

## 35. Animal auxiliaries among hunting and gathering societies

### 16202 - Shared workload, shared qualities : reindeer riding, herding and hunting

Presentation type: Oral presentation

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Among the Eveny, located in Yakutia (Russia), reindeer husbandry play a key role. Our purpose is to analyze the relationships between herders and their animals, the forms of cooperation and the influence on herding and hunting.

For the herders, reindeer riding is the main way of conveyance in the Verkhoïansk Range and the taiga throughout the year and is particularly used for hunting and reindeer husbandry. We will describe the different forms of partnership and collaboration developed through the daily use of the reindeer as a riding animal, starting from his influence on the perception of the environment. By pointing out the importance of the riding as a form of cooperation, we will study this specific collaboration between the herder and his animal, and present the divisions of the workload, shared between human and animal.

Subsequently, in order to understand the different qualities sought by the herders, attention will be given to the selection process. Moreover, main stages of the training will be detailed to observe the status changes of the animal in the herd and the acquisition of dedicated hunting and herding habits throughout the different tasks reindeer will have to realize, particularly such as sledge pulling.

Considering reindeer as different animals, we will look at the specificities that make the mount unique and how do the herders manage their reindeer, according to the various tasks they want to realize. We will focus on the strategies used by herders in order to acquire and exchange animals in order to form an highly valuable duo. The latter is based on intrinsic qualities shared by human and animals, and seems to play a crucial role, especially on the result of the hunting.

## **16184 - Marking seasons: Indicator animals and the Batek**

Presentation type: Oral presentation

**Author(s):** *Lye, Tuck-Po (Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia / Malaysia)*

Batek of Malaysia recognise several categories of "special" animals, including ?asal (original); hala? (superhuman); tahun (fruit season); hantu? (ghost); and lə? (indicator). These are overlapping categories and contextually defined. There are also associations between various groupings of plants and animals, which are encoded in myths and beliefs. Indicator animals might mark diurnal, seasonal, and climatic changes. This paper investigates how indicators might be used practically. It will discuss the proximity of Batek interactions with these animals and whether and how elements of domestication are implied by these interactions.

## **16155 - Werewolves of the Sea: Human - killer whale (*orcinus orca*) relationship in the North Pacific**

Presentation type: Oral presentation

**Author(s):** Holzlehner, Tobias (*Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Halle (Saale), Germany / Deutschland*)

North Pacific mythology and sea mammal hunting practices reveal mutual exchange between humans and orcas. This beneficial relationship is reflected in maritime mythologies and legends that tell of a primordial bond between wolves, orcas, and humans. Imagined as a shape shifter that switches seasonally between wolf and whale form, orcas play a pivotal role in maritime hunting communities past and present. Sea mammal hunters in Chukotka, Russia, cooperate actively with orcas to hunt grey whales and walrus, while the intimate relationship is underscored by a commonly held hunting taboo and ritual exchange. Native hunters and fishermen in the North Pacific appreciate killer whales as hunting companions and food providers, envisioned to live in human-like underwater communities

Tracing human-orca relationships along the Pacific Rim shows not only a common mythological substrate and an intricate human-animal companionship that developed and co-evolved over hundreds of years, but furthermore sheds light on how humans relate to other sentient and highly intelligent beings outside of their own species. Comparing indigenous knowledge with the understandings, that behavioral ecology and evolutionary biology have about orca communities reveal distinctive epistemologies. Yet despite different forms of encoding knowledge, traditional ecological and mythological knowledge, as well as western science, come to surprisingly similar conclusions.

