

BEYOND SOCIAL MONOGAMY: DNA-FINGERPRINTING REVEALS VARIABLE MATING BEHAVIOUR IN LARIANG TARSIERS.

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For a long time, sociality among primates has been exclusively attributed to diurnal species. Meanwhile a number of sociobiological studies revealed complex social structures also to occur in nocturnal primates including tarsiers. The smallest of all haplorrhine primates exhibits a range of social behaviours and grouping patterns varying from solitary animals to polygynous groups. Sulawesi tarsiers are known to live in family groups. This has also been observed in *Tarsius lariang*, a species endemic to the central and western regions of the island. Thus far, however, data on group structure and mating behaviour of this recently described taxon was lacking. For this reason, we studied a population of Lariang tarsiers in Central Sulawesi for a period of approximately two months recording group sizes and compositions. To complement our field observations of these cryptic faunivores with molecular data, we genotyped 26 tarsiers from 11 social groups at 12 microsatellite loci and obtained mitochondrial cytochrome b sequence information. Thus, we conducted the first genetic study on sociobiology of tarsiers to reveal parentage and relatedness patterns within the sampled population. Our data suggest a predominantly monogamous mating system in Lariang tarsiers. Nevertheless, we also found strong evidence for occasional extra-pair mating suggesting that monogamy seems not to be obligatory in our study species. This work was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft DFG (grant ME2730/1-1).

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