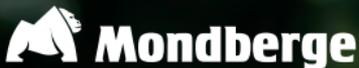


GORILLAS

— our friends —

FOREVER

A campaign
In memory of silverback RUHONDEZA
On the 10th anniversary of his death



berggorilla.org



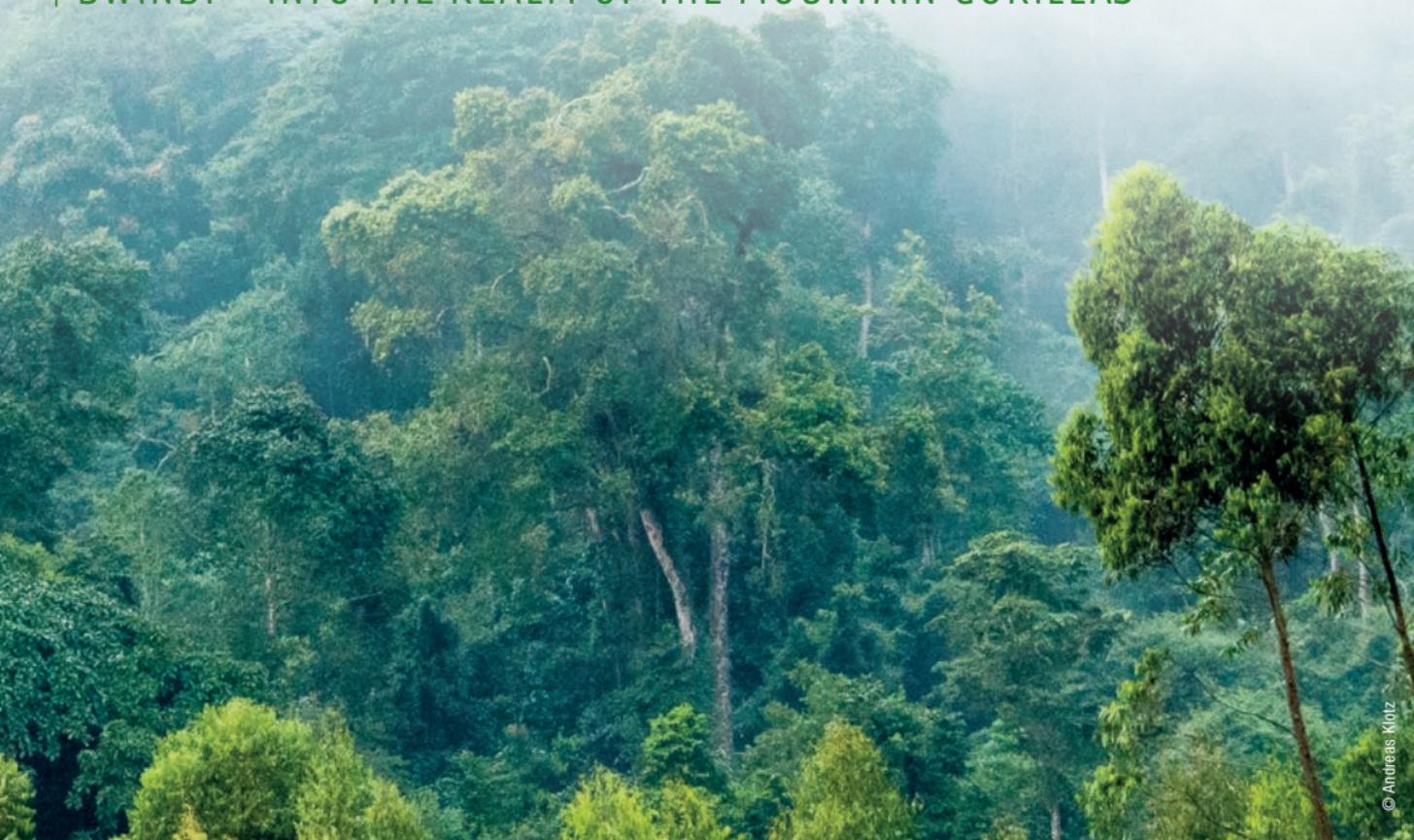
MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE
FOR EVOLUTIONARY ANTHROPOLOGY





A depiction by Andreas Klotz

BWINDI – INTO THE REALM OF THE MOUNTAIN GORILLAS





Andreas Klotz (left), the author of this report, has often been with the mountain gorillas. Here together with his friend and co-editor of the MONDBERGE magazine, Michael Matschuck.

