

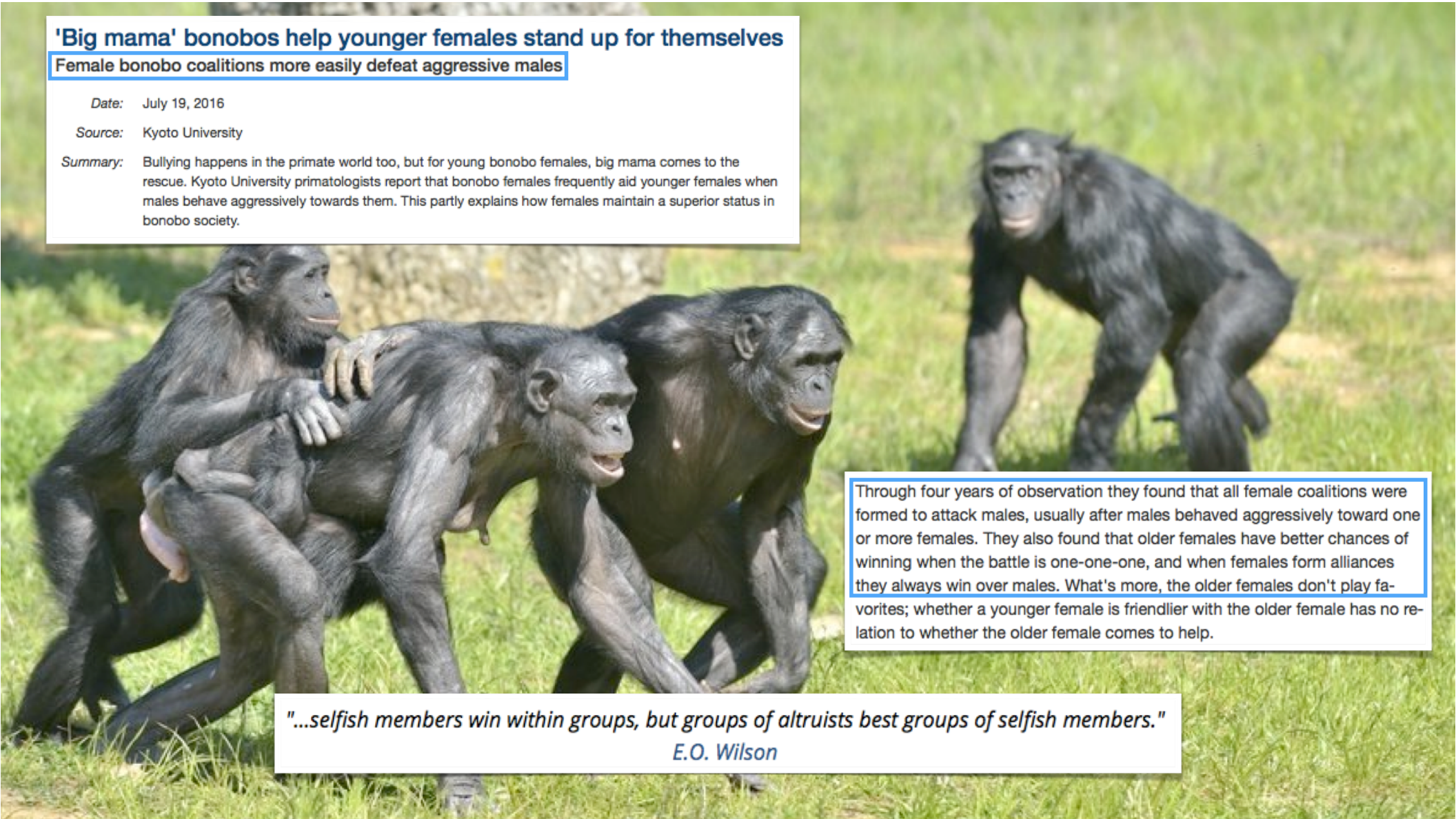
'Big mama' bonobos help younger females stand up for themselves

Female bonobo coalitions more easily defeat aggressive males

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Source: Kyoto University

Summary: Bullying happens in the primate world too, but for young bonobo females, big mama comes to the rescue. Kyoto University primatologists report that bonobo females frequently aid younger females when males behave aggressively towards them. This partly explains how females maintain a superior status in bonobo society.



Through four years of observation they found that all female coalitions were formed to attack males, usually after males behaved aggressively toward one or more females. They also found that older females have better chances of winning when the battle is one-one-one, and when females form alliances they always win over males. What's more, the older females don't play favorites; whether a younger female is friendlier with the older female has no relation to whether the older female comes to help.

"...selfish members win within groups, but groups of altruists best groups of selfish members."

E.O. Wilson