



# GRASP

# Newsletter

Issue Number 6, November 2006

## Pro-poor great apes conservation in action: progress on the EC-funded GRASP projects

This four year project, comprised of 6 sub-projects and funded by a grant from the European Commission (EC), has now been running for over a year. Here are some snap-shots of what has been accomplished over the past year.

In Indonesia, the Orangutan Foundation is working with local authorities and communities in Central Kalimantan to prevent illegal logging. The first target area focused on the Belantikan region, as it contains the largest orangutan population found outside of a protected area in Indonesia. A community liaison team was deployed full time to the field and meetings have been held with key stakeholders, including the primary logging concessionaire and local government. Currently, each village receives a payment for allowing logging operations in their area. However, once the logging companies move on the payments will stop, causing the communities to either further log their forests or agree to the establishment of a palm oil plantation. The team believes that improving and developing rattan harvesting as part of an overall sustainable agricultural system will boost household incomes and decrease dependency on payments from logging activities.



Training centre/guard post in Belantikan

© Orangutan Foundation



Ecologists in the field

© Wild Chimpanzee Foundation

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gorilla Organisation (formerly Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund-Europe) is working in collaboration with ICCN (*Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature*), on the Mount Tshiaberimu Conservation Project. The population of gorillas in the region now stands at 21, following the latest birth on 5 August 2006. Monitoring agents for the project have been building up a comprehensive map of the region, and collecting substantial data on gorilla ecology that is being compiled with data collected by ICCN elsewhere in the Virungas National Park. An education campaign has been ongoing, including weekly radio broadcasts, as well as awareness-raising talks. In addition, a pig breeding and distribution scheme was launched to provide alternatives to the unsustainable use of forest resources.

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## New GRASP Partner!



The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was admitted into the GRASP Partnership during the Executive Committee meeting of July 20-21. The Ramsar and GRASP secretariats are now reviewing the list of Ramsar sites (12+) hosting great apes to identify possible joint field activities in wetland ecosystems of importance to great apes.

## New initiatives from the GRASP Secretariat

Beyond the routine tasks of any secretariat liaising with a global partnership as big as GRASP, there is much other activity. New ideas are being put into action, exciting projects are under development and fresh collaborations are being formed. Here are some examples of upcoming projects that GRASP is pursuing, as we follow the GRASP Programme of Action, and work within the UNEP strategic plan. For further information on the work of the secretariat or the initiatives described below, please send a message to: [grasp@unep.org](mailto:grasp@unep.org).

1) UNEP-GRASP is currently developing a project on "Great Ape Habitat Valuation: the Economic Argument for Conservation". Tropical forest habitat is often considered valueless unless it is logged and/or converted to agriculture, and yet it provides a wide range of ecosystem services – from provision of clean water, timber and fuel wood, foods and medicines, to climate change mitigation, pollination, disease regulation, provision of genetic resources, and flood and erosion control. In many great ape habitat areas, local communities living in and around the forest also depend heavily on natural resources. While the dependency of humans on the environment may be clear, quantifying this link in terms of exact benefits derived is not always easy. The concept of ecosystem services valuation can help to assign a monetary (economic) value to those services that are naturally provided "for free" by ecosystems. The results of this valuation project would allow for a more equitable comparison of conservation and development trade-offs when authorities are faced with policy decisions, as well as create a base of information for the study sites, from which markets for these ecosystem services could potentially be developed as a means of conservation financing.



The UNEP-GRASP Secretariat

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## GRASP and CITES

The first joint technical mission to great ape range and consumer states of Africa and Southeast Asia was undertaken to Indonesia on 8–12 May 2006 by the CITES and UNEP-GRASP secretariats to investigate illegal trade in orangutans. This mission is one of several that were planned as part of the implementation of the Resolution on the conservation of and trade in great apes, that was adopted by the Conference of the Parties to CITES at its thirteenth meeting, held in Bangkok in October 2004 (CITES Res. Conf. 13.4). The team reached the conclusion that orangutans in Indonesia are being adversely affected by both domestic and international illicit trade, despite the dedicated efforts of some individuals. The team's recommendations to combat illicit trade include increasing deterrent factors such as prompt prosecution and adequate penalties for offenders, targeting corruption in the public service, conducting education and awareness campaigns for the general public as well as enforcement authorities and the judiciary, and the possibility of addressing the issue through a presidential instruction. To read the report of this mission, see <http://www.cites.org/eng/prog/ape.shtml>



