

THE  
DIAN  
FOSSEY

# Gorilla Journal

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Daily protection | Scientific research | Educating conservationists | Helping communities

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## Daily protection



**Grauer's gorillas photographed** by our remote cameras in a formerly unprotected forest, where hunting had been a major threat.

## Finding hope for Grauer's gorillas

By Tara Stoinski, Ph.D.  
Fossey Fund President and  
CEO/Chief Scientific Officer

*As we continue to celebrate* 50 years of successfully protecting mountain gorillas, we face quite a different situation in our newer efforts to protect the critically endangered Grauer's gorillas in the nearby Democratic Republic of Congo.

Due to two decades of civil unrest, hunting, mining and other problems, these gorillas have seen their population plummet during that time, possibly as much as 80 percent. They are now considered one of the world's 25-most endangered primates.

There are two national parks in Congo that

house Grauer's gorillas but most of them live outside national parks where there has been no formal protection — until we started to work there about five years ago. We are also helping the Congolese national park authorities (ICCN — *Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature*) in both national parks that do house Grauer's gorillas.

In many ways, the situation for Grauer's gorillas right now is not unlike what Dian Fossey faced with the mountain gorillas when she started her work 50 years ago — in a word, dire. Hunting, poaching, mining, extreme poverty and rebel groups in forests have continued at high levels for many years.

### We can still make a difference

But we are hopeful, because our efforts there are working. Our permanent field station, similar to the early Karisoke Research Center, is set up along the Biruwe River in the

See **Grauer's gorillas**, page 7

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## Grauer's goal: Double numbers receiving protection

# Saving Grauer's gorillas in Congo: Protection, research, community

**Grauer's** gorillas live only in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where they receive little protection and face many severe threats, including hunting and loss of habitat.

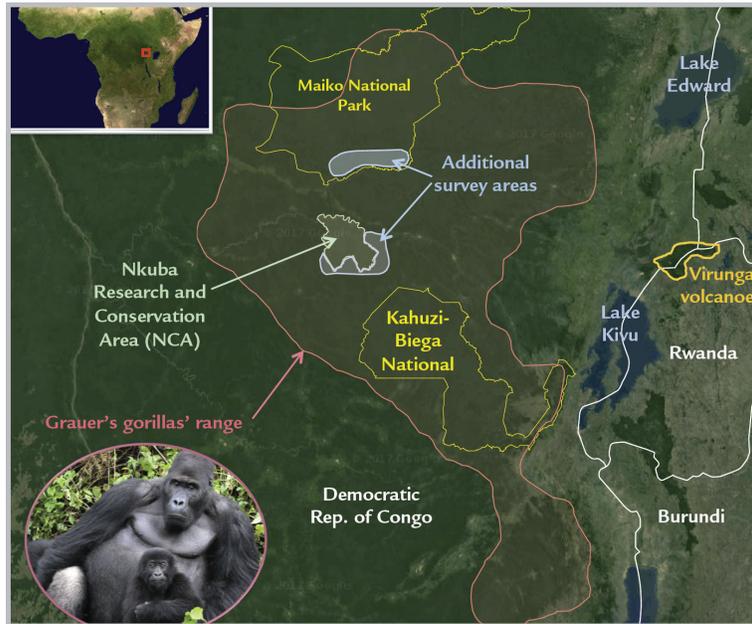
The Fossey Fund's conservation model, used successfully to help save the mountain gorillas of Rwanda, is now being fully applied in Congo, combining daily protection of gorillas, scientific study, community education and training local people, and helping local communities thrive. Our long-term goal is to double the number of Grauer's gorillas receiving protection over the next three to five years, since more than 60 percent live in unprotected forests.

To accomplish these goals, we partner with traditional landowners and have trained local community members to become expert gorilla trackers in their forests. Some of them were formerly hunters and are now ardent conservationists. Our efforts are working, with no killings of gorillas reported in the areas we now monitor.

**Our work in Congo includes the following major projects:**

### The Nkuba Research and Conservation Station

Established in 2012, this site is the center of our work here. The



**We work in three areas of Congo, with our main program in Nkuba, where teams, above, spend two weeks at a time in the forest.**

adjacent forest is in the core of Grauer's gorillas' range, between Kahuzi-Biega and Maiko National parks. In the past five years, our Congolese and international staff working here have carried out large-scale wildlife surveys in the forest, identified the main threats to the gorillas, chimpanzees, and other wildlife, and localized a 200-square-kilometer sector where three to four healthy gorilla groups are now being continuously moni-

tored and protected. We have also identified new areas needing protection.

