



Gorilla Journal

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Surveys for Itombwe and Protection of Great Apes

Exclusion of Gorillas from their Ranges in Sarambwe

Trip to Uganda and Initiation of an Aid Project

Bushmeat Investigation in Logging Concessions



BERGGORILLA & REGENWALD DIREKTHILFE

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Cover: A gorilla in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda

Photo: www.mondberge.com

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Claude Sikubwabo Kiyengo conducted a gorilla survey in the Maiko National Park from 1989 to 1992. He worked for the ICCN and the IUCN in Goma. Since 2004 he has been the coordinator of the NGO VONA, and since 2008 he has been our assistant in the region.



D. R. CONGO

The Groups Mufanzala and Birindwa after the Death of their Silverbacks

After the death of the two silverbacks of these gorilla groups on March 26th and May 30th 2009, respectively, several friends of the gorillas of the Kahuzi-Biega National Park (KBNP) expressed interest in knowing how these groups have been doing since they lost their leading males. While Mufanzala died from a liver abscess, Birindwa seemingly died of old age: his autopsy did not indicate any disease.

Members of gorilla groups transfer to other groups either during the interaction of two males, when the weaker silverback may lose members of his group to the stronger male, or after the death of a silverback. In this case, the leaderless group is fragile and is susceptible to splitting up when they come into contact with another group, be it habituated or un-habituated.

In the case of Mufanzala, the team of guides and trackers continues to follow the now leaderless group, which continues to range through the same forest sectors as during the time when their silverback was still with them. A young silverback is trying to keep the group together, despite the fact that a number of females tend to split off for a duration of 3 or 4 days at a time.

As far as the Birindwa group is concerned, a young silverback joined the group after the death of Birindwa. He now seems to have taken charge of the females. However, even those group members who had begun to tolerate the presence of humans a few months ago no longer do so because the new male does not tolerate people's presence. During contacts with guides and trackers he charges and drives the females into vegetation cover to hide.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is making efforts to pacify the region and to stimulate



Vice Governor Jean Claude Kibala and Minister Sebastien Ngomirakiza during the unveiling of the gorilla statue at Tshivanga

Photo: Radar Nishuli/Kahuzi-Biega National Park

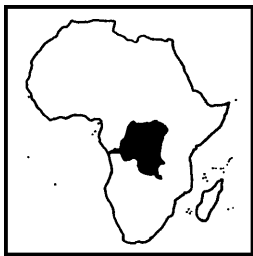
the economy of Kivu Province. As part of this process, the Kahuzi-Biega National Park is preparing to participate in the economic upturn through the development and promotion of responsible tourism. With this in mind, the park approached the political, administrative and traditional authorities – as well as all those responsible for state services – to Tshivanga on the occasion of International Tourism Day (which is celebrated on September 27th each year). The authorities were invited to visit the different tourism attractions and experience the wonders of Kahuzi-Biega. The attendance of Jean Claude Kibala, Vice Governor of the Province and the head of the delegation, encouraged the park authorities and rangers, as did his promises to spare no effort to persecute any persons violating the territory of the park.

The objective of this event was not only to show the decision-makers the wonders of the park but also to ap-

peal to their conscience, such that they adopt a positive attitude towards the protection of their heritage. It also serves to raise awareness of the fact that tourism is an income-generating industry invaluable for the reconstruction and the development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in general, and Kivu Province in particular. Their involvement in the conservation of the KBNP is an absolute requirement for this. The event was also an appropriate opportunity for the unveiling of the statue that the park managers have erected at the park entrance on the occasion of the International Year of the Gorilla.

Radar Nishuli

We are very grateful to all the people who assist us in the protection of the gorillas and their habitat in the Kahuzi-Biega National Park, whether they do so from near or from afar.



D. R. CONGO

Surveys for Itombwe and Protection of Great Apes

The *Wildlife Conservation Society* (WCS) has been undertaking biological inventories in the Itombwe Massif since 1995. This area holds the largest and most remote block of intact montane forest in Africa. The entire massif, an area of about 12,000 km², includes an unbroken block of forest; the central massif, of about 6,500 km², ranges up to 3,700 m in elevation.

Its unique range of habitats includes various highland forest formations, bamboo, moorland heath, miombo-moist forest transitions, and a high elevation forest savanna ecotone. It contains important populations of both the eastern chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii* or *marungensis*) and the endangered Grauer's gorilla (*Gorilla beringei graueri*).

The Itombwe Massif represents one of the most significant remaining new areas for the conservation of the Dem-

ocratic Republic of the Congo's great apes and the endemic biodiversity of the Albertine Rift. A properly gazetted and managed protected area, encompassing the massif and surrounding ecotones, is one of the most important conservation priorities for Congo.

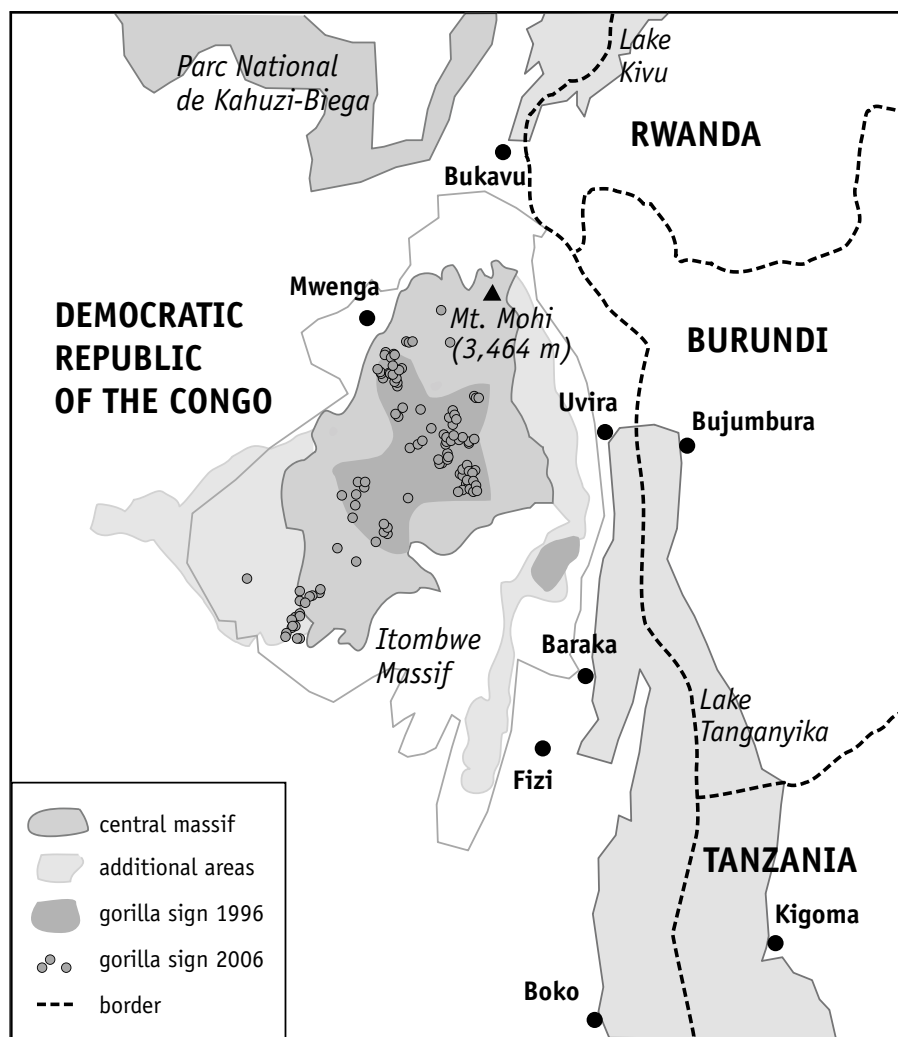
In 2006, WCS teams discovered two new sub-populations of gorillas that were not identified in the 1996 surveys of the massif. These include some in the south west and some in the north of the central massif. These data need to be assessed in relation to the survey routes because not all areas of the central massif have been visited. Interestingly gorillas are sighted quite close to human habitation despite the fact that they are hunted by people for meat.

Conservation

Though it is remote, the Itombwe Massif is confronted by a number of threats, including mining, artisanal logging, wild fires, a major increase in hunting, and pressure from human populations that are converting the forest for agriculture and pastures. A decade of conflict has led to wide availability of arms and ammunition, and some areas remain under the control of small bands of rebels.

These threats are growing and, combined, these pressures are threatening the biological integrity of the massif and critical populations of chimpanzees and gorillas. In addition, these threats have contributed to the fragmentation of the great apes' habitats, with the gorilla the most affected and its very existence seriously compromised. Studies conducted by WCS teams in 2006, although not covering the entire massif, have recorded a dramatic decrease in the number of gorilla populations compared to 1996 surveys. Conservation of the massif and its great apes must happen quickly before these biological treasures are compromised or lost.

A large number of people live in the central massif of Itombwe. If we esti-



Map of the Itombwe Massif, the proposed conservation areas and gorilla distribution areas
Adapted from original maps by WCS



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mate about 6 people per household then there are about 31,530 people in the houses we have identified from the aerial photography and therefore about 5.4 people per km² in the region. Therefore, any planning for conservation of this region needs to incorporate some form of zoning that would include the needs of the local people as well as the conservation of the incredible biodiversity found here.

The presence of the large number of people in the massif is having an impact on the wildlife of the massif, particularly the large mammals and birds. The ornithological team reported that it was very surprising how few large birds were observed when compared with other forests they have surveyed in the Albertine Rift region. Snaring in particular was common. The field teams were regularly offered bushmeat, including primate meat, while in the massif and it was clear that near villages large mammals were very scarce. If large mammals are to survive in the massif then there is a need to create relatively large areas that are isolated from human hunting and these areas may need to be linked by corridors to maintain viable populations.

