

## **The use of vertebrate model systems to study social evolution**

**15 – 18 August 2009, Adelboden, Bernese Alps, Switzerland**

Organizer: Michael Taborsky, University of Bern (michael.taborsky@iee.unibe.ch)

### Summary:

To understand the evolution of complex social organization (including structured groups, cooperation between group members, task sharing, individualized relationships, divergent social roles) we need suitable model systems that (1) dispose of the required complexity of social organization, (2) allow to observe and measure relevant traits and their fitness effects in the field, and (3) enable performance of crucial experiments to unravel underlying ultimate and proximate mechanisms of advanced sociality. Among vertebrates, there are a few model systems that fulfil these criteria, like meerkats, Seychelles warblers and Lake Tanganyika cichlids. The aim of this symposium is to provide state-of-the-art insight into the mechanisms underlying advanced social behaviour by bringing together experts studying respective model systems in mammals, birds and fishes.

### Structure of the symposium:

Invited speakers and other participants who wish to contribute to the theme of the symposium will present relevant results and overviews of the(ir) research on the respective model systems. In the discussion, we shall emphasize the involved ultimate and proximate mechanisms and attempt to compare them between different vertebrate taxa to understand the importance of intrinsic differences in their biology. We shall further discuss the pros and cons of the respective model systems to unravel general principles of social evolution. We expect that at the end of this symposium the participants will dispose of a good understanding of some of the most complex and best studied model systems of social evolution.

### Where and when:

The symposium will take place in Adelboden, an alpine village in the Bernese Alps (<http://www.adelboden.ch/en/navpage-SummerAB.html>). The venue is the high-altitude holiday resort Crea (<http://www.hotel-crea.ch/adelboden/>) that combines the convenience of a nice setting in a breathtaking landscape with the practical amenities of a well-proven seminar venue. It is within easy reach by public transport from any Swiss city. For all details of the meeting and registration please consult:

<http://behav.zoology.unibe.ch/index.php?pp=56&p=66>

Registration until 1 June 2008 at:

marlis.gerteis@iee.unibe.ch

### Credits:

1-2 ECTS can be obtained, depending on the contribution of the participant