Melanie Virtue and John Sellar of the UNEP-GRASP and CITES Secretariats inspect Medan port facilities with NGO and government representatives

A CITES Great Ape Enforcement Task Force was convened at UNEP headquarters from 31 October to 2 November 2006 in conjunction with GRASP. This Task Force was designed to bring together key enforcement officials from range states and trading countries to tackle the specific problem of illegal trade in great apes, following the Resolution on trade in and conservation of great apes, passed in Bangkok.

## France and the great apes

Since its nomination in 2006 to the GRASP Executive Committee, France has become involved in many projects aiming to protect the great apes and their habitat. France is funding the French translation of the World Atlas of Great Apes and their Conservation, which will be available to French-speaking audiences in 2007. With the help of UNESCO and the *Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle* (MNHN), a traveling exhibition project was born and the first exposition was organized in collaboration with the Uganda Wildlife Authority at the Museum of Kampala. This exhibition, which was inaugurated at the International Primatological Society (IPS) Congress on 28 June 2006, welcomed more than 10,000 students in the first 45 days after opening.



Great Apes exhibition banner in Kampala, Uganda

In France, GRASP and its objectives have been presented at several meetings. At the Annual Congress of the *Société Francophone de Primatologie* in Strasbourg (18–20 October 2006), Sabrina Krief (MNHN) introduced GRASP to francophone primatologists. At the *Assises Nationales du Développement Durable* in Nantes (11–13 October 2006), Samy Mankoto (UNESCO), Sabrina Krief and Jean-Patrick Leduc (both MNHN) and Pascal Picq (Collège de France) discussed different projects that would reinforce the role of France in the conservation of great apes, namely 1) leading the mobilization of other European countries, taking into consideration the driving role that France could play 2) working more closely with the forest industry and developing fauna conservation sections within logging projects 3) creating decentralized co-operation programmes that take the great ape issue into account and 4) bringing together all parties in France who are interested in great apes, through a great apes national plan.

## New GRASP initiatives (continued from page 1)

2) UNEP-GRASP is working in collaboration with the UNEP Civil Society Group on a project entitled "Indigenous Peoples' Participation in Mapping of Traditional Forest Resources for Sustainable Livelihoods and Great Ape Conservation". This project, funded by the Norwegian Government, aims to assess, through participatory mapping systems, the role of indigenous peoples in ensuring the sustainable use of forest resources for their own survival and well being while preserving the natural habitat of the great apes. Moreover, it will hopefully enhance indigenous people's involvement and participation in decision making of protected area management, to protect community forest use as well as the great apes species. The project will be undertaken in Cameroon in cooperation with the Forest Peoples Programme and the World Wildlife Fund.

3) The Sabah Forestry Department, in cooperation with UNESCO, UNEP, the GRASP Scientific Commission and other partners and stakeholders, is preparing to host a workshop in early 2007 to discuss ways to integrate environmental considerations into the economic development of Sabah State. The Kinabatangan ecosystem will be given particular emphasis as it is the home to the largest remaining population of orangutan in Malaysia. The workshop will discuss appropriate mechanisms for generating revenue for the State and the private sector while providing opportunities for local peoples and conserving wildlife and habitat in a sustainable manner.

