

## SELF-MEDICATION IN BONOBOBOS: A REPORT OF LEAF-SWALLOWING FROM LUI KOTALE IN SALONGA NATIONAL PARK, DR CONGO.

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The ingestion of plant items for apparently non-nutritional purposes has been observed in all species of African apes at field sites across Africa. Between September 2008 & June 2009, habituated bonobos at Lui Kotale were observed on 30 occasions to ingest the scabrid plant parts of a woody climber, *Manniophyton fulvum*. We distinguished between leaf-swallowing (LS; N=16) and stem bark-stripping (SS; N=14). SS is a new variant of self-medication and involves a specific sequence of behaviours, undescribed in earlier reports of self-medication among *Pan*. Details of the ingestion of both plant parts was in accordance with assumed self-medicative uses described from other field sites: The species is a). widely available (measured via random plots); b). not consumed regularly (measured via fecal samples); c). not ingested for nutritional benefit (swallowing of single unchewed leaves and strips of bark); d). consumed seasonally; e) ingestion concords with parasitic load (measured via fecal samples); f) consumed by specific individuals only (22% of given party members). LS included all age-sex categories; SS was heavily biased toward adult females. Ingestion bouts were observed both arboreally and terrestrially. An ethogram was developed for each behaviour. Observations revealed similarities across individuals as well as individual differences in the technique of preparing and swallowing. We will discuss our results in the context of culture and self-medication.

Keywords: Bonobos, Lui Kotale, Self-medication, *Manniophyton fulvum*.