

Biography of Maura Tyrell

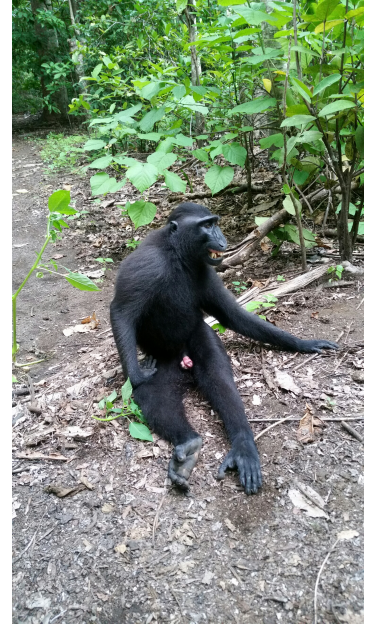
I would like to update you and the Grace LeGendre Fellowship Committee on my experiences in the field. Once again, I am so grateful for the fellowship award. It has been a tremendous help for me. I arrived in A`Indonesia this November. My start date was a bit delayed due to room availability at the research site, but I finally made it! The research site is quite beautiful. It is located inside the Tangkoko Nature Reserve in Sulawesi, Indonesia, just a few meters away from the beach.

On some mornings, the monkeys will walk right through camp to forage in the trees nearby. The crested macaque monkeys are one of the most charismatic monkey species, in my somewhat



biased opinion. The females' social circles consist of their relatives (mothers, sisters, cousins), while the adult males are unrelated because they migrate from their natal group when they reach adulthood. The females are generally very friendly to one another and spend a lot of time grooming, hugging, playing with one another's babies, but they occasionally get cranky and will scream at one another and chase each other. But immediately after they start lip-smacking (a facial expression that indicates friendly intentions) and hugging. It's such a special thing to see monkeys reconcile. Of course, the babies and juveniles never cease to amuse me. They are constantly playing and wrestling, and being goofy in general. My main focus of study is male relationships, which are in stark contrast to the females. Their relationships tend to be more tense and competitive since they compete

over mating with females in their fertile phase. It's been so fascinating observing them. Even though they are very serious and typically avoid one another, I have seen males engage in apparently friendly interactions that require a considerable amount of trust. Males will grasp each others genitals, mount one another, or mock bite each other in a friendly manner. These behaviors may function to promote close relationships that may translate into tighter cooperative alliances when attacking other males inside the group, or new males that try to migrate into the group. Or they may function to reduce tension when females or high quality food resources are nearby. My data will help me find out. What is also fascinating is when the groups come in contact with each other. We have to be ready to run after them because one group often ends up chasing the other out of the territory. The young males are the most fearless and are always ready to fight.



My days are long, but rewarding. We start at 5am and follow the monkeys until they go up into the trees to sleep around 5:30 – 6:00 pm. My first few weeks I was so exhausted that I went to sleep right after dinner, but now I am getting used to the hard work and can function a bit more normally. I have learned the names of all the adult males and females. It was a big challenge since many females look so similar in appearance. However, their butts are unique in the size and shape of their pink swelling skin, so that is the best way to tell them apart. I am really enjoying my time here. It is so amazing to spend everyday with these monkeys.

