

# Social behaviour and distance during maternal care in captive red pandas (*Ailurus fulgens*)

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## INTRODUCTION

Little is known about red panda's **mother-cub interaction** and even less about **father-cub** and **father-mother interaction** during the cub's growth.

## AIMS

Better understand : (1) the **activity budget**; (2) the **distance** between 2 adults and their cub during the first months of the its life; and (3) the impact of the **visitors' presence, feeding routine** and **temperature**.

## METHODS

Scan sampling at two-minutes intervals for 10 weeks of a mated pair and their female cub

### Ethogram

Eating, Food foraging, Resting, Moving, Grooming, Alert, Exploratory, Aggression, Playing, and Drinking

### Inter-individual distance

Touching, Very close, Close, and Far

### Feeding routine

Morning meal delayed of 2 hours – comparison with control days of the behaviours observed 30 min prior to the meal

## RESULTS

### Activity budget

- Most frequently performed behaviours: *Sleeping, Moving* and *Eating*
- Father: *Aggression* positively correlated with time
- Peak activity rate between 9:30 and 10:00, 16:00 and 16:30

### Distance

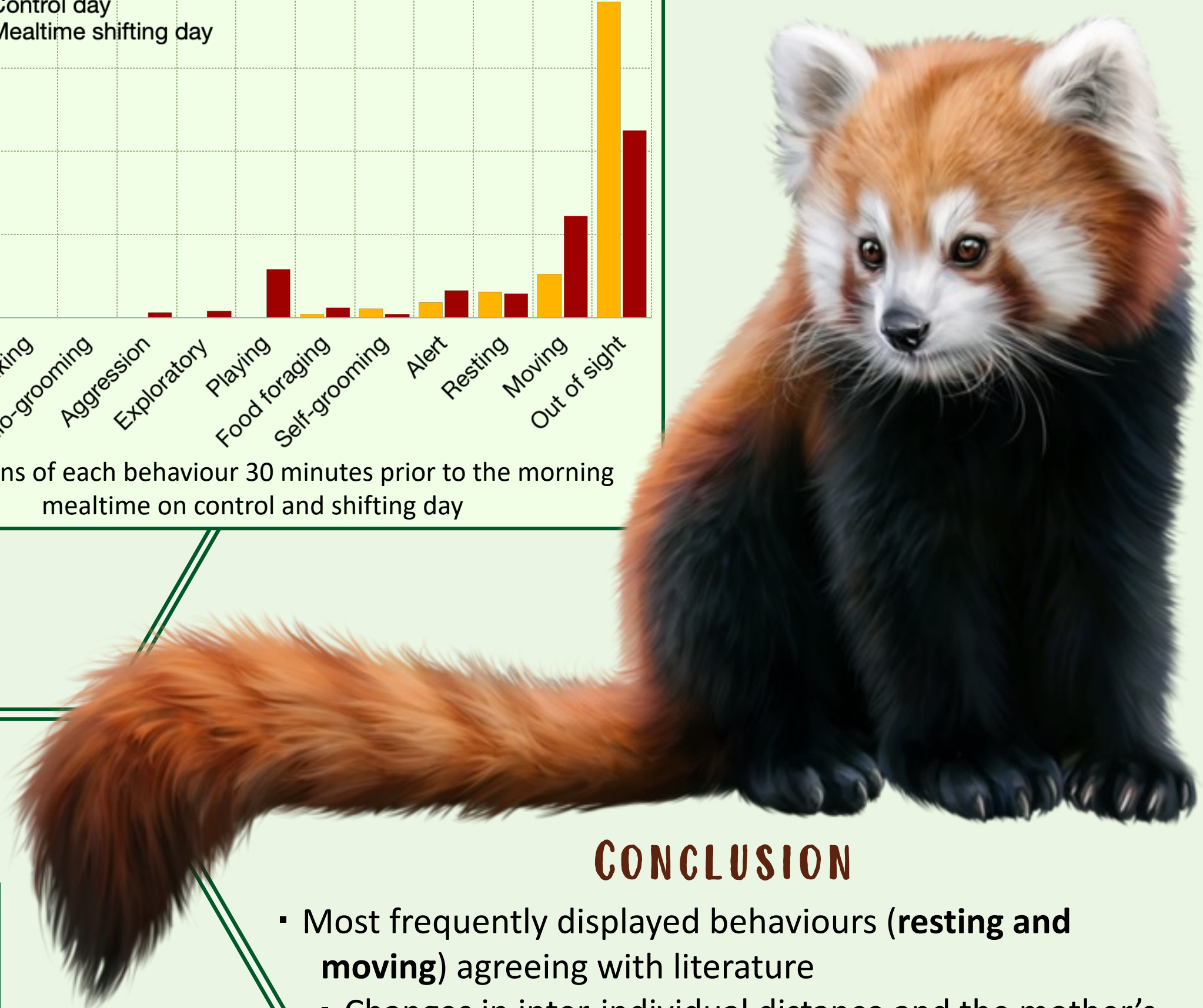
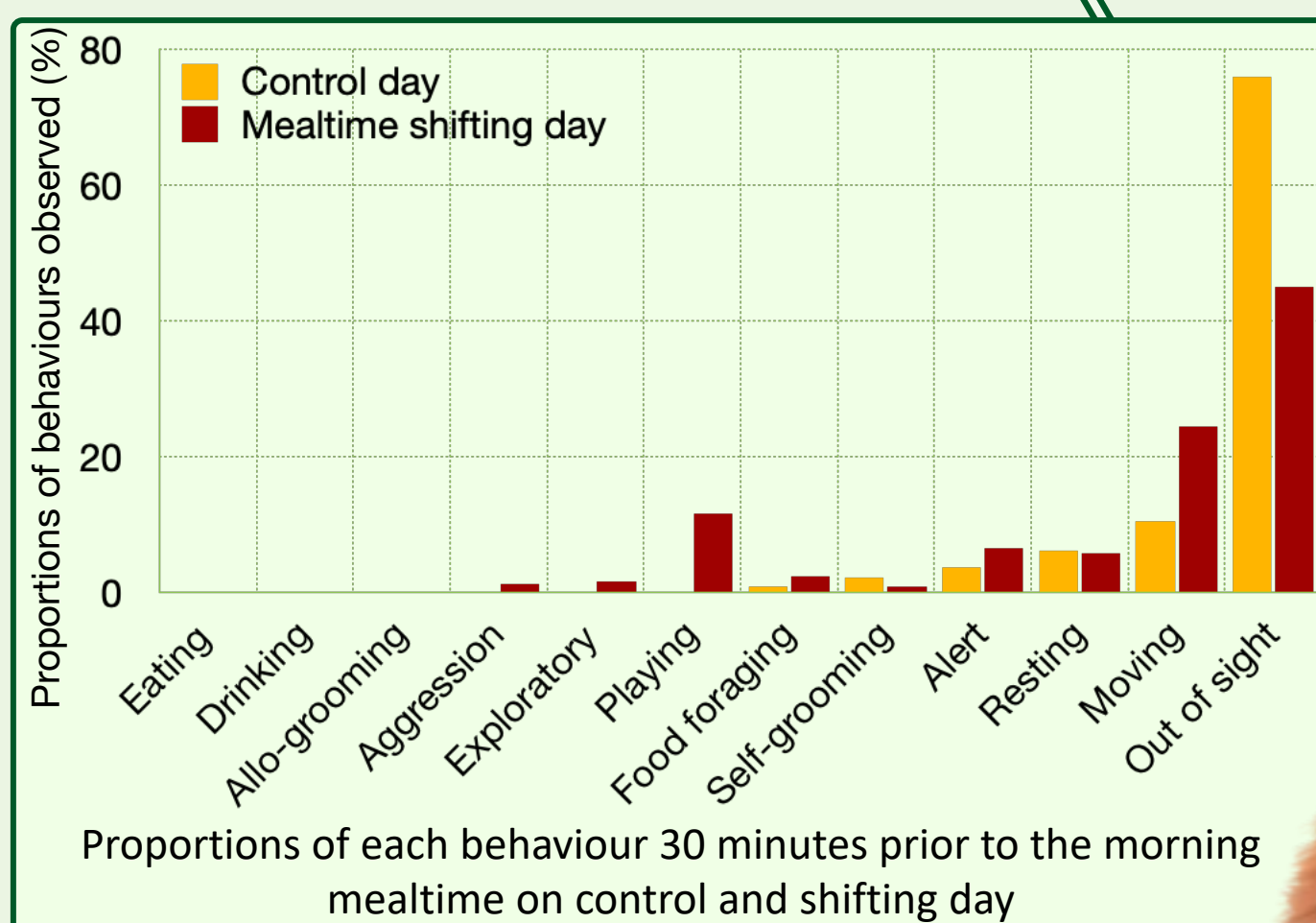
- Mother/Father & Cub/Father: mostly *Far*
- Mother/Cub: mostly *Touching*
- Cub/Adults: significantly closer over the weeks
- 67% of *Aggression* occurred when Cub/Father were *Touching* & *Very close*

### Public

- Activity rate higher in presence of public
- Shift of an hour of the morning peak activity rate

### Feeding routine

- Activity rate higher when the meal is delayed
- 31% less *Out of sight*
- Most display: *Moving, Alert, Exploratory, Food foraging* and *Aggression*
- Newly displayed: *Playing*



## CONCLUSION

- Most frequently displayed behaviours (**resting and moving**) agreeing with literature
- Changes in inter-individual distance and the mother's higher alertness linked to the **cub's growth**
- **Increased** activity rate in presence of visitors
- Morning mealtime changes can **improve red panda's behaviour, welfare, and breeding success**

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More information & pictures

