

1 **No Evidence for Contagious Yawning in Lemurs**

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30 **Introduction**

31 Yawning is an activity common to most vertebrates (Baenninger 1997; Smith 1999;
32 Gallup 2011) yet its physiological and social functions are still debated. For instance, yawning is
33 purported to prevent respiratory infections and to increase oxygen levels in the blood and brain
34 (Baenninger 1997; Smith 1999; Gallup 2011). In some species, yawns also convey important
35 social or emotional information. A yawn might be given, for example, by a male baboon (*Papio*
36 *cynocephalus*) during a threatening dominance display (Altmann 1967), by a captive chimpanzee
37 who has just heard social commotion among her neighbors (Baker & Aureli 1997) or by a pet
38 dog who is anxious when separated from his owner (Lund & Jorgensen 1999). Animals may also
39 produce different types of yawns in different contexts. For example, after social conflicts, gelada
40 monkey males often vocalize and then yawn, showing their canines, while female geladas yawn
41 when affiliatively lip-smacking and grooming others (Leone et al. 2014).

42 Sometimes, however, yawns appear to serve no clear physiological or social function. In
43 these cases, for many species, including those described above, yawns that occur in a relaxed
44 context spread contagiously from individual to individual (Palagi et al. 2009). In humans, yawn
45 contagion is so powerful that people yawn when watching videos of others yawning, when
46 reading about yawning, or when being instructed to think about yawning (Provine 1986). Such
47 non-conscious contagion has been linked to a basic level of empathy (de Waal et al. 2008). The
48 connection to empathy is supported by evidence in humans: subjects who yawn in response to
49 videos of others yawning have fewer schizotypal personality traits and exhibit better
50 perspective-taking skills (Platek et al. 2003). In addition, contagious effects are more powerful
51 among individuals who share social bonds. For instance, humans are more likely to yawn in

52 response to the yawns of friends and family than acquaintances (Norscia & Palagi 2011). Given
53 its connection to empathy and sociality, comparative data on contagious yawning may yield
54 insights into social and cognitive evolution.

55 It is important to note that while species from birds, to fish, to snakes produce long,
56 gaping mouth movements that we identify as yawns, it is unclear whether those movements
57 represent the same physiological processes across taxa (Baenninger 1997; Smith 1999). For
58 instance, among mammals, carnivores seem to yawn more frequently than herbivores
59 (Baenninger 1997). Although yawning may serve different functions across species, contagious
60 yawning is nevertheless found in a wide range of species.

61 Observational studies have found contagious yawning in taxa as diverse as birds and
62 bonobos. In captivity, budgerigars, which form cohesive flocks in the wild, are observed to yawn
63 and stretch after conspecifics have yawned and stretched (Miller et al. 2012). Wolves also
64 contagiously yawn, doing so more often if they share a close social bond with the initial yawner
65 (Romero et al. 2014). Among primates, captive bonobos and geladas are more likely to yawn
66 after conspecifics do, particularly if those conspecifics are kin or preferred social partners (Palagi
67 et al. 2009; Demuru & Palagi 2012; Palagi et al. 2014).

68 Contagious yawning can also be induced experimentally. Both chimpanzees and
69 stumptail macaques yawn when shown videos of yawning conspecifics (Anderson et al. 2004;
70 Paulkner and Anderson 2006; Amici et al. 2014). Importantly, authors noted that these stumptail
71 macaques also displayed nervous behaviors while yawning, suggesting that yawns produced
72 could have been motivated by social stress, so it is unclear whether these yawns were induced by
73 empathy-like capacities (Paulkner and Anderson 2006). In a similar video-playback experiment,

74 chimpanzees were more likely to yawn after watching footage of a yawning groupmate than a
75 yawning stranger (Campbell & deWaal 2011).

76 Contagious yawning is not only induced by conspecifics. Captive chimpanzees with
77 human caretakers are more likely to yawn in response to a familiar chimpanzee or human than to
78 an unfamiliar chimpanzee (Campbell & DeWaal 2014). Dogs may yawn when watching a human
79 experimenter yawn in person (Joly-Mascheroni et al. 2008) and do so more often when the
80 human is familiar (Romero et al. 2013; although see Harr et al. 2009; O'Hara & Reeve 2011).
81 These interspecific results further emphasize the possibility that emotional bonds influence
82 contagious behavior since dogs may be closely bonded to their human owners and captive apes
83 to their human caretakers.

84 Understanding how and when such rudimentary empathetic capabilities evolved is key to
85 understanding the evolution of complex social cognition, as both empathy and cognition are
86 entwined with the evolution of sociality (Seyfarth & Cheney 2013). The comparative method
87 affords a powerful approach for answering questions about how, when, and why particular
88 cognitive capabilities have evolved (MacLean et al. 2012; MacLean et al. 2014). This approach
89 requires data from broad phylogenetic samples in order to estimate the evolutionary origins of
90 particular traits. Among our closest relatives, nonhuman primates, only haplorhines have been
91 the focus of research on contagious yawning. No study has examined whether contagious
92 yawning occurs in strepsirhines – the other major primate lineage including lemurs, lorises,
93 galagos and pottos. Therefore, comparative data from strepsirrhines will bear importantly on
94 whether contagious yawning is common to all primates or unique to the haplorhine lineage.

