



Gorilla Journal

Journal of Berggorilla & Regenwald Direkthilfe

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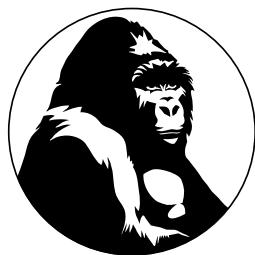


**Implementing
Conservation Ac-
tion Plan Strate-
gies in Congo**

**Bwindi Gorilla
Number Increased**

**The Shifting Trend
of Ape Trafficking
in Africa**

**The Bambidie
Gorillas**



BERGGORILLA & REGENWALD DIREKTHILFE

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Cover: Infant gorilla Afangui in the restaurant cage before the confiscation. Photo: Tomo Takagi

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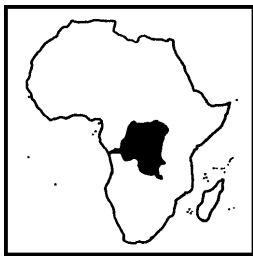
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FZS Activities in Support of the Simba People inside Maïko National Park

The Maïko National Park (MNP) is one of 7 national parks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It was established by Presidential Decree no. 070/312, dated 20 November 1970, and covers an area of 10,830 km². It is located in the north-east of the DRC and extends over three provinces – the Lubero and Walikale territories in North Kivu, the Bafwasende territory in Oriental Province and the Lubutu territory in Maniema Province.

The Maïko National Park embodies the intent of the DRC government to protect the immense rainforest and to safeguard the survival of key endemic species such as the eastern lowland gorilla, the okapi and the Congo peacock, in addition to species at risk of becoming locally extinct, such as the elephant, chimpanzee and various other species of primates.

For effective and efficient management, the MNP is subdivided into three

sectors – the northern, central and southern sectors – all of which are under the supervision of a central management unit located at Lubutu. Each of the three park sectors has patrol posts that are no longer operational, due to incidents between Simba fighters and the park rangers and to the limited funding available to the park. A park rehabilitation project is currently underway, such that MNP is in the process of re-launching monitoring activities in all sectors.

The presence of the Simba in Maïko National Park goes back a very long time. They were there since historic times, but were taken close to the main road by the Belgians. They lived on hunting and fishing. During the 1964 Mulele rebellion, which engulfed the whole country, they became warriors and retreated into the forest to protect themselves from Government reprisals and because they were furious about the death of their idol Lumumba – they only accepted recently that he has been killed.

When the Maïko National Park was created in 1970, the presence of the



A meeting of representatives of ICCN, the military and FZS with the Simba. Photo: Eugene Izinga

Simba was not taken into account: the Congolese (formerly Zairean) authorities did not plan or take any measures to relocate them outside a protected area.

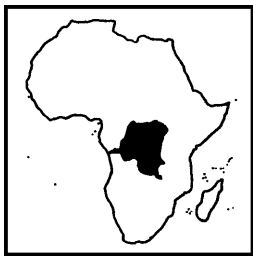
The problems between the park authorities and the Simba intensified as the establishment of the park progressed. The rangers found it difficult to fulfil their mission of protecting the park as they frequently became involved in skirmishes with the Simba. This situation persisted until around 2000, after the civil war. Everybody knew that their presence in the park posed a serious problem but nobody was able to come up with a solution. In order to be able to carry out patrols and other work inside the park, the park authorities finally came to an understanding with the Simba – a compromise was reached. However, in April 2009 the army called up the rangers to participate in an operation against the Simba with the objective of forcing them out of the forest. Unfortunately, one ranger was killed in the ensuing fight and when the Simba saw his dead body, they considered the rangers as traitors for having led their enemies. A trial of strength commenced and the activities of the rangers in the park ground to a halt.

The *Frankfurt Zoological Society* (FZS) arrived at the end of 2009 and started activities in 2010. They recognized that it was important to initiate certain measures for the Simba to leave the park peacefully, because



A Simba village in the park

Photo: FZS



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other groups (poachers or miners) operating in the park may present themselves as Simba and the distinction between the groups is difficult to make. Strategies had to be outlined before it was possible to find a solution and embark on this procedure, and to define who exactly should be involved to ensure a sustainable solution. We should take into account the risk that, if they leave, another armed group such as the FDLR or Maï Maï may take over. The FZS wanted to find a long term solution; but not resolve one problem by creating another more difficult.

This approach was not easy and required much lobbying and sensitization at the political and diplomatic, as well as at social levels including involvement of the local chiefs who have already played a very important role because they have respect from the Simba. The strategy of FZS is to encourage the Simba to leave while offering them certain assistance:

- A school is being constructed to improve the quality of education in the area that the Simba will move into. (Two others have already been inaugurated by *Fauna and Flora International*.)
- The first 100 households to come out of the park will each be offered 25 metal sheets to assist in building their houses.
- To avoid them into turning into bandits or creating other problems for society, it is planned to provide relocating households with agricultural materials and seeds to help them integrate into civil society, and to provide them with training to ensure that their agricultural activities will be productive and profitable.
- 30 Simba will be taken as park rangers, giving them guaranteed employment. ICCN would actually prefer to increase this number and encourage them to work in other protected areas as well.



A wing of the new school for the integration of the Simba

Photo: FZS

Towards the end of last year, a broad concept was developed which included the following activities:

- lobbying at the provincial level
- visiting the site in order to meet the Simba in their camps
- sensitization of the Simba for a peaceful exit to normal life

Lobbying started at the beginning of January 2012 when a FZS-ICCN team met the politico-military authorities at Kindu to secure the authorisation for negotiation with this armed group. The Governor gave an authorization to proceed.

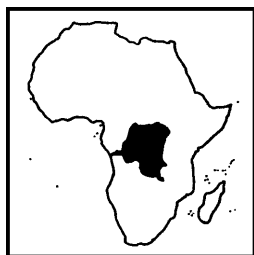
The FZS-ICCN team then scheduled a trip into the park to meet with the Simba. This meeting was facilitated through several contacts set up by local chiefs, following an agreement with the Simba leader that he would meet the team.

The first meeting had the objective of renewing relationships which had existed between the park rangers and the Simba and which had allowed the patrols to be carried out. At the end of this first meeting, the chief Simba gave

his agreement for the rangers to resume patrolling – which they subsequently did, even going on mixed patrols with the Simba. Other questions were also raised during this important meeting, such as possibilities for their peaceful exit, their re-integration into normal life, etc.

The contacts that were initiated at the site level by ICCN and FZS subsequently required an involvement at a much higher level. The relocation of the Simba from the forest has many implications in regard to the need to re-integrate them into normal social life, which means an orientation either towards the army or towards civilian life. The FZS has thus initiated contacts with diplomatic missions, the relevant ministers, the army and the Director General of ICCN to get them involved in finding a long-term solution.

On a suggestion from the ICCN Director General, a team was formed to carry out a second sensitization mission focusing particularly on the means of achieving a peaceful exit of the Simba. This team included a representative of ICCN Director General from Kinshasa with extensive experience in ne-



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gotiating with armed groups, who went to Kindu to meet the military authorities of the province. In Kinshasa, the issue was taken up to the higher Military instances and the 7th military region in Maniema Province who sent an emissary (a colonel in charge of security and military intelligence at the provincial level who was accompanied by a lieutenant from the intelligence section). The venue of the meeting was approximately 8 hours' march (from the main road) into the park. The meeting included representatives of the ICCN Directorate-General, representatives of the military region, the chief warden and a FZS representative. The main objective of the mission was to sign an agreement between ICCN and its partners on the one side and the Simba on the other side, for a peaceful exit and re-integration to normal social life.

By the end of the mission, the parties had agreed to all the suggestions and proposed that this should be gradually implemented. The 30 men who will join the ICCN will be available as soon as joint patrols have been held comprising ICCN rangers and the Simba. This has now taken place and the prospective rangers are expected to join up in October. In addition, a list of 250 children who require schooling (this number may go up with more people returning) has been provided and a monitoring group set up to ensure adherence to commitments over a 3-month period. Three households that have already come out of the forest have been provided with metal sheets.

As an army representative was among the team, the Simba warriors received a firm guarantee that they will never again be pursued once the agreement was signed. The presence of an army representative played an important role in convincing the Simba to leave the forest. Their interest in doing so is palpable – and the whole army has been sensitized so as not to disturb those who come out of the forest.

In the meantime, the Simba chief together with his high-ranking community members has been involved in sensitizing their warriors and the rest of the people to accept the fact that they can leave the forest, and live their lives normal lives in villages.

We are convinced that the relocation of the Simba from the park will improve its protection, which is important to achieve conservation goals. It also allows to establish research and monitoring teams, which FZS proposes to set up and coordinate. To date, the mixed patrols report the presence of important biodiversity, with gorillas, chimpanzees, okapis and other ungulates having been seen in significant numbers. This strengthens the interest that FZS has taken in this site and will help ensure its long-term conservation.

We would like to express our gratitude to BMZ (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) for co-financing this project, which is in the process of giving this park international visibility.

Prince K. Kaleme

Implementing Conservation Action Plan Strategies in Northeastern Congo

Some of the largest tracts of forest habitat in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo are located in the Walikale and Lubutu territories. Although the forests are not formally protected by the government, the communities have designated them as protected areas and are working with the government to establish the land as formally recognized reserves. The forests of Walikale and Lubutu include important corridors between Kahuzi-Biega and Maïko National Parks and currently have healthy populations of Grauer's gorillas, chimpanzees, leopards, and elephants. Although human density inside the forests of Walika-

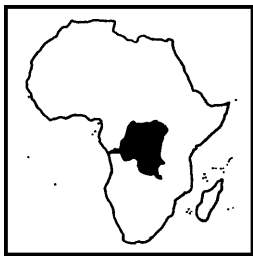
le and Lubutu are still quite low, the perimeters are some of the most densely populated and impoverished areas of DRC.

Unfortunately, poverty, proximity to wildlife habitats, the presence of a major roadway, and the increasing presence of mining extraction companies make the Walikale and Lubutu forests target areas for the illegal bushmeat and pet trades. Sadly, evidence of these illegal practices is growing at an alarming rate, and stories of confiscations are even making national headlines. Prior to 2000 only one eastern gorilla was confiscated by wildlife officials in the eastern DRC. In contrast, during the last 10 years, 17 eastern gorillas and more than 50 chimpanzee orphans were confiscated from northeast DRC alone. It is speculated that as many as 30 more chimpanzees came from this region but ended up in a sanctuary in southeast DRC (*Pan African Sanctuary Alliance Database*). Of those rescued, a large number were confiscated in the provincial capital of Goma and in villages located along the main road running between the Maïko and Kahuzi-Biega National Parks (see map on page 6).