In September 2006, partly as a result of these surveys, the Ministry of Environment gazetted the Reserve Naturelle de l'Itombwe (RNI). However, this was done very rapidly without any consultations with the local communities, and led to much friction between them and ICCN (*Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature*) as a result. There are also no clear boundaries in the gazettelement document, only an indication of the area where the reserve should be established. There was a need for further surveys to help establish where the boundaries should be drawn, in particular in the two sectors with potentially very important great ape populations – North Ulindi and West Mwana. Finally, participation of the local communities in the

RNI area has to move beyond the initial contacts and discussion of the past decade to their real participation in the protection of the massif and its apes.

WCS is now working with ICCN, WWF and the *Rainforest Foundation* to consult with the local communities and develop a participatory zoning of the reserve that would establish core protection zones with buffer areas and corridors where forest resources could be harvested but no hunting would take place, and also development zones where support for infrastructure devel-

opment, health and education amongst other things could help support the local population.

Andrew Plumptre, Fidele Amsini, Papy Shamavu and Deo Kujirakwinja

Exclusion of Gorillas from their Ranges in the Sarambwe Reserve

Five protected areas within the Virunga landscape are of great value, both from a conservation and tourism perspective. These areas are the Virunga National Park and the Sarambwe Reserve in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda, and the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and the Mgahinga Gorilla National Park in Uganda. The Volcanoes National Park, the Virunga National Park and the Mgahinga Gorilla National Park adjoin each other, as do the Sarambwe Reserve and the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP).

Together, these 5 protected areas contain an endemic gorilla subspecies: the mountain gorilla *Gorilla beringei beringei*. About 70% of the mountain gorilla population is habituated to the presence of humans and most of those groups are used for the purpose of ecotourism. As the price that the tourists must pay for a one-hour visit to the mountain gorillas is very high, this type of tourism is very selective. Prices vary in the different countries: in the Democratic Republic of the Congo tourists pay US\$ 400, while in Rwanda and Uganda the price is US\$ 500. There is nonetheless a great demand. In countries where the security situation is stable (i.e. in Rwanda and Uganda), available places are often fully booked in advance, especially during holiday periods.

A maximum of 8 tourists are allowed to visit a gorilla group if it itself consists of more than 8 gorillas. The maximum possible annual revenue generated by

Death of another Gorilla at Mt. Tshiaberimu

The silverback male Kanindo from the tiny gorilla population on Mt. Tshiaberimu died after falling down a ravine. He was thought to be in his late twenties or older. He is the seventh gorilla to die in the region in just over 2 years. There are now just 16 gorillas in this isolated population.

It appears that Kanindo fell down a gully at the edge of the park and probably spent 4 days paralysed before he was discovered. He was unable to move, and he could not be lifted out. Vets from *Conservation Through Public Health* (CTPH) and trackers stayed with him for 3 days fighting unsuccessfully to save him. Kanindo died just before 18:00 h on 11 July 2009. A veterinary assessment found fractures and signs of a heavy fall. He was buried at a livestock farm at the edge of the park where he was well-known to the farmer, who said he was very fond of the gorilla.

Summary of a News Release by The Gorilla Organization



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one gorilla group in the three different countries is US\$ 1,152,000 in the Congo and US\$ 1,440,000 in Rwanda and Uganda (360 full capacity visits per year). However, the number of tourists does not always reach maximum capacity. If we assume an average of 75% capacity, the revenue generated by one gorilla group amounts to US\$ 864,000 in the Congo and US\$ 1,080,000 in Rwanda and Uganda. The potential income is considerable. Efforts must be made for conservation to succeed and to remedy any problems that might arise from tourism.

Before a gorilla group can be visited by tourists, a great effort must be invested in habituating it to the presence of humans. In the Congo, gorilla eco-tourism started up in 1986 and has continued ever since – with interruptions due to various wars and periods of insecurity in the area. Gorillas were discovered in Sarambwe in 1995: the

Sarambwe Reserve was recently set up in order to protect the gorillas which range there. As a consequence, the sale of permits for land use was suspended and the management of the area was taken over by the ICCN, who had been working towards the gazettement of the area with the intention of developing tourism.

The History of Gorilla Observations in Sarambwe

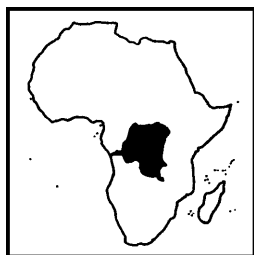
Although it is very likely that gorillas ranged into Sarambwe even before 1995, it was in that year that a local organisation called AJAKAR (Association of the Young Friends of Kacheche in Rutshuru) informed the public about the presence of gorillas there. In 1998, AJAKAR announced for the first time that un-named Ugandans had entered the area to drive the Sarambwe gorillas from Congo into Uganda. In 1999, ICCN received a

second such report. Observations of gorillas conducted in Sarambwe between 2001 and 2008 indicate that two gorilla groups and one lone animal occur there. The observations of gorillas are listed below in chronological order (according to Sarambwe monitoring reports).

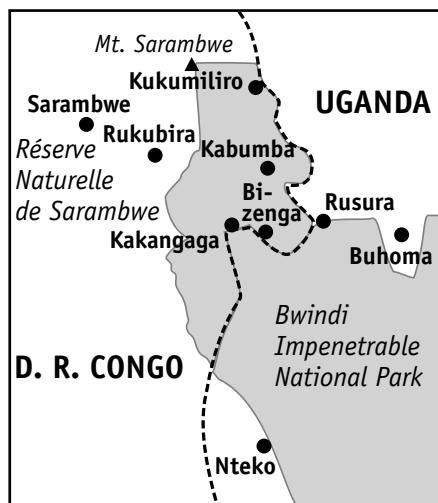
Since 1997, the *International Gorilla Conservation Programme* (IGCP) has initiated a number of training and capacity building events, including eco-tourism management and monitoring, for the staff from the five protected areas. Almost all the partners have contributed to the provision of field equipment and materials. In order to promote regional collaboration and facilitate conservation, the IGCP has also initiated a joint patrolling programme between staff of different countries. Thus rangers from Bwindi and Sarambwe happened to be on a joint patrol in and around Sarambwe at the time that the

Date	Location	Number of animals observed	Observation: individuals/signs
16/11/2001	Rukubira	1	tracks and faeces
21/02/2002	Bizenga	18	Counted 18 individuals. This group was visited by tourists in the company of BINP rangers. Subsequently, the group was pressured by humans to return to BINP.
16/07/2002	Bizenga	1	tracks and faeces
28/10/2002	Nyabwishenyi	1	sighting of one solitary male
31/10/2002	Kikumiliro	1	sighting of one solitary male
03/11/2002	Kakangaga	1	tracks and faeces
28/01/2003	Kikumiliro	1	sighting of one solitary male
13/11/2005	Bizenga	1	tracks and faeces
14/11/2005	Rusura	2	tracks and faeces
07/12/2005	Bizenga	1	tracks and faeces
06/07/2008	Kakangaga	7	Faeces and nests. The family was driven back to BINP in Uganda by UWA (<i>Uganda Wildlife Authority</i>) rangers.
11/09/2008		16	The Rushegura group appeared and stayed. This is a group from Uganda which is habituated to tourists.
09/10/2008		17	A baby gorilla was born into the Rushegura group and called "Demerode".
11/11/2008		17	The Rushegura group remained in Sarambwe. After another baby gorilla was born, the group finally returned to Bwindi at the end of February.
11/03/2009		18	The Rushegura group returned to Sarambwe. On 24/07/2009, it was driven back into Uganda.

Note: No entry in the second column of the table means that the gorillas ranged widely in the Sarambwe Reserve.



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Adapted from a map by WWF/PeVi

Rushegura group returned to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a result, no incidents happened. In addition, the IGCP has supported the development of collaboration protocols between the responsible people from the UWA, ORTPN and ICCN. These protocols concern the habituated gorillas which move from one country to another, and may allow for tourists to cross borders to visit them. The protocol also addresses the equal sharing of the revenue generated from tourists' visits.

The Displacement of the Rushegura Group by Ugandans

On 11 March 2009, the entire Rushegura group moved from Bwindi to Sarambwe, where it stayed until 24 July. On that date, an impressive group of Ugandans (including local residents, police officers, army officers and rangers) forcefully drove the gorilla group back into Uganda.

How did this happen and what might be the reason?

On 24 July, a team of Sarambwe rangers went into the reserve to follow the Rushegura group. After having found the gorillas at Kakangaga, the team noted from tracks and other

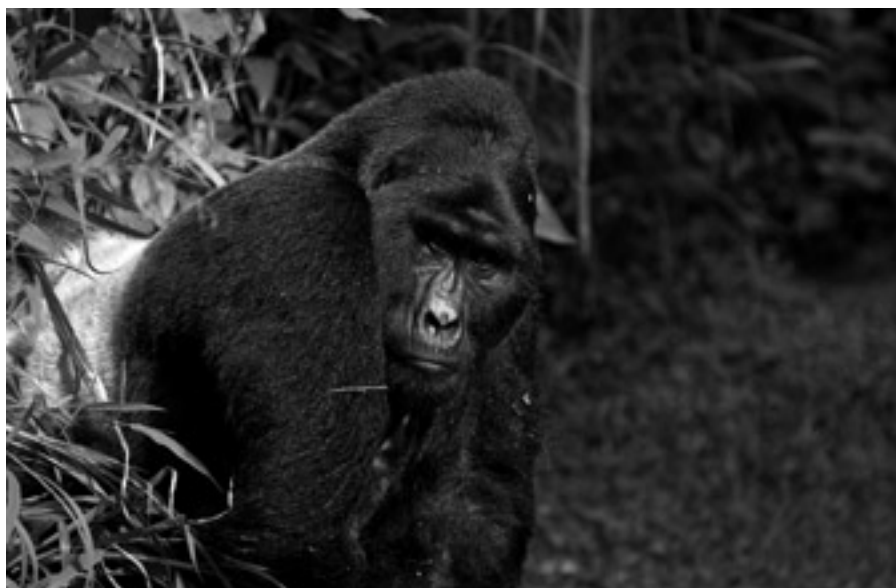
signs that a group of people had just visited the gorillas. Just as they were preparing to return to their base they received a message to meet four Buhoma rangers in Kabumba (we will not name these rangers).