## Secretariat updates

- A mission to Japan was undertaken on 22 May 2006 by UNESCO to meet Mr. Toshisada Nishida, GRASP Patron and head of the GRASP Japan Committee and Mr. Noriaki Sakaguchi, Ministry of Environment of Japan. Discussions focused on taxon-specific workshops and further involvement of the Japanese Government and private sector in the GRASP Partnership.
- The second Executive Committee meeting was held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris from 20–21 July 2006. The meeting discussed the implementation of the GRASP Programme of Action 2006–2007 among other items.
- A Congo Basin Forest Partnership meeting was held in Paris on 21–23 June 2006. UNESCO representatives and the GRASP Chief Consultant were invited by the French Government facilitators to present an update on GRASP activities and discuss synergies between the two World Summit on Sustainable Development Type II partnerships. At a press conference afterwards, Equatorial Guinea signed the Kinshasa Declaration and made a public commitment to conserving gorillas, chimpanzees and their habitat.
- A GRASP side event, organized by Ian Redmond and Dr. Dieudonné Ankara, the Republic of Congo Focal Point, was held during the eleventh regular session of African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in Brazzaville on 25 May 2006. During the closing ceremony, Gabon and Rwanda signed the Kinshasa Declaration.
- An event dubbed "How can GRASP better support Great Ape Conservation?" was held at the International Primatological Society congress in Entebbe, Uganda on 29 June 2006.
- GRASP Patron Russ Mittermeier and GRASP Executive Committee Chair Moses Mapesa met with the new UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner, in July and September 2006, respectively, to encourage UNEP senior management support for GRASP.

## The TCCB is 3 years old

The Tayna Center for Conservation Biology (TCCB) has now been in operation for three years. TCCB is a high-level educational institution in Kasugho, province of North Kivu, DRC.

To increase public awareness of nature conservation issues, a "Friends of the Gorillas Club" was created in 2003 in Kasugho and currently has 300 members. To achieve its objective, TCCB uses sketches, theater, poetry, football games, etc. The club's members are passionate defenders of nature for their own interests as well as for those of future generations. The club benefits from the support of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International, TCCB's main partner.



Truck used for transporting supplies

© TCCB

TCCB has just finished the 2005-06 school year and the year 2006-07 started on the 14 October. Of 67 students registered in the last year of the programme for 2005-06, 40 will receive their graduation diploma and 18 will be admitted to the next degree level.

TCCB would like to thank GRASP and the Irish Government for making possible the installation of the Internet network and the purchase of the transport truck (pictured).

*Pierre Kakule, President of the TCCB Administration Committee*

## Ugandan communities to save chimpanzees outside protected areas

Chimpanzees in Uganda are found in scattered remnants of forest in the west of the country. Between 1999 and 2002, the Wildlife Conservation Society and Jane Goodall Institute carried out a census of Central Forest Reserves and Protected Areas, and estimated the population to be about 5,000 (excluding those living in fragmented forests on private lands).

Small communities of chimpanzees *Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii* in the Bunyoro region, especially in fragmented forests on private and customary land and other small forest reserves, are under threat of their habitats being completely depleted. Chimpanzee distribution in the Bunyoro region is estimated to be: Hoima 207 individuals, Masindi 154 individuals and in Kibaale so far 43 are known but other forests are not yet assessed.

A local community initiative under the Bunyoro Region Chimpanzee Conservation Programme was recently established specifically for the conservation of such chimpanzees and their fragmented habitats. This initiative was introduced by the Uganda Wildlife Authority, which brought together all conservation organizations and government agencies in the three districts to develop a programme for the sustainable conservation of chimpanzees in the area. The "Bunyoro Region Chimpanzee Conservation Steering Committee" was formed to spearhead the initiation of the whole programme with the following aims 1) contributing to improved livelihoods of the local communities through chimpanzee conservation 2) creating a positive attitude among the local communities towards chimps and their habitats 3) protecting and conserving chimpanzees and their habitats in fragmented forest patches on private and customary land and small forest reserves, and 4) building capacity of conservation NGOs and CBO's (community-based organisations) and other stakeholders in the management of chimpanzee conservation.

The fundamental premise of this programme is that "poverty is the driving force behind the illicit use of natural resources and in the degradation of resources in unprotected landscapes." The lack of alternative livelihoods forces the ever-growing human population of local people to overexploit natural resources.