When orphans are confiscated, wildlife authorities arrange for their care at one of the three facilities in northeastern DRC for rescued apes: **GRACE** (Gorilla Rehabilitation and Conservation Education Center) for Grauer's gorillas, **Senkwekwe** for mountain gorillas, and the **Center for the Rehabilitation of Primates** in Lwiro for chimpanzees. These sanctuaries are essential components to anti-poaching efforts, but they are quickly exceeding their capacity due to the substantial increases in ape confiscations.

Conservation Action Plan

In early 2011, with support from the *Arcus Foundation* and *The World We Want Foundation*, the Congolese Wildlife Authorities (ICCN) and the

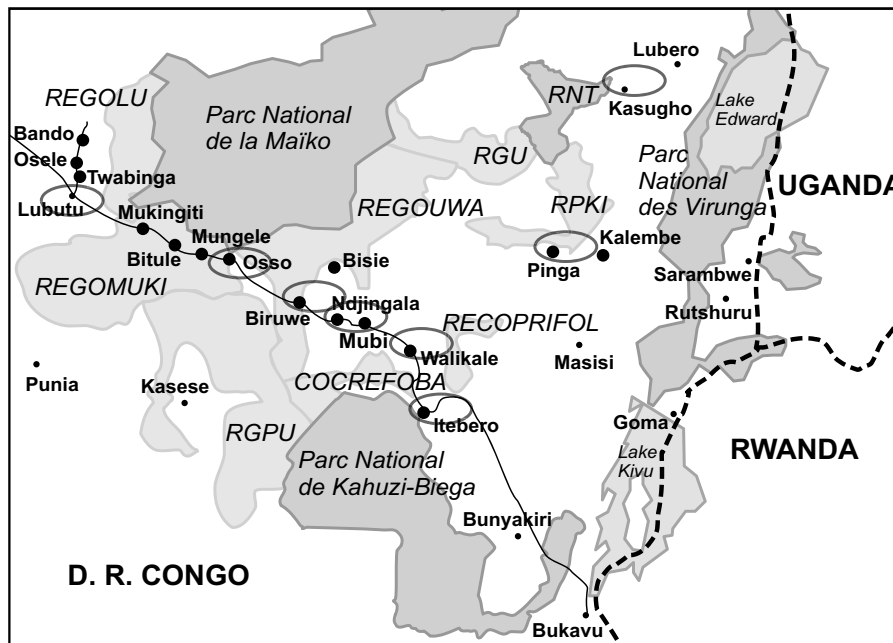


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Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) facilitated a Conservation Action Plan (CAP) Workshop to assess the current status of gorillas and chimpanzees in eastern DRC. During the workshop, illegal poaching was identified as the number one threat to apes in northeastern DRC, and the Walikale and Lubutu territories were recognized as critical target areas for conservation efforts. Furthermore, conservationists identified conservation education for local communities and law enforcement agencies as one of 5 priority strategies to protect gorillas and chimpanzees in Walikale, Lubutu and other areas with high rates of ape poaching.

Ape Conservation Awareness Survey

Based on the priorities outlined during the CAP workshop, JGI joined with conservationists from Disney's Animal Kingdom® to develop and implement a comprehensive conservation education program in the Walikale and Lubutu territories. To develop the program, a needs assessment survey was first conducted to identify key issues that should be addressed in the program. The survey consisted of 21 questions about people's knowledge, attitude, and practices with regard to ape conservation. It was administered to 350 people living in the following 10 communities in the Walikale and



Map of the UGADEC region in northeastern Congo. Large dots: CAP sites. Circles designate areas where ape confiscations have occurred. The Walikale and Lubutu territories include communities along the route between Lubutu and Itebero.

Lubutu territories: Lubutu, Biruwe, Bisie, Ndjingala, Mubi, Walikale Centre, Itebero, Kasese, Pinga Centre, and Kalembe (see map). The survey results highlighted the severity of the bushmeat problem and the lack of knowledge concerning wildlife regulations and penalties, demonstrating the potential benefits of conservation education.

Survey Findings

Here we present some of our key findings from the ape conservation awareness survey.

1. There is a lack of knowledge about the laws protecting apes and other wildlife and the penalties for breaking these laws. This knowledge varies greatly by community.
2. Although a large percentage of respondents consume bushmeat, none claimed to eat apes. Nonetheless, from the survey results, it is

clear that ape hunting and consumption are major problems in Walikale and Lubutu. It is interesting that a few respondents listed domestic livestock as a type of bushmeat.

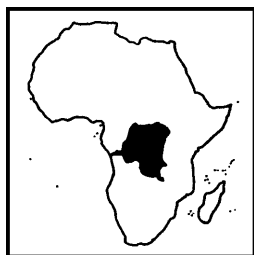
3. An overwhelming majority of respondents were supportive of ape conservation initiatives in their communities, indicating the potential for conservation programs to create positive change in the Walikale and Lubutu territories.

Conservation Education Program Development and Implementation

With this invaluable groundwork, JGI and Disney's Animal Kingdom® developed a conservation education program for both adults and primary school-aged children. Educators from 10 communities in the Walikale and Lubutu territories were selected to deliver the educational program. It was particularly important to involve local



An educator demonstrating one of the educational activities at a training workshop



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educators to enhance their capacity and to ensure that educators were well-respected members of their community with first-hand knowledge of the conservation challenges of the region. The local educators received

Percentage of respondents that agree with each statement

| Survey statement | % of resp. |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| It is legal to buy apes | 12.3% |
| It is legal to capture apes | 9.4% |
| It is legal to kill apes | 7.4% |

Percentage of respondents that believe they know DRC Wildlife Laws

| Community | % of resp. |
|-----------------|------------|
| Ndjingala | 85.7% |
| Walikale Centre | 77.8% |
| Itebero | 68.4% |
| Biruwe | 64.4% |
| Pinga Centre | 61.9% |
| Lubutu | 60.9% |
| Kalembe | 59.1% |
| Bisie | 50.9% |
| Kasese | 39.1% |
| Mubi | 30.8% |
| Average | 61.7% |

Percentage of respondents that agreed with each statement

| Survey statement | % of respondents |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| It is normal to eat ape meat | 40.3% |
| Apes are hunted in my community | 50.9% |

Percentage of respondents that agreed with each statement

| Survey statement | % of resp. |
|---|------------|
| Ape conservation education is important | 96.0% |
| I would like to participate in ape conservation in my village | 98.0% |

extensive training with JGI and Disney conservation educators on how to deliver conservation lessons, conduct pre and post evaluations, and lead community meetings. Each educator was also provided with program

Percentage of respondents that identified each as a penalty for possessing an ape

| Penalty listed | % of resp. |
|--|------------|
| Prison term | 36.3% |
| I don't know | 27.4% |
| Arrest and confiscation of animal | 16.9% |
| Punishment according to DRC law | 11.1% |
| No punishment | 6.6% |
| Settled between hunter and forest ranger | 1.7% |

Percentage of respondents that listed each type of bushmeat eaten

| Type of meat | % of resp. |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Antelope, monkeys | 67.7% |
| Porcupine | 21.6% |
| Elephant, okapi, leopard | 9.5% |
| Other bushmeat | 0.9% |
| Cow, sheep, goat | 0.3% |

materials, such as puzzles, cartoon story boards, educational posters, and funds for transportation to deliver the program.

As of July 2012, the educators have delivered the conservation education program in 95 schools to 27,803 children. In cooperation with UGADEC (Union of Associations for Conservation of Gorillas and Development in the East Democratic Republic of Congo), the educators also have held 90 meetings with over 2400 community members and leaders. In addition to the interactive conservation education lessons and meetings, JGI has erected 10 billboards and hundreds of posters and delivered conservation-themed radio and film programs throughout the communities. These tools not only reinforced information delivered to program participants but also allowed conservation messages to be spread to hundreds of thousands of additional people living in and passing through the Walikale and Lubutu territories. Although we have received much positive feedback on the program, we will re-administer the ape conservation awareness survey in order to systematically evaluate the impact the program is having on people's knowledge of and attitudes towards ape conservation. We look forward to continuing our work with our partners to foster respect for apes and the laws protecting apes and their habitat.

Alison Grand, Tammie Bettinger, Dario Merlo and Debby Cox

This program would not be possible without our partners that support and contribute to the program: ICCN, UGADEC, North Kivu Ministry of Environment, North Kivu Ministry of Education, the Inspections of Education for Walikale, Lubutu, and Goma, Kahuzi-Biega National Park, Maiko National Park, Arcus Foundation, Coopera, Conservation International, Disney's Animals, Science and Environment, Flora and Fauna International, Frankfurt Zoological Society, Gorilla Organization, Jane Goodall Institute-Holland, Jane Goodall Institute-Spain, Jane Goodall Roots & Shoots, Prince Bernhard Funds for Nature Foundation;



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Two New Grauer's Gorilla Orphans

On September 13, 2012, a young gorilla was brought to the Kahuzi-Biega National Park headquarters by a community conservation group, who claimed to have been given the baby by the rebel group Raïa Mutomboki. The baby gorilla was taken from the forest sometime in early August. The Gorilla Doctors Dawn Zimmerman, Eddy Kambale and Martin Kabuyaya, who were in park that day, examined the infant, a 9-month-old female in relatively good condition. She was named Isangi.

On September 20, ICCN and local officials successfully undertook a sting operation following a tip-off by local community members, and confiscated a 4-month-old female Grauer's gorilla from men attempting to sell her in Goma. Her captors claimed to have taken the baby from the Walikale area. They were arrested and transferred to the court authorities in Goma. The infant was named Baraka. She was weak and dehydrated after 2 weeks in captivity.



Isangi with her caretaker

Photo: Molly Feltner/gorilla doctors

Both infants were taken to the Senkwekwe Sanctuary, where they are being cared for by experienced keepers until they eventually will be moved to the GRACE center where orphaned Grauer's gorillas are cared for.

Summary of posts from www.gorillacd.org and www.gorilladoctorsblog.org

Although it is good news if gorilla orphans are confiscated and saved in orphanages, it is bad news that they are still captured and traded. There are more sad news: on July 25, 2012, Kaboko – the only male mountain gorilla in captivity – died at the age of 9 years. He lived in the Senkwekwe Sanctuary near Rumangabo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, together with the females Maisha, Ndeze and Ndakasi.