The rangers referred to an invitation by the Sarambwe monitoring team to meet at the border in order to discuss the gorillas' movements scheduled for 26 July. They requested that the Sarambwe team return quickly to their ranger post as it was absolutely necessary to arrange the meeting for the next day (25 July). After some hours, the Sarambwe rangers heard horns and a lot of other noise originating near the border. They had no idea what was going on.

The next day, the Congolese group who had received the message duly arrived at the meeting point. It consisted of three traditional chiefs and two staff members of Sarambwe. However, no one was waiting at the meeting point. After several hours of waiting, the Congolese party returned to their homes without knowing why the Ugandans had not turned up.

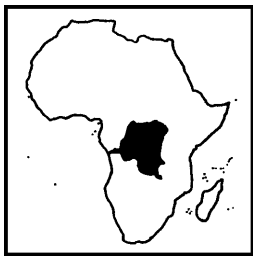
Subsequently, when the monitoring team went into Sarambwe to locate the gorillas, they were surprised to find the tracks of several people in a broad semi-circle, moving towards Uganda. The signs included foot and shoe prints, and bushes and branches cut by machetes. When the team asked a woman harvesting beans in the area, this woman – of Ugandan descent – informed them that on the day before, just after the Sarambwe rangers had returned to their base, a large group of people arrived with horns and machetes and surrounded the gorilla group. The people made a lot of noise, shouting and sounding their horns, and moved forward in a semi-circle in order to drive the gorillas back into Uganda. After they had crossed the border, the Ugandans made even more noise in order to drive the gorillas further into Uganda.

It is most likely that there are financial motives behind the displacement of the gorilla group. As mentioned previously, Ugandans have crossed the border into Sarambwe in the past and have subsequently driven the gorillas



Silverback of the Rushegura group

Photo: Uwe Kribus



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back into Uganda. Once the Rushegura group has entered Congo, visits cannot be organised from Uganda. Enquiries made by independent individuals concerned about the conservation of the gorillas have revealed that these operations are conducted by Ugandans simply because they can no longer benefit from tourism revenues once the gorillas cross the border. The same enquiries have indicated that UWA has attempted to enter into negotiations with Congolese counterparts such that tourists coming from the Ugandan side may still visit the gorillas if they have moved into Sarambwe, with an agreement to split the generated revenue evenly. However, ICCN had not yet reacted to this proposal. The silence of ICCN gives cause for concern about the security of tourists.

What are the Consequences of this Operation?

The immediate result of this operation was the departure of the Rushegura group from Sarambwe to Uganda. Subsequent to the displacement of the gorilla group, two people were charged and injured by the gorillas – they were taken to a medical facility where they were taken care of. Are these two events connected with each other? The UWA rangers have acknowledged that the gorillas were displaced into Uganda but they have denied any involvement, as this would not give credence to the cross-border collaboration that they are supposedly trying to promote.

This was not the first time that the gorillas have been deliberately displaced. However, after raising this issue at several meetings between ICCN and UWA staff, we hope that there will not be a further repetition of the event. Both parties have expressed their concern and will work to sensitize the population concerning the inherent dangers of such actions.

Claude Sikubwabo Kiyengo

At the beginning of November another group moved to the Sarambwe Reserve: the unhabituated Makale group that has 5 members. This shows that there are 3 gorillas families use the

Sarambwe Reserve: Makale, Rushegura and Gahanga with 7 to 8 gorillas. The latter is also unhabituated and lives permanently in Sarambwe.

Gorilla Visits in Virunga National Park

Mountain gorilla tourism brings much needed revenue to the Virunga National Park for the conservation effort – but it also brings the threat of disease. Humans and gorillas share so much DNA, that we can easily pass on our viruses and diseases to these animals that we are struggling to protect. When a tourist, a ranger or anyone is visiting a family of gorillas, they should stay at least 7 m away from the animals. But sometimes the gorillas themselves, out of sheer mischief or curiosity, come closer.

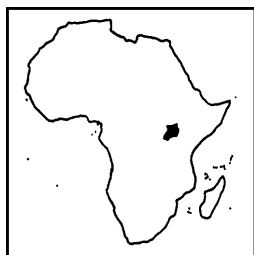
So when we re-launched tourism earlier this year, based on the advice of MGVP (*Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project*), we asked tourists to wear masks. It was a good decision. Tourists have been incredibly supportive and recognize the importance of protecting the gorillas for generations to come.

Eddy Mbuyi

This article was originally published in the blog of the Virunga National Park, www.gorilla.cd, on October 3rd, 2009.

Tourism in the Virunga National Park was started again in May 2009. Until October 23rd more than 500 tourists had visited the park. Each person pays US\$ 400, of which 30% go to the communities surrounding the park, 20% is for conservation activities in Virunga National Park, and 50% go to ICCN in Kinshasa (more information on www.gorilla.cd).





UGANDA

Trip to Uganda and the Initiation of an Aid Project

The project "Mountains of the Moon" was founded in the middle of 2008, with the aim of contributing to the protection of species through the production and marketing of different media products. Its objective is to use journalism to inform a broad public, to entertain and to inspire – in order to raise consciousness about and help the mountain gorillas.

In January 2009 a team of 8 photographers and authors travelled to Uganda. During a 9-day tour they visited the Rwenzori Mountains and different national parks, including the mountain gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. On their return to Germany, they designed a book, postcards, posters, a DVD and a multimedia show with the material they collected during their trip. A fixed part of the turnover of all these products is donated to the *Berggorilla & Regenwald Direkthilfe* to support a joint long-term project in Uganda – a project which has now become a reality.

On 31 October, 2009, we were finally off. Six of us, including 3 members of the Mountains-of-the-Moon photographers' team, took the plane from Brussels to Uganda, with an excess baggage of 100 kg! Our destination was Ruhija, a small village close to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. After 8 hours in the plane and a 10-hour car journey we finally reached Ruhija without a hitch, and we checked in for 3 nights at one of the three brand-new lodges, situated in a very beautiful location on a hilltop.

At approximately 2,500 m, Ruhija stands at the highest altitude of any town in the neighbourhood of Bwindi, and on the first evening we had a wonderful view of the Virunga Volcanoes chain further south from our lodge.

The Bitukura gorilla group was habituated here as recently as 9 months



Hand-over of displays and other Aid project materials to Martha Robbins on the first evening

Photo: www.mondberge.com

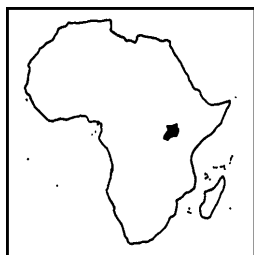
ago, and can now be visited by tourists, although permits are currently sold only by UWA (*Uganda Wildlife Authority*) and must be applied for 3 months in advance. The first lodges had opened their doors only a few weeks ago; in contrast to sites such as Buhoma, Ruhija still has almost no tourism infrastructure.

Ruhija is the base of the ITFC (*Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation*), and for 4 months a year is the home of Martha Robbins, who has been studying the life and the behaviour of the Bwindi gorillas for 11 years. Before our journey to Uganda we exchanged many emails with her: she worked with ITFC to prepare our aid project in coordination with *Berggorilla & Regenwald Direkthilfe*. Only 4 months after our book *Perle Afrikas* (The Pearl of Af-

rica) was published, over 3,000 Euros were already available. We met Martha Robbins on the first day, and the following day she accompanied us in and around Ruhija.

Of course, we did not want to miss the opportunity to track gorillas. It was very exciting on this occasion to see recently habituated gorillas that are visited only rarely by tourists. After having been well briefed by Chris, our guide, we entered the forest at around 9:00 h, equipped with sticks and cameras. There was bright sunshine although it was the rainy season. Martha had already assured us that it probably would not take very long before we found the gorillas.

Around Ruhija, the forest is somewhat denser and much steeper than in Buhoma. We walked downhill almost



UGANDA

all the time. And, yes, we found the Bitukura group after only 1 hour and 5 minutes. At the moment, the group consists of 15 members, 4 of which are, unbelievably, silverbacks! Not all group members showed themselves to us, but those who did remained visible for long periods of time and in ideal conditions for taking photographs. For example, at one point, 3 silverbacks sat together on the forest path for several minutes.

Each gorilla tracking is different; every time it is a special experience!

The first specific activity of the “Mountains of the Moon” aid project was the production of 7 different large-size displays (1 x 1.8 m). These were designed with texts written by Martha Robbins and photographs from our project and Martha Robbins. Four copies of each motif were printed and taken to Uganda. They will be used in Ruhija, Buhoma, Nkuringo and Rushaga.

We had to roll up our sleeves and mount the first set of displays in Ruhija ourselves. Hooks? Nails? Wires? Good ideas, but no one from the team had remembered to bring any. So we found an “African solution”: we pulled rusty and bent nails out of a pile of old boards, hammered them more or less straight and after a short time the displays were up and being admired by us, and by the local UWA staff and some tourists who had dropped in by chance. The displays are to assist in educating tourists AND local residents about the gorillas – printed in large, clear and simple words they cannot easily be overlooked. The aim is to generate a better understanding and ensure that the rules for gorilla tracking are followed more closely. Martha Robbins was very happy about the displays, and she will distribute the remaining ones around Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.

A nature trail, which will take about one-and-a-half hours to walk, will be established as another tourist attraction in Ruhija; this will generate addi-

tional income for the village. Women from the village will soon offer it as a guided tour. We also intend to produce a small, printed nature trail guide which they will be able to sell to tourists.

After visiting a primary school, a plan was hatched to produce a “gorilla book” in English and the local language. We will start on this new project as soon as we receive the texts from Uganda. As requested, we had brought chalk, crayons, pens and maps; the children were very happy and entertained us with several dances and songs.

The core function of the “Mountains of the Moon” aid project initiated by us is to support the training and awareness raising of the local population in

the vicinity of Bwindi National Park, and therefore to contribute to the long-term conservation of the forest and the mountain gorillas. It thus also addresses one of the UN goals for the 2009 Year of the Gorilla. The project initiation was witnessed by Veronika Lenarz, who represented UNEP/CMS (*United Nations Environment Programme/Convention on Migratory Species*) during our trip to Ruhija.