They are the last of their kind: around 1,060 mountain gorillas live on our planet today. They are among the rarest primates of all, and anyone who is lucky enough to see them in their natural habitat will experience a very special encounter. An unforgettable experience! Almost half of them live in the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in South-Western Uganda. The dense mountain rainforest has such an unusually

thick undergrowth that it is therefore called the Impenetrable Forest. Many streams cross the area. In the forest there are several swamp areas, some of which are extensive. The mountain slopes are rugged and steep.

It is a scarce habitat that has been left to the mountain gorillas that live there. It has been protected as a national park since 1991 and has also been recognized by UNESCO as a natural world heritage site since 1994: unique and absolutely worth preserving. More than 300 tree species can be found here; some of them are endemic, meaning they only occur there and nowhere else. Bwindi is also home to 350 species of birds, 310 species of butterflies and 120 species of mammals.

Gorilla Habituation

Unlike the famous African “Big Five”, mountain gorillas cannot be observed from the comfort of a safari vehicle; you have to walk – sometimes for several hours. However, individual groups of gorillas have been, and are slowly becoming accustomed to the presence of humans so they don’t hide from the tourists. So-called trackers approach the animals carefully over and over again. They stay close to the animals while building trust by making calming vocalizations. This takes up to two years.



These trackers are always present when tourists visit the group. Income from tourism strengthens governments and communities. It creates jobs in the park administration and connected companies. They enable research work and bring better protection for the gorillas in Uganda.

Habituation began in Bwindi in the early 1990s. Tourists have been able to visit the first mountain gorillas since 1993. The silverback of the Mubare group, Ruhondeza, led his family for almost 20 years. He died in 2012.

Adventurous visit to relatives

All gorilla permits (the “tickets” so to speak) must be purchased from the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) – preferably well in advance, because permits on certain dates are often fully booked months in advance. This ticket entitles you to stay with a gorilla family for one hour on a specific day. For gorilla tracking you should – in addition to long trousers, sturdy shoes, a rain jacket, gloves and sensible photo equipment – be relatively fit, because sometimes an arduous march through the impenetrable rainforest will be necessary.

An unforgettable Hour

When the gorillas are found, everything else takes a back seat: the experience is incomparable. It is difficult to put into words the emotions it triggers in the viewer when a gorilla mother caresses her baby in a self-absorbed and tender manner. When three juveniles playfully fight with each other during their lunch break or when an adult male, the silverback, casually climbs down from a tree to be closer to his family and then the surrounding forest floor fills with gorillas.

It is astonishing that the animals can easily be told apart even if they are similar in size. Each gorilla’s face has individual features that make them unique. The shape of the nose and its folds are as varied as human fingerprints. Their faces can express moods like joy, unease and certainly sadness. When a gorilla looks pensively at a baby and then curls the corners of its mouth and hints at a smile, you can almost feel the genetic closeness between us.

Of course, encountering a silverback is particularly impressive. A mighty specimen! A mighty skull, huge chest and gigantic arms on which he casually leans on. An incredible physical presence, a calm, almost arrogant superiority. No King Kong. But the king. The chief. The Patriarch. Unchallenged. A being that doesn’t seem



© Andreas Klotz

to tolerate any contradiction. And who nevertheless good-naturedly, lets a young animal dance around on his back while he rests.

Anyone who has seen them, who has not only taken a photo but really understood these beautiful beings, will carry this experience with them forever: of our brothers and sisters in the rainforest.

Almost half of all living mountain gorillas live in the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda.

THE STORY OF THE SILVERBACK RUHONDEZA

Ruhondeza lived to be over 50 years old. In the early 1990s, he was the first mountain gorilla in Uganda to accept tourists as visitors with his group. It is estimated that Ruhondeza saw more than 50,000 people over the next nineteen years. What did he experience? What did he see? What did he think?

