Dr. Wendy Erb is a biological anthropologist broadly interested in reproductive competition and cooperation in wild primates. Her research spans the fields of sexual selection, animal communication, ecology, physiology, and conservation biology, as she investigates the proximate and ultimate bases of behavior and how these are influenced by environmental change and human disturbance. She is currently a Fulbright Scholar to Indonesia.

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Massey University, AT1, 12-1 p.m.
Candid calls: ecological, energetic, and anthropogenic influences on primate long-range signals

In most mammals, females invest much more than males into reproduction, yet male investment in mating effort does not necessarily come cheaply. For example, some primate males utilize long-distance vocalizations as a critical component of their mating strategies. If these calls are physically or energetically constrained, they may be honest signals of male quality. I studied male reproductive strategies in two Indonesian primates: a leaf-eating colobine (simakobu, Simias concolor) and a fruit-eating great ape (Bornean orangutan, Pongo pygmaeus). Males in both of these very different taxa use long calls, but are these vocalizations costly signals or cheap talk? Taking a multifaceted approach, I incorporated data on the environment, nutrition, health, energetics, hormones, parasites, social behavior, and bioacoustics to understand the processes underlying the reliability of these sexually selected displays.