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Food humming in gorillas (*Gorilla g. gorilla*) in the wild – A preliminary report

Many nonhuman primates produce specific calls (i.e. food-associated vocalizations) upon encountering or ingesting particular food. Concerning the great apes, only food-associated vocalizations of chimpanzees and bonobos have been studied in detail, providing evidence that these vocalizations can be produced flexibly in relation to a variety of factors, such as quantity and quality of food and/or the type of audience, among others. Only anecdotal evidence exists reporting food-associated vocalizations in lowland and mountain gorillas termed “singing” or “humming”. To enable a better understanding of the production of these calls, we thus investigated the vocal behaviour of two wild groups of lowland gorillas (*Gorilla g. gorilla*) at Mondika, Republic of Congo. Our results show that humming (a) is most frequently performed by adult males, (b) occurs exclusively during feeding (i.e. ingesting food, discovery of food), and (c) only occurs in response to feeding on distinct food types. Our results thus shed light on a vocal ability that has gone relatively unnoticed by research thus far. Implications regarding biomusicology and the evolution of singing in the great ape lineage will be discussed.