

# ANTHROPOS

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY VOL. 27, ISSUE 2 OCTOBER 2002

## PRIMATES IN PERIL

One-third of the world's non-human primate species now face a serious risk of extinction, according to a report by an international group of conservationists. The report, entitled "Primates in Peril," was published recently by Conservation International and the primate specialist group of the World Conservation Union.

According to the report, the number of endangered primates has risen 63% since 1999, when the last such report was published. The greatest number of species at risk are in Asia and the island of Madagascar. Twenty per cent of the top 25 are located in Vietnam, 16% are from China,

and 12% from Indonesia. The primary threats are habitat destruction and hunting.

Most of the species listed are prosimians and monkeys, but mountain gorillas and the Eastern black-crested gibbon from China are also listed.

The conservationists reported that many new species and subspecies of primates have been discovered in recent years and that there are several other new species waiting to be scientifically described. These new species have been found in remote areas that have only recently been opened up because of human population pres-

ures. Because of the intersection of habitat destruction and the small numbers of animals found, new primate species almost always simultaneously go on the endangered species lists.

The group did note that



there have been some conservation successes with primates in Latin America. In some cases, captive breeding programs have returned endangered species to the wild.

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## INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE & CULTURAL SURVIVAL IN SOUTH AMERICA

This spring, Dr. Froemming will offer another Special Topics course, this one being Indigenous Knowledge & Cultural Survival in South America. Indigenous knowledge is the know-how and cultural practices people in small-scale societies use as they go about making

a living.

In this course, Dr. Froemming will look at the local knowledge of the indigenous peoples of the highlands and lowlands of South America, particularly the peoples of the Andes and the Amazon. This will

include the ways they relate to their environments. A growing concern in anthropology is how indigenous knowledge is exploited or used by the global culture, often without compensation for local cultures or recognition of how that knowledge fit into traditions.

**THE 2002 MIDWEST ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE: AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE MOUNDBUILDERS** BY DR. DEE ANNE WYMER



I was honored to have been asked to present papers in the two evening plenary sessions at one of our most important regional conferences—the Midwest Archaeological Conference. The Department of Anthropology at Ohio State University and the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus hosted the conference from October 3 to 5. Nearly 400 archaeologists from across the country at-

tended sessions focusing on the archaeology of the Midwestern portion of the United States. However, the conference emphasized the most recent discoveries and research on the Hopewell culture—the early Moundbuilders of 100 BC to 400 AD whose remarkable ceremonial lifeways still haunt us today.

One of the nice features of the conference is that the evening plenary sessions are structured so that all confer-

ence goers may attend the presentations. Thus, these sessions tend to highlight the most “ground-breaking” research. The Thursday session, “Recent Research on Hopewell Collections, the Ohio Historical Society: New Ideas, New Techniques,” was hosted at the Ohio State Museum and featured the results of innovative new technologies applied to artifacts from the Museum’s collections. I summarized my most recent

“THE MIDWEST ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE IS ONE OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT REGIONAL CONFERENCES.”

work, which has been highlighted in several issues of this newsletter, identifying organic materials preserved on ceremonial copper artifacts. The paper, “The Value of Archival Collections: Organic Preservation on Hopewell Copper Artifacts,” featured photographs of fabric, fur, feathers, and other usually perishable fibers found on artifacts. It also investigated

what insights these materials might imply about the ritual realm of the Hopewell.

The Friday evening session, “The Anthropology of the Hopewell,” included four more in-depth papers that assessed our current understanding of the unique culture of these early moundbuilders. The papers compared and contrasted the archaeology of

the “eastern” range of this culture (Ohio) with the more “western” portion (Illinois). I collaborated with a researcher from Illinois, Sissel Johannesen, and we produced the presentation, “Growing the World in their Image: The Evolutionary Trajectories of Hopewell Farming, East and West.” We argued that, although the two regions are quite different in terms of the

environment and cultural histories, the crop systems and human-land interaction was virtually identical for the two regions during the Hopewell period and this implies a widely shared dynamic of social identity and land-use practices. I must admit being given the opportunity to dive into more theoretical realms and working with such a

gifted researcher as Sissel was refreshing and rather exhilarating.

One of the highlights of the conference was “hanging out with Brian Fagan and hearing his lecture at our Saturday evening banquet. Dr. Fagan is reknown for his rare ability to present archaeology to the public and has written

over 25 books, including the most prominent textbook for North American archaeology. (I use it in my course.) It was mesmerizing to listen to him for he could paint pictures with his words. Fagan compared the Hopewell earthworks he had seen earlier in the day to his homeland’s (England) famous Stonehenge and Avebury. He noted that

## HOPEWELL CONFERENCE (CONTINUED)

he thought the Hopewell earthworks perhaps outshone even those two places.

