

THE DIAN FOSSEY Gorilla Journal

Summer 2018

Daily Protection | Scientific Research | Educating Conservationists | Helping Communities

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Focus on the Future

New census, new center, new realities: Planning is key

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

For those of us in conservation, the focus is all about the future.

In the case of the Fossey Fund, it's the future of the gorillas, the future of gorilla conservation and research, and the future generations of people who will carry out our work, our mission and our goals.

Dian Fossey recognized this when she set up the Digit Fund — which is today the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund — to raise money for gorilla protection, knowing that she could not do it alone, especially for the long term.

Today, while the organization she founded is robust and successful, we can't take our minds off the future either. Interestingly, when Dian looked to the future, she imagined the imminent extinction of the mountain gorillas she loved so much. In the Virungas, they reached a low of 242 during Dian's time. But due to her concerns about their



future and to the intensive protection she helped to launch, the latest census shows very exciting results!

Mountain gorilla census

After two years of data collection and analysis, the latest census of the mountain gorillas shows that there are now **604 mountain gorillas in the Virungas!** This reinforces the success of the intensive protection the mountain gorillas receive from our trackers and from the Rwandan and other park authorities.

See **Future**, page 8

Mother gorilla Nyabitondore and her infant are among the increasing number of mountain gorillas. The recent census shows their population in the Virunga mountains has risen to 604.

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Mountain gorillas increase; still critically endangered

Census teams, including trackers and scientists from the Fossey Fund, covered the entire range of the mountain gorillas in two sweeps, collecting a variety of data.

Results from the latest complete count of the mountain gorillas in the Virungas, released in May, show that their population has now risen to 604, up from 480 counted during the 2010 census, and from a low of 242 during Dian Fossey’s time in 1981. Censuses since that time show consistent increases.

This reconfirms the mountain gorilla’s status as the only wild ape population whose numbers are known to be increasing, and research shows the increase is due to the intensive daily protection provided by the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund and the park authorities of Rwanda (Rwanda Development Board), Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Staff of the Fossey Fund played a large role in this census, with eight of our trackers, three assistant team leaders and one co-instructor joining staff of the three national park and wildlife authorities and other partners during the two sweeps of the process.

During each sweep, teams were based in the forest and systematically walked throughout the gorillas’ entire range on pre-determined paths, searching for gorilla trails from west to east. The count was based on night nests, dung samples and hair samples, which collectively allowed for genetic analysis and identification of the gorillas.

More good news

Not only did the census reveal an increase in the mountain gorilla population, but it also allowed scientists — through DNA analysis — to determine the location of a number of gorillas that were once within our tracking range but had since moved to other areas of the



forest where groups are not monitored. Some of them had not been seen by our trackers since 2005, so we were delighted to learn that they are still alive and well!

Why the census matters

“The mountain gorilla census is critical for understanding the current status and overall population trends of this critically endangered species, to confirm that our intensive protection efforts are working, and to provide all partners with a basis for good conservation planning,” says Dr. Tara Stoinski, Fossey Fund President and CEO/Chief Scientific Officer.

Even with these increases, mountain gorillas remain critically endangered due to their overall tiny numbers and the threats that they still face, such as limited habitat space, snares, and potential diseases. And while the mountain gorilla increase is exciting, other gorillas are all facing significant declines.

“Dian Fossey thought mountain gorillas would go extinct by the year 2000, but the intensive conservation she helped start 50 years ago is working,” says Dr. Stoinski.

“To help further secure the future of gorilla conservation, we are excited to begin work on our new campus — the Ellen DeGeneres Campus — which will provide permanent, purpose-built space for all aspects of gorilla conservation.” (See **MASS Design**, next page.) ■

It’s been awhile since we’ve seen you!



Gufasha

Makuba

Genetic analyses that were part of the census brought us some additional exciting news — the whereabouts of 13 gorillas who were all once members of groups that the Fossey Fund monitors daily, but had not been seen in some time, after they moved to groups outside our monitoring range.

For example, we had not seen Gufasha since 2005, or Makuba and Mawingu since 2007, when they moved to non-monitored groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



New gorilla campus with MASS Design focuses on community-based mission

In designing and building a new center for gorilla conservation in Rwanda, we could not have found a more-perfect partner than the MASS Design Group.