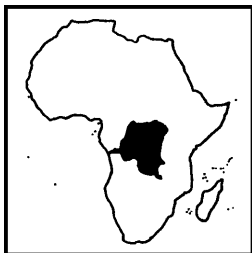
Wildlife Conservation Society, World Wildlife Fund, Zoological Society of London, Zoos Victoria, Center for the Rehabilitation of Primates in Lwiro, and Stella Matutina Hotel. We would also like to congratulate the JGI-DRC educators on their tremendous accomplishments and acknowledge their remarkable commitment to conservation: Kitima Anaclet, Aduka-ko Amita, Barthelemy Tchangwi, Arajabu Kukay, Zaina Mboasu, Apolina Misingi, Abapolo Molisho, Samamba Misanda, and Mishonya Mirimo.

DFGF Grauer's Gorilla Program

The *Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International* (DFGFI) has expanded its efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to build a new Grauer's Gorilla Conservation and Research Program, which is dedicated to research, monitoring, and protection of the Grauer's (formerly eastern lowland) gorilla. In contrast to mountain gorillas, which have been studied in Rwanda at the Fossey Fund's Karisoke Research Center for some 45 years, there are fewer habituated Grauer's groups that researchers can observe in the vast forests of eastern DRC. As a result, much less is known about this subspecies. There is no current census of their population numbers, and according to some estimates, there may be as few as 4,000 individuals left in the wild.

The Fossey Fund's new Grauer's Gorilla Conservation and Research Program in DRC aims to assess the numbers and stability of the current population in the region, as well as to study and protect them. This program is funded through the generosity of the Turner Foundation, the Daniel K. Thorne Foundation and other donors and members of DFGFI.

The *Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund* is working in collaboration with three community-based reserves located between Maïko and Kahuzi-Biega National Parks – Réserve des Gorilles de Utunda et Watsa (REGOUWA), Ré-



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Biruwe field technicians

Photo: DFGFI

serve des Gorilles de Punia (RGPU), and La Conservation Communautaire de la Réserve Forestière de Bakano (COCREFOBA). These reserves (see map on page 6) form an important ecological corridor between the two national parks and are reported to be home to a significant population of Grauer's gorillas.

Over the year 2011, the Fossey Fund has made significant steps in building the program's infrastructure, as well as

in collecting data regarding the presence and composition of Grauer's gorillas in the reserves. Three teams of the Fossey Fund's Grauer's Gorilla Conservation and Research Program field technicians completed 30 patrols in the reserves during the course of the year, with the last patrol returning from the field at the end of September 2012. Based on evidence of gorilla presence such as nest sites, dung, and food remains, field staff believe they may have found a group of as many as 35 gorillas in the REGOUWA reserve.

In addition to the patrols, the program also established the Biruwe Research Base, the central operating facility of the program, and three mobile bio-monitoring posts, one in each reserve. Local people were hired as field staff and to construct the Biruwe Research Base, strengthening the program's ties with the communities in the areas where it works. This is important not only to make conservation efforts sustainable, but also to develop informal information networks, which

are essential for exchanging the latest news about security in the region.

Biruwe Research Base is outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment that will allow for direct transmission of data collected in the field to the *Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund's* primary research facility in Ruhengeri, Rwanda. The Fossey Fund is aiming for an efficient and seamless cycle, which transforms the on-the-ground efforts of tracking, monitoring, and protecting gorillas into cutting-edge scientific knowledge that is also applicable for management and conservation practices. Although the Fossey Fund is still far from being able to habituate Grauer's gorilla groups for research, it plans to begin identifying individual gorilla groups from which it can collect data on ranging patterns and demography. In the meantime, the work that the organization has done to build the infrastructure of the program has been the fundamental step to expanding its activities in DRC.

The landscape of DRC is challenging in and of itself, as all three bio-

The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund Needs Support in Congo

At the beginning of October, we received a mail from Urbain Ngobobo, the new DFGFI country Director for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He wrote:

We are currently based in the bush, in one of the community based reserves where we have established a Grauer's Gorilla Research and Conservation base. For that we are hiring local field technicians who receive from us regular food for patrols, a prime, equipment including uniform, vehicles, inflatable boat, sleeping bags, raincoat, and others. Is there a chance to have support from Berggorilla in term

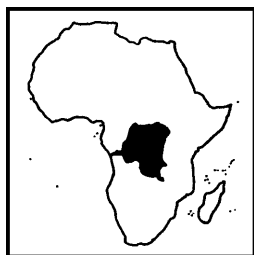
of field technician equipment, such as sleeping bags, raincoat, boots, torches, GPS, Camera or whatever you can fund?

In the meantime, we transferred US\$ 1,000 to the project, but of course this is only a small portion of what is needed. You can either donate to us with the keyword "DFGFI" or to DFGFI directly (www.gorillafund.org).

Address:
Berggorilla & Regenwald
Direkthilfe
c/o Rolf Brunner
Lerchenstr. 5
45473 Muelheim, Germany
www.berggorilla.org

The Grauer's gorilla is classified as one of the 25 most endangered primates. Conservation of this gorilla subspecies in areas that are not protected by the government is essential.

Bank Account:
Account number 353 344 315
Stadtsparkasse Muelheim,
Germany
Bank code number 362 500 00
IBAN:
DE06 3625 0000 0353 3443 15
SWIFT-BIC SPMHDE3E
Switzerland, Postfinance:
Postscheckkonto 40-461685-7



D. R. CONGO

monitoring posts and the Biruwe Research Base are located in extremely remote areas that are difficult, and in some cases impossible, to access by car. The *Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund* has also faced the additional challenges brought on by the current crisis in Congo, which flared up in May 2012. Nevertheless, the Fossey Fund's experienced field staff were successful in navigating the logistical obstacles and political unrest to achieve all of the program's goals for this year.

Another reason DFGFI's Grauer's Gorilla Conservation and Research Program is essential to gorilla conservation in the region is to combat the continuing problem of illegal gorilla trafficking. In September, the Fossey Fund was involved in the confiscation of two infant Grauer's gorillas (see page 8). It is believed that both of them originated in North Kivu province, where the community reserves they work in are located, marking this area as an epicenter of gorilla trafficking in the region. Currently, the Fossey Fund is supporting the care of these two infant females by funding their caregivers, food, and supplies at the Senkwekwe Sanctuary for mountain gorillas. The infants will remain in quarantine at Senkwekwe until they can be safely transferred to the Gorilla Rehabilitation and Conservation Education (GRACE) center for Grauer's gorillas.

GRACE was created at the urging of Congo's wildlife authority (ICCN) on land donated by the Tayna Center for Conservation Biology, adjacent to the Tayna Nature Reserve (RNT, see map on page 6) in eastern Congo. The center was initiated by the *Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund*, with funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; design and construction assistance from The Walt Disney Company's Animal Programs; and technical expertise from PASA. GRACE is a conservation project of DFGFI's Gorilla Council, and overseen by GRACE Governing Council mem-

bers including The Walt Disney Company, the *Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund*, Dallas Zoo, Denver Zoo, and Houston Zoo. Future plans call for GRACE to become an independent nonprofit organization registered in the USA and the DRC.

October 2012 has been a time for the *Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund* to both reflect on its achievements in DRC and to reckon with ongoing challenges, especially in light of the two or-

phaned gorillas that came into the organization's care last month. The Fossey Fund hopes that a dual program of research, monitoring, and protection, which builds on what has been learned through 45 years of researching and protecting mountain gorillas in Rwanda, coupled with rehabilitation of infants who are victims of poaching, will be the key to conserving and learning about the Grauer's gorilla.

Urbain Ngobobo

M23 Update

Since May 2012 large portions of the Virunga National Park's Mikeno Sector have been occupied by the rebel group M23. Fighting between rebels and the army continued occasionally, and the M23 occupied certain towns and lost them again. In July, the fighting had come so close that the rangers and their families were evacuated from Rumangabo. Four and a half weeks later they were able to return to their homes.

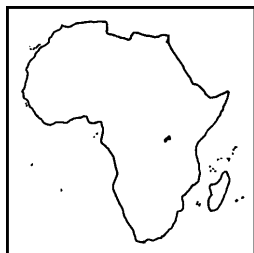
At the beginning of August, the rangers were finally able after authorization by government authorities and M23 rebel commanders to begin a gorilla monitoring operation. They searched for the gorilla families and found 4 out of 7. Only at the beginning of December, a small team of rangers was again allowed to visit the Mikeno sector to look for the habituated gorillas. They found two groups and discovered 4 newborn babies, 3 in the Kabirizi family and one in the Munyaga family. Another newborn baby was later found in the Kabirizi group.

Since the increase in FDLR and Maï Maï rebel activity in the central sector and the takeover of the gorilla sector by M23, there has been a renewed increase in illegal charcoal production that is destroying the park's forests. The M23 are not the only rebels that threaten the Virunga Conservation Area: In Rwanda, an anti-poaching patrol post was attacked on December 2nd and tragically one Karisoke staff member, Esdras Nsengiyumva, was killed by suspected FDLR rebels.

On November 20th, the M23 entered the city of Goma, which had already suffered mass upheaval over the previous days due to the advance of the rebels and their clashes with national army troops. In the fighting between government troops and the M23 rebels for the control of Goma, a main electricity line was cut, leaving large areas of the city without power or piped water. Moreover, soldiers from the Congolese army looted homes and shops as they retreated from the M23 rebels.

On December 1st the rebels withdrew from Goma again after the Congolese government had agreed to hold peace talks. Before they left, they also looted and took everything they could use, especially vehicles, weapons and ammunition that the Congolese army had left behind when the troops fled.

From the blog on gorillacd.org as well as articles of various media



RWANDA

Eucalyptus – An Introduced Medicinal Food for Mountain Gorillas?

In the past decade or more, thousands of seedlings and saplings have been planted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in an effort to alleviate the relentless destruction of indigenous forests by wood-cutters and also to promote agro-forestry. *Grevillea robustus* (Australian silver oak), *Calliandra*, *Leucaena*, *Maesopsis*, *Markhamia*, *Acacia mearnsii* (Black wattle), cypress, *Erythrina abyssinica* and *Eucalyptus maideni* (Maiden's gum) have all been introduced (Sikubwabo Kiyengo 2011; Vhosi & Sikubwabo Kiyengo 2010). In Rwanda, particularly, plantations of fast-growing *Eucalyptus* spp. are well-established and have provided gorillas with an unexpected food source. The apes are passionate for the gum exuded by injured trees, even crossing open ground to gain access to the plantations.

