



iDiv sabbatical project report

“ Linking genetic parameters with the IUCN Red List Status”

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Scientific hosts: Prof. Anja Widdig, Dr. Marten Winter

Feedback

- **What were your objectives for your sabbatical and what progress did you make?**

During my sabbatical, I stayed at iDiv and Leipzig University from April 22 to May 30, 2025. In collaboration with researchers at iDiv (Prof. Anja Widdig, Drs Martin Winter, Anne-Celine Granjon and Chloe Schmidt), this project build upon extensive, long-term studies of non-human primates, particularly within the genus *Macaca*. We will assess how genetic diversity, especially effective population size, fluctuates across different regions and periods. By identifying consistent patterns in these changes, we aim to provide data that could inform updates to IUCN assessment protocols, promoting a more comprehensive, genetically informed approach to species conservation.

How did being at iDiv help you achieve your objectives?

Being at iDiv I was able to meet Dr. Martin Winter, head of sDiv Synthesis Centre, Prof. W. Stanley Harpole, chair of the Sabbatical Board and Luise Dietel, Event Coordinator. In addition, I allowed to meet sDiv Postdocs, hearing their research work, and forming the supportive research atmosphere in the room we sharing. Connecting with Drs. Anne-Celine Granjon and Chloe Schmidt, and working alongside Prof. Anja Widdig on my project, was a truly rewarding experience. I also had the chance to present a seminar that highlighted the long-standing collaborative research on *Macaca nigra* (Black-crested macaques), including insights from my sabbatical work. A special highlight was forming a new connection with Prof. Alexandra N. Muellner-Riehl, who showed interest in exploring the plant species within the macaques' natural habitat, especially those that form part of their diet.

As a faculty member at a primarily undergraduate institution, as well as having experience in graduate school environments, it was a refreshing experience to return to a setting where cutting-edge research is actively pursued, and similar research challenges are being addressed. Being surrounded by the talented members of iDiv kept me engaged with the latest literature and provided valuable insights into innovative research areas, something that is not always possible in my usual setting, where the focus is often more on teaching than on high-level research.

The work atmosphere was welcoming and collaborative. Colleagues from different research groups often have lunch together, which creates a friendly space to get to know one another. Regular seminars offer opportunities to share research and explore collaborations. The administrative staff were extremely helpful, providing support at every stage and quickly addressing any issues that came up.

It's a good idea to arrange accommodation early to secure a reasonable price, a good location, and enough space. A monthly public transport pass is also a cost-effective option for getting around the city.

A sabbatical is not just an opportunity to advance a specific project. Still, also a valuable time to step back, generate new ideas, and shape future research directions, and iDiv and Leipzig offer an excellent setting for that kind of creative thinking.