MASS Design, which is based in Boston and Kigali, Rwanda, is a unique, award-winning nonprofit firm with a significant presence and extensive experience creating mission-aligned, purpose-built facilities in Rwanda and throughout the world.

In Rwanda, MASS Design projects include the Butaro and Munini District Hospitals and a proposal for an addition to the Kigali Genocide Memorial. The firm has also worked on important community projects elsewhere in Africa and in the United States, including the new Memorial to Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, which is the first national memorial in the U.S. to the victims of lynching.

Improving through design

MASS Design believes that each architectural project not only has a mission, but that this mission must speak to greater societal goals outside the buildings and to help improve the communities around them. This includes investing in the training of local workers, using locally sourced materials, and keeping a small ecological footprint.

The goal is to leave positive impacts on communities, long after the building process is completed. On average, MASS Design construction projects spend 83 cents of every dollar in the local region — through labor, equipment, materials, and other aspects.

In addition, MASS Design sources approximately 75 percent of materials from within 100 kilome-



Planning for the new Ellen DeGeneres Campus of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund is underway, as led by MASS Design Group.

ters of each project and strives to have a workforce that includes at least 40 percent women, with at least 10 percent in leadership roles.

This approach fits perfectly with the Fossey Fund’s conservation work, because our holistic model focuses on community engagement and support as a critical element.

We believe that for conservation to thrive, people must thrive too. So, in addition to gorilla protection and research, we operate extensive education, training, health and community development programs. The more people we can get involved learning about and working in conservation the better.

“We were lucky to find MASS Design for this project, because of their commitment to and experience working with Rwandan communities,” says Dr. Tara Stoinski, President and CEO/Chief Scientific Officer of the Fossey Fund. “As the Fossey Fund does in science and conservation, MASS Design is dedicated to training and educating local community members in architecture and building, so that their impact goes beyond each project, leaving a legacy of important, positive impact in the community.”

MASS Design co-founder and executive director Michael Murphy explains: “Our philosophy — and thus our hope for this new campus — is not only to provide an incredible center for gorilla conservation, but to involve and improve the whole community in the process of construction. We see architecture as a living thing, not a static object — as a verb, not a noun. It is to us the physical manifestation of an ideal.”

Through its many projects in Rwanda, starting in 2010, MASS Design has helped educate and build a team of experienced local architects, designers, engineers and construction personnel needed to create a truly community-oriented, locally sourced facility. This supports their mission of creating architecture that promotes justice and human dignity.

The campus: Why and what

The Fossey Fund has been working in Rwanda for more than 50 years, and even though there has been dramatic growth in our programs in recent years, we are still renting offices and houses in the town

See **Campus design**, page 7

Where adopted gorillas are now

The Fossey Fund's symbolic gorilla adoption program goes back almost 20 years, and has proven to be an important way for everyone to learn and follow some of the individual gorillas we monitor every day in Rwanda, while also providing important support for their conservation.

Here's a look at some of the gorillas available for adoption in years past, and where they are now.

To see the gorillas who are currently available in our adoption program, please visit gorillafund.org/adopt. You'll get instant access to their profiles, photos and regular updates for one year.



Kubona

Born June 6, 2002

Adoption 2003

Then In his 2003 adoption profile, Kubona was described as a playful infant, who loved nothing more than playing with the 14 other infants in his large group and rolling around in vegetation. He was born and raised in Pablo's group, which was the largest ever recorded and contained 50 members at that time.

Now As a grown silverback of 16, Kubona has spent some years as a lone silverback, but this spring he arrived in a group led by silverback Urugwiro, and seemed to slowly try to take over the group, though this did not occur without a number of fights and injuries. Kubona's mother, Bishushwe, was recently located after moving out of our tracking range years ago.



Dushishoze

Born June 19, 2003

Adoption 2005

Then Dushishoze was born in the large Pablo group. He had a good start in life with many relatives and playmates in his natal group and was known for his high energy and frequent demands for attention from group members.

Now Even though many of his peers later left the group, Dushishoze stayed in Pablo's group, where he is now a silverback who supports the dominant silverback (Gicurasi) as well as another silverback in protecting the group. But, sadly, he has no direct family members left in the group.