Andreas Klotz

If you want to learn more about the project, please visit the web platform www.mondberge.com

Rwanda: Death of Titus

On 14 September 2009, the silverback male Titus was found dead on his night nest. He was 35, which is quite old for a mountain gorilla male. Observers believe that his death was hastened by persistent challenges from his son. A few weeks before his death, Titus' 17-year-old son Umushikiranano had returned after having been a lone silverback for 2 years. He made several sexual overtures toward the female Tuck, despite Titus' protests, and he kept Titus on the move for several weeks. After some time, Titus became weak and the group stopped traveling. He remained in his nest, eating and moving very little.

Titus was born in 1974, observed by Dian Fossey and her research assistant Kelly Stewart. His mother, the elderly Flossie, lived in Group 4, led by Titus' father, Uncle Bert. When he was 4 years old, poachers killed his father. His mother transferred to another group and Titus was left at age 5 to live with a few unrelated males. The group remained all-male for several years, until another group's silverback died and 5 females came to join the bachelors. Titus succeeded in taking over the group when he was 17 years old.

Titus maintained his dominance over a group of some 25 individuals for many years. However, in 2007, son Kuryama began to provoke confrontations, until he simply split off with some of Titus' followers and formed his own group. Over the next 2 years females transferred to other groups, until Tuck remained as the only female. Three blackbacks and two juveniles rounded out the group.

When Titus was found dead in his nest, the young male Ihumure was by his side. Since his mother had left the group, Titus had taken care of him. Ihumure died soon after Titus.

Summary of a report by Veronica Vecellio on the DFGFI (Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International) website.



CROSS RIVER

Reforming 28 Gorilla Hunters in Cross River National Park – Nigeria

As part of our efforts to improve the protection of the critically endangered Cross River Gorilla in Nigeria, *Wildlife Conservation Society* (WCS) aims to reduce hunting levels by targeting some of the region's most notorious hunters for training in alternative livelihoods. Hunting was identified as a major threat to the future existence of gorillas in Nigeria as far back as the 1930s. Although today Cross River gorillas are fully protected by law across their entire range, isolated cases of poaching still occur, and the loss of even a few individuals poses a serious threat to the viability of the population given the small numbers surviving in the area.

In the past, gorillas were hunted along with other animals as a source of bushmeat. As their numbers have declined, and as awareness of their protection status has grown the hunting of gorillas has been reduced considerably although the consumption of gorilla meat is still widely believed to confer strength and the gruesome practice of drinking palm wine from gorilla skulls has not entirely disappeared. Despite the presence of more than 60 park rangers hunting of other species continues unabated throughout the Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park and occasional reports are received from a remote village that a gorilla has been killed, though conclusive evidence to confirm such incidents is often hard to come by.

Hunting is generally a year-round activity but with a peak in the rainy season when it becomes easier to move quietly on the forest floor. Our interaction with hunters in 49 communities around Okwangwo revealed that only a limited number of the bravest hunters, those with the widest knowledge

of the surrounding forest, are willing to undertake the risky business of gorilla hunting. Hunters report that gorillas are most commonly hunted at the onset of the dry season during October/November, when gorillas are said to descend to the lowlands in search of water and food bringing them in closer proximity to surrounding villages and enclaves. At other times of the year gorillas are reported to favour the national park's most inhospitable terrain such as the deep valleys and rocky areas of the highest mountains, presumably in an attempt to avoid contact with human activities in the surrounding areas of lowland forest.

In addition to hunting, crop raiding by gorillas and other mammals is currently the source of some conflict between local people and Cross River National Park authorities. Crop raiding also tends to occur during the early dry season and involves crops such as banana and plantain.

By targeting known hunters in and around the Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park we hope to reduce the threat posed by hunting to the gorilla's long-term survival and also improve the livelihood security of selected hunters. Hunting persists more

as a source of income than as a source of protein and is no longer considered either to be a lucrative business or an attractive occupation. Moreover there is always the chance of arrest by national park rangers – and most hunters interviewed expressed their willingness to give up hunting provided that an alternative means of income could be found for them.

28 of the most active hunters were selected from 14 different communities closest to the known gorilla range for the training programme: rearing giant snails, the domestication of bush mango and bee-keeping.

Rearing Giant Snails

Eight hunters were selected from 4 support zone villages and each of them was provided with a modern snail pen constructed from concrete bricks, plastic mosquito netting and aluminium roofing sheets. Each pen was stocked with 225 Giant West African snails (*Archachatina marginata*). It is expected that during the first 6 months this initial stock will have grown to more than 3,000 snails. Under good conditions giant snails grow rapidly and reach maturity after about one year. Snails are a highly prized delicacy among the



Hunters demonstrate with bee suit and veil during training on bee-keeping in Butatong
Photo: Louis Nkonyu



CROSS RIVER

local population but have been heavily depleted due to over-utilization. At current prices one snail sells for about 50 naira (about 30 US cents), so 1,000 snails could fetch as much as US\$ 300. A ready market exists to supply local hotels and within the village itself where the demand is already high. Snails are an excellent source of protein and the start up costs and investment required are relatively low by using locally available snails and materials. Running costs are kept low because snails eat readily available vegetation such as the leaves of cassava, pawpaw and okra; consumption of household waste is not recommended due to the high salt content.

Domestication of Bush Mango

Bush mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*) is a local delicacy used in preparing soup, and is in high demand from local traders – it is collected from the wild and grows commonly throughout Okwangwo. The collection of bush mango is one of the major sources of income for forest communities; some studies estimate that the sale of bush mango accounts for as much as 50% of the annual household income. But harvesting the wild fruit from the park is illegal and the proliferation of camps inside the park constructed for the collection of bush mango each year also serves to increase levels of hunting and fishing.

Eight hunters were selected from 6 support zone communities and trained on bush mango domestication techniques, seed selection, nursery management and maintenance. Each hunter was also provided with 50 seedlings of an improved variety of dry season bush mango. Bush mango normally bear fruit only after 12 years but with a special treatment called *marcotting* the tree can be stimulated to produce fruit after only 3 years. The aim is to encourage domestication of bush mango and other non-timber forest products in order to reduce pressure on the wild

stock and to reduce levels of disturbance inside the park. At the same time it was hoped that the livelihood of selected hunters would be improved and they would be discouraged from the hunting of endangered wildlife species as a source of income generation.

Bee Keeping

Honey has high medicinal value and its rate of local consumption is high. Presently honey is harvested from the wild, frequently from the national park. The method used for harvesting wild honey involves the use of fire and frequently results in the destruction of fragile montane habitat. 12 hunters were selected from 9 support zone villages and received training on bee keeping, colony management and honey harvesting. Each hunter was provided with 5 modern Kenyan top-bar bee-hives constructed locally as well as other equipment needed for honey production such as bee-suits, protective hats, rubber gloves, smokers for honey harvesting, iron stands, and honey wax for the baiting of hives to attract bees. Local levels of demand for honey from bakeries, hotels, and pharmacists are high as well as for household consumption. It is hoped that honey could also be marketed for sale to tourists visiting the nearby Obudu Cattle Ranch. Each hive is expected to produce at least 5 litres of honey per season thereby providing each hunter with an annual income of roughly US\$ 250.

Whether or not these 28 hunters will be truly transformed as a result of these inputs remains to be seen, and an evaluation of the project is planned after 12 months. In order to have a significant impact on hunting within the park this pilot project, if successful, will need to be expanded to include more hunters and extended to other areas. We believe that the project has the potential to improve much-needed levels of local support for conservation and the park,

and at the same time reduce levels of hunting and improve local livelihoods.

Louis Nkonyu and Andrew Dunn

We are grateful to the Arcus Foundation, the Great Ape Conservation Fund of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Taronga Foundation for their financial support.

Gorilla Guardians Gain Momentum

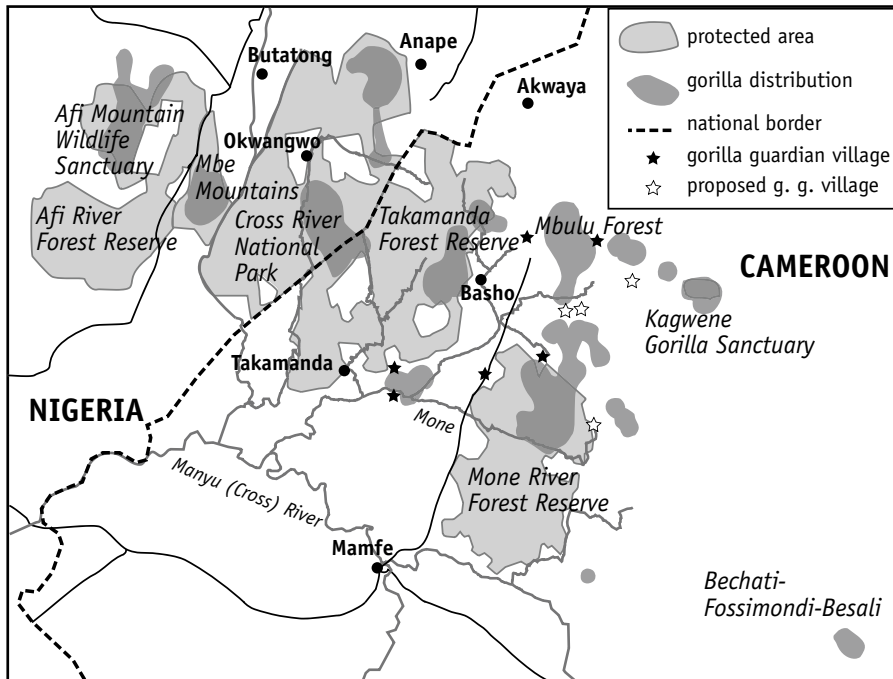
Faced with the challenge of improving the monitoring of unprotected Cross River gorilla sites in Cameroon, the Gorilla Guardian community-based monitoring network was established at the end of 2008 (see *Gorilla Journal* 37). With a focus on the most vulnerable but important unprotected Cross River gorilla sites, our initial planning basically consisted of identifying villages with traditional forest rights over these sites; working with traditional authorities to identify Gorilla Guardians from each of the 6 villages identified in this way, and then building the capacity and understanding of the 6 selected Guardians in relation to basic gorilla ecology, monitoring and national wildlife laws through training at the Kagwene Gorilla Sanctuary.

