

## Scientist Says Animal Scents can Manipulate Animal Behavior

Submitted by [Raoul Girard](#) on Tue, 11/12/2013 - 03:25



New molecular survey has come up with findings to suggest that animals' scent posts convey a veritable encyclopedia of information about the animals that left them. The analysis of scent from groups of hyenas in Kenya could suggest a way to manipulate animal's behavior.

Michigan State University researcher Kevin Theis said that paste deposits left by hyenas on grass actually relay reams of information for other animals to read. This means that hyenas leave a quick, detailed message and go - like latest update about who's around and how they are doing.

The study has been reported in the current issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of

Sciences. Theis said, "Scent posts are bulletin boards, pastes are business cards, and bacteria are the ink, shaped into letters and words that provide information about the paster to the boards' visitors".

According to Theis, there is much greater diversity in the odor-producing bacteria in spotted hyena scent glands than suggested historical studies of mammals. He, however, added that the diversity still varies between hyena species and with sex and reproductive state among spotted hyenas.

Previously, culture-based methods were the only way to analyze bacterial scent signals. But the latest study used microbial surveys and complementary odor data from wild animals.

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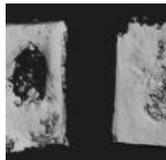
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