The conference experience was invigorating, stimulating, and simply, loads of fun. There is a resurgence of interest and new research into the Hopewell culture with innovative technologies (such as ground penetrating radar and digital imaging of artifacts) and new ideas (what do the earthworks tell us about their world view and psychology).

being debated in the rooms and hallways at the hotel. Many of us remarked that we are perhaps closer to understanding this remarkable prehistoric culture than ever before. In fact, some of us are discussing returning to the famous Hopewell living sites that were excavated in the 1950's and 1960's and reexcavating portions of them with the new technologies. Going to conferences, although exhausting, always

renews my "research batteries," and I find that I return more productive than ever as a scholar and as a teacher.



## BU ANTHROPOLOGY ALUMNI NEWS

Louise Tokarsky, a year 1999 graduate of the anthropology program, has received her M.A. in anthropology from the State University of New York in Buffalo. The Master's is entitled "Por Alla" and is based on research Louise conducted in Michoacan, Mexico in the summers of 2000 and 2001. She received the Michael Matsu-munyane Travel Grant from

SUNY-Buffalo to support her Mexico research in 2001. She is continuing to work towards her Ph.D. at Buffalo, and she hopes to return to Michoacan where she is focusing on the impact of migrant labor to the U.S. on a rural Mexican community.

Tina Hutchinson, a 2000 graduate of BU, has recently informed the department that

she has been promoted to the position of Human Resources Generalist for Independence Construction Materials. Once she has worked the necessary length of time in this position, she plans to become Human Resources certified and then perhaps go on for a Masters degree in the area of Human Resources.



## REDWARE POTTERY BY EMILY RUPERT

I attended "Doc" Wymer's field school in archaeology at the Briggs' farm this summer, and I learned a great deal about excavating a site. I learned to lay a grid and excavate by layers, and I learned what is a rock and what is an artifact. Many historic and prehistoric artifacts were found.

Among the historic artifacts was a large concentration of redware pottery shards. Putting the pieces together was an exercise in patience and dexterity. After many hours of trying a piece here and then there, I learned to look for the thickness of a piece as well as coloration.

The result is approxi-

mately half of a large redware crock that is unglazed on the outside. The inside of the crock is glazed with a slightly ribbed pattern in a dark reddish brown. The crock has a small base which flares out into a wide top opening. It has two handles resembling ears with which to lift and carry it. The top opening is approximately 18 or 20 inches across. About 3/4 of the top is there, but only a very small portion of the base. It was probably about 20 inches high, although this is a guess because not enough pieces were available to join together to get a jointure from top to bottom at any one place. I thoroughly enjoyed working on the crock, and I am sorry that not more pieces were found.

## GRADUATE SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

This past summer, Dr. Wymer had a number of discussions with various anthropology students about what it takes to get into graduate school. She found that many of them thought that their undergraduate GPA's weren't all that important in terms of being accepted into graduate school. In fact, some felt that they could be accepted into graduate school of GPA's of less than 3.0. That impres-



sion is not shared by the anthropology faculty, and Dr. Wymer decided to look into the realities of graduate school admissions by contacting (via e-mail) the chairs at major and mid-level institutions to ask what they were looking for in new applicants.

At this point she has received responses from almost all of the institutions she contacted, and she finds that the responses are quite uniform. They are:

- 1) a GPA at or over 3.5;
- 2) An extremely well-written and focused Statement of Purpose;
- 3) Outstanding letters of recommendation;
- 4) Evidence of research, study or work outside the classroom, including internships, papers, posters, etc.;
- 5) High GRE's were helpful but not as crucial as the

A 3.5 GPA IS  
GENERALLY  
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SCHOOL IN  
ANTHROPOLOGY

above factors.

Some of those contacted commented that GPA's lower than 3.5 might be considered if the student also had higher grades in their last two years, if they had very high GRE's, or if they had extensive research.

All of the respondents also indicated that if a student wanted funding, then that

individual must have a high GPA, high GRE's, and a well-written letter.

BU students must understand that getting into graduate school in anthropology is highly competitive. In the last decade, a bottleneck has been building in anthropology graduate programs. Undergraduate programs have been attracting more and more

majors (like BU's), but graduate programs have been cutting costs by cutting back on admissions and financial awards. Since only 14% of American universities offer graduate degrees in anthropology, the competition is fierce.

So...go to class, get A's in all your courses, prep for the GRE's, and do research!