95 Compared to haplorhines, little is known about yawning behavior in general in
96 strepsirhine primates. However, a recent study closely examined the context of yawns that

97 occurred among wild ring-tailed lemurs (*Lemur catta*) and Verreaux's sifakas (*Propithecus*
98 *verreauxi*) (Zannella et al. 2015). Like many animals described above, lemurs of both species
99 yawned after events expected to produce anxiety, such as within-group aggressive incidents,
100 encounters with unfamiliar stimuli or attacks by predators (Zanella et al. 2015). These recent
101 findings corroborate previous reports that ring-tailed lemurs occasionally yawn during intergroup
102 encounters (Pereira & Kappeler 1997; Nunn & Deaner 2004). In addition to yawning when
103 anxious, both ring-tailed lemurs and sifakas, like other animal species, yawned when they
104 changed behavioral state in relaxed contexts, such as rising from rest to walk to a nearby place
105 (Zannella et al. 2015).

106 Here, we used a video playback experiment comparable to those used in haplorhines to
107 determine whether contagious yawning occurs in free-ranging, captive ring-tailed lemurs and
108 ruffed lemurs (*Varecia variegata*) in relaxed settings. Ring-tailed lemurs form large, hierarchical,
109 cohesive social groups (Sauther et al. 1999) while ruffed lemurs live in fission fusion
110 communities (Vasey 2007). Given their complex social systems, these two species are ideal
111 candidates to test whether contagious yawning occurs in strepsirhines.

112 The evidence for contagious yawning in haplorhines as well as several diverse non-
113 primate species suggests that the phenomenon is evolutionarily ancient, and would thus appear in
114 strepsirhine as well as haplorhine primates. Furthermore, lemurs show evidence of social
115 learning (Stoinski et al. 2011; Kendal et al. 2010) and other forms of complex social cognition
116 (Sandel et al. 2011; MacLean et al. 2013; Bray et al. 2014) suggesting that they likely possess
117 basic empathetic processes. Thus, we expected that both ring-tailed lemurs and ruffed lemurs
118 would demonstrate contagious yawning.

119

120 **Methods**

121 Experiment 1. Video stimulus validation

122 We modeled our approach after experimental paradigms used in monkeys and apes that
123 rely on video stimuli to test contagious yawning (Anderson et al. 2004; Paulkner & Anderson
124 2006; Amici et al. 2014). Many species respond to behaviors presented in videos, and, as lemurs
125 have been shown to make appropriate choices between still onscreen images (MacLean et al.
126 2008; 2012; Merritt et al. 2007, 2011) and to discern a conspecific's identity from photographs
127 (Marechal et al. 2010) it is likely that lemurs are capable of perceiving individuals on a screen.
128 However, lemurs also heavily rely on olfactory cues to gather social information (e.g. Drea &
129 Scordato 2007) and no previous study that we are aware of has used video playbacks to induce
130 behavioral responses in lemurs. Thus, we performed experiment 1 to test whether lemurs could
131 meaningfully perceive moving images on a screen.

132 We exposed lemur subjects to video playbacks for which we expected them to produce
133 differential responses: footage of a predator, and footage of their primary human caretaker.
134 These lemurs occasionally encounter several potential predator species in their free-ranging
135 enclosures, including wild gray foxes (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*). Upon seeing these foxes,
136 ruffed lemurs become attentive and emit vocalizations (RBR, pers. obs.). When lemurs see their
137 caretakers, they tend to approach them or do not change their behavior (RBR, pers. obs.).

138 Study Site and Subjects

139 For this and the subsequent experiments, we tested lemurs housed at the Duke Lemur
140 Center in Durham, North Carolina, USA. Most social groups consisted of 5 to 10 individuals
141 living in semi free-ranging enclosures with seasonal access to fenced portions of forest as well as
142 indoor and outdoor rooms. Testing took place in indoor rooms, which were connected by doors
143 that experimenters could open and close. Individual room dimensions were 2.2 x 2.1 meters and

144 groups typically had one outdoor and one indoor enclosure per adult individual. Subjects were
145 fed a daily diet of fruit and monkey chow and had access to water *ad libitum*.

146 In experiment 1, we tested 28 subjects (ring-tailed lemurs: 7 M, 10 F, 0.7-21 years; ruffed
147 lemurs: 4 M, 7 F, 0.8 -16 years) (Table 1).

148 Apparatus & Procedure

149 We showed lemurs two silent video clips, both 30 seconds in length. One clip showed
150 footage of a red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) walking, and the other, footage of subjects' caretaker
151 presenting a bowl of grapes. Using a Vivitek d510 DLP projector, we projected videos to life-
152 size dimensions onto a 2.2-meter screen placed outside the mesh of an indoor room. We allowed
153 group members to remain together in the brick-walled room during the video playback. We
154 chose not to isolate individuals because predator response could be mediated by the presence of
155 groupmates and because viewing a predator might be a stressful experience for lemurs.

