



JOIN TODAY!

A publication of the
Archaeological Institute of America

ARCHAEOLOGY MAGAZINE

RENEW SUBSCRIPTION

SUBSCRIBE

SEARCH

CURRENT ISSUE

PREVIOUS ISSUES

MAGAZINE

LATEST NEWS

f X @ e RSS

LOG IN



NEWS ▶ DECEMBER 15, 2015

CHIT-CHAT MAY HAVE EVOLVED TO REINFORCE RELATIONSHIPS

(Ipek Kulahci, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology)

SHARE:



(Ipek Kulahci, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology)

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY—Scholars have speculated that human ancestors used grooming each other as a way to form social bonds until group sizes increased and it became too time consuming. Ipek Kulahci of Princeton University and her colleagues have observed that the ring-tailed lemurs living at Duke University's Lemur Center and on St. Catherines Island, Georgia, groom each other as a means of social bonding, but use vocalizations to stay in touch with those individuals that they

groomed the most frequently, independent of group size. "By exchanging vocalizations, the animals are reinforcing their social bonds even when they are away from each other," Kulahci said in a [press release](#). And, when the researchers played recordings of lemur calls to the group, only the lemurs that shared a close grooming relationship with the individual that made the call responded. "This social selectivity in vocalizations is almost equivalent to how we humans keep in regular touch with our close friends and families, but not with everyone we know," she explained. To read about ancient languages, go to ["The Wolf Rites of Winter."](#)

RECOMMENDED ARTICLES

DIGGING DEEPER INTO
POMPEII'S PAST ▶
JULY/AUGUST 2019

Communication

OFF THE GRID ▶
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER
2026

Xunantunich, Belize

LETTER FROM IRELAND
▶
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER
2026

FEATURES ▶
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER
2026

A Change in Fashion