



GRASP

Newsletter

Issue Number 5, March 2006

A Step Forward - The Kinshasa Declaration on Great Apes



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The first Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) on Great Apes and the Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) and the first GRASP Council Meeting was convened from 5th - 9th September 2005 in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), under the patronage of His Excellency the President of the Republic, Mr. Joseph Kabila.

Accomplishments during the IGM include the adoption of four key documents: a Global Strategy for the Survival of the Great Apes and their Habitat, a set of Rules for the Organization and Management of the GRASP Partnership, the GRASP Partnership Outline Workplan 2003-2007 and the GRASP Partnership: A Distinctive Approach - Current Priorities. The most significant output of the IGM, however, was the adoption of the Kinshasa Declaration, a high-level political statement on the future of great apes. By signing this declaration, the 76 representatives - including 16 range States, 6 donor countries, 25 non-governmental organizations (NGO) Partners, 2 Multilateral Environmental Agreements secretariats and 2 intergovernmental organizations - affirmed their will to protect these charismatic species for the first time in the history of great apes. This historical event made the front page of the Independent (UK) newspaper, and received significant media coverage elsewhere (BBC News, Boston Globe, the New Scientist, the Australian, and numerous local newspapers, online news providers and radio shows).

Convinced of the urgent need to take appropriate measures to save the great apes, the signatories agreed on 11 main points, including: commitment to support GRASP and the Global Strategy, reinforcement of cooperation, support of the range States and the development and implementation of national great apes survival plans. The signatories also invite all relevant international institutions to develop and implement policies which promote ecologically sustainable livelihoods for local and indigenous communities and which prevent actions that are detrimental to great ape populations.



Delegates at the close of a plenary session

Moreover, the Kinshasa Declaration signatories recognize the important role of appropriate national and international measures, and participation in regional initiatives. The Declaration also encourages ratification and compliance with international treaties and the provision of long-term ecologically sustainable direct and indirect economic benefits to local communities. Finally, the signatories resolve to meet the target, by the year 2010, of securing a constant and significant reduction in the current rate of loss of great ape populations and their habitats; and, by 2015, securing the future of all species and subspecies of great apes in the wild.

The next steps include encouraging signatories to implement the commitments adopted in the Kinshasa Declaration and working with all Partners to ensure that the agreed "added value" that the GRASP Partnership brings to existing great ape conservation efforts is effectively harnessed.

For a detailed report of the IGM, please see: <http://www.unep.org/grasp/Meetings/IGM-kinshasa>

Funds secured for ranger training in Central Africa

We are happy to report that UNESCO/ERAIFT (Regional Training Centre for Integrated Tropical Forest Management) and the World Heritage Center project (strengthening the capacities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to monitor and address natural resources conflicts in World Heritage sites) has secured \$352,560 from Belgium to train rangers in GIS and capacity building.

GRASP in Japan

The GRASP Japan Committee and the GRASP Secretariat are actively working on fund and awareness-raising initiatives with the Ministry of Environment, GRASP Patron, Prof. Toshisada Nishida, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, Japanese embassies in range States, the International Tropical Timber Organization and private sector players.

Convention on Migratory Species CoP



The 8th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) was convened at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi from 20th – 25th November 2005. GRASP held a side event on 23rd November where the UNEP GRASP secretariat gave a short presentation about the partnership, great apes and CMS. About 70 delegates from great ape range states, NGOs and other interested parties attended.

At the event, it was acknowledged that there is need for more concerted action and continuous collaboration to help save the great apes from imminent extinction.

At the CMS CoP8, all gorilla species were listed in CMS appendix I, joining the mountain gorilla. This paves the way for the conclusion of a CMS Article IV Agreement among all the 10 gorilla range states to conserve gorillas and their habitat.



Participants at the GRASP CMS side event get ready to engage in discussion

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands CoP

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands 9th Conference of the Parties (CoP) was held in Kampala from 7th – 15th November 2005. The UNEP GRASP Secretariat attended the CoP, seeking, among other aims, to encourage the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands to join the GRASP Partnership. Ramsar is now in discussion with the GRASP secretariat regarding joining the partnership.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is one of the five biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Most great ape range states and all major donor countries are party to the convention. Ramsar site designation provides similar protected area status as do World Heritage sites, with concurrent national-level commitment. Currently there are at least 13 Ramsar sites (Wetlands of International Importance) in seven great ape range states that house populations of great apes.