156 Groups had four total test sessions conducted on separate days, two days to three weeks
157 apart. In each session, the group watched a single video that featured either a fox or their
158 caretaker. Each group spent two sessions watching the fox video and two watching the caretaker
159 video. The order in which subjects watched the videos was counterbalanced between groups.
160 Before starting each video, we scattered dried fruit on the ground at the front of the enclosure to
161 encourage individuals to be on the ground when the video began. We began the playback when
162 all lemurs had finished swallowing and no fruit remained on the ground. As a result of group
163 dominance relationships, certain individuals would not co-feed, and some lemurs remained
164 resting on ledges or supports above the ground when the video started.

165 During test sessions, one experimenter recorded subjects' activities with a handheld
166 camera, while a second experimenter coded behavioral responses. A second camera captured

167 most of the enclosure at a wide angle. We filmed for the duration of the 30-second video
168 playback and for two subsequent minutes.

169 An experimenter then coded behavioral responses from video. From these videos we
170 recorded (1) whether subjects moved upward, defined as moving vertically into a new level of
171 the testing room when the room was divided into three levels: lower, middle, and upper, during
172 the 30-second video, and (2) the alarm vocalizations they made during the video playback and
173 for 1.5 minutes following its conclusion. For ring-tailed lemurs, who may produce alarm “click”
174 or grunt-like vocalizations in response to terrestrial predators (Sauther 1989) we recorded the
175 amount of time in the 2-minute period that grunts were audible from the group. As ring-tailed
176 lemurs do not open their mouths when they produce these grunts, it was impossible to score the
177 vocalizations at the individual level. For ruffed lemurs, we recorded the number of alarm
178 vocalizations made by specific individuals. Vocalizations could be attributed to specific
179 individuals in ruffed lemurs due to the open-mouth postures that accompany vocalizations in this
180 species (Macedonia & Taylor 1985). These vocalizations included rumbling sounds, often made
181 by one individual, and roars, in which multiple group members typically participated.

182 A second coder who was blind to the condition and hypothesis coded 20% of the videos
183 for reliability. Inter-observer reliability was excellent, both for subjects’ movement during the
184 trial (Cohen’s Kappa = 0.92), the duration of alarm vocalizations in ring-tailed lemurs ($R = 0.73$,
185 $p < 0.05$), and the number of alarm vocalizations in ruffed lemurs, for which agreement was
186 perfect.

187 Analyses

188 We tested the prediction that more upward movement and alarm vocalizations would
189 occur in the fox condition compared to the caretaker condition using Related-Samples Wilcoxon
190 Signed Ranks Tests and adopting a directional hypothesis testing framework following the

191 conventions ($\delta = 0.01$, $Y = 0.04$) recommended by Rice and Gaines (1994). Accordingly, the
192 null hypothesis was rejected when the 1-tailed p value was $\leq .04$ in the predicted direction, or \geq
193 $.99$ in the unanticipated direction.

194 Experiment 2. Contagious Yawning

195 *Session 1: Individual Condition*

196 Here we explored whether ring-tailed lemurs and ruffed lemurs yawned contagiously by
197 exposing individuals to video projections of yawning conspecifics. To understand whether social
198 bonds and familiarity might affect contagious behaviors (e.g. Campbell & deWaal 2011), each
199 subject watched footage of a groupmate and footage of a stranger.

200 Subjects:

201 We tested 20 lemurs (ring-tailed lemurs, 3 Male, 7 Female, age range: 1-21 years; ruffed
202 lemurs: 4 Male, 6 Female, age range: 2-22 years) living in four social groups that were housed
203 separately from one another (Table 1).

204 Apparatus & Procedure:

205 In experiment 2, we showed lemurs experimental and control videos. The projection
206 methods were identical to those in experiment 1. Experimental videos contained footage of a
207 lemur yawning while control videos showed the same individual at rest. We filmed both yawning
208 and control footage when animals were relaxed. All videos contained a 5-second yawning or
209 control clip that was repeated in a looped sequence for a total duration of five minutes. Example
210 frames from these videos are shown in Figure 1. The lemurs featured in these videos were the
211 same sex and of similar age. They were current groupmates of some subjects but strangers to
212 others so that footage shown to one lemur group as a groupmate could be shown to the other
213 lemur group as a stranger, and all subjects of a given species experienced identical stimuli.

214 Each subject partook in two testing sessions up to two weeks apart. In each session,
215 subjects watched an experimental (conspecific yawning) and control (conspecific resting) video;
216 in one session, the featured individual was a groupmate, and in the other, a stranger. The order in
217 which subjects watched groupmates and strangers was counterbalanced between subjects, as was
218 the order in which they watched yawning and control stimuli within each of these sessions.

219 Yawning and control sessions were identical in format. We tested subjects in brick-
220 walled rooms so that they could not view their groupmates, though they could potentially hear
221 them if they vocalized. To attract subjects' attention at the start of each playback, an
222 experimenter tapped lightly on the back of the projector screen. We began each session with a
223 one-minute habituation period during which a solid blue "blank" screen was projected. After this
224 time, we played either the yawning or control video for five minutes. Immediately following the
225 first video, we projected the blank screen for one minute, and then played the second video for
226 five minutes.

227 One experimenter live-coded the number of yawns that occurred in each video condition
228 while a second experimenter recorded the subject with a handheld video camera that was focused
229 on the subject's face as the subject moved freely within the test room. Another camera captured
230 the enclosure and subject in its entirety. A second coder who was blind to the test condition and
231 to the hypothesis of the experiment watched 20% of the videos and coded them for reliability.
232 Inter-observer reliability was perfect.