## 15958 - Commensal symbiosis between the honeyguide bird and Congo Basin honey hunters

Presentation type: Oral presentation

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Whatever the latitude, all human societies entertain complex relationships with birds, but these interconnections have a particularly high influence on the life of forest foragers. The characteristics that make birds so special are threefold 1) the ability to fly, 2) the talent of uttering unique sounds, and 3) the habit of coming close to man. Since birds are the residents of the sky, they are frequently perceived as messengers sent by supernatural forces to deliver messages to humans and to mediate the relations between humans and the other surrounding life forms. Catching birds is a hazardous and energetically costly effort with regard to their limited food value. By contrast, birds are highly prized for their ability to sing and for providing basic material to traditional healers for magical purposes. Among the Congo Basin hunter-gatherers, each of the most salient forest products is associated to a particular type of bird that is given the task to guide humans to the coveted resource: bird of the wild yam, bird of the elephant, bird of the okapi, bird of the blue duiker, bird of the bush-pig, bird of the buffalo, bird of the leopard, bird of the pangolin, bird of the viper, bird of monkeys... Such associations are mainly symbolic and seldom empirically true. They bring insight into the complex immaterial relationships of these forest dwellers with their environment. Guidance to beehives by honeyguides (Indicatoridae) is a striking exception since these 'birds of honey' have developed a true symbiotic interaction with humans and other honey consumers. The honeyguide feeds exclusively on beewax and bee larvae. Since it is unable to open nests by itself, it enlists the partnership of mammals, including humans. After locating a hive, the honeyguide seeks out a suitable 'follower', which it then leads to the hive by means of a series of characteristic vocalizations and flight dances. The bird feeds on honeycomb left behind voluntarily by the hunters in exchange of the guidance. Besides being a mutualist with honey hunters, the honeyguide is also a symbiont with cerolytic microorganisms that facilitate the digestion of wax, and is a brood parasite with 39 known hosts. Honey hunting is a prominent activity among the various groups of Congo Basin hunter-gatherers who eagerly look forward to the taste of honey. African forest wild honey is produced by the honeybee *Apis mellifera adansonii* and from a dozen different species of stingless bees and also intervenes as a medium by which social relations are regulated. The paper will explore the various biocultural dimensions of this man-bird commensal symbiosis and question the evolutionary benefits of this rare type of interaction to both partners.

## **15995 - Dogs in Agta Hunting and Raiding**

Presentation type: Oral presentation

**Author(s):** *Griffin, Percival (University of Hawaii Department of Anthropology, Baguio City, Philippines / Philippinen)*

Dogs are an integral and necessary part of Agta life. Dogs are essential as members of hunting teams. Women hunters nearly always utilize dogs in locating, driving and holding deer and pigs. Dogs, even today with traditional raiding practices nearly ended, are early warning systems for the approach of potentially dangerous persons. Dogs are also intimate companions and are often friends of Agta of all ages. Dogs do come at a high cost. They must be fed from the scarce foods of the Agta themselves. Dogs must also be replenished from neighboring farmers' litters of puppies since mortality rates surpass local reproduction. In addition, deaths are common due to illness and hunting wounds. Dogs fit into Agta beliefs concerning hunting luck and the roles of the spirit beings that surround all Agta. The paper explores these aspects of Agta life and examines variation among Agta currently exploiting different social and economic environments.

## **15923 - Warlpiri dog tales: of protectors, companions, and collaborators**

Presentation type: Oral presentation

**Author(s):** *Musharbash, Yasmine (The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia / Australien)*

Through analysis of ethnographic vignettes of contemporary relations between canines and Warlpiri people at Yuendumu, central Australia, I revisit and revise key themes of the Australianist dingo/dog debate of the 1960s and 70s. In particular I focus on (1) hunting and alternative motives for canine/human domestic co-existence; (2) the particular nature of Aboriginal canine domestication and its neo-colonial permutations, and (3) the meanings that flow from canines' "inbetweenness" in regards to Warlpiri ways of understanding and being in the world.

During the great dog/dingo debate, hunting as a motive for the, as Meggitt (1965) called it, quasi-domestication of canines by Aboriginal people was already hotly contested. At Yuendumu today, with guns having replaced spears and spear throwers, and a sedentised rather than a hunting/gathering life-style being the norm for the last three generations, hunting as the primary *raison d'être* for the bond between humans and canines is even less plausible. Participants in the debate advocated other motives: the warmth dogs provide on cold winter nights, their eating leftovers around the camp fulfilling hygienic functions, their ritual importance and symbolic significance, and their providing an "emotional release for nurturant behaviour" (Hamilton 1972:294). Most importantly to my paper, all authors listed the same reason as secondary, namely the protection dogs/dingos provide by alerting a camp to the arrival of strangers, be they human or spirits. I put forward that today, dogs being "the mangy sentinels of the night" (Meehan 1965:100) is the first priority in continuing canine/human entanglements, and has taken on specific characteristics molded to sedentised camp life in remote neo-colonial Aboriginal towns. These I examine in tandem with the other purpose accentuating human/canine continued domestic co-existence: a culturally-specific kind of companionship (very different in both practice and meaning from that provided by, say, 'pets'). Dogs at Yuendumu today, as during the 1970s, continue to be characterized by their "inbetweenness" (Kohlig 1978:109); they are 'of the camp' but not human, essential collaborators in boundary making and maintenance between not only the domestic realm and the world but also between Indigenous and non-Indigenous spheres. In my conclusion, I contemplate this positioning to uncover what Warlpiri/dog relations can reveal about contemporary Warlpiri ways of being in the world.