While gorillas are fond of the bark and sap of some trees, their exploitation of eucalypts (Myrtaceae) might seem surprising, given that many species are potentially toxic; they can possess harmful hydrocyanic and prussic acids. Some of the volatile or essential oils, however, contain therapeutic properties. A primary agent is cineole, a powerful antimicrobial that is found in the majority of eucalypt species, but to varying degrees of potency. *E. maideni*, for example, has 50% cineole, as well as pinene. Other typical chemicals with germicidal activity in the eucalypts include cuminal, phallandra, crytone and phenol (Penfold & Willis 1961).

The potential for these therapeutic agents has long been recognized by native Australians and incorporated into their folk medicines, while early European colonists were quick to take advantage of these new therapeutic oils. Sadly, the Aborigines no longer share the secrets of the ingredients and

preparations of their native medicines, this information having been abused in the past. The leaves of all eucalypts possess oil glands, which can also be found in the buds, petioles, flowers and young fruit of many species. In addition, a number of types produce oils in the bark.

With about 450 species, eucalypts are, in the main, hardy and adaptable, having been successfully introduced into many parts of the world for a broad range of commercial and domestic uses. In tropical Africa, eucalypts were introduced into Nigeria at the start of the 20th century, while plantations were established in Angola in the 1930s to provide fuel wood for locomotives of the Benguela railway. Both Malawi and Mozambique created plantations of *Eucalyptus* spp. and *Pinus* spp. in recent decades (Sayer et al. 1992) as have other countries on the continent as well as in Madagascar.

Parts of the Congo Basin have been colonized, with plantations of *Eucalyptus* sp. and *Pinus* sp., covering 320 km² and 10 km² respectively, being created near Pointe Noire, Republic of Congo, in the 1970s, with a further 100 km² planned for the coastal region with much greater areas of savannah earmarked. Neighbouring Gabon has also played host, although a project to convert 227 km² into further *Eucalyptus* plantations was abandoned in 1982 in favour of more traditional crops (Sayer et al. 1992). According to Penfold & Willis (1961), a small area of 500 ha had been planted with *Eucalyptus* spp. over a 25-year period in the Bamenda highlands, Cameroon, with *E. maideni*, *E. robusta* and *E. saligna* producing the best results. Interestingly, in Gabon the leaves of *E. robusta* are made into an herbal tea for the arrest of malarial fever (Raponda-Walker & Sillans 1961).

It is worth considering the impact, favourable or otherwise, of introduced species on regional ecologies. Over the centuries a great many alien plants

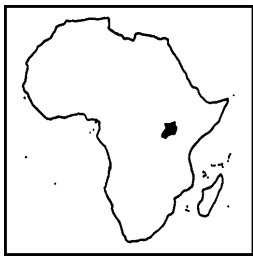
have taken root in African soil, some more beneficial than others. In Uganda's Mgahinga Gorilla National Park the invasion of *Eucalyptus* spp. and *Acacia mearnsii* has spread uncontrollably (Karlowski & Weiche 1997).

An attractive feature of the eucalypts is their rapid growth rate, with some species attaining enormous heights and absorbing vast quantities of water that can seriously disrupt the ecology of some biomes. Deforestation and land misuse have created problems, even with native species.

On the positive side, some eucalypts have contributed significantly to African ethnomedicine locally. Healers in the Mgahinga Gorilla National Park exploit the leaves of one species to produce a vapour for nasal and chest congestion, while these leaves are also used, together with *Targeta minuta* (Mexican marigold) and *Hypericum revolutum*, to treat flu, colds and whooping cough (Hord 1996). Likewise, the people of the Southern Blue Nile district of Sudan utilize the leaves of *E. camaldulensis* for respiratory diseases, and apply fresh leaves to affected parts to target rheumatism (El-Kamali & El-Khalifa 1999).

E. maideni, a species established in Rwanda, is one of the smooth-barked "gum" eucalypts. When the bark is stripped volatile oils seep into the wound in the form of a gum, which then solidifies to form a protective antiseptic resin. It is this sap that the gorillas favour, de-barking many trees in the process. Unfortunately, gorillas do not restrict the damage to bark stripping, but big males can and do snap medium-sized trees in half, causing havoc, and leaving the Rwandan Government to reimburse the plantation owners.

The eucalypts have always been popular in many human societies for their pleasant aroma, efficiency in killing bacteria, and as an applied antiseptic. Mountain gorillas in Rwanda have "discovered" a new plant food that has



UGANDA

been introduced into their domain in relatively recent times, and one that may be as medically beneficial to them as it has to people.

Many primate species have adapted to exploiting cultivated plants, some of which may possess medicinal or even psychoactive compounds. When gorillas were reintroduced into the Lefini region, Republic of Congo, 5 males failed to integrate socially and formed a gang of malcontents. They left the reserve to ravage nearby plantations, including marijuana (cannabis) crops (John Aspinall Foundation Online 2006).

Although the practice of animals deliberately seeking inebriation, and thus rendering themselves vulnerable to accident and injury or as easy targets for predators, appears contrary to logic, reports suggest that, like humans, they sometimes throw caution to the wind in exchange for mind-altering sensations. In northern Republic of Congo a very relaxed mangabey was observed by Nugent (1993) chewing the branches and leaves of cannabis plants, while in the Petit Loango National Park, Gabon, one particular elephant became notorious for its belligerent behaviour after eating the powerful stimulant *Tabernanthe iboga* (V. Stirling, pers. comm.).

Don Cousins

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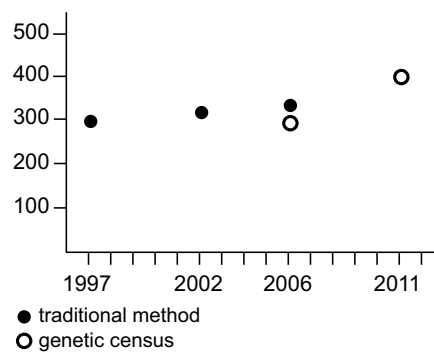
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Bwindi Gorilla Number Increased

A census of the gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park conducted in 2011 confirms a minimum population of 400 gorillas, raising the world population of mountain gorillas to 880. While it was initially planned to include Sarambwe Nature Reserve in Congo, it was not possible to do so due to insecurity in the Sarambwe area at the time of the census. The results could not be released earlier because samples taken during the census were analyzed genetically, which took a long time.

The increase in the Bwindi population since the last census, from 302 in 2006 to 400 in 2011, is attributed to improved censusing techniques as well as real population growth. During two sweeps of Bwindi the census teams could find more gorillas than during a single sweep; it is likely that some gorillas were missed in the 2006 census. But all signs indicate that this gorilla population is indeed growing.

The 400 gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park form 36 distinct so-



Bwindi gorilla census results

cial groups and 16 solitary males. Ten of these social groups are habituated to human presence for either tourism or research. At the time of the census, 168 gorillas or 42% of the Bwindi population were habituated.

From an IGCP Press Release

The census was conducted by the Uganda Wildlife Authority with support from l'Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature and the Rwanda Development Board. It was also supported by the International Gorilla Conservation Programme, the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Conservation Through Public Health, the Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project, the Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation, and the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International. It was funded by WWF-Sweden with supplemental support from Berggorilla & Regenwald Direkthilfe, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology.



Census training with A. Basabose

Photo: Anna Behm Masozera/IGCP



CROSS RIVER

Gorilla Guardian Update: Expansion of the Community-based Monitoring Network

The Cross River gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*) is Critically Endangered, with perhaps fewer than 250 individuals remaining within their range, which occupies a small area of forests straddling the border between Nigeria and Cameroon. Until 2008 the entire population of remaining Cross River gorillas in Cameroon occurred outside of any existing protection area, and despite recent successes that resulted in the creation of two new protected areas (Takamanda National Park and Kagwene Gorilla Sanctuary) there still remain a significant portion of gorillas that inhabit forests outside these protected areas.

Surveys have revealed that perhaps as much as half of Cameroon's gorillas inhabit forested areas that are under no formal protection. Therefore it is critical that some kind of conservation management strategy is implemented to bring as many of these unprotected gorilla groups as possible within some form of protection. However many of these sites are difficult to access, due to their remoteness and the ruggedness of the terrain, posing a problem for conducting survey work and ongoing monitoring. Government also has very limited capacity to mount protection efforts in many of these areas. As a result of these challenges the "Gorilla Guardians", a community-based monitoring network, was initiated in 2008 as a means of stimulating the involvement of local communities and enlisting them in gorilla monitoring and conservation.

The main objective of the Gorilla Guardian program is to engage the cooperation of the leaders of communities with traditional rights over unprotected forest areas where Cross River gorillas are known to occur, and to



Takpe chief receiving WCS in the community

Photo: WCS/TMLP

collaborate with local hunters, to gather information related to Cross River gorilla distribution, status, and threats. The information gathered is then used in supporting Cross River gorilla conservation, awareness-raising, and conservation planning. Gorilla Guardians are selected by their communities and undergo training in gorilla ecology and nest identification, monitoring and data collection, and Cameroon wildlife law.

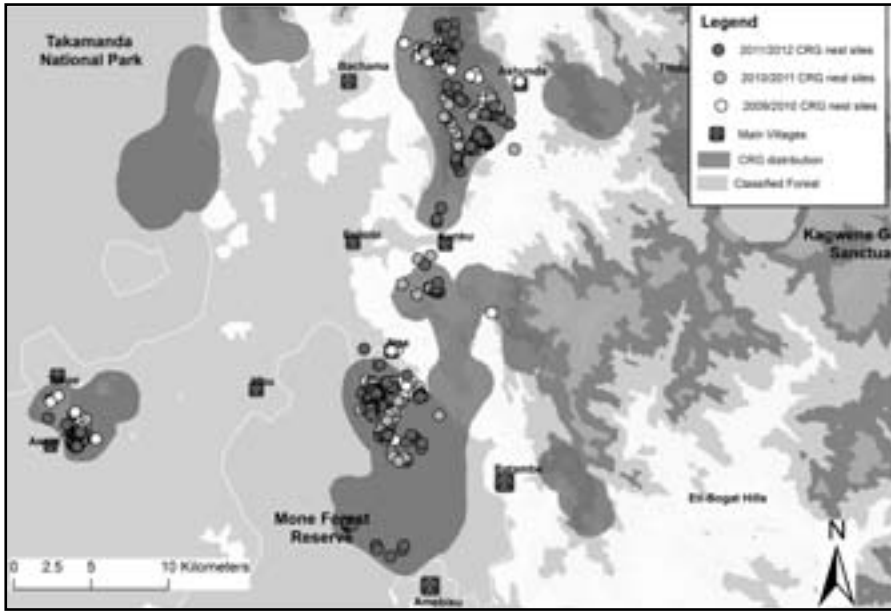
They serve as conservation ambassadors in their communities, and carry out monitoring of gorillas and of illegal activities. Since the establishment of the program, Gorilla Guardians working in collaboration with local hunters have recorded observations and collected data that have provided updated distribution information for gorillas in each site. In their role, Gorilla Guardians act as liaisons between their communities and government to gather vital data, forming a network for sharing information and raising awareness.