This year, we established a new remote camp further west in the Membe area, with two more teams protecting gorilla groups there. A network of 20 camera traps adds to our reach, capturing photographs not only of gorillas but other important wildlife as well. We also conduct survey patrols in other sectors of this region, as we continue to look for the presence of more gorillas in need of protection.

### Community programs for local people

Our farming program aims to provide food independence and income for local families,

many of whom have faced years of poverty and malnutrition and have relied on rapidly dwindling bushmeat from the forest. We are working with a group of local families, providing basic support as they develop farms with a variety of crops.

In addition, we have prepared 1.75 hectares of land near our conservation station in order to test potential food crops and fertilization techniques.

These gardens are producing eggplants, tomatoes, cabbage, amaranths, and other vegetables, which



are distributed to local families in Nkuba, Biruwe, and Mabeka. We're also surveying local households to determine the role of bushmeat in the local economy.

Education is another aspect of our conservation model, and we currently provide school fees for 100 children of Nkuba traditional landowners to attend primary and secondary schools. In return, these landowners agree to work with the Fossey Fund to preserve the forest habitat where the gorillas live.

In a special effort by our local staff, three of our trackers (who have university-level education) are supporting the only local high school during the weeks when they are not in the forest, serving as teachers and in administration. As a result, the students they helped have passed the national graduation examinations!

To help train future conservationists, our Congo program director, Urbain Ngobobo, and our Congo research director, Dr. Damien Caillaud, have been collaborating with faculty at the Institut Supérieur de Pédagogie in Bukavu, teaching ecology and natural resource management classes to Congolese undergraduate students.

### Research in Kahuzi-Biega National Park

Kahuzi-Biega National Park is one of only two formally protected national parks within Grauer's gorilla range, and is also the only area where several groups of Grauer's gorillas are habituated to human presence, which allows for direct observation.

The Fossey Fund works here with the Congolese authorities who protect the park (ICCN — *Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature*) to help with studying three groups and collecting direct behav-

ioral data on them. This is our best chance for learning more about Grauer's gorilla behavior, because the groups we protect in the Nkuba area are not habituated to human presence and we track them at one day's distance, using such signs



**Family farms**, top, are among our community projects in Congo. Above, **silverback Bonane**, who is being observed in a national park.

as footprints, night nests, food remains and other markers of the gorillas' trails. For their own safety, these gorilla groups will remain unhabituated.

In Kahuzi-Biega, we've recently been observing the formation of a new group, as a silverback named "Bonane" tries to keep several females together, with mixed results, although recently two infants were born in his group.

### Grauer's survey in Maiko National Park

Maiko is the only other formally protected national park within the Grauer's gorilla range, but there has been little recent or reliable information on how many gorillas may still be living there.

"Maiko is a huge park — with more than 10,000 square kilometers — and it is critical habitat to the future conservation of Grauer's gorillas and many other species of wildlife," says Dr. Caillaud.

"Recent reports suggested as few as 15 gorillas remained. We hoped that if we looked for more gorillas there, we might find them. And we did."

In the relatively small portion of the park that we were able to survey, we located evidence of more gorilla groups than expected and now estimate 30 gorillas live in just that survey area, with likely more living throughout other areas of the park that have yet to be surveyed.

The Maiko survey was a collaborative effort between the Fossey Fund, the Congolese national park authorities (ICCN) and the local community living around the park.

The Fossey Fund's Urbain Ngobobo, and research and conservation program manager, Escobar Binyinyi, worked with Maiko chief warden, M.A. Boji Dieudonné, to organize this important attempt to look more closely at Maiko.

"A few years ago, it was unimaginable that the community surrounding southern Maiko could make a joint patrol with ICCN," says Ngobobo.

"The survey we did was a strong signal showing that we can count on the community to save the remaining extremely endangered Grauer's gorillas both inside the national parks and in the community forests."

## Rwanda's 'Kwita Izina' ceremony

# Gorillas get names at annual event

Rwanda's annual gorilla naming ceremony, called "Kwita Izina," took place on Sept. 1, and 19 gorillas were given their new names.

Most of them were infants born in the past year, but a few were actually adult gorillas who joined the monitored gorilla groups during the same time period, arriving from groups that have not been monitored, some from over the border in Congo.

In honor of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Karisoke Research Center by Dian Fossey, Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund staff participated in a number of special events during Kwita Izina, including the naming ceremony.

### Fossey Fund gets naming honor

Fossey Fund President and CEO/Chief Scientific Officer Dr. Tara Stoinski attended the events and presented the choice for the name of the infant who was born to mother Kurudi last August.