233 *Session 2. Group Context*

234 In a second experimental session, lemurs watched videos in a group. It may be that social
235 context is an important component of behavioral contagion, and a solitary context is insufficient
236 to stimulate contagious yawning, as some studies that identified contagious yawning in
237 haplorhine primates tested subjects simultaneously in a group setting (e.g., Paulkner and

238 Anderson 2006). To understand whether a group context might enhance, or allow for behavioral
239 contagion in lemurs, we exposed subjects to the yawning and control videos they had watched in
240 experiment 1, but this time, we presented the videos to the entire group.

241 Subjects

242 We tested 24 lemurs (ring-tailed lemurs: 7 M, 10 F, 0.7-21 years; ruffed lemurs: 4 M, 7 F,
243 1 -16 years) in experiment 2, most of whom had participated in session 1 (Table 1). Certain
244 individuals from session 1, who had been moved from the DLC, or integrated into new social
245 groups within the DLC, were not able to participate in session 2. In addition, some lemurs who
246 had been too young to be isolated in session 1 could participate in session 2.

247 Eight months elapsed between the end of session 1 and start of session 2. The stimuli and
248 presentation methods for session 2 were identical to those of session 1, except that in session 2,
249 subjects of the four study groups watched the videos with all of their group members present,
250 including individuals who were featured in stimuli videos.

251 Each group had two test sessions, one in which they watched yawning and control
252 footage of a groupmate and one in which they watched yawning and control footage of a
253 stranger. The order in which we showed yawning and control footage was counterbalanced
254 between groups within species. The order in which groups watched groupmate and stranger
255 videos was also counterbalanced between groups.

256 Experimenters live-coded the number of yawns that occurred during all test sessions and
257 the identities of the yawners. A second coder who was blind to the test condition and to the
258 hypothesis of the experiment coded 20% of session videos for reliability. Inter-observer
259 reliability was perfect.

260

261 **Results**

262 Experiment 1. Video stimulus validation

263 Across species, individuals moved to a higher location in the enclosure more often in the
264 fox condition than in the caretaker condition ($n=28$, $Z=-2.89$ $p < 0.01$) (Figure 2). The same
265 analysis within each species revealed that ring-tailed lemurs, but not ruffed lemurs showed a
266 pattern to move upwards more often during the fox than the caretaker video (ring-tailed lemurs:
267 $n=17$, $Z=-3.00$ $p < 0.01$; ruffed lemurs: $n=11$, $Z=-0.58$ $p=0.28$). This is possibly because more
268 ring-tailed lemur than ruffed lemur individuals began watching the video from the ground.

269 Ring-tailed lemurs spent more time alarm grunting in the fox condition than in the
270 caretaker condition, grunting, on average, for 58 ± 48.8 seconds in the fox condition compared to
271 17 ± 18.4 seconds in the caretaker condition. Ruffed lemurs also made significantly more alarm
272 vocalizations in the fox condition than in the caretaker condition ($n=11$, $Z= -2.39$, $p=0.01$)
273 (Figure 3). Only one individual vocalized in the caretaker condition. There were a total of 30
274 alarm vocalizations in the fox condition, with an average of 2.73 ± 5.0 calls per individual, and a
275 total of three alarm vocalizations in the caretaker condition, with an average of 0.27 ± 0.91 calls
276 per individual.

277 Experiment 2. Contagious Yawning

278 In the individual yawning sessions, only one yawn occurred across all 20 individuals in
279 all four conditions. An adult female ruffed lemur yawned once in the stranger yawning condition.
280 In group yawning sessions, only two yawns occurred across all 24 individuals in all four
281 conditions. Two ruffed lemurs each yawned once during the stranger yawning condition (Figure
282 4).

283

284 Discussion

285 Lemurs did not yawn contagiously in response to videos of yawning groupmates or
286 strangers. Our findings are consistent across individual and group contexts, with large samples,
287 and between two of the most socially complex strepsirhine species. However, lemurs did
288 demonstrate that they respond meaningfully to video footage in general; they moved upward and
289 made alarm calls while viewing footage of a predator but not a caretaker. This study provides the
290 first evidence that lemurs do not respond to yawning video stimuli in the same way as haplorhine
291 primates, and suggests the possibility that strepsirhines do not yawn contagiously.

292 Given that many social animals, including wolves and budgerigars in addition to
293 haplorhine primates, yawn contagiously with conspecifics, it seems surprising that lemurs did not
294 do so. However, several aspects of interindividual social relationships in lemurs differ in relevant
295 ways from those of haplorhines and other social mammals. First, even lemurs species that live in
296 large social groups appear to engage in fewer cooperative activities than haplorhines and are
297 characterized by more within-group competition (for review, see: Fichtel & Kappeler 2010). For
298 example, ring-tailed lemurs form matrilineal groups where females, like female Old World
299 monkeys, affiliate most often with kin, grooming with them and maintaining close spatial
300 proximity to them frequently. Despite the similarities of these affiliative kin behaviors, ring-
301 tailed lemurs, unlike Old World monkeys, rarely recruit or assist others in coalitionary
302 aggression. Ring-tailed lemur mothers rarely support even their daughters in fights (less than 5
303 percent of the time, Nakamichi & Koyama 1997). Consequently, ring-tailed lemur daughters,
304 unlike Old World monkey daughters, do not always rank immediately below their mothers
305 (Nakamichi & Koyama 1997). The absence of such alliances in lemurs contrasts not only to
306 certain Old World monkeys, but to many social mammals who form coalitions against others,
307 including chimpanzees and wolves discussed above (for review, see: Harcourt & DeWaal 1992).

