

INCEST AVOIDANCE IN WILD WOOLLY MONKEYS, *LAGOTHRIX LAGOTRICHA LUGENS*, AT LA MACARENA, COLOMBIA

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I monitored one group of woolly monkeys usually twice a year, each time spending about two months, from 1987 through 1998 at La Macarena, Colombia. Females left their natal group at about 6 years of age or adolescence and repeated intergroup migration until they gave birth (Nishimura, 2003). Evidence of male transfer was not obtained in my study. Among males who had their mothers alive in the group 9 were seen to copulate. Their copulatory partners were females other than their mothers, except one male (PC), who repeatedly mated with his mother PT. There was a general tendency for heterosexual grooming to occur much more frequently in mother-son dyads than in any other female-male dyads. The tendency was consistent not only in juvenile males (1-4 years old) but also in adult males (≥ 8 years old). However, PC did not have more grooming interactions with his mother than with other females when and after he was 3 years old, when his sister was born. These observations support the hypothesis that affiliative relation between a mother and son at his infant and juvenile period may inhibit incest between them. On the other hand, there is some possibility that while I was absent from the study site nearly one year adolescent PC was replaced by another male of similar age, who was later seen to copulate with PT. Some recent studies of woolly monkeys in Ecuador suggest that male also transfer (Di Fiore & Fleisher, 2005).

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