The program was formally established in January 2009 with the selection and training of the first 6 Gorilla Guardians from communities (Ashunda, Bachama, Awuri, Takpe, Mbu, and Nga) in three main forest areas adjacent to important Cross River gorilla sites – Mbulu forest, northern Mone forest, and Mawambi Hills. In 2011, two additional communities were added to the program with the inclusion of Eshobi and Kunku located between Mbulu and Mone forests, filling in a critical gap in the landscape.

Continued interest in the program by other communities in the area permitted the expansion of the program to the eastern side of Mone forest. In January 2012, Gorilla Guardians from Amebishu and Batambe underwent training and began collecting data in March. There are plans to continue to strengthen the program before the end of 2012 with the selection and training of a new Gorilla Guardian from Mantoh village,



CROSS RIVER



this section of the landscape. As a result of the Gorilla Guardian monitoring we have much more accurate estimates of the group numbers and movements. Current estimates indicate that there are possibly 29 gorillas inhabiting the Mone Forest Reserve, 22 gorillas in the Mawambi Hills, and 14 gorillas in the Mbulu forest. Mapping of the nest site data along with reports from hunters has revealed that gorillas are moving in areas outside of the previously described distributions. Continued monitoring should allow us to determine if this is a temporary movement or if gorillas are beginning to move back into forested areas that were part of their historical range.

The original goals of the program were 1) to collect more regular data on the status and distribution of gorillas; 2) to serve as a link between conservation authorities and the communities, particularly to act as informants reporting threats to gorillas (and chimpanzees); and 3) to build awareness within their communities and serve as a source of information regarding conservation issues. The Gorilla Guardian network has shown itself to be a very effective means for collecting data and involving communities in the monitoring of Cross

Distribution of Cross River gorilla nest sites recorded in forests near the Gorilla Guardian communities from January 2009 to June 2012

on the eastern side of Mone forest, and assessing the interest of additional communities near critical gorilla habitat in joining the network.

Through the community-based monitoring conducted by the Gorilla Guardian network, a total of 661 nest sites containing 3,667 individual weaned

Cross River gorilla nests have been recorded since the inception of the program. The details of this data combined with additional observations made in the field are permitting us to make better estimates of the numbers of gorillas that inhabit these forests and to better understand how they are distributed in

Gorilla nest site data recorded in forests near the Gorilla Guardian communities from January 2009 to June 2012

| Communities/ Forest Areas | 2009–2010 | | | 2010–2011 | | | 2011–2012 | | | Totals | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | # of nest sites | # of ground nests | # of tree nests | # of nest sites | # of ground nests | # of tree nests | # of nest sites | # of ground nests | # of tree nests | Total # of nest sites to date | Total # of ground nests to date | Total # of tree nests to date |
| Takpe/Awuri | 74 | 340 | 140 | – | – | – | 58 | 256 | 128 | 132 | 605 | 268 |
| Mbu/Nga | 86 | 272 | 285 | 86 | 288 | 211 | 88 | 309 | 132 | 260 | 869 | 628 |
| Ashunda/ Bachama | 91 | 324 | 226 | 60 | 196 | 76 | 84 | 224 | 93 | 235 | 744 | 395 |
| Eshobi/ Kunku | – | – | – | 7 | 15 | 11 | 10 | 18 | 18 | 17 | 33 | 29 |
| Amebishu | – | – | – | – | – | – | 11 | 38 | 25 | 11 | 38 | 25 |
| Batambe | – | – | – | – | – | – | 6 | 18 | 15 | 6 | 18 | 15 |
| Totals | 251 | 936 | 651 | 153 | 499 | 298 | 257 | 872 | 411 | 661 | 2307 | 1360 |



CROSS RIVER



Collecting nest data at Mbu/Nga forest Photo: WCS/TMLP

River gorillas. With regard to the first two goals, the network has provided a wealth of knowledge related to the status and distribution of less-known gorilla groups. It has proven itself to be a cost-effective and efficient way of monitoring the most vulnerable and remote gorilla populations.

As the program has evolved we have seen progress as well with efforts to raise awareness of conservation issues in the Gorilla Guardian communities. In May 2012, with the addition of a Conservation Education Officer, basic conservation education activities were launched with community members and schools, and we are hope-

ful that additional funds will be secured permitting more complete implementation of the conservation education strategy in subsequent years. The Gorilla Guardians have also expressed a desire to support each other to develop and disseminate conservation messages in each of the Gorilla Guardian communities.

A result of these measures is that no hunting of Cross River gorillas has been reported since the inception of the program in January 2009.

Monitoring by the Gorilla Guardian network and its continued expansion to additional villages have created a true community-based conservation program where local communities are actively participating in conservation actions. These actions are working to ensure a future for Cross River gorillas and other species along with the forests that both humans and wildlife depend on.

Chris Jameson

We are grateful for the past and ongoing financial assistance received by the program from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation, and Berggorilla & Regenwald Direkthilfe.



Gorilla Guardian team crossing hammock bridge in Eshobi community Photo: WCS/Albert Ekinde

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Suitable Environments for Apes

The aim of this research was to predict the distribution of suitable environmental conditions (SEC) for eight African great ape taxa for a first time period, the 1990s, and then project it to a second period, the 2000s, in order to assess the relative importance of factors influencing SEC distribution and to estimate rates of SEC loss, isolation and fragmentation over the last two decades.

Total SEC area was approximately 2,015,480 and 1,807,653 km² in the 1990s and 2000s, respectively. Loss of predicted SEC appeared highest for Cross River gorillas (-59%), followed by eastern gorillas (-52%), then western lowland gorillas (-32%).

This first continent-wide perspective of African ape SEC distribution shows dramatic declines in recent years.

Junker, J. et al. (2012) Recent decline in suitable environmental conditions for African great apes. Diversity and Distributions 18, 1077-1099



GORILLAS

The Shifting Trend of Ape Trafficking in Africa

In recent years, the trafficking of Africa's apes has evolved into a highly organized criminal activity, but the situation has remained largely ignored. Increasing enforcement of laws around the continent has played an important role in uncovering and reporting what may turn out to be the final straw as far as ape conservation is concerned – the professionalism of traffickers. In January 2006, wildlife law enforcement officials in Cameroon arrested a trafficker, some 130 km from the capital city, Yaounde. He was arrested while in possession of a young chimpanzee alongside 4 large sacks of marijuana, each weighing at least 50 kg, and another kind of drug which he admitted to be cocaine. The drugs and apes dealer had been employing at least 5 poachers and, before his arrest, he regularly traded

in other protected primate species. The organizational capacity needed to carry out his activities highlighted what it takes to do a successful business, illegal wildlife trade in this case. Great ape trafficking may have been raised to a high profile professional illegal activity on the African continent. This is demonstrated by the manner in which powerful traffickers use their perfected operational skill to run the illicit trade alongside other illegal activities such as the trade in drugs. The connection between drugs and wildlife trafficking, and increasing prices for wildlife products, are attracting criminal syndicates with vast experience in organized crime, as is typical for drug syndicates.

This high level of organization has been observed in many other wildlife cases. Wildlife law enforcement operations in Cameroon, following the intensification of the fight against wildlife trafficking in the country, uncovered de-

termined and organized criminal activity. Four young gorillas were smuggled from Cameroon in 2006 through Nigeria to Taiping zoo in Malaysia. The animals ended up in a South African zoo. It took the combined efforts of both the Cameroonian and South African governments and animal welfare non-governmental organizations to arrange for the gorillas to be returned to their homeland, Cameroon. Smuggling four gorillas, travelling through many countries, across thousands of miles and through several check points, needed sophisticated logistics and organization; it needed an organized group of traffickers with substantial financial resources. Ape traffickers seemingly have all of these and even more, as more operations in the Cameroon would reveal. Some of the trafficking is carried out using a different strategy and tactic but with equal seriousness – and devastating impact.

The arrest of a cyber-trafficker in South West Province, Cameroon in January 2009 was significant in that it revealed changing strategies and tactics. The man had previously shipped 22 consignments of primate skulls to the United States from his base, using the internet. He admitted to having turned over revenue to the tune of 22,000 US\$ and to have been conducting wildlife trafficking over the internet for 2 years. This operation emphasised the extent of the illegal trade in primates to distant places and the profile of today's trafficker who is able to use modern technology to his advantage. The use of modern technology is clearly opening up new avenues for trafficking and even working to complement traditional trafficking methods.

In December 2005, on board a French flight en route to Russia from Kinshasa were a Ukrainian and a Congolese with a French passport and in the bag they were ferrying was a baby bonobo. They had a permit from the Congolese Ministry of Agriculture, and



Wildlife law enforcement operation in East of Cameroon led to arrest of traffickers in gorilla parts.

Photo: LAGA



GORILLAS

this suggested that this was something that had been done before. French officials stopped the two but were rather more concerned about fears of the spread of the ebola virus than about the trafficking itself, and the pair were allowed to continue their journey with the bonobo. Similarly, the seizure by French customs officials at Paris's Charles de Gaulle airport of huge quantities of bushmeat from passengers travelling aboard a French flight from Bangui demonstrates the scope of the trade, and the involvement of a former Central African prime minister, whose luggage contained meat from protected primate species, points to high level involvement in trafficking. The prime minister was simply fined. Apes, specifically, chimpanzees and gorillas, and their meat constitute an important proportion of the illegal trade in wildlife species on the continent today.

The case of Guinea is very specific and revealing on the issue. The country has been identified as a centre for professional and organized trafficking in live apes. A recent report by the brand new Guinean wildlife law enforcement support project, known by its French acronym GALF, states that over 100 chimpanzees and 10 gorillas were illegally exported from the country since 2010. The preferred destination for apes leaving Guinea is China. Investigations and operations carried out in June and July of 2012 led to the arrest of a Chinese national in Guinea who implicated two others in the trafficking of 3 chimpanzees which were about to be exported to China.