308 In addition to a lack of alliances, lemurs show minimal post-conflict affiliation with other
309 individuals (Fichtell & Kappeler 2010). After aggressive conflicts, individuals of a wide range of
310 species show increased affiliation with their former opponents or with other groupmates,
311 including baboons (Castles & Whiten 1998), long-tailed macaques (Aureli & van Schaik 1991),
312 chimpanzees (DeWaal & van Roosmalen 1979), dolphins (Tamaki et al. 2006), rooks (Seed et al.
313 2007), domestic horses (Cozzi et al. 2010), goats (Schino 1998), hyenas (Hofer & East 2000),
314 dogs (Cools et al. 2008), and wolves (Cordoni & Palagi 2008). This affiliation is thought to
315 reduce anxiety and future aggression (e.g. Castles & Whiten 1998) and has implications for
316 group cohesion.

317 Several captive studies have examined post-conflict affiliation in ring-tailed lemurs
318 specifically. One study found no evidence for affiliation in the 10 minutes following a conflict, a
319 typical time length examined in species above (Kappeler 1993), but a follow-up study on the
320 same group observed opponents for 70 minutes post-conflict and found that more affiliation
321 occurred in post-conflict periods compared to control periods (Rolland & Roeder 2000). A later
322 study reexamined post-conflict association in ring-tailed lemurs at the dyadic level with a larger
323 sample size and found that breeding seasonality may influence the behavior: pairs of ring-tailed
324 lemurs showed increased affiliation after a conflict in the social group with breeding females but
325 not in the social group with lactating females who are less likely to be tolerant of males (Palagi et
326 al. 2005). Other lemur species, including redfronted brown lemurs and Verreaux's sifakas do
327 show some post-conflict affiliation (Kappeler 1993; Palagi et al. 2008). Post-conflict association
328 has not to our knowledge been studied in ruffed lemurs, but like ring-tailed lemurs, this species
329 also experiences seasonal shifts in social behavior (Vasey 2009).

330 Given these peculiarities of lemur social social relationships, one interpretation of our

331 main result is that contagious yawning capabilities evolved in haplorhine primates after the
332 lineage split from strepsirhines and that the phenomenon seen in other distantly related
333 vertebrates like budgies and wolves is the result of convergent evolution linked to the social
334 relationships between individuals in these species; budgeriars form cohesive flocks and wolves
335 are obligate carnivores that acquire food by hunting cooperatively with groupmates (Wyndham
336 1980; Peterson & Ciucci 2003). Another possibility is that contagious yawning occurred at very
337 low levels in a primate ancestor and became exaggerated as the result of selection in some social
338 species and not others. In our study, yawns occurred infrequently, but importantly, they occurred
339 exclusively in conditions where lemurs watched yawning stimuli. Although this evidence
340 certainly does not suggest contagious yawning is a strong phenomenon in lemurs, it is consistent
341 with the possibility that contagious yawning is evolutionarily ancient but has evolved to be more
342 prevalent and easily elicited in haplorhines and other social species, but not in ring-tailed or
343 ruffed lemurs.

344 An alternative explanation for our results is that lemurs *do* yawn contagiously but that
345 visual stimuli alone are not sufficient to induce such behavior. Some research suggests that this is
346 the case for pet dogs. Joly-Mascheroni and colleagues (2008) found that 72 percent of dogs
347 tested yawned contagiously in response to a live human who yawned, but in a later study Harr
348 and colleagues (2009) showed 15 dogs video footage of unfamiliar dogs and humans yawning
349 and only one subject yawned contagiously. Video was insufficient to produce contagious
350 yawning in dogs. Yet, dogs, like lemurs in this study, do produce responses to video in other
351 contexts. For instance, dogs pay attention to a familiar human's communicative cues that occur
352 onscreen (Pongracz et al. 2003). This suggests that dogs can perceive and respond to the content
353 of videos, but that a contagious yawning response requires additional cues. For instance, Silva

354 and colleagues (2012) found that auditory cues were integral to the contagious yawning response
355 in dogs; auditory playbacks of humans yawning alone caused dogs to contagiously yawn.

