

Cross River Gorillas



This subspecies of the western gorilla is very similar in appearance to the more numerous western lowland gorilla, but subtle differences can be found in the skull and tooth dimensions. Cross River gorillas live in a region populated by many humans who have encroached upon the gorilla's territory—clearing forests for timber and to create fields for agriculture and livestock. Poaching occurs in the forests as well, and the loss of even a few of these gorillas has a detrimental effect on such a small population.

Efforts to protect these animals are focused on securing the forests that house them. WWF and partners have worked with the governments of Cameroon and Nigeria to create a protected area for the Cross-River gorilla that spans the border of these two nations.

Gorillas, the largest living primates, make their homes in central Africa. Poaching, disease and habitat destruction remain threats for gorillas, and WWF is working to designate new protected areas where populations can thrive.

INBREEDING

The population risks inbreeding and a loss of genetic diversity because there are so few Cross River gorillas and they live in groups that interact infrequently if at all.

HUNTING

The hunting and killing of gorillas is illegal in Cameroon and Nigeria, but enforcement of wildlife laws is often lax. Following conservation efforts, hunting has declined to a low level, but any amount of gorilla killing will have a significantly impact an already small population. "If we don't get serious about saving these spectacular species, it's quite likely that many won't be around in the years to come."

Tom Dillon WWF Senior Vice President, Field Programs



WHAT WWF IS DOING

PROTECTING GORILLA HABITAT

WWF and partners have worked with officials in Nigeria and Cameroon to establish a protected area for the Cross-River gorilla that spans the border between the two nations. Within that protected area, WWF has established ranger posts, provided field and communication equipment for antipoaching staff, and established a system to monitor the gorilla population.



PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

For the past 10 years, WWF and other non-governmental organizations have worked with logging companies, the Cameroon Ministry of Forest and Wildlife and local communities to foster sustainable management of the gorillas' forest home. These efforts help to ensure that logging enterprises protect sensitive wildlife corridors and waterways and contribute to the fight against poaching.

GORILLA RESEARCH

Cross River gorillas are the least well known of all the gorilla subspecies. In partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society and the governments of Nigeria and Cameroon, WWF supports research about the ecology, distribution and population biology of these animals.