Kurudi's infant is a granddaughter of the legendary historic silverback Titus, who was first observed by Dian Fossey, after his birth in 1974.

Given her "royal" lineage and the 50th anniversary of the Karisoke Research Center, choosing



Titus' granddaughter will now be called "Macibiri" in honor of Dian Fossey, whose Rwandan nickname was "Nyiramacibiri."

the name for this youngster wasn't hard — "Macibiri," taken from the Rwandan nickname used for Dian Fossey, "Nyiramacibiri."

Silverback Titus was born during a time when poaching threats were very high. But due to the gorilla protection efforts that were initiated by Dian Fossey and then carried on and greatly expanded after her death, Titus was able to

Arakaza  
Nsanganira  
Macibiri  
Iyamarere  
Uruyange  
Ubudasa  
Urugano  
Umutware

live a long and productive life, leading an important group that still has a version today, and to sire numerous

offspring, including others who became leading silverbacks.

Titus died in 2009 at the age of 35, which is quite old for a mountain gorilla male.

Macibiri's mother Kurudi is 21 years old and this is her fourth infant.

### And many more!

Among the other gorillas named during this year's Kwita Izina, were the following, all in groups monitored daily by the Fossey Fund:



**Infant Iyamarere:** A male, first seen on March 7, 2017, born to mother Tegereza. “Iyamarere” means “enthusiastic.” This infant was born while the group was ranging in Congo, outside of our tracking area.



**Infant Uryange:** A male born to mother Mitimbili on April 24, 2017. Uryange means “shiny.” He lives in Pablo’s gorilla group, which is the largest monitored by the Fossey Fund.



**Adult female Nsanganira:** First seen on March 8, 2017. Her new name means “well accepted.” This previously unknown female was first seen in Ntambara’s group when they returned from ranging in Congo. She is now established and doing well in her new group.

See **Gorilla names**, page 6

**Gorilla names, from page 5**



**Infant Arakaza:**  
A female born approximately April 1, 2016, to mother Mahirwe. “Arakaza” means “welcome” and was chosen because she was born while the group was in the Democratic Republic of Congo, outside of our tracking area.



**Infant Urugano:**  
Gender still undetermined, born on June 21, 2017, to mother Rugira. “Urugano” means “generation” and was chosen to highlight investment in Rwanda’s youth.

**Infant Ubudasa:**  
Gender still undetermined, born on Sept. 8, 2016, to mother Tamu. “Ubudasa” means “remarkable” in reference to the young silverback who leads this group.



**Infant Umutware:**  
Gender still undetermined, born on Aug. 7, 2016, to mother Ukuri. “Umutware” means “leader” and honors the leadership of Rwandan president Paul Kagame.

**Grauer's gorillas**, from page 1

core of Grauer's range, in the village of Nkuba. And we have a Congolese staff of 40 there, studying and protecting more than 150 Grauer's gorillas in community forests nearby. No killings of gorillas in this area have been reported since our work started.

In January we established a second permanent remote camp in the center of this area. Two field teams now track and protect gorilla groups in this new sector. And our network of 20 camera traps continues to capture photographs not only of gorillas but also other important wildlife, including chimpanzees, leopards, owl-faced monkeys, bushpigs, buffaloes, bongos, and other mammals in this richly biodiverse forest.

**Community conservation approach working**

Our work in Congo demonstrates that a community-centered conservation approach, combining the direct involvement of traditional landowners, and a year-round presence of skilled trackers in the forest, efficiently reduces levels of bushmeat hunting and protects gorillas and other wildlife in areas where law enforcement is absent.

We've also been able to gather comprehensive data detailing the lives of these gorillas as well as the causes of their decline.

So while we are still in the early days of our direct protection of Grauer's gorillas in Congo, we are hopeful that they may still have a viable future.

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**Reaching out and up**

*We're so proud* of all the great things our staff are doing to help build our education, outreach, and other programs. Some recent highlights:

- **CEO Dr. Tara Stoinski** was the keynote speaker at this year's "Conversation on Conservation" at Rwanda's Kwita Izina gorilla-naming ceremony (in addition to actually naming one of the gorilla infants). She was also featured at the Steppes Beyond Festival in October, held in London at the Royal Geographic Society.

- **Congo program director Urbain Ngobobo** attended the African Primatological Consortium for Conservation, with participants from 15 countries, and he has now been named coordinator for this important effort.

- **Three of our Congolese field staff** are helping the only local high school in Nkuba by teaching and helping with administration when they are not in the forest protecting gorillas!