The Gorilla Guardians started monitoring their gorillas in the Mbulu forest, Mawambi Hills and northern Mone Forest Reserve in January 2009 and since then, 3 WCS-led monitoring trips have visited each of these areas to work with the Guardians and local hunters to review the information that has been collected.

Two of the key initial expectations for the community-based Gorilla Guardian network were that 1) more regular basic monitoring data (status and distribution) would be generated in a more cost-effective manner and 2) the Guardians should act as informants in relation to threats to gorillas in



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Adapted from a map by Richard Bergl, North Carolina Zoo

each site. A further expectation is that over time, as the role of the Guardians becomes increasingly accepted within their communities, improved protection of their gorillas would also be achieved. I am happy to report that progress has been made in relation to both of these expectations.

Historically, our monitoring of gorilla presence in sites like the Mawambi Hills, northern Mone and the Mbulu forest has been restricted to periodic re-see-style surveys. Organised remotely and at significant cost, these forest were only visited by trained field teams a few times in the last decade, normally with a number of years between visits. For example, the Mawambi Hills (just south of Takamanda National Park) were surveyed by Groves in 2001, Bergl in 2003 and Ekinde and Warren in 2007 and in total, data from 33 nest sites were collected during these visits. Thanks to the work of Gorilla Guardians Ferdinand Eyong and Simon Essa Ncha from Awuri and Takpe villages

adjacent to the Mawambi Hills, working in collaboration with local hunters, 42 nest sites with a total of 269 nests were located and visited by WCS monitoring teams from the first 8 months of Gorilla Guardian monitoring alone. Records from the other two Gorilla Guardian sites for the same period follow a similar positive pattern with 34 nest sites having been located in northern Mone Forest Reserve (previous database total was 41 nest sites) and 43 nest sites in the Mbulu forest (previous database total was 48 nest sites).

The fact that Gorilla Guardians are helping generate significantly more nest site location data is important because it is helping further define the areas being used by Cross River gorillas at these different unprotected sites. This has implications in terms of improving our ecological understanding of Cross River gorilla distribution over time and space, may provide an improved picture of connectivity between different sites and will also help us plan

further conservation action, including protection of the gorillas in these areas.

We have also achieved some progress in relation to our second expectation related to gaining a better understanding of the threats faced by gorillas at different unprotected sites. We have often promoted the fact that the hunting of Cross River gorillas has not taken place in recent years as a result of increased community sensitization and greater conservation presence in sites like Kagwene and Takamanda. But, reports from Gorilla Guardians now confirm that such statements may not be entirely accurate and that a small number of gorillas are still being killed by poachers in unprotected sites in Cameroon. A good example of this was the report received from one Guardian that a gorilla had been recently killed in the northern part of Mone Forest Reserve. Further investigations revealed that this was indeed the case and that a male gorilla (undetermined age) was shot in November 2008 by a local hunt-



Peter Tipa, Moses Takia and hunter Prince Ebole with a gorilla nest

Photo: WCS Takamanda-Mone Landscape Project, Cameroon



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er. Although an investigation team was unable to secure the physical evidence needed to secure the effective prosecution of the alleged hunter, this has focused our attention on a number of villages that may still be actively involved in gorilla hunting. If not for the Guardian network, it seems less likely that this information would have reached us.

In subsequent issues, we hope to share more about the evolution of the Gorilla Guardian network. Thanks must be extended to the *Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation* and *US Fish and Wildlife Service* for their support to this programme.

Aaron Nicholas

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Life History Patterns of Western Gorillas – Insights from Mbeli Bai

Gorillas are known among the great apes for their fast life history patterns. In zoos it is common for female gorillas to give birth before reaching 10 years. Our knowledge of the physical maturation of wild gorillas is mainly based on studies of mountain gorillas carried out at the Karisoke research station; gorillas in that population show very similar life history milestones compared to captive western gorillas. This is in strong contrast to chimpanzees or bonobos in which captive animals

mature much faster than those in the wild, because food provisioning under captive conditions accelerates physical maturation.

Maturation rates and life-history parameters are seen as evolutionary adaptations to different ecological and social conditions. In environments with poorer and unstable or unpredictable food availability, maturation is expected to take longer. This strategy helps to reduce the risks of starvation (due to intraspecific feeding competition) by spreading the metabolic needs for juvenile growth. Under this hypothesis more folivorous animals are expected to show rapid growth rates in the earlier stages of ontogeny and cease growth earlier than nonfolivorous/frugivorous species.

Gorillas are an interesting genus to investigate in order to ascertain whether the more frugivorous western gorillas mature more slowly because they occur in very different habitats: the seasonal lowland forest with many fruit trees at one extreme and the high-altitude montane rainforest with its dense herb availability at the other. So far the long-term data required to investigate whether western gorillas have a different maturation pattern compared to mountain gorillas has been lacking.

Recent analysis from the long-term data at Mbeli Bai indicates that indeed western gorillas are weaned at a later age compared with mountain gorillas and indicate a slower physical maturation for immatures. Western gorillas in the Mbeli Bai population were weaned (last time seen suckling) at an average age of 4 years and 9 months, which is 16 months later than in mountain gorillas. One female with known age, born during the study in April 1995, had her first baby at an age of 11 years and 4 months. Another female that we have continuously monitored since her birth is currently 11 years and 1 month old (October 2009) and has not yet given birth. Hence we assume that age at first



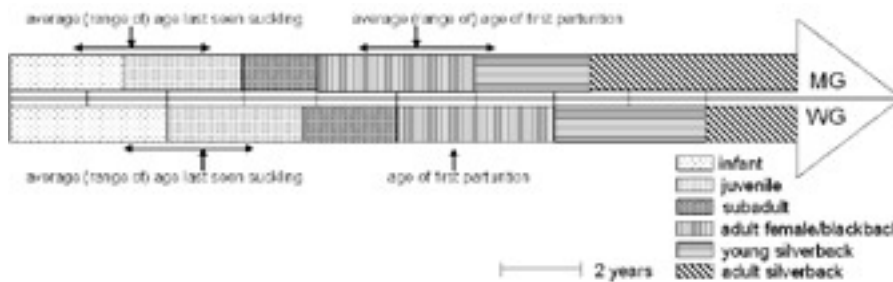
Side profiles of gorillas of different life-history classes. The two photos in each row present a typical example of the life-history classes used in this study (from top: infant, juvenile, subadult, blackback, young silverback and adult female/adult silverback

Photos: Thomas Breuer

parturition is later than that in mountain gorillas (average age at first parturition: 10 years 3 months; range 8 years 8 months to 12 years 10 months). We also assigned photographs to common life history classes and these results further support the finding that western gorillas in our population and probably elsewhere have slower maturation compared to mountain gorillas (but see Todd 2008 in *Gorilla Journal* 36 for



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Developmental stages (life-history classes) in the life cycle of mountain gorillas (MG) and western gorillas (WG)

a short interbirth interval of 3 years 10 months).

For example, we consider males to be fully grown at an age of 18 years compared to 15 years (or even earlier) in mountain gorillas. The development of the first secondary sexual characteristics (e.g. longer arm hairs of males) is not obvious before the age of 11 years at Mbeli Bai. We have therefore proposed new age boundaries for life history classes in western gorillas, which can be used and tested at other western gorilla research sites.

The slower life history and longer period of dependency of immature western gorillas could have major consequences for other aspects of western gorilla biology. For example, it might have effects on the likelihood of multimale (kin) groups in western gorillas. If male tenure length is shorter than a male's age to maturity it is unlikely that father-son multimale groups can form. It might also impact infant mortality patterns and population growth rates that will affect recovery from population crashes of this critically endangered species.

Infant mortality to weaning age at Mbeli Bai is higher than 50%. Our study emphasizes the importance of long-term studies in providing accurate baseline demographic and life-history data of undisturbed primate populations in assessing the vulnerability of populations to their threats.

Thomas Breuer

I would like to thank the Ministère de l'Économie Forestière for permission to work in the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park and WCS's Congo Program for crucial logistical and administrative support. Special thanks are due to numerous research assistants who contributed to the demographic data at Mbeli Bai. Financial support for the Mbeli Bai Study is provided by Brevard Zoo, The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, Cleveland Metropark Zoo, Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund, Margot Marsh Biodiversity Fund, Houston Zoo, Jacksonville Zoo, Knoxville Zoo, Little Rock Zoo, National Geographic Society, Santa Barbara Zoo, Sea World & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, Toronto Zoo, USFWS, WCS and Woodland Park Zoo.