356 Like pet dogs, lemurs may produce some but not all natural behaviors in response to
357 video alone, but require other cues, not conveyed in video, to yawn contagiously. Our videos did
358 not include sounds and it is possible that auditory cues are important for contagious yawning in
359 lemurs. However, unlike dog yawns, lemur yawns are silent to human observers and solely
360 visual playbacks did induce yawning in apes and in stump-tail macaques (e.g. Anderson et al.
361 2004; Paulkner & Anderson 2006), though visual stimuli are perhaps relatively more salient to
362 haplorhine compared to strepsirhine primates who use olfaction to communicate important social
363 information (e.g. Scordato & Drea 2007). Olfactory cues can induce yawning in rodents
364 (Moyaho et al. 2015) and lemurs sometimes yawn when presented with sticks scent-marked by
365 other lemurs (Sandel, pers. comm.), though, importantly, these yawn responses do not occur in
366 response to the yawns of groupmates and likely represent phenomena different than empathy-
367 related contagious yawning investigated here. Issues of the importance of auditory, olfactory,
368 and other cues in potentially inducing contagious yawning in lemurs could be informed through
369 an observational study of yawning in lemur social groups.

370 We hope this study will be the first of many that explore across a range of species the
371 distribution of contagious yawning in order to understand its phylogenetic origin and ultimate
372 function (MacLean et al. 2012).

373

374 **Ethical approval**

375 All applicable international, national, and/or institutional guidelines for the care and use
376 of animals were followed. All procedures performed in studies involving animals were in

377 accordance with the ethical standards of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee at
378 Duke University (Protocol # A199-11-08).

379

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525 **Figure Captions**

526 Table 1. Lemur subjects in all experiments.

527 Figure 1. Frames from yawning stimuli video (left) and control stimuli video (right) of ruffed
528 lemurs (top) and ring-tailed lemurs (bottom).

529 Figure 2. Average number of individuals to move up while watching predator video footage and
530 caretaker video footage in experiment 2 (n=28)

531 Figure 3. Average number of alarm calls per individual ruffed lemurs (n=11) while watching
532 predator and caretaker video footage in experiment 2.

533 Figure 4. Number of individuals who yawned in individual and group contexts in experiment 2.

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| Group | Subject | Species | Sex | Age (years) | S 1 | S 2 | E 2 |
|-------|-----------|--------------------|-----|-------------|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | Pyxis | <i>V v. rubra</i> | F | 17 | X | X | X |
| 1 | Hunter | <i>V v. rubra</i> | M | 16 | X | X | X |
| 1 | Scorpius | <i>V v. rubra</i> | M | 5 | X | X | X |
| 1 | Aries | <i>V v. rubra</i> | M | 5 | X | X | X |
| 1 | Esther | <i>V v. rubra</i> | F | 3 | X | X | X |
| 1 | Orion | <i>V v. rubra</i> | M | 3 | | | X |
| 1 | Phoebe | <i>V v. rubra</i> | F | 3 | X | X | X |
| 2 | Carina | <i>V v. rubra</i> | F | 8 | X | X | X |
| 2 | Alphard | <i>V. v. rubra</i> | M | 23 | X | | |
| 2 | Avior | <i>V v. rubra</i> | M | 4 | | | X |
| 2 | Hydra | <i>V. v. rubra</i> | F | 4 | X | | |
| 2 | Lyra | <i>V v. rubra</i> | F | 4 | X | X | X |
| 2 | Pandora | <i>V v. rubra</i> | F | <1 | | X | X |
| 2 | Cordelia | <i>V v. rubra</i> | F | <1 | | X | X |
| 3 | Schroeder | <i>L. catta</i> | F | 20 | X | X | X |
| 3 | Edelweiss | <i>L. catta</i> | F | 2 | X | | |
| 3 | Liesl | <i>L. catta</i> | F | 4 | X | X | X |
| 3 | Aracus | <i>L. catta</i> | M | 21 | X | X | X |
| 3 | Johan | <i>L. catta</i> | M | 2 | | | X |
| 3 | Rolfe | <i>L. catta</i> | M | 1 | X | X | X |
| 3 | Brigitta | <i>L. catta</i> | F | 1 | | X | X |
| 3 | Gretl | <i>L. catta</i> | F | <1 | | X | X |
| 4 | Sprite | <i>L. catta</i> | F | 11 | | X | X |
| 4 | Ginger | <i>L. catta</i> | F | 6 | X | X | X |
| 4 | Randy | <i>L. catta</i> | M | 6 | X | X | X |
| 4 | Schweppes | <i>L. catta</i> | M | 2 | | | X |

