

Great apes

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In news— New research suggests a penchant for whirling isn't uniquely human and it has found that great apes also seem to enjoy spinning, perhaps as a way of altering their mental states.

About Great apes-

- Hominidae, in zoology, one of the two living families of the ape superfamily Hominoidea, the other being the Hylobatidae (gibbons).
- The Hominidae whose members are known as the great apes or hominids, are a taxonomic family of primates that includes eight extant species **in four genera**:
 - *Pongo* (the Bornean, Sumatran and Tapanuli **orangutan**).
 - *Gorilla* (the eastern and western gorilla).
 - *Pan* (the **chimpanzee** and the bonobo) and
 - *Homo*, of which only **modern humans** (*Homo sapiens*) remain.
- **Hominidae has been a subject of much debate among taxonomists. Formerly, humans alone (with their extinct forebears) were placed in Hominidae**, and the great apes were placed in a different family, Pongidae.
- However, **morphological and molecular studies now indicate that humans are closely related to chimpanzees**, while gorillas are more distant and orangutans more distant still.
- Since classification schemes aim to depict relationships, it is logical to consider humans and great apes as hominids—that is, members of the same zoological family, Hominidae.
- Typically, this family is divided into **two subfamilies. One (called Ponginae) contains only the orangutans, and the other (Homininae) contains humans and the African**

great apes.

- Some classifications further subdivide Homininae into two or more “tribes.”
- Some reserve the tribe Gorillini for gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos, and their evolutionary ancestors and reserve the tribe Hominini exclusively for modern human beings (*H. sapiens*) and their extinct forebears (e.g., the Neanderthals, *H. erectus*, and various species of *Australopithecus*); members of the tribe Hominini are frequently referred to as hominins.
- Other classifications, however, place chimpanzees and bonobos in their own tribe, called Panini, since they are genetically relatively distant from Gorillini, or place them with human beings in the tribe Hominini, since their ancestors separated from one another within the most recent eight million years.
- All members of Hominidae share complex cognitive attributes: for example, they all can learn to recognize themselves in mirrors (an ability that is taken to indicate a degree of self-awareness).
- Only the bottlenose dolphin, killer whale and false killer whale, Asian elephant, cleaner wrasse, and a handful of other animal species can pass this test conclusively.