The growing severity of trafficking in apes in recent years has been compounded by Chinese involvement in the trade. With a burgeoning middle class in China, illegal trade on the continent is growing extremely fast to satisfy the demand in China and other Asian economies. Chinese involvement in the illegal ivory trade has long been established and its consequences are wide-

ly known, but an equally worrying trade in apes by Chinese nationals exists alongside the trade in ivory. The growing significance of ape trafficking and its devastating effect on wildlife populations is gradually becoming apparent, and many are now beginning to realise how dangerous and important is the trade. According to the GALF report, live chimpanzee trafficking in Guinea is flourishing and involves many other nationalities including Lebanese, Americans and Spaniards, and the case of an American who comes into the country every year to buy chimpanzees is reported by GALF officials.

Countless stories of similar gravity may explain the worsening crisis facing Africa's great apes. Every African country has suffered, with increasing profit margins for ape traffickers. This is boosting the trade and attracting all sorts of people, from the small time local trafficker who kills apes in the wild for their meat and orphans, to the big time criminal syndicates who are generally after live apes, doing big business and earning huge profits. The trade is shifting its momentum from simple bushmeat trade, involving locals only, to major transnational activity attracting professionals. The consequences may just be too strong to bear.

Eric Kaba Tah

On 22 October 2012, Ofir Drori, the founder of LAGA, was awarded the prestigious WWF Duke of Edinburgh Conservation Medal for 2012 at Buckingham Palace in London. Congratulations!

Orphan Gorilla Confiscation in Equatorial Guinea Triggers Government Awareness Campaign

Equatorial Guinea is experiencing a dramatic oil-fuelled economic boom which over the last decade has in-

creased incomes, encouraged urban migration and, in the absence of alternative sources of fresh animal protein, increased demand for bushmeat. Commercial hunting has been facilitated by large-scale road development as part of the government's "Roads for Everyone by 2020" scheme. As firearms have become more affordable, hunters have switched from trapping to the use of shotguns which has enabled the targeting of primates, including the western lowland gorilla (Kümpel et al. 2008).

The thriving oil and construction industries, as well as other economic opportunities, have led to an influx of expatriate workers who are further impacting on primate populations by creating demand for infants as pets or attractions in restaurants and bars. Expatriates also frequently buy infant primates out of misguided concern, the buyers not realising that by paying money to "rescue" one individual they are fuelling demand and encouraging the killing of more. With no hunting or trade restrictions enforced inside or outside protected areas, gorillas and other primates are under severe pressure.

In response to the scale of the threat that hunting poses to primates and the risk of zoonotic disease transmission, Presidential Decree no. 72/2007 came into force in October 2007 which prohibits the hunting, sale, consumption and possession of all primate species in Equatorial Guinea. Initial sensitization efforts had some impact on the number of primate carcasses detected at bushmeat markets, but the lack of enforcement quickly led to the resumption of hunting and overt trade in endangered species (BBPP 2010).

In June 2012, there were reports from members of the public that an infant gorilla had been acquired and was being kept illegally at an expatriate beach restaurant. Due to the popularity of this restaurant, it was deemed



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essential to make an example of this case by instigating a high-profile confiscation to dissuade others from buying infant apes. After extensive planning and preparation, the gorilla and two monkeys were successfully confiscated by the government's Ministry of Fisheries and Environment with support from the *Zoological Society of London* (ZSL) and *Conservation International*. The confiscation took place in the presence of the national press and customers at the restaurant who were given information about the law and the negative conservation implications of buying infant primates.

With no facility to house confiscated animals in Equatorial Guinea, assistance was sought from the *Pan African Sanctuary Alliance* (PASA) and, in collaboration with the Cameroonian government and with logistical support from an oil company, the confiscated primates were transported to sanctuaries in neighbouring Cameroon. The 2-year-old female gorilla, who was named Afangui meaning "a forest of gorillas" in the local Fang language, was transported to the Ape Action Af-



Afangui meeting other orphan gorillas at the Ape Action Africa sanctuary in Cameroon

Photo: ZSL

rica sanctuary where she is now readjusting to life with other infant gorillas in the forest. The other primates confiscated, a mandrill and a moustached guenon, were offered sanctuary at the

Limbe Wildlife Centre.

The confiscation turned into a catalyst for a government-initiated awareness raising campaign around mainland Equatorial Guinea. Ministry officials distributed leaflets about the Decree and destroyed seized primate carcasses during an initial tour of two districts, and the campaign continues. The collaborative effort between governments, NGOs and the private sector which was required during this confiscation highlights the urgent need for capacity to be built, infrastructure to be developed and a procedural framework to be put in place to enable the Ministry to enforce the law and confiscate live primates independently in future. There is a wealth of regional expertise both in terms of wildlife law enforcement and primate husbandry which needs to be harnessed to develop a strategy for enforcing the law and providing adequate protection for primates in Equatorial Guinea.

ZSL is one of the international conservation organizations with a pres-



Ministry officials, press reporters and police at the beach restaurant during the confiscation

Photo: ZSL



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ence in Equatorial Guinea. The aim of the ZSL project is to work with local communities to develop sustainable alternatives to bushmeat. Becoming directly involved in live animal confiscations is beyond the scope of this project. However, with so few boots on the ground, and given the severity of the problem, there is a need to support such interventions when necessary. Now it is essential that partnerships are developed with experts who can assist further with mitigating this problem.

Building on the momentum that this confiscation has started, funding is being sought to facilitate meetings between regional experts and the Ministry of Fisheries and Environment to assist in developing the necessary procedural framework. The priorities are to review the existing legal framework and suggest appropriate amendments, agree on a strategy for the placement of confiscated primates, continue to raise awareness of the Decree and other wildlife laws at the national level and train law enforcers in the implementation of these laws to ensure appropriate sanctions are levied.

We should not underestimate the role of the Regional Delegate of Fisheries and Environment, Elias Ondo Edjo, which was critical to the success of the gorilla confiscation. Harnessing the political will of champions within the government is essential. It is hoped that through this collaborative process we can help to conserve gorillas and the other 8 species of primate considered at risk of extinction in Equatorial Guinea.

Juliet Wright

There were many individuals involved with the confiscation and subsequent care of Afangui and the other primates. Since this was the first confiscation of its kind in Equatorial Guinea, the efforts of these individuals to make this confiscation a success were greatly appreciated. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the involvement of Santiago Francisco Engonga, Elias Ondo Edjo and Santiago Biyang Mba

from the Ministry of Fisheries and Environment, Heidi Ruffler from Conservation International, Rachel Hogan and Caroline McLaney from Ape Action Africa, Julie Sherman from the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance and Ainare Idoiaga from Limbe Wildlife Centre, as well as Miila Kauppinen who is an intern with ZSL. The ZSL project in Equatorial Guinea works in close collaboration with the government through INDEFOR-AP and is supported by grants from the USFWS Great Ape Conservation Fund, Rufford Foundation, Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, Sea-World Busch Gardens Conservation Fund and Hess Equatorial Guinea Inc.

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Guide Refresher Training at Bai Hokou and Mongambe, Central African Republic

The Primate Habituation Programme (PHP) in the Central African Republic is an integral part of the conservation activities of Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas and aims to conserve the Critically Endangered western lowland gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*) through habituation for research and tourism. So far, the PHP has greatly contributed to the conservation of western gorillas, protecting their habitat and supporting numerous studies on their ecology and behaviour. The PHP was initiated in 1998 at the Bai Hokou study site in the Dzanga-Ndoki National Park. The area includes a large number of forest clearings, named “bais”, which attract high densities of wildlife to the area, and harbours significant populations of other mammal species including forest elephants, bongos, forest buffaloes and agile mangabeys, as well as a multitude of bird species. The gorillas therefore serve as a flagship species,

raising international attention for the conservation of this area.

Today, the PHP has two research stations, Bai Hokou and Mongambe. There are currently two habituated gorilla groups, named after their silverbacks Makumba and Mayele, and a further two groups are under process of habituation. As a result of daily group follows, the locally-employed guides are uniquely placed to monitor the gorillas as well as to guide visitors and enforce tracking rules. To increase species knowledge and ensure the long-term well-being of the gorillas, project data are collected by guides on habituation level and behavioural ecology. Additionally, the PHP’s staff assess the health of the habituated gorilla groups via a health monitoring programme, whose goal is to collect data in order to assess the “normal” health status, i.e. baseline, and future risks (Todd, pers. comm.). It is thus of utmost importance to regularly evaluate the staff’s performance through training to ensure adherence to PHP protocols and revise and improve data collection standards.

Notwithstanding continuous direct anti-poaching efforts, the role of long-term field projects such as the PHP remains vital in the face of increasing human pressure, and given their long-term aim to prevent gorilla populations from declining further. High levels of training and expertise are required to obtain reliable and valid data on individual-based life history of the gorillas, and to facilitate tourism. Staff training is cited as the most common strategy to improve the staff’s job performance, and plays an important role in achieving institutional objectives (Stone 1997).

In the same manner, a number of studies or reports underline the importance of providing regular, high quality staff training in great ape habituation programmes to ensure adherence to the rules and to closely monitor these endangered animals (e.g. Hanes 2012; Homsy 1999; Macfie & William-



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Angelique Todd providing training to the guides on the collection of gorilla ranging data, June 11th 2011 in Bayanga. During this part of the training the guides conducted a practical assessment regarding the mapping of ranging patterns, which is part of their daily activities.

Photo: Thirza A. C. Loffeld

son 2010; Sandbrook & Semple 2006). In the previous issue of *Gorilla Journal*, Hanes (2012) described the risk of disease transmission between tourists and mountain gorillas habituated for tourism in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda, principally arising as a result of the 7-m distance rule not being properly enforced and the subsequent extreme proximity of humans to the gorillas. One of Hanes' recommendations is to provide the staff with more frequent and better quality refresher training in order to improve enforcements of the rules.

The Primate Habituation Programme currently employs just under 60 national staff and a varying number of national and international researchers and volunteers. Given the recent expansion of the PHP teams, it is a priority for the Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas (DSPA) to organize in-depth training and knowledge assessment for new and old guides alike. Therefore a two-day guide refresher training program was designed and given by An-

gelique Todd, WWF Primate Habituation and Tourism Advisor for DSPA, in June 2011 to the nine PHP guides, divided into two groups.