Pasika and Umutuzo

Born Pasika: April 1, 1991;

Umutuzo: September 6, 2001

Adoption 2003

Then In 2003, young mother Pasika had just given birth to her first infant, Umutuzo. Pasika left her natal group at age 8, and attracted the attention of many silverbacks in her new group, Shinda group. After giving birth a second time in this group, Pasika changed groups a number of times and even traveled by herself with her latest infant for eight months. Umutuzo started playing with other infants at only 8 months of age!

Now Pasika has settled into a new group — Mafunzo group — and we expect she will give birth again this year! Umutuzo left her mother and group in 2010 when she reached maturity, and currently lives outside our tracking area, over the border in Congo.



Tetero

Born October 9, 2003

Adoption 2005

Then In 2005, Tetero was labeled an up-and-coming star at only 2 years old, since he had gained the affection of every gorilla in his group with his irresistible charm, good nature, sociable attitude, and independent streak.

Now Tetero is a strong silverback who helps lead the Kuryama group with his "best friend" Igjhozo, whom he has known since birth. The two took over after the death of Vuba, who was the previous leader of the group. Tetero plays a key role keeping the group cohesive and seems to have inherited the peaceful nature of his late father, the famous silverback Titus.

Gorilla Protection



Gutangara and Mutobo

Born Gutangara: December 30, 1993;
Mutobo: October 31, 2004

Adoption 2005

Then Gutangara transferred to Pablo group from the Susa group in 1995. In 2004, she gave birth to her third infant, Mutobo. Living in the large Pablo group, little Mutobo made quick progress learning about his environment and socializing with the other gorillas.

Now Gutangara now has six offspring and field staff expect her to give birth to her seventh sometime soon! She still lives in Pablo's group, but Mutobo left the group in 2017 and became a lone silverback. Although we don't monitor him, our trackers frequently spot him in the forest and he seems to be doing well.



Impamo

Born October 29, 2011

Adoption 2013

Then Impamo's adoption profile in 2013 labeled the youngster as a male, but genetic testing later on confirmed that "he" was actually a female. Impamo's birth was the first in her group, after the three silverbacks in the group competed for mating with her mother, Mahirwe.

Now Impamo is now 6 years old and her mother had her fourth infant in 2016. They still reside in Kuryama group, led by Impamo's older brother, Igihozo, after Vuba, the former leader, died. Currently, her group has spent a lot of time ranging in Congo, but our staff resumes monitoring them whenever they return to Rwanda.

Ntaribi

Born December 18, 2007

Adoption 2009

Then Ntaribi was the first infant born in what was then a new group, formed by silverback Bwenge. Little Ntaribi developed a problem with his fingers swelling when he was very young, while holding onto the hairs on his mother's back. Luckily this problem resolved within a month, but his mother died when he was only 4.

Now After the death of his father, Bwenge, in 2014, Ntaribi traveled by himself for a while. In 2015, Fossey Fund staff were surprised and delighted to see him join Isabukuru's group, where he has been well accepted.



Icyororo

Born July 3, 2012

Adoption 2015

Then Icyororo was the third infant born to mother Isaro, who later gave birth to rare twins. In 2013, Icyororo was badly injured during her group's interaction with a lone silverback, but luckily she recovered, after a veterinary intervention to treat her infected wounds.

Now Young Icyororo continues to face challenges, since her father, Isabukuru, died, and all the adult females moved to other groups, including her mother! Icyororo and three other youngsters effectively became orphans at that time, but they have bonded together and are doing well with lots of help from their uncle, the now-dominant silverback Kubaha.

Mountain gorillas are still critically endangered, but YOU can help save them.

When you symbolically adopt a gorilla, you protect one of the planet's most endangered animals.

Please visit gorillafund.org/adopt to adopt a gorilla today!

We cannot reverse extinction, but we can prevent it.



Helping People. Saving Gorillas.



It takes a community to help gorillas, forests and people

The Fossey Fund's work protecting Grauer's gorillas in Congo, whose numbers have plummeted in recent decades, is an incredible example of community-based conservation at its best.

This approach is especially crucial here, since the forests we work in formerly received no protection and the area has been subject to decades of political violence and extreme poverty, including lack of food and other basic resources.

While the forests were once a source of food, hunting has left them largely empty of wildlife. There is also little history of agricultural or animal husbandry practices. Lack of access to seeds and farming supplies further exacerbates food scarcity as well.