Great Ape Exhibition

Discover how similar we are to our ape relatives in 'Great Apes – How Great Are You?', a new interactive touring exhibition created by the UK based national history and science centre @Bristol in conjunction with GRASP. It opened on Thursday, December 8th and will run until April 2006.

From trying your hand at knuckle walking to seeing where you stand on the ape height chart or hanging tight on the monkey bars, there's a whole host of ape activities to explore.

Did you know we share more than 98 per cent of our DNA with chimpanzees and bonobos? You can explore just how closely we are related to the other apes in the **Meet The Family** section.

In **Great Minds Think Alike**, the intricate behaviours, emotions and social structures of apes come under the spotlight. The similarities between humans and the rest of the ape family are incredible, even down to the practicalities of tool making. Take on the termite fishing challenge and learn how apes sculpt tools out of sticks to probe for food. But the fun doesn't end there. Apes, like humans, are social creatures who love to play and interact with one another. Discover what life is like in an ape's playground - from chest beating to crazy climbing, there's plenty to get stuck into. Younger children can even have a go at treetop nest building using giant foam leaves and branches.



Treetop nest building



Crazy climbing at an ape's playground



Trying a hand at knuckle walking

The focus moves from play to plight in **One Minute To Midnight**, an area dedicated to the threats the other great apes face as humans continue to drive them into extinction. See how life will pan out for our relatives if the devastating effects of the bushmeat trade and hunting, logging and deforestation, mining, agriculture and war carry on.

Having explored the amazing characteristics and fragile future of the great apes, you can then pick up top tips on how to get involved in conserving these incredible species in **What You Can Do**.

The exhibition is supported by the ReDiscover fund, among others. For more information visit: www.at-bristol.org.uk.

Bring a Smile



The UNEP GRASP team with a furry 'adopted' friend



With birthdays, anniversaries and holidays always around the corner, GRASP is happy to suggest gift ideas that will bring a smile to your friends and family as well as to our Partners. Adopting an ape will help GRASP Partners with their work to conserve great apes and protect their remaining habitats. Check our

website (<http://www.unep.org/grasp>) for the 'Adopt an Ape' section where you will find wonderful gift ideas, all with an ape theme.

Loss of Mr. Boniface Nyakageni, Burundian GRASP Focal Point

The GRASP team is saddened to hear of the death of Mr. Boniface Nyakageni, Advisor to the Minister in the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Regional Planning in Burundi and GRASP Focal Point. Mr. Nyakageni, who was an active participant in the September 2005 Intergovernmental Meeting in Kinshasa, passed away peacefully in the hospital 3 weeks into the new year. We mourn the loss of Mr. Nyakageni as a valuable colleague and send our condolences to his family.

Regional CITES Legislation Workshop for Anglophone Africa

From 31st October – 4th November 2005, the Regional CITES Legislation Workshop for Anglophone Africa was held at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi. Over 25 Anglophone countries and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force were represented. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss each country's experiences in writing/implementing CITES compliant legislation, share problems, discuss solutions and ideas, and to bring questions and observations to the CITES Secretariat. The UNEP GRASP secretariat gave a short presentation on the GRASP partnership, great apes and linkages with CITES.

1st GRASP Executive Committee Meeting

The first GRASP Executive Committee met from 5th – 6th December 2005 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France to discuss a detailed programme of action for the period 2006-2007 as mandated by the decision of the GRASP Council meeting held in Kinshasa, September 2005. Cooperation with all Partners will be needed to achieve the bold targets in the programme of action.

Poverty Will Make the Great Apes History

World's First Atlas of Great Apes reveals human struggle behind apes' plight.

It is not just humans that will benefit from a campaign to 'make poverty history'. For the other 6 species of great ape - eastern and western gorilla, chimpanzee, bonobo, and Sumatran and Bornean orangutan – it could literally save them from the cooking pot.