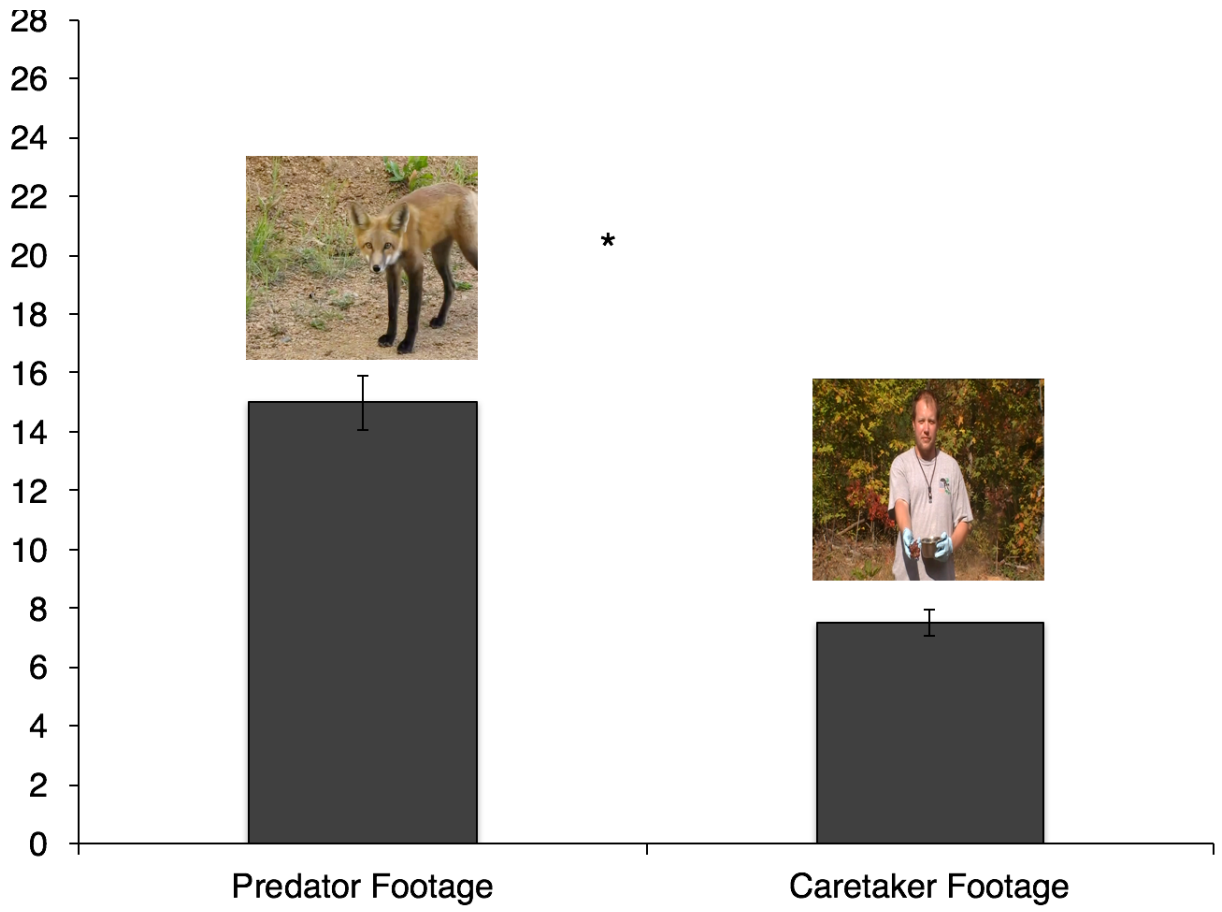
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|---|---------------|-----------------|---|----|---|---|---|
| 4 | Sobe | <i>L. catta</i> | F | 1 | | X | X |
| 4 | Sarsparilla | <i>L. catta</i> | F | 1 | | X | X |
| 4 | Crystal Light | <i>L. catta</i> | F | 2 | X | | |
| 4 | Canada Dry | <i>L. catta</i> | F | 1 | X | X | X |
| 4 | Izze | <i>L. catta</i> | F | <1 | | X | X |
| 4 | Jones | <i>L. catta</i> | M | <1 | | X | X |
| 4 | Stewart | <i>L. catta</i> | M | <1 | | X | X |