For these reasons, as we have built our gorilla protection program here, under the leadership of Fossey Fund Congo program manager Urbain Ngobobo, we have created unique partnerships with local landowners, former hunters, people who would like to grow food and other community members, each realizing that conservation can benefit the whole community and be a sustainable path to the future.

Landowners partner to save forests

To gain access to the forests where Grauer's gorillas live and set up our tracking program, the Fossey Fund works with local traditional Congolese landowners, who control different areas of the forest.

Six years ago, Prosper Abaigaendo was one of the first landowners to work with us, because he wanted to protect the forest and reduce hunting. He says he "saw the benefit of conservation from the beginning," and no longer allows people to hunt on his land.

Prosper also works as a tracker with us and operates a small garden using seeds we have provided.

"There is no long-term advantage to hunting," he says. "Keeping the animals safe and protecting them

with the Fossey Fund is the sustainable way."

The Fossey Fund now works with 11 landowners and more are interested in joining. Recently, a new landowner approached Ngobobo to inquire about joining this partnership and was especially concerned that if he didn't protect the forest, it could be taken over by mining, logging or other outside interests that would destroy the habitat.



Congo community members meet with Fossey staff.



Our farming project, left, brings new food options to local people. Right, former hunter, now a tracker.



Hunters and others turned conservationists

A local man named Lumumba was known in the area where we work as one of the most skilled hunters, having grown up hunting in the forest with his father. He tells stories about hunting elephants and gorillas – back when there were lots of them.

"You know, I was a great hunter and I've seen everything in this forest, but it makes me sad to think that my grandkids might never see gorillas. They won't ever see elephants because they no longer exist here. I don't want that to happen to gorillas. I don't want our kids to learn about them in storybooks. That's why I started working with the Fossey Fund here – because I want to protect the gorillas for the future."

In addition to hunters and others who grew up in the forest, we also have women now becoming trackers with us, including Charlotte, who is technically a village chief, though as a woman she doesn't hold the official title.

However, she is well respected in the community and says she hopes that by becoming a gorilla tracker she can show other women that they can work in conservation too.

Charlotte's wish is that those living elsewhere will hear about the good job the community is trying to do to protect the forest and all its wildlife.

Growing food in new gardens

Since hunting in the forest once provided a majority of food for locals, and that the wildlife there has now been greatly reduced, the Fossey Fund is focusing on



helping communities find sustainable alternative food sources, especially through family farms and gardens. We have been providing the community with seeds for a variety of vegetables and fruits, and now there are 30 households involved in this project, with expansion planned for next season.

Clarisse and her husband Alain were once avid gardeners but had not been able to find seeds until our program began. “It may seem like a small thing, but if we can get more people to grow what looks like just small gardens, just think what else we can do!” Clarisse says.

Arachuga, who is another beneficiary of our household gardening project, had lots of previous experience growing vegetables and, after receiving seedlings from the Fossey Fund, is now growing eggplants, cabbage, onions, peanuts and pineapples.

As we expand this program and incorporate sustainable agricultural training courses for those who have never farmed before, we hope that this will reduce pressures to hunt in the forest, where bushmeat of any kind — ranging from antelopes to green pigeons — is becoming harder and harder to find.

Former nurse Kambala Busanga, says that monkeys, buffalo and even elephants used to be seen frequently in the area, but that “now, with regret, we no longer see them. It is everyone’s hope, that by working together with the community and the Fossey Fund in conservation that one day the forests will be full of wildlife again.”

Improving health access

The primary health center that served the community of Nkuba, where we work, was until this year a worn, single-room, thatched-roof building with open doors and windows. Now, with the help of our donors, we have completed the building of a new health clinic that is ready to help improve healthcare for the whole village. This was a challenge because the supplies had to be transported to this remote area and skilled labor was not readily available.

But the community and local health department were so excited about the project that they were ready to move in even before the beds and other supplies arrived!

Community conservation works!

Working in close partnership with local communities in all these ways not only helps them thrive, but builds upon their desire to save the forests, as well as their long-term connections to and experience with managing the land. And, as our experience continues to demonstrate, it may save the future for the conservation of gorillas and other wildlife in this important region. ■

Campus design

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of Musanze. None of these facilities are built for our unique needs and do not offer adequate or permanent space. We have minimal space for our growing staff, much less for the 400 college students who come through Karisoke each year for training!