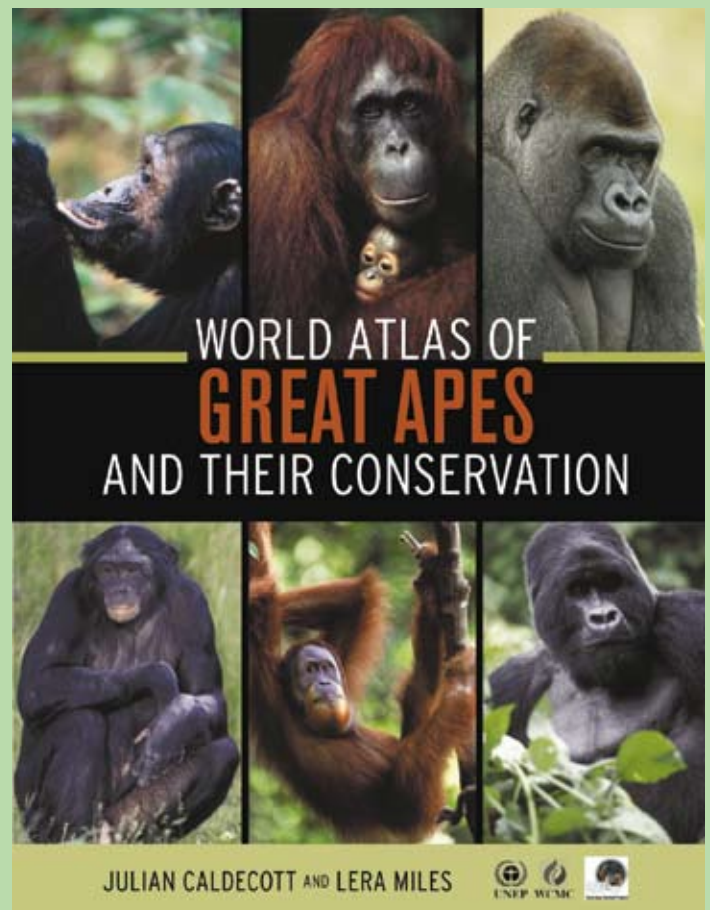
The first World Atlas of Great Apes and their Conservation reveals that although the 23 range States hosting wild great apes are supportive of their conservation, most of these countries are among the poorest in the world. Concerted international action is required if these species are to survive.

The Atlas, edited by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, is the most comprehensive source of information about great apes ever compiled, bringing together the latest research and observations from scientists throughout the world and including contributions from Kofi Annan, Jane Goodall, Richard Leakey, Toshisada Nishida, Russ Mittermeier and Ian Redmond.

The book includes conservation status assessments at a species and country view level. The great apes' biology, behaviour and culture are discussed in detail.

The Atlas is rich in photographs, case-studies and maps. Samples are available as downloads from the UNEP-WCMC website.

The Atlas can be bought, in English, from www.earthprint.com, UNEP's official on-line book shop, and www.unep-wcmc.org, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre homepage. UNEP is currently negotiating with donors for a French version of the Atlas.



Design/Layout: Division of Communications and Public Information

Workshop on a Conservation Action Plan for the Bornean Orangutan



Ape themed art displayed at the IGM

From 12th to 14th October 2005, a Workshop on a Conservation Action Plan for the Bornean Orangutan was held in Pontianak (West Kalimantan), with participation from two members of the GRASP Scientific Commission. These three days were a unique opportunity to discuss a strategy that needs to be urgently developed in order to secure the survival of the last remaining wild populations of orangutans that are still surviving in Kalimantan today.

During the three days, a list of threats, strengths, recommendations, and possible actions were identified during discussions in working groups for all major populations of the three different orangutan subspecies.

On the third day of the workshop, the "Pontianak Declaration" was approved by all workshop participants and was presented to the media at a press conference.