Since the participants' motivation to learn is essential to the success of training, a questionnaire was distributed among the guides two weeks before the training. The questions involved the guides' 1) perceptions on the gorilla tracking rules and data collection methods, 2) opinions on conservation-related aspects of their job, and 3) job satisfaction, by asking about the challenges encountered in their job. Finally, the guides could indicate their preference for future training subjects and the frequency of training. The results of this questionnaire were incorporated into the design of the training so as to specifically tailor the training to the guides' needs. When providing training, it is furthermore important that trainees are able to implement the knowledge and skills gained (Jacobson et al. 2006; Stone 1997). The PHP training was therefore based on real

experiences and focused on interaction and practice.

Monitoring and evaluation are imperative to the process of any training event (Kopylova & Danilina 2011). Adequate monitoring will allow small changes to be made during the training, adapting the training content, delivery techniques and materials used according to the needs of the target audience. Such evaluation permits training plans to be developed, adjusted and improved, and thenceforth enhances the effectiveness of training efforts by minimising the costs and increasing the programme's credibility, such as to donors and foundations; the evaluation of training efforts furthermore enables documentation and distribution of information on successful programmes to beneficiaries (Jacobson & Robinson, 1990).

In this evaluation we appraised the effectiveness of the guide refresher training given in June 2011. Training was evaluated by 1) a practical assessment comprising the evaluation of the nine guides whilst collecting baseline data on the two groups of habituated western lowland gorillas (Makumba and Mayele) and by 2) a knowledge assessment involving a questionnaire pre- and post-training as a method to evaluate the nine guides' learning process. Data for the practical assessment were collected pre- and post-training over a total period of 8 weeks from May to July 2011. We compared each of the guides' skills by means of tests for inter-observer reliability regarding data collection. The knowledge assessment consisted of a written test on gorilla biology, behaviour and ecology, rules and regulations, and data collection methods. The questions were designed based on the outcome of questionnaire A, and the "refresher" information given during the training reinforced the trainees' ability to answer these. To further assess the effectiveness of the training, questions were asked on the



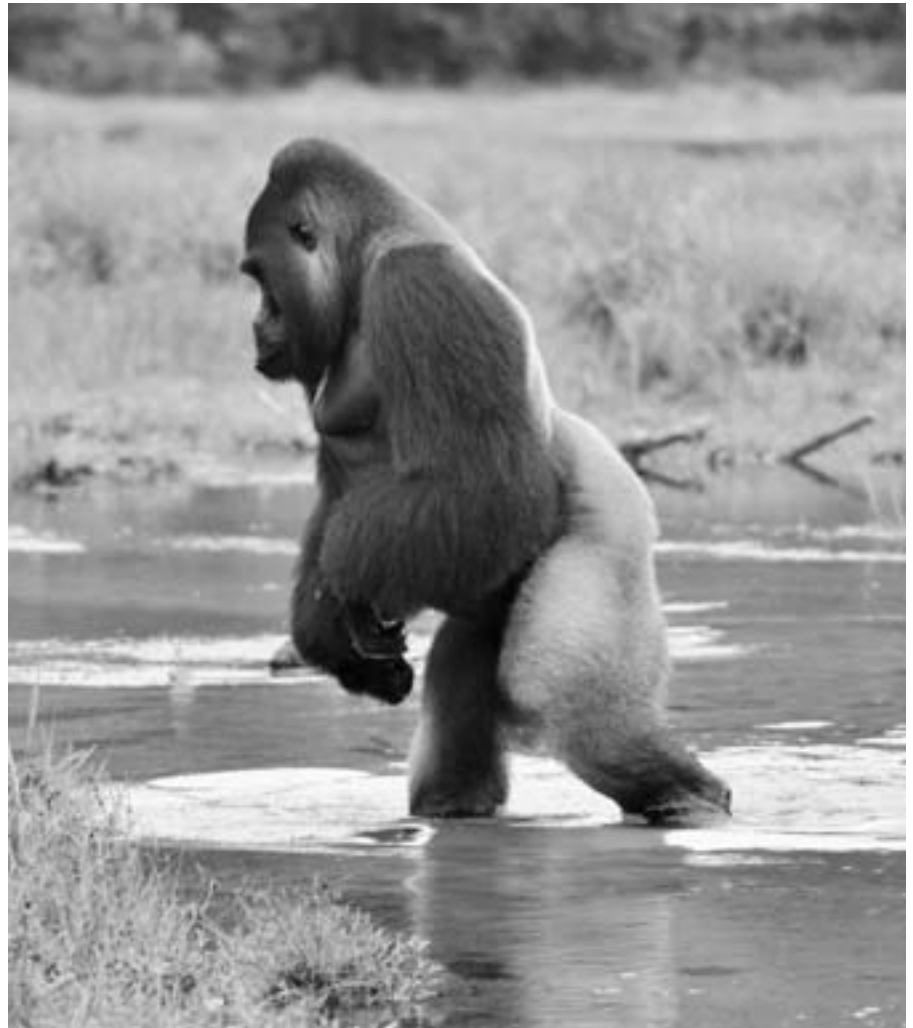
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participants' opinion on the training, as recommended by the IUCN guidelines on Protected Area Staff Training (Kopylova & Danilina 2011).

Results of the knowledge assessment illustrated that the training increased the knowledge of seven of the nine guides assessed. Contrary to our expectations, only three guides demonstrated an improvement in data collection methods, which may be explained by several reasons such as the small sample size per guide, resulting from time limitations, and the difference in experience between observers (varying from less than 6 months to up to and over 10 years of experience). However, when we removed outliers ($N = 2$), the experienced guides as well as the less experienced guides demonstrated an increase in inter-observer reliability. High inter-observer reliability is only one of the conditions to ensure validity of research (Caro et al. 1979), though it serves as an indicator that the data collection by the PHP guides became more standardised after the refresher training.

At both PHP's research stations western lowland gorillas are successfully habituated, which has contributed to the protection of this species while permitting both gorilla tourism and field research. An important aim of the PHP is to regularly evaluate their staff's work performance and maintain high quality data collection as well as adequate enforcements of the gorilla tracking rules and regulations. The 2011 evaluation took place 1–4 weeks after the training, depending on the guides' work schedule. Recent guidelines however recommend evaluating the results of the training 3–12 months after the training, to assess changes over the longer term (Kopylova & Danilina 2011). The PHP would therefore like to continue systematic evaluation of training efforts and the dissemination of the lessons learned from future evaluations.

Through this study we fulfilled the



Silverback Makumba crossing a bai bipedally Photo: Thirza A. C. Loffeld

objective of creating a standardised methodology for assessing guide training at the PHP, and furthermore collected baseline data for future PHP staff evaluations. We recommend that these types of evaluations become a permanent policy for all primate habituation programmes to ensure accurate long-term monitoring of habituated primates and continued animal wellbeing, and hence the sustainability of such conservation programmes.

Given that the process of evaluation is critical to the success of training, we would like here to call attention to the

dearth of information on training evaluation assessments in great ape habituation programmes. With an eye on the future of our close relatives the gorillas, we would like to continue sharing the lessons learned from prospective training evaluations at the PHP with the conservation community.

Thirza A. C. Loffeld

This article is based on the results of more extensive MSc-research conducted by Thirza Loffeld. For further information about the questionnaire, practical assessment and/or knowledge assessments used at the 2011 training and evaluation at the Primate



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Habituation Programme, please contact Thirza Loffeld at thirzaloffeld@gmail.com. For further information on the Primate Habituation Programme please contact Angelique Todd at atodd@wwfcarpo.org.

We would like to thank the Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fishing and the Ministry of Education in the Central African Republic for their permission to undertake this study. My sincere thanks go to all the Bai Hokou and Mongambe staff. I am particularly grateful to Angelique Todd and Anna Feistner for their support and great contribution. Special mention goes to Terrence Fuh and all the guides. Their help has been vital to the completion of this study. Thanks go to Vincent Nijman and Susan Cheyne at Oxford Brookes University for their supervision of this research and Viridiana Jimenez for her help with the French translation. Acknowledgment of funding goes to Chester Zoo, the FONA Foundation for Nature Conservation, the Hendrik Muller Fund, the Foundation of Renswoude, and Oxford Brookes University.

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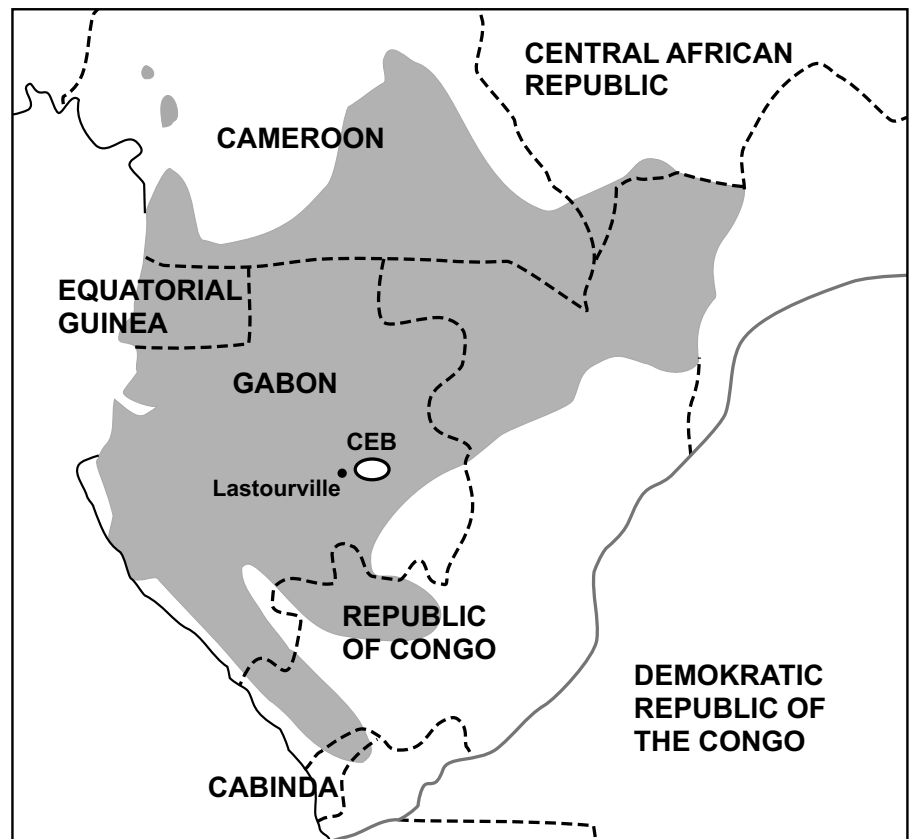
The Bambié Gorillas

The Bambié Gorilla Project (BGP), founded in 2008, aims to preserve a population of western lowland gorillas, between the villages of Lastourville and Okondja, in eastern Gabon. This area is in the middle of a forestry concession operated by the Compagnie Equatoriale des Bois (CEB – Equatorial Forest Company), one of the leading companies in the Gabonese forestry sector. The area contains a varied and abundant fauna, including large mammals such as gorillas, forest elephants and chimpanzees. These

species are, however, facing the usual threats that arise both inside and outside of Africa: habitat destruction and fragmentation, poaching for bushmeat, and the illegal trade in wildlife.