*John Bosco Nuwe, Community Conservation Coordinator*

## Progress on EC projects (continued from page 1)

In eastern Cameroon, Bristol Zoological Gardens reports that the Community Engagement and Support Programme team is now an integral part of the management plan for the Dja Biosphere Reserve (DBR), and is working closely with the Ministry of the Environment and Protected Areas. In June 2006, the first training and induction of Community Facilitators took place in Sangmelia and was followed by the first of what will be ongoing in-depth discussions with villagers living around the DBR. In addition, Heifer International, in consultation with Send a Cow, will be looking into developing a cane rat breeding programme with villages around the DBR to create an alternative to bushmeat hunting.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the *Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques* and the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation initiated a Bio-monitoring Programme in three National Parks that harbour chimpanzees (Taï, Marahoué and Banco NP). Scientific and research capacity has been built within the National Park Services and in the local communities, as staff and local ecologists were trained in surveying and data collection. Monitoring of programme effectiveness is ongoing and community awareness campaigns have been carried out. Survey methodologies have been developed and preliminary results are already being used to guide conservation strategies. A meeting with the park staff and ecologists has been held to learn about successes, mistakes and implications for the park management.

Through the Born Free Foundation, the Technical Support Team has promoted GRASP and great ape conservation policy development through attendance and/or organization of GRASP-specific events at the 8th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Curitiba in March 2006, the Meeting of African Ministers of Environment held in Brazzaville in May 2006, the International Primatological Society and the Congo Basin Forest Partnership meetings. The GRASP Scientific Commission also attended a workshop in Nigeria on the conservation of the Cross River Gorilla, and a UNESCO meeting in Paris on biocarbon initiatives. The Born Free Foundation is also currently providing all range state focal points with much needed IT equipment.

The Intergovernmental Meeting on Great Apes was also funded under the EC grant. The Kinshasa Declaration on great apes, one of the main outputs of this meeting, has now been signed by 21 out of the 23 range states and a total of 71 other groups and individuals.



One of the piggeries on Mount Tshiaberimu

© The Gorilla Organisation

## GRASP Australasia

Grasp Australasia was established as a coordinating body by the organizations working on the conservation of great apes in Australia and New Zealand. The immediate priority is to lobby the Australian Government to develop and implement a Great Ape Policy, sign the Kinshasa Declaration and make the labeling of palm oil products compulsory. All GRASP partners are encouraged to look at the new website ([www.grasp.org.au](http://www.grasp.org.au)) and post a link on their own organizations' website.

*Design/Layout : UNEP-GRASP*

## Humane Society International (HSI Australia)

HSI Australia has commenced a two year programme to fund Orangutan-human interaction research in Northern Sumatra, with the Born Free Foundation, the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Program and the Durrell Institute of Conservation Ecology. The project is called "Bittersweet knowledge - can people and Orangutans live in harmony".

New resources were provided to HSI major partners in Indonesia, the Friends of the National Parks Foundation (FNPF), for their ongoing "Integrated Conservation & Development" project in Tanjung Puting National Park. FNPF has successfully gained further funding from the Commonwealth's Regional Natural Heritage Program (RNHP), a programme on which HSI advises the Australian Government.

Working with the Rainforest Information Centre and the Indonesian NGO Forum Rawak Taman Mahap, HSI made a financial contribution to a short term education program in Kalimantan, to raise awareness of the growing problem of palm oil plantations and the effect upon orangutans. The road show is to explain the impacts of using the land for large-scale oil-palm development on the customary lands of the Jawan Dayak people.

As a member of the Government's Taskforce overseeing the RNHP, HSI has ensured that significant funds have gone to orangutan conservation efforts in Indonesia and Malaysia. HSI is working for a renewal of the program, and to promote new Government action to support great ape conservation in the lead up to the next Federal election at the end of 2007.

