhibited by the bonnet macaques in the mixed troops have been induced by their association with rhesus macaques or whether these patterns are species-typical responses to the local environment in which these troops have formed.

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