In May 2012, without a fight, he peacefully handed over the management of the family to his son. Ruhondeza retired and lived alone for a few more weeks near Buhoma, a small town on the edge of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. He was very weak and was looked after by the people there who allowed him to eat their crops. On June 27, 2012, he didn't wake up in his nest in the morning. The Uganda Wildlife authority posted the news on Facebook the same day. Thousands of people around the world noticed and took part.

*The legendary silverback Ruhondeza.
Tens of thousands of people visited him.*



© Andreas Klötz



© Andreas Klötz

The message of the campaign. A statement.

BY HANNES JAENICKE

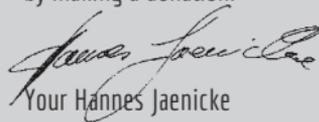
Mountain gorillas are among the most endangered great apes in the world. The last 1,000 mountain gorillas live in the region of the Virunga volcanoes in the border area between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda and in the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Southwestern Uganda.

The most dangerous enemy of the mountain gorillas are humans. The destruction of the rainforest for mineral resources, tropical wood, charcoal, and the growing pressure of civilization are destroying their last habitats. The transmission of human diseases such as influenza, or more recently, Covid by humans penetrating deeper and deeper into gorilla areas is also a growing threat to primates.

Do mountain gorillas even have a chance? Yes, if we don't give up or look the other way. The international campaign "GORILLAS our friends FOREVER" aims to draw public attention to this topic and to support specific projects in the Bwindi rainforest region in

Uganda. On the homepage of this campaign you can find detailed information about the projects "Water Tanks for Ruhija", "Gorilla Health Centre Laboratory" and the "Mondberge Tree Network". It's about rescuing the last mountain gorillas, preserving their habitat, and involving and supporting the local population. This independent campaign, which is exclusively organized by volunteers, guarantees that all proceeds and donations directly go to the project's different aid campaigns.

Together with the other ambassadors Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka, Martha Robbins and Ian Redmond, I would like to urge you to support these projects by purchasing the high-quality Eco-Box or by making a donation.



Your Hannes Jaenicke



International activists for nature and species protection

THE AMBASSADORS OF THE CAMPAIGN

On the 10th anniversary of the death of Ruhondeza, the legendary silverback from Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda, the campaign »GORILLAS our friends FOREVER« will begin. Internationally known species protection activists are participating in the campaign as ambassadors. They hope everyone will support the local population in preserving the last mountain gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda. All proceeds and donations go directly to local initiatives and species protection projects.

Dr. Martha Robbins is a Research Scientist at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and the director of the Bwindi Gorilla Project. The committed American scientist and her team are dedicated to researching and protecting mountain gorillas. Dr. Martha Robbins sees the support and education of the local population in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park as part of her mission and is involved in many local community projects.

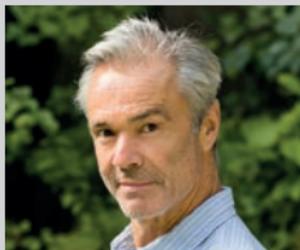


Dr. Martha Robbins: "The mountain gorillas fascinate and inspire me every day."

The well-known German-US-American actor, author and environmental activist **Hannes Jaenicke** has been campaigning for the preservation of endangered species all over the world for many years. In his popular species protection documentary series on Second German Television (ZDF), he showed his audience a startling report on the endangered mountain gorillas in the Congo.



Dr. Martha Robbins



Hannes Jaenicke



Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka



Ian Redmond OBE

Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka:
“We need more local champions.”

Hannes Jaenicke: “Investing in education
is the best way to protect species.”

Ugandan wildlife doctor and conservation activist **Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka** is the founder and CEO of the aid organization CTPH »Conservation through Public Health«. Early in her career, she studied the effects of human diseases on gorillas. With her organization, she has become a pioneer when it comes to improving the health of mountain gorillas and humans. In 2021, Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka received the “Champion of the Earth for Science and Innovation 2021” award from the United Nations Environment Program for her commitment.

Ian Redmond OBE:
“Some of my best friends are gorillas.”

The British biologist, conservationist and non-fiction author **Ian Redmond**, who researched the mountain gorillas and their parasites with Dian Fossey in Rwanda, was involved in an advisory capacity during the filming of “Gorillas in the Mist” and has been campaigning for the protection of the species with countless international projects ever since.”

