

Dr Sonja Koski's research legacy: From chimpanzee conflicts to human-horse relationships

Thursday 2nd, 11am to 1pm

Speakers (to confirm):

Kathelijne Koops
Jorg Massen
Liesbeth Sterck
Liza Moscovice
Judith Burkart
Edwin van Leeuwen
Zanna Clay
Veera Riihonen
Elisabetta Palagi
Jeroen Stevens
Emma Vitikainen

Overview:

This symposium will bring together friends and colleagues of Dr Sonja Koski (1973-2025) to remember and celebrate her remarkable research legacy in primatology and beyond. Sonja's first foray into primatological research was her master's project on Thomas langurs at Helsinki University. Sonja then moved to the Netherlands in 2002 to start her PhD at Utrecht University, which focussed on chimpanzee conflict resolution to investigate what the aftermath of chimpanzees fights may tell us about their social cognition. Sonja's post-doc at the University of Cambridge dove deeper into the underlying mechanism of consolation, namely empathy. Subsequently, Sonja tackled another challenging topic, chimpanzee personality. She was the first to describe chimpanzee personality traits based on ecologically relevant observable behaviours. In 2011, Sonja then moved to the University of Zurich and extended her personality research to include common marmosets. In 2013, Sonja returned to Helsinki University after more than a decade abroad. She used this opportunity to make a bold scientific move, switching her focus from primates to horses. Once again, she found herself at the forefront of a newly-emerging scientific field this time investigating human-horse relationships, now a flourishing field of research. Throughout her career, Sonja's diverse scientific contributions stand out for their rigorous and innovative approaches. Her truly interdisciplinary and big picture views were a trademark and are embodied in her last contribution, her book 'The Chimpanzee Within' - which she completed in her final months. This symposium will cover the breath of Sonja's legacy and will showcase how Sonja inspired us and the scientific community at large.

Organizers: Kathelijne Koops, Jorg Masen