

Researchers study chimpanzee community isotopes to learn about ancient food sources (w/ Video)

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Kibale Chim in a canopy. Credit: Ronan Donovan

UNM Assistant Professor of Anthropology Sherry V. Nelson has a new research paper that examines carbon and oxygen stable isotopes in the tooth enamel of animals from a chimpanzee community to understand the environment of fossil apes and early humans. The paper, "Chimpanzee fauna isotopes provide new interpretations of fossil ape and hominin ecologies," is available [here](#).

UNM Anthropology Professor Martin Muller and Harvard Human Evolutionary Biology Professor Richard Wrangham co-direct the Kibale Chimpanzee Project, a long-term field study of the behavior, ecology, and physiology of wild [chimpanzees](#) in Uganda. When animals die in the forest, their skeletons are preserved for researchers like Nelson.

Nelson wants to eventually look at the diet of hominids to explore what they ate and how they were able to thrive and spread. At UNM Nelson teaches Human Origins, Evolution and Human Emergence, Paleoanthropology, Human Behavioral Evolution, Primate Evolution, and a lab course in paleoecology.

Provided by University of New Mexico

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