In order to safeguard the long-term future of the gorillas in the concession, the BGP has cooperated with the CEB to establish several objectives, specifically:

- identification of the gorillas' preferred ranges and feeding sites, so as to protect them from any future forestry activity
- education of the local communities to reduce poaching
- initiation of an ecotourism activity to generate alternative income for the local population and to encourage them to conserve the environment



Map of Gabon and the CEB concession



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Poster explaining the posture to adopt when encountering gorillas in the forest

Photo: M. Hurdebourcq

The Concession

The concession extends over an area of 600,000 ha and produces approximately 220,000 m³ of round wood per year, mostly Okoumé, renowned for its light weight and the ease with which it can be used. The main Bambidie camp coordinates exploitation activities (i.e. tree felling) and transformation activities (sawmills and kilns). It employs 450 workers, but taking into account their families the number of people at the site reaches about 2,000.

In 2007, the Swiss company Precious Wood became the main shareholder of CEB. In 2008, the concession obtained FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification, which certifies the sustainable exploitation of forest resources in accordance with very strict environmental, social and economic rules. This system allows the forest to regenerate, thanks to a regular rotation of timber coupes (selective logging system), and requires the harvesting company to implement activities that support the development of the local

communities and the conservation of the environment.

CEB prefers to get involved particularly in the provision of drinking water and electricity, the construction of health centres and schools, the battle

against pollution, the creation of a tree nursery for reforestation, the conservation of riverine zones and the sensitization of populations to best practices that help to protect nature on a daily basis. In order to conserve the fauna, the concession controls the forest access roads, and prohibits commercial hunting and the hunting of protected species. In addition, the concession supplies people with animal protein in order to limit the need for bushmeat.

However, even with the award of the FSC label and the application of a rigorous environmental management system by CEB which makes sure its harvesting procedures follow good practice, and the concern shown by the company in conserving global ecosystems, the gorillas still face several threats:

- In spite of CEB's efforts to monitor the forest access routes in order to prevent illegal timber extraction and the hunting of protected species, poachers' camps are regularly found in the forest.
- The concession workers are fright-



Sensitization activity in a CEB school

Photo: M. Hurdebourcq



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ened of the gorillas and do not know how to react when they run into them unexpectedly, which can lead to accidents.

- Many gorillas show physical malformations and skin depigmentation, which may indicate a health problem.

The Role of the Bambidie Gorilla Project

The activities of the Bambidie Gorilla Project take place in the centre of the concession, which contains many gorillas (documented by routine observations carried out in the forest and a 2008 survey by the primatologist Alexandre B. Pujol of Barcelona University). Populations of great apes frequently occur outside of national parks and reserves. An evaluation of their capacity to adapt to constraints linked to forest exploitation will permit us to develop conservation plans which are adapted to this particular situation and to determine whether the conservation of the fauna is compatible with reasonable and sustainable forest exploitation.

Main Achievements between 2008 and 2011

The person responsible for the project, Max Hurdebourcq, has conducted ten missions, each of 3 to 4 months' duration, into the centre of the concession – both in the dry and the rainy seasons. He has observed numerous gorilla groups and has organized sensitization campaigns for workers and school children on a regular basis.

Habitat protection: Successive trips into the forest have allowed the identification of a feeding site of major importance for the concession gorillas. This is a bai, covering an area of 16 ha. It is regularly visited by animals that go there to feed on aquatic plants rich in minerals. After the bai was found, CEB decided to surround it with a buff-

er zone of 96 ha which it will not exploit. In this way CEB will preserve a place which is indispensable to the gorillas, both for food and for social interactions.

Education: With the help of various presentations which have been organized in the concession schools, over 2,000 children have been sensitized to the needs of the gorillas. Initially, the programme used the Great Apes Educational Kit developed by Sabrina Krief and the MNHN (National Museum of Natural History) of Paris. Subsequently a generator and a video projector

were purchased which allow the showing of films and photographs of the wild gorillas roaming the concession and captive gorillas in La Palmyre Zoo in France. In the concession villages, gorillas are considered to be a source of protein (the meat is preferred to that of chimpanzees, which are considered too close to humans), but also as a dangerous and ferocious animal. By showing that gorilla behaviour is very similar to that of humans, particularly the behaviour of females with their infants, and that it is possible to observe



Female and offspring in the bai

Photo: M. Hurdebourcq



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Facial skin depigmentation in a silverback Photo: M. Hurdebourcq

gorillas in the forest without danger, these sessions have made it possible to counteract the negative image of the gorilla and to change people's opinions of the animal.

Other sensitization sessions have been organized for the concession workers. A poster explaining how to behave when encountering gorillas in the forest has been developed by La Palmyre Zoo. Eight copies have been put up in schools and other places frequented by the Bambidie workers.

Outlook for the Future of the BGP

Currently, the project is at a crossroads: long-term activities need to be developed to increase effectiveness and to ensure the sustainability of the project. The creation of a local foundation-like structure involving all BGP stakeholders (authorities and local communities, forestry concession, coordinators, sponsors, etc.) seems indispensable for the provision of a project framework and for helping to raise the funds required for gorilla conservation. Scientific studies need to be conducted, such as studies

into gorilla health and diseases, their role in forest regeneration, the impact of forest exploitation on primates, etc. It is equally necessary to create new educational tools and to recruit an educator tasked with implementing sensitization activities.

The socio-economic aspects of the BGP must permit the development of ecotourism as an alternative source of income for the population. The protected bai is an excellent site for an observation platform for tourists. Recruit-

ment and training of trackers for guiding visitors is indispensable.

Currently, BGP is supported only by Precious Wood and La Palmyre Zoo. The development of the proposed new activities requires new partners to provide the funding needed by the founding partners or, for example, to participate in the development of educational tools. Protecting gorillas in a forestry concession represents a true challenge and a beautiful adventure.

Florence Perroux

International Gorilla Workshop

From June 11 to 15, 2012 Apenheul Primate Park in Apeldoorn (together with GaiaZOO Kerkrade) hosted the International Gorilla Workshop. The new conference center De St@art was the perfect environment for presentations, discussions and extensive chats between colleagues and friends. Although the workshop (like the previous ones) mainly addressed gorilla keepers from zoos all over the world, many other gorilla friends attended it, like curators, field researchers, conservationists and "gorilla enthusiasts".

Most presentations and discussions covered issues connected with gorilla husbandry and management, but some experts contributed reports from the wild.

One highlight for many gorilla friends was the auction of all kinds of objects that the participants had brought with them. After the silent auction some objects were left; they were presented by Janse Heijn during a "loud" auction. The result was remarkable: Euro 1235.50 for the Clubs des Amis des Gorilles in the Ebo Forest.

Angela Meder





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Craig Stanford

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BERGGORILLA & REGENWALD DIREKTHILFE

GRASP Council Meeting in Paris, 6–8 November 2012

The Council of the Great Ape Survival Partnership. It met for the first time in 2005 in Kinshasa; 7 years passed before it met for the second time. GRASP is a mixed body: representatives of range countries were sitting alongside NGO delegates (including *Berggorilla & Regenwald Direkthilfe*), delegates from donor countries, representatives of international conventions and other partners, such as zoos.

The agenda of the meeting was very densely packed: after reports of the various GRASP organs, various experts gave presentations about illegal trade, green economy, and great apes & technology. In-between these presentations, the GRASP Rules for Management, the Global Strategy and the Priority Plan were discussed ex-

tensively and adopted. A new Executive Committee was also elected. But at least as important as the plenary presentations were the delegates' talks with colleagues during the breaks and the informal discussions in small groups.

There were many interesting contributions. Ofir Drori (LAGA) explained the problems with illegal trade in live great apes in Africa – a very profitable business that involves huge sums of money. Even if the responsible persons are known, it is usually very difficult to arrest and convict them. Often they have very good connections to particular elements in the government and the police, and most of them succeed in buying their way out of jail. The trade is very much connected with the divide between rich and poor, and promotes corruption.

Another presenter, Michel Masozera (WCS Rwanda), reported on environmental problems in his home country. Erosion following deforestation has led

to damage in hydropower plants; the turbines have to be replaced more frequently because the amount of soil in the rivers is increasing. This, in turn, increases the price of electricity. 50% of the cultivated area already shows signs of erosion, so the present form of land use is not sustainable. Solutions have to be found urgently, and gorilla tourism is regarded as playing an important role.

Angela Meder



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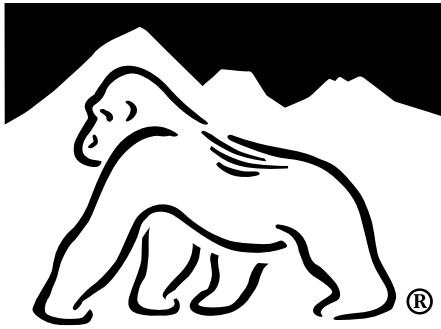
From May to October 2012 we received major donations by Christoph Baumann, Maximilian Behr, Birgit Demuth, Angelika Dickmann, Werner Eigler, ElectronicPartner, Elisabeth Engel, Marianne Famula, Jürgen and Irmgard Friedrich, Helga Innerhofer, Kong Island Productions, Corinne Legeret, Philip Linnartz, Hannelore Merker, Birgit Reime, Wolfram Rietschel, Alfred Roszyk, Siegfried and Edith Scharrschmidt, SOS Gorilla, Christian Ströbele, Kay and Inge Tietje, Gabriele Uhl, Sixt Wetzler, W-Pack Kunststoffe GmbH, Zoo Basel and Zoo Krefeld. Oliver and Ariane Trifunic-Rasi Broma Basel collected donations for us during their marriage. The Gorilla Workshop auction was a big success – also for gorilla conservation, because we received the proceeds.

Many thanks to everybody! We are grateful for your support, and we hope that you will continue to support us.



A discussion between Ofir Drori and Russ Mittermeier Photos: A. Meder

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