Uganda

THE PEARL OF AFRICA

A little over a century ago, Sir Winston Churchill described Uganda as 'The Pearl of Africa' and although much has changed, it will always remain an equatorial country with an extraordinary diversity of landscapes, animals and people. From friendly farmers,



© Radmila Kerl

to the icy snowfields of the Ruwenzori Mountains, to hippos frolicking in the lakes. But the main attraction is a visit to the green throne of the mountain king, the endangered mountain gorilla.

By Ian Redmond





*The tropical Bwindi rainforest
is also called "The Impenetrable".*





Craftsmanship in the eco-box

1.000 SMALL MONUMENTS TO THE LAST 1.000 MOUNTAIN GORILLAS

A thousand...that's roughly the number of the last living mountain gorillas in the world. On the initiative of the Mondberge project in cooperation with the Max Planck Institute, the Ugandan NGO Conservation through Public Health and the Berggorilla & Regenwald Direkthilfe association, a thousand small tin monuments are to be dedicated to the legendary silverback Ruhondeza on the 10th anniversary of his death with the campaign "GORILLAS our friends FOREVER".



Various national and international institutions such as the German Federal Ministry have certified the high-quality Eco-Box for the Environment, the European Commission and the GreenTin® label.



Pewter figures are engraved mirror-inverted in slate in elaborate manual work.

Supported by partner companies in the graphics industry and bellazinnfigur, the publisher of historical pewter figures, two noble and sustainable natural products – an artistic group of pewter figures and high-quality packaging – were combined into a symbiosis of two arts: pewter casting and the art of papermaking.

With the box, proceeds and donations are to be organized worldwide. All elements of the box were not only made from recyclable material, but also produced in Germany in a climate-neutral and conflict-free manner.

Various craftsmen were involved in the creation of the eco-box and figurine. Through this campaign, the organizers also want to draw attention to the connection between species protection and the preservation of traditional handicraft techniques in terms of the “UNESCO Convention for the Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage”.



Dozens of miniature painters from all over the world designed the pewter figure and made it available for the campaign. Here, for example, are the small masterpieces by Bianca Sandri (Italy), Philippe Fourquet (France), Trevor Morgan (Great Britain) and Reinhold Pfanzelt (Germany). All unique pieces can be admired and purchased on the homepage www.gorillafriends.org.

THE WORLD AND US - A statement by Dirk Wahlscheidt

TIN - AN ESSENTIAL METAL

In order to function in our new world, we need so-called rare earths/minerals for all our electronic devices, which are usually taken from the ground of developing countries. According to estimates, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone, around 40,000 children still work in mines to extract these minerals instead of going to school, playing or simply having a normal childhood.

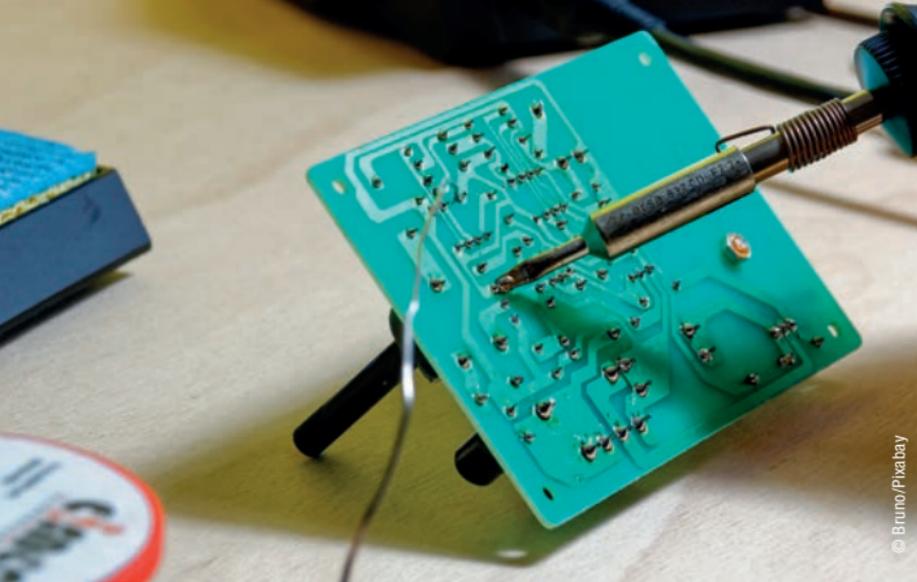
While there have been laws in the USA for years that prohibit the use of so-called conflict minerals (Conflict-Free Minerals Act), other countries have made little progress in this area. The demand for better, complete verifiability of the origin of these minerals could quickly put an end to the exploitation of the weak and under-age population.

