



# Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

*Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme*



## REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE GREAT APES SURVIVAL PARTNERSHIP

(Rome, Italy, 26-27 November 2008)

The Convention Secretariat, also acting as the Secretariat to the Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats, has prepared the following report for the Meeting of the GRASP Executive Committee, taking place in Rome, Italy, in November 2008. The Convention Secretariat has serviced the Gorilla Agreement since its negotiation in October 2007, through its entry into force on 1 June 2008, to the First Meeting of Parties on 29 November 2008.

### **Gorilla Agreement Action Plan**

As part of the CMS Gorilla Agreement, under the provisions of Article VIII, the CMS Secretariat, together with the range states and international experts, developed an Action Plan during the course of 2008. The Action Plans (one for each of the four taxa) must be the main focus of, and should be adopted by, the First Meeting of Parties, held just before the ninth CMS Conference of Parties, hosted by Italy.

First drafts of these Action Plans were made available online on the Gorilla Agreement Website of the Convention on Migratory Species at: <http://www.naturalsciences.be/science/projects/gorilla> in June 2007. Maps, status reports and priority populations could also be consulted or downloaded for each gorilla taxon.

All experts were invited to contribute to the development of these Action Plans. A gorilla "wiki" ([www.gorillawiki.org](http://www.gorillawiki.org)) was developed which allows easy access for comments, proposals, suggestions or amendments to the Action Plans by any registered users. We intend to leave the wiki open, including any updates or changes made by the First Meeting of Parties, as we see the document as a dynamic document whose development should continue. This is a relatively experimental approach, but after careful consideration we feel it to be the optimum method both of achieving the essential multi-lateral dialogue between the range states, who will eventually obligate themselves when the Action Plan is passed as a resolution at the First Meeting of Parties, and also of allowing key organisations and individuals from the world of gorilla conservation to give invaluable input to the process. This, of course, must happen in both English and French, the official languages of the Gorilla Agreement.

### **Year of the Gorilla 2009**

Next year 2009 is officially the Year of the Gorilla, which is supported/endorsed by UNEP and UNESCO through the partnership with GRASP. The third partner in the campaign is WAZA, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and Dr Jane Goodall is the Patron of the campaign. The Secretariat hopes to repeat and even surpass the resounding success of the Year of the Dolphin (2007/2008). A website is already online and expanding constantly: The address is [www.yog2009.org](http://www.yog2009.org). The site is designed as a platform to allow visitors (following registration with CMS) to post articles, or announce events and publications which should be part of the Year of the Gorilla. As the implementation of the CMS Agreement on Gorillas is the primary objective of the campaign, we seek to not only raise awareness among the public, but also allow organisations and individuals already active in gorilla conservation to network and draw more public and peer attention to their respective projects. A list of priority projects

drawn from the Action Plans will be posted on the dedicated website and allow for online donations.

The campaign is part of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and the CMS Secretariat is the designated focal point. We expressly encourage organisations to get involved and look forward to the campaign developing momentum. The official launch is planned to take place on 1 December by HSH Prince Albert of Monaco II at the Ninth Meeting of CMS Parties (1-5 December 2008), in Rome, Italy.

### **Depositary News**

Two range states, Republic of Congo and Central African Republic, signed the Gorilla Agreement on 26 October 2007, following the negotiation meeting in Paris. In March 2008 the Secretariat was pleased to report the third signature by Nigeria, which brought the Agreement into effect for 1 June 2008 in accordance with Article XIV of the Agreement. On the last day of being open for signature, 25 April 2008, two further signatures were made by Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This brought the total to five signatures without reservation.

Gabon became the first range state to accede to the Agreement in August 2008 via an instrument of accession, thus also qualifying as a Party before the First Meeting of Parties. The Secretariat notified all range states on finalization of the above legal processes and also registered the Agreement with the UN Secretary General in New York on its entry into effect.

### **Liaison with Other Organizations**

In order to realise the ideal of partnerships and networking, CMS organized a meeting with the current facilitator of the Congo Basin Forestry Partnership, the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, and Secretariat of the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP - [www.unep.org/grasp](http://www.unep.org/grasp)), to explore further possibilities for cooperation. The CMS Secretariat is pleased to be a member organisation of the international Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP).

Through the development of the Agreement Action Plans, numerous links and contacts were forged with the main NGOs involved in Gorilla conservation.

The task of administering and coordinating the Gorilla Agreement has been given through the terms of that Agreement to the CMS Secretariat and the Secretariat of the GRASP Partnership. The Secretariat also enabled the participation of GRASP and Gorilla focal points in a CBD workshop on national biodiversity strategies and action plans involving CBD focal points from the members of the *Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale* (COMIFAC). This was held in Limbe, Cameroon in September 2008. At the time this document was written the CMS Secretariat was negotiating the terms of a memorandum of cooperation with COMIFAC.

CMS signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Tropical Timber Organization ITTO in May 2008. Its purpose is to facilitate cooperation between both organisations, i.a. by increasing cooperation among range states for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory species through encouraging members governments to integrate the special requirements of migratory species into their national strategies, plans or programmes.

Furthermore, at the UNESCO 3rd World Congress of Biosphere Reserves, Madrid, February 2008, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, on the future development of a tripartite Transborder Biosphere Reserve, aiming in particular at the conservation of mountain gorillas and their habitats. This initiative is of course of the highest importance for the preservation of mountain gorillas, and, as such, it builds on existing agreements between the three countries, such as the Goma Declaration (2005) and the Transboundary Strategic Plan (2006). It reinforces the commitments taken in the framework of the Gorilla Agreement, and it will undoubtedly constitute an important element of implementation of the CMS Gorilla Action Plan.

### **Looking Ahead...**

The CMS Gorilla Agreement is moving ahead; its continued development and success very much depend on the participation of the entire network of people and organizations who play a role in gorilla conservation. These include both the range states and also individuals and organisations involved, however slightly, in gorilla conservation, or whose work affects gorilla populations and their habitats. CMS specifically looks to Governments and organizations, and partnerships thereof, to sponsor and promote the Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats, both at national and international levels. CMS is pleased to have received strong signals from Germany and Italy already in this regard. We would also like to acknowledge the generous support in developing the Agreement from France, Monaco and the UK, and non-governmental partners, such as the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

In addition to the Action Plan, one of the most important issues to address at the First Meeting of Parties will be the question of resources for the Agreement. The Secretariat will provide an estimated budget for the period 2009-11. It is hoped that this can be financed by contributions from Range States and contributions from donor countries and Regional Economic Integration Organisations (e.g. the European Union), and also further contributions from organisations including the private sector, and funds raised through the campaign “Year of the Gorilla” and contributions in kind.

UNEP/CMS SECRETARIAT

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