

Gorilla Journal



Dian Fossey began studying mountain gorillas in September 1967, habituating them to human presence for close observation.

Saving gorillas: 50 years and forever

Our successful protection work is increasing

This fall, we begin celebrating our 50th anniversary, since it was on Sept. 24, 1967, that Dian Fossey set up her tent between Mt. Karisimbi and Mt. Bisoke, and gave it the name “Karisoke.”

Fossey intended for Karisoke to become a center for scientific understanding of the gorillas, and now, decades later, the majority of what is scientifically known about gorillas is actually based on studies conducted at Karisoke.

Our long-term database constitutes one of the largest of its kind for any species and is a powerhouse of information on gorillas. It is used by scientists from around the world, to answer questions about gorilla biology and the best methods for conserving them, and by extension, other wild apes as well.

Dian Fossey soon began to understand that the mountain gorillas faced many threats, and after doing a count that showed only about 240 of them left, she realized that they might well go extinct without direct protection. She founded the Digit Fund, published “Gorillas in the Mist,” and began publicizing their plight, but was killed in December 1985,

before the movie based on her book was released.

The Digit Fund was renamed the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund and has greatly increased efforts to save mountain gorillas ever since, also expanding this protection to nearby critically endangered Grauer’s gorillas. Thanks to this work, mountain gorillas now number nearly 900 overall and we await the results of a new count just completed. And our work in the core of Grauer’s gorilla range, in nearby Democratic Republic of Congo, is now providing crucial daily monitoring in an unprotected area.

To solidify this work for the long term, the Fossey Fund is also a pioneer in building the next generation of conservationists in Africa, and in helping people thrive, along with wildlife.

As we begin our 50th anniversary celebration, we want to thank you for being an integral part of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund team. In this issue and throughout the year in all of our communications, we’ll be documenting the impact our work has had over the years, thanks to your support.



**THE DIAN FOSSEY
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Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International
800 Cherokee Ave., SE
Atlanta, GA 30315-1440
1-800-851-0203



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