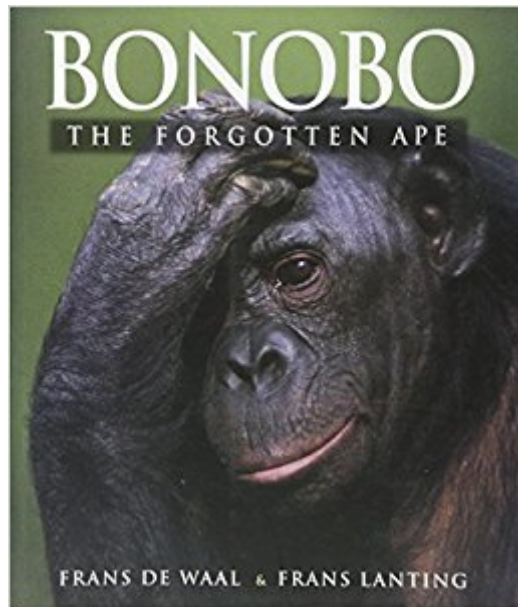


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Bonobo: The Forgotten Ape



Synopsis

This remarkable primate with the curious name is challenging established views on human evolution. The bonobo, least known of the great apes, is a female-centered, egalitarian species that has been dubbed the "make-love-not-war" primate by specialists. In bonobo society, females form alliances to intimidate males, sexual behavior (in virtually every partner combination) replaces aggression and serves many social functions, and unrelated groups mingle instead of fighting. The species's most striking achievement is not tool use or warfare but sensitivity to others. In the first book to combine and compare data from captivity and the field, Frans de Waal, a world-renowned primatologist, and Frans Lanting, an internationally acclaimed wildlife photographer, present the most up-to-date perspective available on the bonobo. Focusing on social organization, de Waal compares the bonobo with its better-known relative, the chimpanzee. The bonobo's relatively nonviolent behavior and the tendency for females to dominate males confront the evolutionary models derived from observing the chimpanzee's male power politics, cooperative hunting, and intergroup warfare. Further, the bonobo's frequent, imaginative sexual contacts, along with its low reproduction rate, belie any notion that the sole natural purpose of sex is procreation. Humans share over 98 percent of their genetic material with the bonobo and the chimpanzee. Is it possible that the peaceable bonobo has retained traits of our common ancestor that we find hard to recognize in ourselves? Eight superb full-color photo essays offer a rare view of the bonobo in its native habitat in the rain forests of Zaire as well as in zoos and research facilities. Additional photographs and highlighted interviews with leading bonobo experts complement the text. This book points the way to viable alternatives to male-based models of human evolution and will add considerably to debates on the origin of our species. Anyone interested in primates, gender issues, evolutionary psychology, and exceptional wildlife photography will find a fascinating companion in *Bonobo: The Forgotten Ape*.

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Customer Reviews

For Frans de Waal, man is not the only moral entity, as he made clear in his last book--Good Natured: The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals. The author has long been intrigued by chimpanzee politics and mores, and now he has turned his human heart and scientific mind to a species science has tended to celebrate solely for its sex drive. Bonobos may look like chimps, but they are actually even closer to us--far more upright, physically, for a start. Furthermore, where chimpanzees hunt, fight, and politic like mad, bonobos are peaceful, often ambisexual, and matriarchal. (Of course, hyenas are matriarchal too, but that's another story ...) De Waal's collaborator, Frans Lanting, has been photographing these gentle creatures for some years and augments the primatologist's explorations and interviews with hundreds of superb color shots. The penultimate picture is of bonobos crossing a road while schoolchildren stand watching, a short distance away. If, as the truism goes, all books about animal behavior are ultimately about us, this exploration of the bonobo may be a step in the right direction. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Bonobos, formerly called "pygmy chimpanzees," are the least known of the great apes. This wonderful book by a preeminent primatologist does much to introduce the general reader to one of our closest relatives. Covering studies undertaken both in captivity and in the species' natural habitat in Zaire, de Waal's riveting account compares bonobo behavior with that of the better-known chimpanzee and with humans. Complemented by Frans Lanting's coffee-table-quality photographs of wild and captive bonobos, the chapters cover the discovery of the bonobo (in 1929), its habitat and how it shaped the species' behavior, and the fears for the future of wild bonobos in an unstable region. Interviews with researchers provide a full picture of scientific studies, and extensive notes pertaining to each chapter explain many concepts in greater detail. This highly recommended book should be in all libraries. One minor warning: bonobos engage in all forms of sexual contact, and this behavior is fully explored in both the text and the photos. Nancy Bent --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Frans De Waal, a primatologist, and Frans Lanting, a wildlife photographer, combine their expertise to make this an extraordinary book. It is written in third person, research style. It is a larger size book which makes the photos rich, life-like, and endearing like the baby bonobo thumb-sucking, and a mom playing "airplane" laying down with her baby held skyward on her feet, and many more. There are only about 100 bonobos in captivity, and although bonobos breed well in captivity, this small number does not offer enough genetic variety to hold any promise, even when individuals are loaned out from one zoo to another. Bonobos, whose home is in Zaire, Africa, are estimated to number 10,000 - 25,000. Local taboos on killing bonobos help discourage some poaching, but an increase in poison arrows and use of snare traps are difficult for authorities to fight against. Even in the "heart" of bonobo rainforest, there are more people habitating than the total number of estimated bonobos. Bonobos have a unique quality; it's that of empathy. Bonobos do not typically fight, but have other ways to solve intense moments; they engage in sex in a manner that helps relieve anxiety. Their use of sex is clearly not just for breeding, is by mutual consent, and is engaged in with the same or opposite sex. Infanticide is not known among bonobos. Because of bonobos' social use of sex and the females' long period of estrus, the male does not have a way to detect if a baby is indeed his or not. Bonobos are peaceful in comparably large groups, and females hold high status in bonobos' matriarchal society. Frans de Waal has the talent of sharing fine detail in an exquisite manner. His explanations are scientific and all jargon is defined in context. The photographs all have "purpose" and show what is talked about by the author. I highly recommend this book.

Frans de Waal is "the man" when it comes to primate behavior and studies. His insight into primate behavior and the relationship and characteristics we share with other primates like the bonobo are truly enlightening. Being able to understand primate behavior thru the eyes of Franz de Wall is an excellent way to not only learn about primates, but to better understand who we ourselves are. After all, we are primates too.

I cannot imagine a better place to begin learning about Bonobos than this book. It is written in layman's terms and is accompanied by some exquisite photography. This book will set you on your way to exploring more of this "forgotten ape." The only reason I gave it 4 instead of 5 stars was the book's short length (less than 200 pages with a lot of pictures). Solidly recommended for anyone interested in human evolution, primatology, or psychology.

Excellent. Fine text and fine photographs. The differences between bonobos and common chimpanzees are astonishing. This is a good solid book on the topic, and it's attractive enough to be given as a gift to friends. Recommended.

Although there were some definitely interesting points, the general level of the book was very uneven. The photography was outstanding, but the text was often weak.

Amazing like all over his books, and highlights everything you need to know about the ape. It's hard to find a book about Bonobos that is both full of information and unbiased.

I love this book. It acknowledges and captures the extraordinary sensitivity of bonobos which is largely ignored. The photos by Frans Lanting are particularly beautiful.

Book came in excellent condition, better than described. Content wise, this book is highly informative, digestible to the layman, and entertaining to read. LOTS of nice photographs.

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