The Results of this study and the pictures were originally published in the following article: Breuer, T., Breuer-Ndoundou Hockemba, M., Olejniczak, C., Parnell, R. J. & Stokes, E. J. (2009): Physical maturation, life-history classes and age estimates of free-ranging western gorillas – insights from Mbeli Bai, Republic of Congo. *American Journal of Primatology* 71, 106–119

Bushmeat-Investigation Trip to Congo and Central African Republic

Republic of Congo: in March 2009 I made a tour of the various markets in Ouesso, and for the first time realized

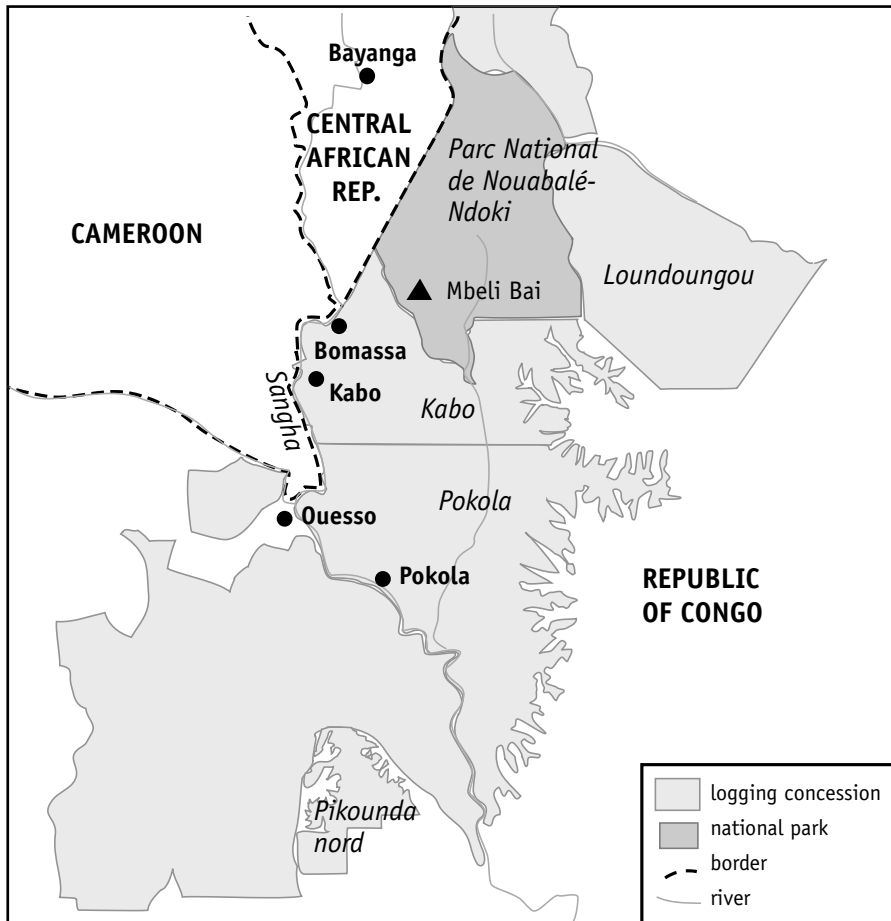
the real ubiquity of bushmeat in that town. There is a night market which comes alive as dark begins to fall and bushmeat is sold. There is also the morning market, which around 9:30 h is bustling with bushmeat being chopped up, sold, and replaced as soon as it is finished by boys carting in wheelbarrows of carcasses. I was able to see the more common species in the market, such as guenons, blue duikers, Peter's duikers, porcupines, and dwarf crocodiles; as well as protected species such as sitatunga, yellow-backed duiker, black and white colobus, red river hog, and rock python. I also heard consistently that, albeit hidden, gorilla meat, chimpanzee meat, and elephant meat enters the market as well. It seems that a lot of the meat comes from the nearby forested areas.

I went into an ammunition shop where I was shown two types of cartridges: one regular red cartridge for a 12-gauge made in Pointe-Noire, and another one which was longer and gold-colored. This was described as ammunition for bringing down big game, even elephants.

In April, I went to Pokola (this region is under concession of CIB = Congolaise Industrielle de Bois). I had the impression that the immediate area had been cleared of wildlife, but people are actively pushing further out into the forest to hunt. In Kabo, a logging concession close to Pokola, I learned that a relatively high-ranking Congolese CIB employee was working together with local hunters to obtain bushmeat to sell, despite it being the off-season. He and the hunters would row in pirogues up the Sangha River, towards the area where Lobéké National Park begins on the Cameroonian (west) side of the river. They would then enter Cameroon and hunt the forest in and around Lobéké National Park. This of course presents potential problems with CITES infractions in addition to the violation of national laws.



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Logging concessions around the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park

Eco-guards were not really a problem because, as much as they may be feared for their ability to catch people hunting illegally in the forest, it appears that once the meat is in the village they do not do anything; once on the market, the meat was not concealed, even though its very presence there must have been the result of breaking the law. The eco-guards' work is restricted to catching people in the forest with guns and meat and snares. The Pygmies seem to fear the eco-guards, but have a network of providing each other with information to evade them in the forest.

Hunting in Kabo is certainly a concern. For a few dollars, an eco-guard

offered to show me an elephant carcass only about 1.5 km away from the mill and the village's center of activity! This particular carcass was from a case where they caught the poachers, but he specifically said there were many carcasses like this around, which is to say that poachers must still feel there is an incentive to kill elephants, despite their super-elevated conservation status in the Republic of Congo.

Workers who have guns often loan them to Mbenjele Pygmies to go hunting; this is quite clear. As far as snares go, the Bakwele still frequently use them, despite the risk of the large fine. I did not hear about any snares or bullets manufactured in CIB buildings.

On the road to Loundoungou the forest was thick and vast. Yellow-backed duikers crossed the road in front of us, and an elephant was nearby. One passes the CIB villages of Ndoki I and Ndoki II along this road; this is where the road supposedly gets rather close to Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, and there are plenty of eco-guard posts, alternating along the road between villages, to make sure that no bushmeat heads south in the direction of Pokola.

When I arrived in Loundoungou, it was clear that the financial crisis was having a serious impact there, and this was already visible in Pokola and Kabo, where activity was at 50%. But here in Loundoungou, there were people who had not really worked for some 3 months. There were people getting salaries of 9,000 CFA (US\$ 18) per month, relying very much on bushmeat, a cheap form of feeding the family, just to get by. The only restaurant in town was serving duiker, even though we were still in the off-season where hunting is illegal (for reference, the hunting season is May 1 to November 1).

As a result of the financial crisis, Loundoungou's sawmill had not yet begun operating. In the past, Loundoungou wood was carried down to Kabo and Pokola, but at the time of my visit much of that traffic had come to a halt as well. The hope seemed to be that the sawmill would open and start running within a couple of months.

CIB would like to get Loundoungou certified (important for maintaining the standard which allows them to sell their wood for higher prices) and then start the sawmill. This tiny enclave in the middle of the forest will certainly grow as Pokola did, and as Kabo did. The demand for bushmeat will rise beyond the traditional pressures on the zone. In a financially turbulent time, the rise in bushmeat consumption is clear, but even in good times, a rising population means that the zone will be exposed to a hunting pressure which it has never



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before witnessed, and CIB will have to defend this as people's "traditional rights" because as one head figure at Loundougou told me, if he tried to stop people from eating bushmeat, the villagers would castrate him.

Of course, it is true that the villagers must eat and hunt to feed their families, but it is the responsibility of CIB, who brought them there when they opened up the forest and built this village in the middle of the jungle, to think about that. If they do not think about that, and can still get internationally-recognized certification, I had to ask myself: how valuable is the certification process?

In any case, the situation at Loundougou is at a full-stop for the moment. There are no expatriate staff currently based there, neither is there telephone communication.

In the Ipendja concession, operated by Societé Thanry Congo (STC), there is no cutting of wood at the moment because they have thousands of cubic meters of stock. Like Loundougou, this area is very wild, with lots of wildlife, even relatively close to the village. I even saw wild, un-habituated gorillas not very deep into the forest. I was there with a Pygmy hunter who was hunting for a Bantu man. I am told that the system of servitude, bordering on slavery, with Pygmies working for Bantu people, is still prevalent in the area. People are aware, even all the way up here, of the species that are not supposed to be hunted, like elephants and gorillas. Afterwards, I passed through the Lopola concession, operated by a Lebanese company. I heard one disturbing story of a gorilla that was coming too close for comfort to the village. Unfortunately, in Congo, given the right authorization, the animal can be shot, which is exactly what happened. I have not seen any legislation regarding what should be done with the carcass, unlike in Kenya where KWS handles carcasses so that no one can profit from the death of a wild animal.

The region Suanké-Sembe-Ouessou proved to be very interesting as the northern limit of Odzala National Park and a definitive source of bushmeat for Ouessou. Despite the eco-guard post outside Mokeko (the village before Ouessou), I saw many motorcycles bringing bushmeat out of the forest towards Ouessou. I also rode with two vehicles carrying officials, both loaded down with a lot of bushmeat. Duiker corpses were lying all over the beds of the pickups, and smoked carcasses of various animals. The worst was clearly two enormous sacks full of smoked meat; I was unable to peer inside the sacks to see which species were included. In any event, that much bushmeat ready for export was really impressive – yet it represented just the few villages we stopped in; every village we passed had villagers standing alongside the road holding up smoked meat for sale.

The market in Ouessou, now in open hunting season, seemed to be handling the same volume of bushmeat, which makes me wonder what the efficacy of a closed hunting season is. Animal populations, even the common species like the guenons and duikers, will certainly be hurt from such persistent pressure.

In the Central African Republic I looked around the border region for any evidence of the ivory trade. I am convinced there is no market for it around the border so whatever comes out would go on to Berberati or Bangui. The area was a diamond-mining region and has been quite hunted out already (this is the Ngoulo area in between Nola and Bayanga, 30 km south of Nola). The bushmeat in the markets, which is readily available (monkeys, duikers), comes from the direction of the forests in the region of the reserve (further south). In Bayanga a known elephant hunter showed me a path by which hunters can also just go to hunt in Congo; there were risks to hunting in Congo though, because the

eco-guards may even torture people they catch. This was common knowledge, and a hunter told me that many of the Baka did not even dare to go into Congo any more to hunt.

It was good to hear the reinforcement of the idea that the eco-guards are actually defending the area around Nouabalé-Ndoki (which down at the Bayanga level, is only a matter of a day's walk away).

I saw hunters bringing out antelopes from Congo, and again, this raises issues for CITES depending on which species are being taken across the border. The hunter said that off-season in Congo was not a terribly important consideration for the people here, and they would just go in anyhow to hunt. Congo provides many duikers for the hunters, and if possible even animals like elephant can be hunted in secret.

In Dzanga Bai I got the sense that the level of protection in Dzanga-Sangha Special Reserve and even in Dzanga-Ndoki National Park is of a much lower standard than in northern Congo, and that things have not changed very much in the last years. It is good to see that Congo's conservation is better established, respected, and feared by poachers. It makes one think, though, that where the conservation effort is lacking, it must mean WCS is financially constrained; and where is the forest-friendly CIB to help when it comes to laying down funds for the effort they claim to support?

