

Communication-for-coordination: Identifying key communicative abilities supporting joint activities across primates

Thursday 2nd, 11am to 1pm

Speakers:

Alicia Melis

Bas von Boekholt

Adele Tuozzi (to confirm)

Judith Burkart (to confirm)

Zoë Goldsborough

Floriane Fournier

Arthur Touchais

Raphaëla Heesen

Overview:

Successful joint activities rely on the ability to coordinate via communication, synchrony and emotions. For this, partners must flexibly adapt their (communicative) behaviours to solve arising coordination problems during interactions with varying partners. While previous work suggested that non-human primates lacked crucial communicative skills for cooperation, the bulk of former studies was carried on young, encultured chimpanzees, demanding more research on how apes interact with other apes across the age span. Recent research demonstrates the role of communication in mediating natural interactions across primates, from coordinating getting in and out of interactions, turn-taking to multimodal signalling strategies. Nonetheless, cooperation in humans is fostered by additional key interactional communicative skills, notably emotion integration or communicative repair, which remain understudied in other primates. This reveals a crucial gap in our understanding of how human communication for coordination is distinguished from that of other primates.

By gathering new evidence, this symposium will examine the importance of communication, emotion and other interpersonal skills in sustaining cooperative social interactions. Additionally, this symposium attempts to clarify how social interactions may differ in nature between humans and other primates, with a thorough discussion on the concept of joint action. With this agenda, we hope to provide insights into the evolutionary roots of cooperation and interactional communicative abilities, and to inspire new theoretical and empirical directions to disentangle the building blocks that facilitate coordination in primates.

Organizers: Arthur Touchais, Raphaëla Heesen