## HUMANS, CHIMPS MORE DIFFERENT

It has been a staple of anthropology courses that discuss human evolution to note how similar humans and chimpanzees are with regards to their DNA. Anthropologists and biologists have long held that the genes of chimps and humans were about 98.5 similar. This was a great teaching point that could be used to emphasize the conti-



nunity among chimps and humans or how very small differences in DNA could produce very different looking creatures.

Now, however, Dr. Roy Britten, a biologist at the California Institute of Technology, has burst that bubble with a new study that concludes that the gene similari-

ties amount to only 95%.

Britten based this on a computer program that compared 780,000 of the 3 billion base pairs in the human DNA helix with those of the chimp. He found more mismatches than previous researchers had.

## ANTHROPOLOGICAL HAIKUS

The March 2002 *Anthropology News*, published by the American Anthropological Association, had a set of anthropological haikus in its "ToWit" column. Here are a few samples:

Deep in the jungle,

Lost, I pause to curse at my

Off-brand GPS

Eyes blazing, bow drawn,

He scowls through his red

war paint.

At my consent form..

Like circling vultures

Committees gather to shred

My grant proposal.

In gorilla eyes

I see my ancestors' gaze -

Uncle Lester's, in fact.

I smile, like  
Pharoah,

While slaves toil in  
blazing sun.

Ahhh—teaching  
field school!

Next month: some  
anthropological  
limericks.



## CAPTAIN COOK

In 1768, English sea captain James Cook sailed to the Pacific to witness the transit of Venus across the sun; this was important in terms of calculating the distance between the earth and the sun. This was the first of three voyages to the Pacific in which Cook is credited with having been the 1st European to see the eastern side of Australia and later with the dis-

covery of many Polynesian islands, including the Hawaiian Islands in 1778. This year there is a tremendous amount of interest in Cook, with several new books about him appearing and a recreated version of his first ship, the Endeavor, once again sailing the Pacific.

But archaeologists in Australia announced on Oct. 7

the discovery of a sunken sailing vessel off Fraser Island on the east coast of Australia. Examination of cannon from the wreck show that the vessel was Portuguese and dates to the 1650's. The Portuguese are known to have charted much of north and western Australia in the 16th and 17th centuries. It seems that they were the first to the eastern side as well.

"IT'S NOT AT ALL UNLIKELY THAT THERE WERE PORTUGUESE SHIPS WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT." -  
MARION DIAMOND, HISTORIAN

## INCAN BURIAL DISCOVERED AT MACHU PICCHU

On October 14, the Peruvian government announced the discovery of the first full Inca burial site at Machu Picchu since the site was discovered by the U.S. explorer Hiram Bingham in 1911.

Machu Picchu, a fortress built on a mountaintop more than 500 years ago, is Peru's

top tourist attraction and a U.N. World Heritage site, drawing some 500,000 foreign visitors a year. Machu Picchu was not discovered by the Spanish in their conquest of Peru.

The burial site was discovered in early October in an area where excavations had been going on for several

months; the grave was discovered about 30 inches below the surface.

The burial is of a young woman. It is notable for its many artifacts—clay and stone vessels, bronze pins, a mirror, and clasps. Peru plans to place the burial on display somewhere to attract even more tourists.



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HUMANS

ANTHROPOS: the Anthropology Newsletter, is published six times during the academic year and is mailed to interested students, faculty, administrators and alumni. It is also distributed in anthropology classes on campus and made available on the department's home page. If you would like to be on the newsletter mailing list, please contact Dr. Dave Minderhout at the address and numbers on the left.

The Department of Anthropology offers a 36 credit B.A. degree and an 18 credit minor in anthropology. If you would like details, please see any of the anthropology faculty.

## ANTHROPOLOGY COURSES FOR SPRING 2003:

Dr. Dauria

46.101 (Intro to Anthropology) MWF 10

46.200 (Prin of Cultural Anthropology)

TuTh 8 & TuTh 11

46.320

(Contemporary World Cultures: The Caribbean) MW 3-4:15

Dr. Froemming:

46.102 (Anthro & World Problems)

MWF 9 & 10, Tu 6:30-9:30

46.495 (Special Topics) TuTh 2-3:15

Dr. Minderhout:

46.102—MWF 11 & TuTh 3:30-4:45

46.200—MWF 12

46.350 (Medical Anthropology) - Tu 6:30-9:30

Dr. Warner:

46.200—MW 4-5:15

46.470 (Anthro Thought & Theory) - M 6:30-9:30

Dr. Wymer:

46.210 (Prehistoric Archaeology) - MWF 1 & 2

46.220 (Human Origins) - TuTh 9:30-10:45

46.311 (Archaeology of NE North America) - TuTh 11-12:15