Marc Ancrenaz, GRASP Scientific Commission/Hutan

Apes in the News

Genetic evidence has been found to support the controversial hypothesis that chimps are more closely related to humans than they are to other apes, according to the scientists at the Georgia Institute of Technology. The evidence says that the molecular clock, or the rate of molecular evolution, is very similar in chimps and humans, the human molecular clock being only 3 percent slower than that of the chimp while 11 percent slower than that of the gorilla. This suggests that certain human traits only evolved one million years ago – a very short time in evolutionary terms. A longer generation time (the amount of time between parent and offspring) is one such human trait, and a chimpanzee's generation time is much closer to humans than to other apes. In addition, comparable regions of human and chimp genomes show very little difference. Together, all of this suggests that chimps are more closely related to humans than they are to other apes. Source: Terraso, David. *Chimps More Closely Related To Humans Than Other Apes*. Medical News Today, January 25 2006. <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=36567&nfid=rssfeeds>

A genetic study of orangutans in the Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary in Sabah, Malaysia shows strong evidence to support that humans have caused a massive population decline of the species within the past hundred years, and most likely within the past decades, coinciding with the start of deforestation in the 1890s and accelerated in the 1950s and 1970s. The orangutan in Sabah is at a high risk for extinction in the very near future if immediate action is not taken to preserve their habitat. The biggest threat to the survival of the species is oil palm plantation, a habitat in which the orangutan cannot survive. If deforestation is halted and corridors are established between fragmented forest patches, the species, which at this point, still shows enough genetic diversity, can stabilize. Source: Gossens, B. et. al. (2006) *Genetic signature of anthropogenic population collapse in organ-utans*. PLoS Biology 4(2): e25.

Gorilla deaths can be partly attributed to cell phones. Coltan, a mineral used in cell phones, is found in gorilla habitat in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The value of coltan has risen due to the rise of the cell phone, causing miners to flock to the area and to survive on gorilla meat. So what can you do?

GRASP in the USA

Natarajan Ishwaran of UNESCO, UNEP's Brennan Van Dyke and Mark Leighton of the GRASP Scientific Commission undertook awareness raising efforts in the USA in November, visiting the US State Department and the US National Commission for UNESCO, among others. The GRASP Secretariat is also actively looking to attract major celebrity personalities to help raise awareness of the GRASP Partnership in North America.

MAB Young Scientist Awards

UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme has \$100,000 in MAB Young Scientist Award grant funding available for 16 research scientists in African great ape range states. Approximately \$5 000 will be awarded to each successful applicant. Letters will be sent out to range states to solicit qualified applicants wishing to undertake great ape conservation related research. Please also let others know of this opportunity through your networks. Any requests for information regarding the award should be addressed to Samy Mankoto (s.mankoto@unesco.org).

Recycle your cell phone. Send your old phone to Zoo Atlanta (in the USA), where a company called Eco-cell is making a donation to the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund for every cell phone turned in to the zoo. Source: Bade, Kathleen. *How Cell Phones are Killing off Gorillas*. CBS Consumer Alert, January 23 2006. http://www.kfmb.com/features/consumer_alert/story.php?id=28229 and Schaller, George. *Why Your Mobile Could be Killing Gorillas*. BBC Science & Nature: Animals, January 26, 2006. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/animals/features/186index.shtml>

From 9th - 11th January 2006, BBC Two aired 'Apes in Danger', a three part look at the crisis facing the world's great apes and the conservation efforts surrounding the fight for their survival. Visit http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/tvradio/programmes/apeweek/apes_in_danger.shtml for more information on the programme, great apes and on what you can do to help. Source: BBC Science & Nature: TV & Radio Follow-Up, January 26 2006.

Two new strains of anthrax have been identified and determined to have caused the death of 6 wild chimpanzees in Cote d'Ivoire in 2001/2002 and the death of 3 wild chimpanzees and one wild gorilla more than 1,000 miles to the east, in Cameroon in 2004/2005. The Cote d'Ivoire and the Cameroon strains are closely related and form a new group of *Bacillus anthracis*, termed 'forest anthrax cluster'. Thus, it would appear that the previously unrecognized Forest cluster is distributed throughout Western and Central Africa. The implications of these findings is that the *B. anthracis* is a far less homogeneous species than previously believed. Source: Leendertz, Fabian H., et. al. *A New Bacillus anthracis is Found in Wild Chimpanzees and a Gorilla from West and Central Africa*. ProMED-mail, January 27, 2006. promed@promedmail.org.

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