L. Aber, communicated by Iris Weiche

Pygmies in Logging Concessions and Reserves

The aim of our study was to acquire information on the living conditions of the Pygmies in logging concessions in the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. A review of the legal background and the principal



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players reveals differing visions of the forest, which clash in an unequal battle between two contradictory dreams. One is the age-old dream of the Pygmies, whose survival is closely linked to their relationship with the forest, and the other is the vision of a number of external actors (the state, donors and conservation projects) who jeopardize the traditional management methods of the local communities, frequently giving the communities the impression that the forest is being protected from them.

The Pygmies always ask what the concession companies are doing in areas they have always considered theirs. Concessions and conservation have always been seen by the Pygmies as the greatest contradiction that ever existed around their expanse and have brought untold problems for them.

Article 16 of the *African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights* emphasizes that state parties shall take the necessary measures to protect the health of their people. The health situation of indigenous people, however, is often very precarious. As they receive little political attention and prioritization and as they, to a large extent, suffer from impoverishment and low literacy rates, their health problems are in many cases extremely critical, and this is in violation of article 16.

An example concerns the Pygmies of one logging town in the Republic of Congo. Some of the major health problems of these people include alcoholism, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

Alcoholism is a symptom of marginalization and despondency, as well as a cause of poor health. Many people drink alcohol to deal with hunger. Alcohol related trauma injuries are often presented at the clinics, but they are usually not given the attention that they need. Very common diseases in these areas include yaws, jiggers, leprosy and conjunctivitis. "We have so many diseases that we suffer from in

this village, but the government does not give us medicine." The mortality rate among the Pygmies is five times higher than among the Bantu. "Many of our family members are dead today because there was no medicine given to them when they were sick." The Pygmies of this area are nicknamed out of prejudice (*la viande qui parle* – the animal/meat that can speak) and do not receive the same treatment as others. The health staff discriminate against sick Pygmies; for example their consultations take place only after all Bantu have been attended to, and they are even refused appropriate treatment. Worse still, the public health system employs Bantu individuals to distribute medicine for leprosy to the pygmies; often the Pygmies do not receive the medicines, or receive them only when they are working for the persons responsible for giving medicine to the Pygmies.

The Pygmies of the Congo experience high rates of infant mortality. They suffer serious difficulties in the areas of diet and nutrition and their children suffer from chronic malnutrition. Some of these people do not have access to clean drinking water because they live in remote areas. Because they lack money to buy medicine, and because of the discrimination they face, many of them do not go to health centers at all, and most of them are left to hope that the illness will cure itself, or to practice self-medication – which is no longer effective because according to them the trees and herbs are all destroyed by the logging company workers. The Pygmies believe that if they were still living in their forest their lives would be better because they would be able to collect medicinal plants and practice their customs.

The African Charter states in its article 17 (1) that every individual shall have the right of education. It further states in article 17 (3) that "the promotion and protection of morals and tradi-

tional values recognized by the communities shall be the duty of the state".

The Pygmies experience a very poor literacy rate as their school attendance is as low as 15%. We were told by most of these people that their children are not attending the "white man's" schools; according to them, all of them are educated in their own culture but this is being destroyed by the powers that be. "Our children are not going to the white man's school because we have no money to pay the government for that. We hear that only the children whose parents work with the loggers are allowed to attend school."

Some of these workers we interviewed agreed that their children are in school, but others said that Bantu parents do not want their children to share a class room with the Baka children whom they considered animals. That notwithstanding, the significance of access to education is self-evident and this right has to be ensured.

The role of cultural and language rights is integral to the question of education. Education is not value-free. It is known that an education system that assumes aspects of the dominant cultural perceptions towards the Pygmies reinforces the perception of them as alien and encourages non-acceptance of them. The discrimination by teachers and some students leads to a high drop-out rate. This is confirmed by some of the Pygmies who said that their children no longer attend school because of serious discrimination against them, and because the schools want to turn them away from their culture. "The Bantu always abused us whenever we went to school; they will always remind us that we do not know how to speak French. The school is made up of those who speak and write French. That is why I left school, since I cannot express myself in French."

The right to justice is preserved in articles 2, 3, 4, and 7 of the *African Charter*; article 5 of the same charter



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says that every individual shall have the right to respect the dignity inherent to a human being, and article 19 says that all people shall be equal and enjoy the same respect. The *African Charter* is rampantly violated in many logging regions of Congo. The Pygmies state they are suffering from discrimination at the hands of the Bantu and their employers. They maintain that they are not given the same attention as their Bantu counterparts in their duties. They say their salaries are three to four times less than that of the Bantu. One Bantu worker said: "I cannot allow to be paid the same salary as a Pygmy. Pygmies are not human beings like us; they do not reason like human beings, they have no use for money. The day we lack food in this country we will use them for meat."

The Pygmies who have the privilege to work for a logging company confessed that their salaries are very small; according to them, the money cannot feed their families, and their plight continues. We were told that when they sustain injuries in the line of duty, nothing is done for them. Most times they are not sent for medical treatment, most of them are left to fall back on their resources of treating themselves. "Many of my brothers have been left dead after incurring serious injuries in this place, while the Bantu are carried to the hospital for treatment; some of them are even carried to Brazzaville, while we are left here." Some of the Pygmies are employed as saw men, and cut down big trees. In this assignment, they are at the mercy of their expertise as the trees risk falling on them. They say that many have had accidents in the line of duty, and very little care and attention was given to them; many have even lost their lives in the process, and very little compensation was given to their families. Some families complained that they have been left without a visit from the logging officials.

Some also serve as forest guides to allocate trees that are ready and good for exploitation. Others are employed by the big bosses to serve as hunters for specific animals for the consumption of these bosses, all Congolese. This latter group of workers is not registered among the formal employees of the company: they are paid by these bosses and their assignment is usually not known by the white bosses.

The Pygmies are the oldest inhabitants of Congo's forest. Traditionally they live in small forest encampments, moving every three or four days, hunting and gathering. The pressure from the colonial government policy of sedentarization unfortunately has continued after independence. They are increasingly settled in camps around the Bantu villages. Consequently, they are sometimes not accepted or, in the case where they are accepted, they are considered as laborers for the already settled Bantu groups. "We are here but we don't consider this place as ours because the Bantu can send us away any time they want."

The soil and subsoil belong to the Congolese State, not to any individual regardless of social rank or how long someone claims to have stayed in an area. The Pygmies have no rights to the land. They were evicted and driven out without indemnity or compensation by the concessions and reserves that have taken over the land. All of them are tenants. No one has a registration certificate proving that the land belongs to him. The state can withdraw this land at will. "We have no land, the government has taken our land and given it to the Bantu, this has caused some of our brothers to move to Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo for settlement since no compensation was given to us."

In the first place, the authorities fail to respect the indigenous people's right. For Pygmies, a forest is what nurtures them, it is everything to them. Their

cultural roots as well as their physical existence are highly dependent on the forest, which is also the main source of livelihood, satisfying both their domestic and agricultural needs. They protected the fauna and flora in their capacity as custodians. "I was born in the forest, I live in the forest and I will die in the forest, I know how to protect the forest because my father taught me so. I don't care what the government says, I will continue to go into the forest, it is where I belong, all I need in this life is found in the forest. How then can I stay away?"

But with the arrival of environmental conservation projects, everything became taboo and sin; everything is governed by law; there is no access to the forest, for the Pygmies separation from this forest is involuntary. "We always wanted to stay and live in the forest, but unfortunately for us we were booted out and today we are asked to become farmers. Farming has never been our concern. We depended on eating bushmeat and wild fruits, but today I stay for months without eating bushmeat because whenever we trap small animals the eco-guards will seize them from us and, when we resist, they will beat us mercilessly, beating us for what we thought was ours."

"They told us that we are not supposed to stay in the forest because we destroy the forest, but it is they who are destroying the forest. They cut down trees and kill big animals; even trees that we respect as sacred are being cut down."

Today a small number of these Pygmies have been employed as eco-guards but they are placed under the watchful eyes of the Bantu who are considered or looked upon as the bosses of these Pygmies fortunate enough to be employed. "I am very fortunate to have been employed as one of the eco-guards in this reserve, though my salary is very small when compared with that of the Bantu and with the type



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of job that I do. The Bantu are my 'big men', they direct me on what to do and I respect them."

As a result of their knowledge of the forest, some of them have been employed to stop their brothers from killing animals and gather wild fruits; but they risk losing their jobs if they dare to stop some of the Bantu hunters, especially those who are given guns and sent to hunt in a reserve by the big officials in Congo. Some of the Pygmies themselves hunt for the Bantu "big men", especially animals like elephants.

A few Pygmies agreed that their situations have actually changed for the better as compared to the past when they were never given a job and were left to fall back on their resources. But this has happened to very few of them, mainly for those who are employed as eco-guards and some who work with loggers.

The creation of a reserve had no immediate impact on resources, because the authorities had no means of enforcement. With the arrival of the eco-guards the reserve would be equipped with comprehensive resources and it would be attempted to systematically implement Congolese protected area legislation. "We were living in the reserve before they came and took us out promising that something will be given to us as compensation, but nothing has been given so far." According to this, Pygmies who were very bitter about their situation are not very well informed about the project's objectives and requirements. The nature of the restrictions imposed varies according to whom you talk to. Some say that hunting is forbidden in the reserve. Others say access of any kind is forbidden. "If you are seen with bushmeat anywhere you will be beaten by eco-guards. How can we stop hunting, which is the only thing we know how to do best, and with that we feed our families?"

Poaching is one of the consequences of unemployment in Congo. Both

the Baka and Bantu participated in this business for some time. "We and the Bantu were very much involved in the business to have money to buy some of our basic needs like salt and oil." In the fight against poaching, the authorities in charge of wildlife management and the various projects used the strategy of applying repressive measures against those behind the poaching. "We passed through a lot of problems, not only as we had to leave our camps, but it was difficult to catch a hare and get it back in the village without being caught. But the Bantu will safely transport theirs." According to them, the anti-poaching measures taken by the authorities affected the Baka more than the Bantu hunters.