*Michael Kennedy, Director HSI Australia*

## Apes in the News (compiled by Ian Redmond)

### Borneo Burns, Orangutans Perish

Forest fires are reported to be out of control in parts of Borneo, many of them started deliberately to clear land for palm oil plantations and exacerbated by tinder-dry debris left by illegal loggers. As in previous conflagrations, smoke and haze is causing problems for people and wildlife in the region. One estimate is that more than 1,000 orangutans may have died, and rescue centres are struggling to cope. Peat swamps are also burning, leading experts to conclude that these forest fires create more carbon emissions than all the world's transport put together. Source: Reuters and [http://www.climateark.org/alerts/send.asp?id=indonesia\\_peatland](http://www.climateark.org/alerts/send.asp?id=indonesia_peatland)

### Gorilla Birth Blog

Few people have witnessed the birth of a wild gorilla, but Maryke Gray of the International Gorilla Conservation Programme and Muhire Nzamurambaho found themselves in the right place at the right time in early September. Their amazing experience prompted the creation of a new blog on Wildlife Direct, a website designed to put rangers and fieldworkers on the front line of conservation in touch with supporters around the world. Source: <http://wildlifedirect.org/mountaingorilla/>

### Taiping Four Gorillas to Go Home

Five years ago, four young gorillas were captured in Cameroon by killing their parents, smuggled to Nigeria, then shipped on false captive bred documents to Taiping Zoo, Malaysia. The International Primate Protection League first exposed this illegal trade, leading to the gorillas being confiscated and a joint letter from the Nigerian Environment Minister and Cameroon Director of Wildlife requesting their return from Malaysia in 2002. Instead, they were eventually sent to Pretoria Zoo in South Africa. Further ministerial interventions, lobbying by several NGOs, DNA tests and a visit by a high-level Cameroonian delegation to South Africa has finally led to the decision to return them to their country of origin. The International Fund for Animal Welfare has offered to cover the transport costs, and the publicity generated will boost

## New look of GRASP online

The GRASP web page has been brightened up and restructured in order to be more user-friendly.

Have a look  
<http://www.unep.org/grasp/>

For any comments, contact  
[grasp@unep.org](mailto:grasp@unep.org)



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## Achievements of the Pole Pole Foundation (POPOF) in Kahuzi Biega National Park, DRC

The aim of POPOF is to contribute to the protection of great apes, to raise awareness and to create employment for the families of Kahuzi Biega National Park (KBNP) guards and for the communities surrounding the park. To reach its objectives, POPOF works in collaboration with the Born Free Foundation, the Gorilla Organisation, Partners in Conservation, POPOF-Japan, Berggorilla, and Ape Alliance Canada. With their financial support, POPOF is 1) hiring local inhabitants living close to the KBNP as staff 2) distributing goats as a micro-credit project benefiting the park guards and the indigenous people 3) establishing tree nurseries in two villages (Kajeje and Cegera) to help with reforestation 4) constructing a fifth classroom at the POPOF agro-forestry high school 5) conducting socio-economic study on the population neighboring the park and 6) purchasing a piece of land for the construction of a nursery and primary school.

*John Kahakwa, General Manager and Founder of POPOF/DRC*

wildlife law enforcement efforts throughout the region. The four gorillas will be housed in the Limbe Wildlife Centre, a Government of Cameroon sanctuary managed by Pandrillus, where the world-class gorilla enclosure and quarantine area has recently been extended with a grant from the Born Free Foundation. Source: <http://iafrica.com/news/sa/995688.htm>

### Gabon Gorillas Blasted by Chinese Oil Company

Petit Loango, one of Gabon's new National Parks, home to gorillas and chimpanzees (as well as beach-loving elephants and surfing hippos) is being blasted by oil prospectors from SinoPec, despite protests from conservationists and Government. Dr Christophe Boesch, co-chair of the GRASP Scientific Commission and head of primate research in the park, said, "The environmental damage poses a risk to the important population of western lowland gorillas in the park." Source: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2100-2391631,00.html>

### Thai Coup Delays Orangutan Repatriation

Plans for the return to Indonesia of 54 illegally imported orangutans, used to stage kick-boxing shows in Safari World, Thailand, were scuppered by the military coup in Bangkok in October. A new date has not, at the time of going to press, been set. The case has highlighted the illegal traffic in orangutans for use in theme parks, and for sale as pets, but so far efforts to improve law enforcement in the South East Asia region have not yet led to successful prosecutions of the criminals involved. Source: <http://www.born-to-be-wild.org/html/news.html>

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