

What's happening to Mountain Gorillas?



What are Mountain Gorillas?

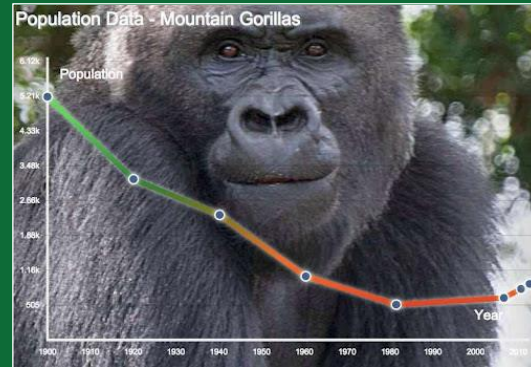
Mountain gorillas are the 2nd biggest primate species and one of two subspecies of the eastern gorilla. In the wild, these giant apes have a natural lifespan of 40-50 years. Mountain gorillas are **highly social creatures** who live in family groups known as troops. Despite their great strength, mountain gorillas are normally **gentle and quiet**, though they are **fierce protectors** when it comes to their families!

Fun Fact:

Male mountain gorillas, called Silverbacks, have been observed removing poachers' snares from family members' hands or feet to save them!

What's Happening?

Mountain gorilla populations have declined in recent decades primarily due to **human intrusion** and **resource use**, which has resulted in **severe ecological degradation** and **habitat loss**.



Gorilla beringei beringei population from 1900-2010

Mountain gorilla populations are an important part of East-Central African biodiversity, and it's crucial that we must protect the **last two isolated groups** that remain in the wild.

Did You Know?

98%
of our DNA



is shared with gorillas!

There are **less than 1100** left in the wild.

Mountain gorillas are classified as **Endangered** by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

If the gorillas continue to lose their habitat, we risk losing these animals forever.

The 2 remaining groups are illustrated below, located in these 4 National Parks:



Threats to Mountain Gorillas Include:

WAR/CIVIL UNREST:



- Refugees cutting down trees for firewood and cooking contributes to habitat loss
- Landmines planted along woodland trails pose a threat to gorillas

LOSS OF HABITAT:



- Rapidly growing human settlements put pressure on remaining mountain gorilla habitat
- Fragmentation of forested areas has led to gorilla populations have become isolated from one another, limiting genetic diversity

DISEASE:



- Regular contact between tourists & gorillas poses a risk of disease transfer from humans → gorillas
- Domesticated animals/livestock also contribute to disease spread
- Human diseases are responsible for 20% of all mountain gorilla deaths

What Can Be Done?



What Can YOU Do?

-Promote Funding for National Parks:

The national parks in which mountain gorillas reside are key to the species' continued survival. The parks' tireless conservation practices such as gorilla censuses, armed patrolling of protected forested areas, safeguards to current habitat, implementation of research centers, and local community outreach have proved critical to preserving the species and mitigating the numerous threats to their survival. Ecotourism is an important economic resource for these national parks and generates enough revenue to cover park management costs and contribute to the further preservation of biodiversity and wildlife. **Consider donating to any of the four national parks!**

- Improve the Human-Gorilla Relationship:

The expansion of protected wilderness areas around mountain gorilla populations has led to animosity and retaliation from local communities, as they no longer have access to the land. As a result, their resources and economic abilities have been negatively affected. Improving the equity between meeting the needs of local communities and preserving natural areas can improve this relationship! This can happen by involving local communities in conservation decision-making and allowing for controlled harvesting of resources from the protected areas of the national parks.

- Preserve Genetic Diversity:

By putting regulations in place to keep the natural areas around the gorillas free from harmful human intrusion and further settlement, mountain gorilla populations could begin to regain their genetic diversity.

Consider donating to the Dianne Fossey Gorilla Fund, Ellen DeGeneres Wildlife Fund, or The Mountain Gorilla Conservation Fund. Can't? Don't worry! By taking the time to read this, you're taking part in the conservation of mountain gorillas by educating yourself and spreading the word.



Sources used:

1. <https://www.saveagorilla.org/>
2. https://donate.gorillafund.org/page/29269/donate/1?_ga=2.39494315.948370286.1638649798-520676110.1638649798
3. <https://africageographic.com/stories/mountain-gorilla-gentle-giants/>
4. <https://www.wwf.org.uk/learn/wildlife/mountain-gorillas>
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