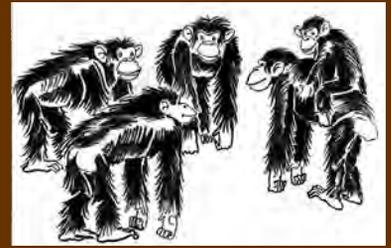




ZYON

Symphathy



Zyon was the alpha male of the group for a long period of time and until 2002. His old age and his experience in leading a group made him very relaxed. In contrast to males who were younger and inexperienced, he rarely displayed towards or chased subordinates. When other males started to pant hoot, all females and juveniles would normally start to climb up a tree to avoid being in the way of a display and suffer from a resulting beating. Due to his position, when Zyon thought he should start a display everybody would stay on the ground and sometimes infants would even approach him and playfully slap him in the face. He would then give up his display, all erect hair would collapse and he would instead start playing with the infants. Zyon was the father of many infants in the group. Therefore he was rarely seen alone, and most of his time with his "Kindergarten". When he sat down to crack nuts or do other things that required sophisticated handling, they would build a circle around him following all his movements vigilantly and he would often share his food with them.



One day, I was observing the chimpanzees by myself. I had followed a group of chimpanzees in the afternoon as they hunted and caught a monkey. Zyon, Kaos and Duna sat together sharing the carcass when a strong wind storm came up. I suddenly heard the cracking of wood and in a reflex I put one hand on my head. In the next moment, a big branch hit me right on the head and struck me down to the ground. Although not seriously injured I lay on the ground groaning with pain and couldn't get up for two minutes. Kaos and Duna were visibly disturbed by my unusual behavior and left, but not without taking the delicious meat with them. Zyon however, who was the alpha male and wouldn't have had any problems to keep the meat for himself, let them go, approached me, sat down next to me and looked at me. After two minutes when I started to feel better, I finally was able to get up on my feet again. At this moment Zyon got up as well and we rejoined the rest of the group.