



Primatology ^[1]

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Primatology is an important sub-field of anthropology. Primatology involves the study of primates—our non-human ancestors—and can help anthropologist better understand both our similarities to primates and the course of human evolution.

Western primatology

While primatology is a popular field of study across the world, its main centers of research are in the West and in Japan. This article will focus on Western primatology, whose research comes out of North America and Europe.

Primatologists often conduct field research—studying primates in their natural habitat—or laboratory analysis.

Primates include dozens of animals, such as gibbons, baboons, apes, monkeys, bonobos, and many more. As our closest human relatives, primatologists believe that by studying primates we can come closer to understanding human evolution and behaviour.

Biology

Primatologists are interested in the biology of primates. Since primates are our closest non-human relative, their morphology and biology is highly relevant to the study of human evolution.

Social lives

Besides biology, a main area of study for primatologists is the social lives of primates. Today, we know that primates have complex social lives and are highly intelligent creatures. Primatologists are interested in how primates interact with one another, and social behaviours such as leadership, competition, deception, compassion, and others.

Jane Goodall

Jane Goodall is a notable primatologist and anthropologist. Goodall spent over a decade studying the social life of chimpanzees in Tanzania. She demonstrated the complex social life of chimpanzees, citing their emotional depth, social hierarchies, and intelligence.

As a result of her research, Goodall has raised an immense amount of awareness regarding the importance of wildlife conservation and animal welfare. Many primates—including chimpanzees—are endangered animals, largely as a result of habitat loss and poaching. She

founded the Jane Goodall Institute, which does conservation and development work in western Africa.

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