In the light of the eviction of the Baka from the forest with inadequate, non-existent or inappropriate compensation, and in light of the continuing arrests and some imprisonment of Baka, sometimes simply because they are getting honey, firewood or food plants from the forest around the concession and conservation areas, it is a matter of urgent concern that the conservation authorities and logging companies have been unable to move ahead rapidly with establishing multi-use programmes with participation of the Baka, which address their cultural and historical dependency on and use of the forest.

D. Nefarm, communicated by Iris Weiche

Obituary: Jordi Sabater Pí

The ethologist Jordi Sabater Pí, Professor Emeritus at the Universitat de Barcelona and one of the internationally best-known Spanish scientists, died at 87 years of age on August 5th, 2009. He spent a very active and profitable life.

In 1940 he arrived in Equatorial Guinea to work as a foreman on a farm. His curiosity about life and animals de-

veloped into a great interest in nature and local human cultures. He learned the local language – Fang – and began some zoological and anthropological research projects with the support of his wife who collaborated in some of his tasks to leave him more free time for research. His work led to some extraordinary results, for example his study of the Fang people's art and tattoos, his description of the lyre-tailed honey-guide (*Melichneutes robustus*), or his study on the metamorphosis of the Goliath frog (*Conraua goliath*). Tulane University in New Orleans was very interested in his work, and Sabater Pí was hired as a researcher of this university between 1966 and 1968 with a grant from the *National Geographic Society*, the National Institute of Health and the New York Zoological Institute.

Without a doubt it is in the primatological arena where his contributions have been most important. A pioneer in research on African great ape behaviour in the wild, he discovered a chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes troglodytes*) population using sticks as tools to catch termites as well as medicines and minerals from the ground in the mountains of Okorobikó in Equatorial Guinea. This discovery was published in *Nature* in 1969 and it had great implications for ethology, anthropology and archeology; it was the first time that a non-human primate industry was proposed – a proposal that culture existed in another species than humans. Other important works in primatology are his study on gorilla and chimpanzee nesting behaviour and his work on etho-ecological principles in arboreal cercopithecids.

After 1958 he worked for Barcelona Zoo as a curator of the Ikunde Research Center, in Bata, and he discovered the world-famous white gorilla Snowflake, who became a symbol for Barcelona City and Barcelona Zoo.

In 1972 he received a new grant from the *National Geographic Socie-*



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ty to continue his research in Rwanda, where he studied mountain gorillas with Dian Fossey.

After returning to Barcelona in 1976 he worked as Professor for the Psychology Department, University of Barcelona, where he introduced ethology as a new subject; a few years later, he also introduced primate behaviour.

He always combined working as a professor with research, and he initiated many research projects on animal behaviour, both in captivity and in the wild, producing doctoral theses and international papers. It is worth mentioning his studies on laterality and cognition on great apes and parrots, his research on the etho-ecology of the bonobo on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and cercopithecoid etho-ecology in Bioko, Equatorial Guinea.

He conducted a wealth of profitable research and always disseminated it through talks, seminars and ar-

ticles for magazines and newspapers to promote ethology and primatology and to bring them closer to the general public.

Sabater Pí was an innovative scientist who was interested in issues before they became popular. His research was always done with the maximum of scientific rigour, and with great stamina; he always kept a global and open vision, paying attention to all the factors that could influence animal behaviour or help him to attain a better understanding of it.

He received many awards for his magnificent scientific career, among them: Premi de la Fundació Catalana per a la Investigació (1991), la Medalla d'Or al Mèrit Científic de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona (1996), and la Medalla Narcís Monturiol al Mèrit Científic y Tecnològic, del Govern de la Generalitat de Catalunya (2004). He was Professor honoris causa of the University



Autònoma of Madrid and of the University Autònoma de Barcelona. He was proposed twice for the prize Fundació Kyoto (Japan).

He dedicated all his work to the University of Barcelona in 2000, comprising all his scientific research, note-books, pictures, ethnological objects and more than 2000 drawings and aquarelles painted during his life. These drawings have not only scientific but also artistic value.

The most important memory that we, the people who studied with him and knew him, will retain is his PASSION for studying nature, the wonderful way he transmitted it to all of us, and his great respect for all living beings.

He always said the following: **To know something you need to observe it, and if you know it you will not be able to stop loving it, and if you love it you would like to protect it.** This sentence defines how he was and how he acted

Montserrat Colell

Photos: col. Sabater





READING

Marc Languy and Emmanuel de Mérode (eds.)

Virunga. The survival of Africa's first national park. Tielt, Belgium (Lannoo) 2009. 352 pages 240 photos, 60 maps and 45 line drawings. Euro 39.95. ISBN 978-90-209-6562-9.

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The Real Chimpanzee: sex strategies in the forest. Cambridge University Press 2009. 196 pages. Hardcover US\$ 115.00, ISBN 978-0-521-11008-2; paperback US\$ 48.00, ISBN 978-0-521-12513-0.

Amanda Rees

The Infanticide Controversy: primatology and the art of field science. Chicago (University of Chicago Press) 2009. 304 pages. Hardcover, US\$ 40. ISBN 978-0-22670711-2.

Michael A. Huffman and Colin A. Chapman (eds.)

Primate Parasite Ecology: the dynamics and study of host-parasite relationships. Cambridge University Press 2009. 548 pages, 48 illustrations. Hardcover, US\$ 126.00. ISBN 978-0-521-87246-1.

Alan F. Dixson

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Richard Sharpley

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Conservation Genetics in the Age of Genomics. New York City (Columbia University Press) 2009. 264 pages, 2 halftones, 13 color illus., 6 line drawings, 8 tables. Hardcover, US\$ 65, £ 45. ISBN 978-0-23112832-2.

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Nature's Matrix. Linking Agriculture, Conservation and Food Sovereignty. London (Earthscan) 2009. 272 pages. Paperback £ 24.95, ISBN 978-1-84407782-3; hardcover £ 85.00, ISBN 978-1-84407781-6.

Laura A. German, Alain Karsenty and Anne-Marie Tiani (eds.)

Governing Africa's Forests in a Globalized World. London (Earthscan) 2009. 400 pages. Hardcover £ 65.00. ISBN 978-1-84407756-4

New on the Internet

In September 2009, a new website, www.friendagorilla.org, was launched in Uganda. Anybody, worldwide, can meet (virtually) gorillas from Uganda's seven habituated groups at a cost of US\$ 1 or its equivalent. The website has sections like Geo-Track, where one can track gorillas using GPS coordinates that the gorilla trackers provide. Online trackers will be able to add gorillas as friends on internet social sites such as *Facebook*, *Myspace* and *Twitter*.

The money the project will make will be used to hire more trackers to bring the number to 45 from 25, and

to buy communication equipment for the trackers and a special power generator that is less noisy. The aim is to raise awareness on the need to conserve gorillas.

Kimberley Hockings and Tatyana Humle

Best Practice Guidelines for the Prevention and Mitigation of Conflict Between Humans and Great Apes. IUCN SSC 2009, 48 pages. PDFs of both the French and the English versions can be downloaded at: www.primat-sg.org/BP.conflict.htm

Human Rights Watch

Soldiers Who Rape, Commanders Who Condone: Sexual Violence and Military Reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Human Rights Watch 2009. 62 pages. ISBN: 1-56432-510-5.

Download: <http://www.hrw.org/de/reports/2009/07/16/soldiers-who-rape-commanders-who-condone-0>; report, 650.55 KB: <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/drc0709web.pdf>; report with cover, 778.38 KB: <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/drc0709webwcover.pdf>

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Download: http://www.globalwitness.org/media_library_detail.php/786/en/global_witness_report_faced_with_a_gun_what_can_you

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You Will Be Punished. Attacks on Civilians in Eastern Congo. December 13, 2009. 183 pages. ISBN: 1-56432-582-2 (<http://www.hrw.org/node/8715>).
Download of the report (3.48 MB) at http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/drc1209web_1.pdf without cov-

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It can be downloaded from the UN website at <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=s/2009/603>

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This report can be downloaded at <http://allafrica.com/view/resource/main/main/id/00011978.html>

Our Donors

From May to October 2009 we received major donations by Aktionsgemeinschaft des Einzelhandels Bünde, Helga Beiderwieden, Angelika Dickmann, Elisabeth Engel, Marianne Formula, Jürgen and Irmgard Friedrich, Andreas Gerlach, Caroline Grosjean, Peter Günther, Antje Hoyer, Volker Jährling, class 7c of the Realschule Bünde-Nord, Eva Klemisch, Hans Mayer, Angela Meder, Hannelore Merker, Mondberge-Projekt, Claudia Ohler, Hanna Otte, Ursula Ploeger, Birgit Reime, Stephanie Maria Rosen, Reiner Schaberick, Manfred Schröder, Sparkasse Herford, Tierheim Heinsberg, Ingo Wolfeneck, Heinz Zaruba, Zeitungsverlag Neue Westfälische and Manfred Zimmer. Susanne Zeitler collected donations for us during her birthday party. At his 70th birthday, Volker Jährling made a generous gift to the rangers of the Virunga Parks and took it to Africa himself (photo below by S. Peer). Many thanks – to all the other donors as well! We are grateful for your support, and we hope that you will continue to support us during 2010.

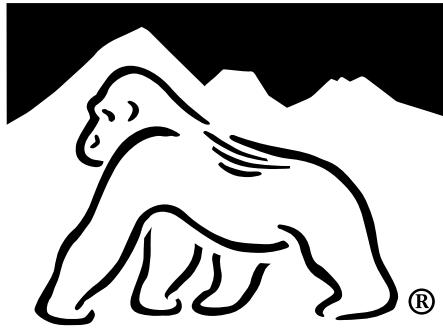


At the "Wilhelma Day", the great ape keepers of the Stuttgart Zoo offered to children to "handicraft for the apes" and collected donations for us.

Photo: Angela Meder



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