In order to secure our multi-faceted gorilla conservation work for the long term, provide increasing opportunities for local people and others to become the next generation of conservationists, and to allow people from around the world to join the effort on behalf of wild gorillas and their habitat, it is critical to have a permanent, purpose-built facility to act as a hub. That is what is envisioned for the Ellen DeGeneres campus.

Plans call for a multi-acre, purpose-built campus with 50,000 square feet of building space and a living laboratory on the grounds. The campus will be located very close to Volcanoes National Park, where the mountain gorillas live, with easy access for our trackers and researchers who work inside the park every day, as well as for the local communities with whom we work.

We also hope it will be a destination for tourists who come to see the gorillas, so they can learn more about gorillas, conservation, wildlife and Africa. The design includes laboratories; classrooms for training and public education; meeting spaces; a library and computer center; an interactive public exhibit on Fossey’s work; and housing for visiting researchers and students. Our Grauer’s gorilla program in the Democratic Republic of Congo also will have a footprint there, with centralized data storage, maps and meeting areas.

The campus will also support the Rwandan government’s strategic conservation priorities for Volcanoes National Park, as well as serve as an important hub for the government’s newly established Center for Excellence in Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Resource Management.

Focusing on the future

“This new campus will solidify our work and the future for gorilla conservation, serving as a focal point for our efforts to protect wild gorillas over the next decades,” says Dr. Stoinski.

As Dian Fossey herself said, “When you realize the value of all life, you dwell less on what is past and concentrate more on the preservation of the future.”

“We are humbled to partner with such a profoundly inspiring group of thought leaders who share a commitment to ideals laid out nearly 50 years ago — to deeply understand our natural world in order to protect and conserve it,” adds Murphy.

With planning underway, groundbreaking on the new center is planned for 2019. ■

Future

continued from page 1

This success shows that looking forward and planning for the future works. And now, with a wonderful lead gift from Ellen DeGeneres and her wife Portia de Rossi, we are off to a great start toward a new campus for our work, which will help ensure the future for gorillas and conservation in Africa on a much greater scale.

Long-term sustainability

Yet, experience and time have taught us that protecting gorillas every day over the course of many years is a monumental effort that takes coordinated teams of dedicated trackers, scientists, and educators; it also involves partnerships with local governments, other conservation organizations and local communities.

As we look to the next 50 years of gorilla conservation, it's also clear that long-term sustainability must involve donors whose own commitment to making this world a better place gets translated into generous and meaningful support.

Our annual operating budget is provided for by a global network of more than 11,000 donors, which is critical to ensuring that we can continue our day-to-day operations each year.

Another way that donors ensure the Fossey Fund can make giant strides for gorilla conservation is by becoming a Legacy Society member, through including us as a

named beneficiary in their estate. Estate gifts are a wonderful way to provide for the future sustainability of all aspects of our work.

If you are interested in becoming

a Legacy Society member or have already named us in your will, please let us know by contacting our Chief Advancement Officer Anna Hutto, at ahutto@gorillafund.org. ■



Murakoze = Thank you!

Why I give

A note from donor Claudia Ellquist

Editor's note: After reading an article in a recent Gorilla Journal about our work to help save Grauer's gorillas living near impoverished communities in Congo, Ellquist wrote us to explain why she decided to increase her Fossey Fund giving.

We are grateful to have such thoughtful donors, who make the future of gorilla conservation possible.

"It was the specific strategies described, and the values they revealed – not just that you were hiring local persons in that area of Congo to monitor and protect the gorillas, but what those local folks were doing:

- Interviewing families about bushmeat consumption
- Setting up remote cameras to see the gorillas
- Doing wildlife surveys
- Following the gorillas from a distance so as not to disturb them
- Collaborating with many partners
- Conducting crop studies to explore economic and dietary alternatives
- Distributing excess crops, and, most impressively,
- Providing scholarships and local school support, including staff members teaching in local schools.

"These practices reflect an approach to gorilla survival that is intensively about the survival, and enhancement, of the lives of the humans who neighbor the gorillas, instead of seeing the humans as outside or secondary factors....

"This article articulated that a holistic approach to doing good is possible, and that it works to help both wildlife and people."

— Claudia Ellquist



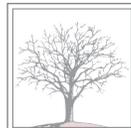
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