546 Figure 1.



547 Figure 2.

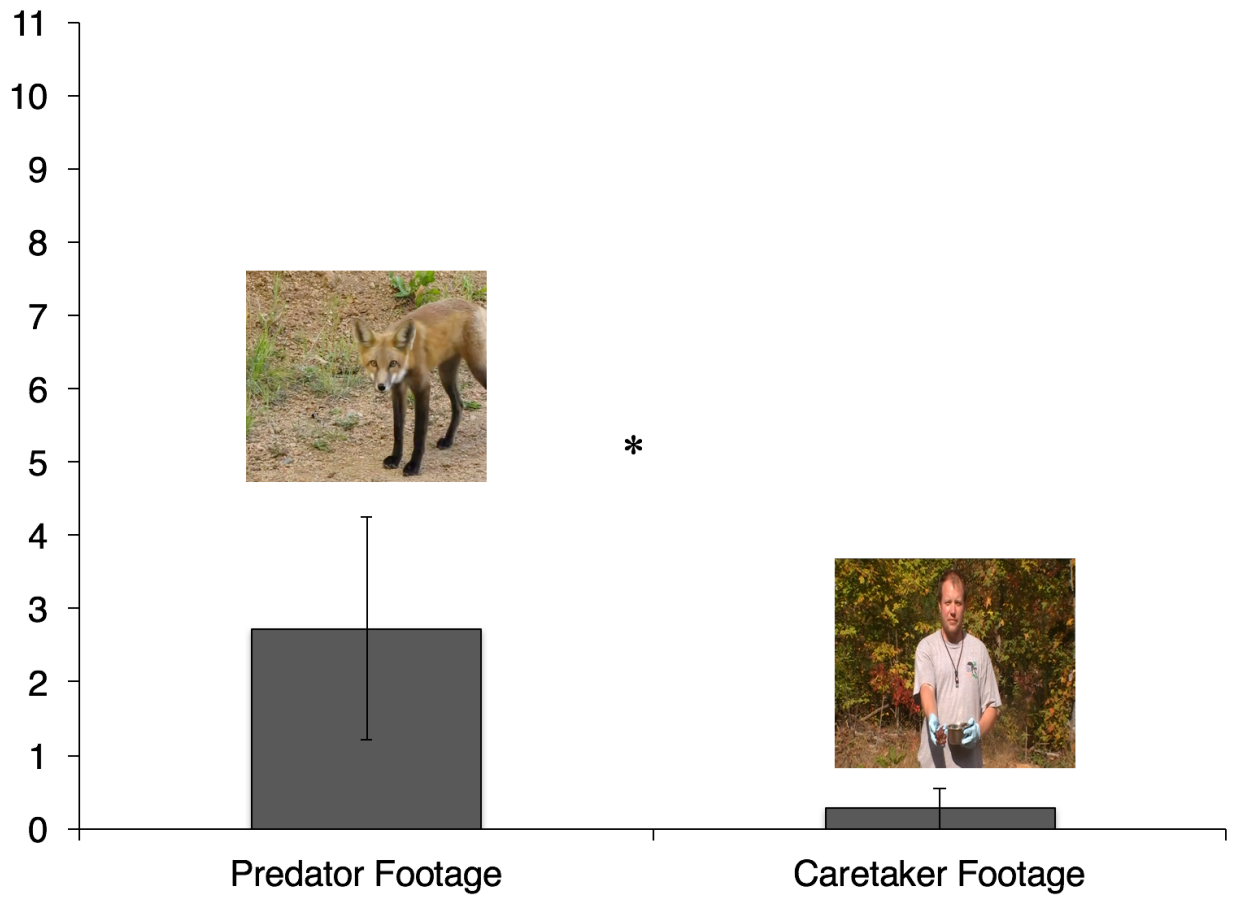
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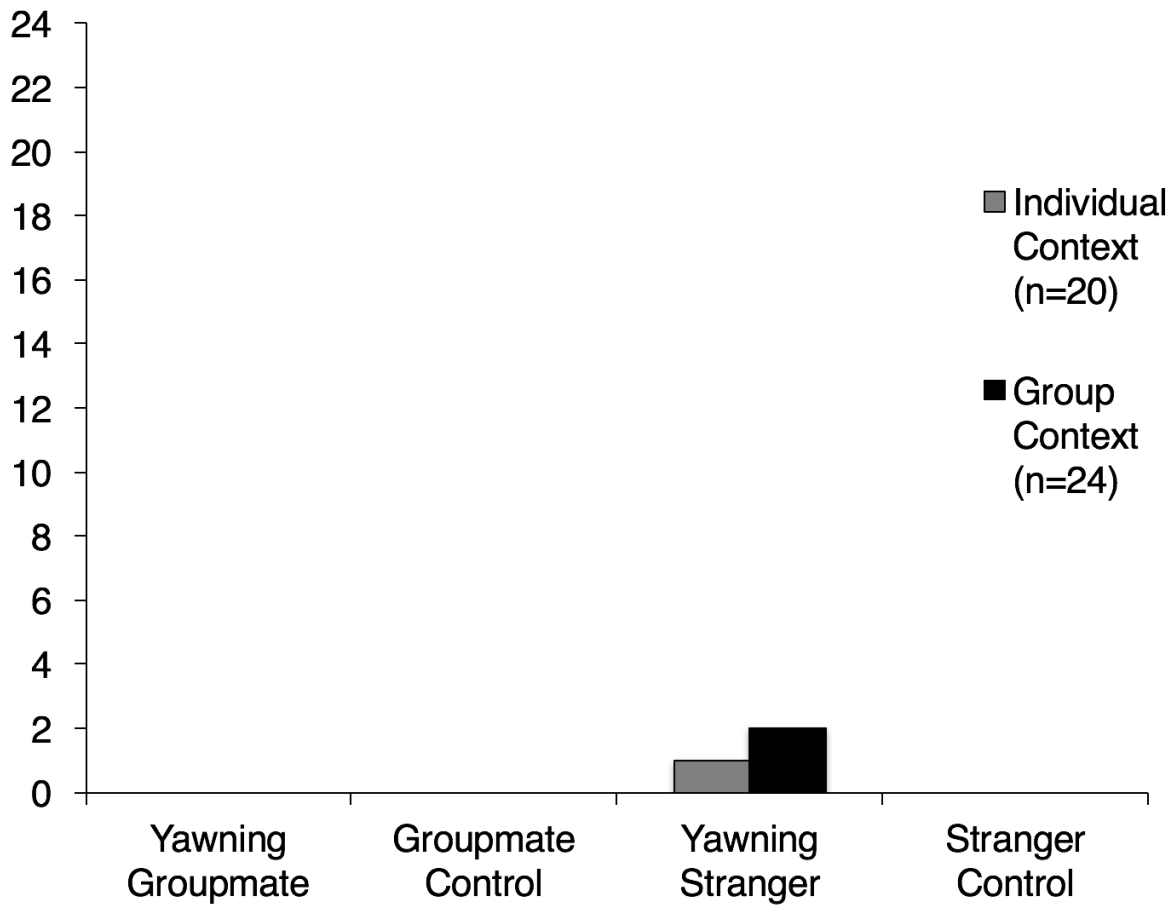
551 Figure 3.



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554 Figure 4.



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