- **Karisoke research assistant Eric Ndayishimiye** has been accepted to a master's degree program at the University of Chester (U.K.).

- **Sarah Tolbert** has joined our Africa staff as community engagement manager and brings a wealth of experience working on important programs for people where we work.

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**UMUGWANEZA**  
2017 - 2018

*Tara Stoinski*  
President & CEO/Chief Scientific Officer

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**INFANT UMUGWANEZA**  
GROWING UP QUICKLY

**Date of birth:** March 10, 2015

**Gorilla group:** Umugwaneza lives in Isabukuru's group, which includes many other youngsters that he can play with. The group is currently led by silverback Kabuba, who, like his predecessor Isabukuru, is known for helping to take care of youngsters. Kabuba is actually acting as surrogate mother for three other young gorillas in the group whose mothers left the group while they were still quite young.

**Personal details:** Umugwaneza is known for his very playful nature, even by gorilla standards! He tries to engage in play with every other youngster in the group and luckily there is no one who doesn't want to play with him!

**Family background:** Umugwaneza's mother is Bukina, who has had five other offspring that did not survive, so everyone is happy to see her latest doing so well. She was born in 1994 and is the oldest female in the group.

**Quotes from the field:** "It is really heart-warming to watch Umugwaneza grow up and reach this next stage in life. Everyone hopes he will do well, given his mother's sad losses in the past," says Didier Abavandimwe, research assistant with the Fossey Fund's gorilla program in Rwanda.

**Fun fact:** All the trackers in this group say Umugwaneza is their favorite gorilla in the group, because he is so playful and always doing something fun to watch!



'Murakoze' = 'Thank you,' in Kinyarwanda

## Meet a donor: Tom Leiden

*Although he* originally pursued training in organic chemistry, Tom Leiden ended up joining the family business for 34 years. Each year under his leadership, the company, which created wooden fixtures for major retail stores, did well enough to give money to good causes, including conservation and supporting higher-level education, leading to the eventual creation of the Leiden Conservation Foundation in 2011.

Now Leiden is also a major supporter of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund's conservation programs. His foundation's multi-year grant has provided an important level of security for expansion of our work in Congo, and through the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo for our Rwandan college student mentorship program.

It may have been scuba diving and seeing the marvels of the ocean that first got him interested in wildlife, says Leiden, but when he got involved with birding his conservation efforts really started to grow.

### **Penguins, giraffes and zebras**

Birding led to involvement with African penguin conservation and a trip to South Africa, where he gained an appreciation for the difficulties and challenges of conservation, as well as the excitement and

passion of the people involved.

"Seeing these places gave me a better appreciation of the challenges and how difficult conservation is, yet also how it can really work and how people can become so excited by it."

Leiden also developed a special interest in giraffes and zebras, and when he went to a conference in 2013 to hear a presentation on giraffes, he learned – to his surprise – that giraffes face a serious threat of extinction, much like the more well-known endangered species, such as elephants and rhinos. This led to a connection with the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and the Giraffe Conservation Foundation, and to more Africa trips.

### **And now gorillas, too**

Leiden says he always knew about the pioneering work of Dian Fossey, but it wasn't until he met Dr. Kristen Lukas, director of conservation and science at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo (and now also a Fossey Fund board member) that he was really introduced to current gorilla conservation efforts.

This connection led to Dr. Lukas being able to travel to the Fossey Fund's Karisoke Research Center in Rwanda each summer to conduct

classes and mentorships with young local aspiring scientists there, as well as to a meeting between Leiden and Fossey Fund CEO Dr. Tara Stoinski.



**Tom Leiden:** Conservation will only get done if people get involved, stand up, and make their voices heard, supporting organizations that are out there that are making a difference.

Now, the Leiden Conservation Foundation is a major supporter of the Fossey Fund's work. Leiden is especially interested in science that can be applied to real-world issues, he explains.

In addition to his fascination with wildlife and field conservation in general, Leiden feels strongly about helping smaller organizations grow to capacity, so they can get to the next level, as well as supporting future leaders.

This type of giving also

allows him the chance to do "due diligence," he says, as he travels around the world observing not only wildlife but ardent conservationists in action on the ground.

As for the future of gorillas and other wildlife, Leiden says conservation will only get done if people get involved, stand up, and make their voices heard, supporting organizations that are out there making a difference. But we also need to practice sustainability ourselves, including being energy efficient and conscious of water use.

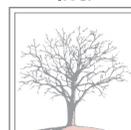
"We still tend to view natural resources as endless. But they aren't."

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