Tin is one of the oldest metals used by humans. As early as 6,500 years ago, people turned copper and tin into bronze, initially only for jewelry, but later also for vessels, weapons and tools. It is mainly used for soldering and is therefore a key component in every electronic device, an everyday product our world would not function properly without. Tin is mainly mined in Asia and South America, with China being the clear leader with around 40 percent of global production. This is followed by Indonesia, Myanmar and Brazil, but tin is also mined in the D.R of the Congo. Tin is mainly



© mehmet all poyraz/shutterstock

Miners toil underground for the so-called civilized world.



Without solder, no computer, telephone or other technical device would work.

obtained from the tin ore cassiterite, which is mined, often by children.

Feinhütte Halsbrücke was the first company to develop a sustainable and extremely high-quality tin, the GreenTin+, which is made entirely from recycling materials and achieves purity levels of up



The pewter figure in the Eco-Box has been certified as conflict-free and climate-neutral.

to 99.99% through upcycling processes. As consumers, we can contribute to sustainably managing resources by separating waste properly, as well as using electrical appliances for as long as possible. Initiatives such as Fairphone or The Fair Mouse from Nager IT are also worth supporting.

Feinhütte only uses this environmentally friendly and sustainable alternative from the heart of Europe. GreenTin+ thus stands for the highest material purity and a wide range of possible uses in combination with active environmental and resource protection. Feinhütte relies on a transparent raw material and thus ensures a certified and ecologically responsible supply of tin.

Campaign Ambassador: Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka

HEALTHY ANIMALS = HEALTHY PEOPLE = HEALTHY PLANET

Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka is the founder and CEO of the non-profit non-governmental organization (NGO) Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH). In 2021, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the United Nations' highest environmental award, named her Champion of the Earth in the Science and Innovation field.

According to a recent United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) report, human-wildlife conflict is one of the main threats to the long-term survival of some of the world's best-known species. In many countries like Uganda, human-wildlife conflict combined with the health risks of COVID-19 have further threatened endangered species.

The organization Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH), founded in Uganda in 2003 by Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka and two other co-founders, Mr. Lawrence Zikusoka and Mr. Stephen Rubanga, is dedicated to protecting the health of mountain gorillas and supporting the local communities bordering the gorilla habitat.



© Jo Anne McArthur

Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka collecting stool samples. The CTPH has already tested over 200 mountain gorillas for Covid.





© Bruno Phabany

Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka (front left) with Gorilla Guardians, UWA, CTPH team and other trainers during mountain gorilla health surveillance training. In the background is the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park - habitat of the mountain gorillas.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CTPH organized training sessions for Uganda Wildlife Authority rangers, Gorilla Guardians, Village COVID-19 Taskforce Committees (VCTFs) and Village Health and Conservation Teams (VHCTs), to contain the spread of COVID-19 to the critically endangered mountain gorilla.

Another initiative of the organization is the social enterprise Gorilla Conservation Coffee. Gorilla Conservation Coffee supports 500 farmers around Bwindi Impenetrable National Park by training

www.gccoffee.org
www.ctph.org

them in sustainable coffee cultivation, processing and post-harvest management. This helps improve coffee

quality and increase production yield. Supporting local farmers helps protect the endangered mountain gorillas and their fragile habitat.

“It’s about the importance of sustainable funding for nature conservation. Alternative livelihoods for local communities reduce the pressure of dependency on gorilla habitat, thereby protecting gorillas from poaching and human-to-gorilla transmission of diseases.”

Dr. Martha Robbins - Campaign Ambassador

WHY DO WE RESEARCH GORILLAS?

Gorillas are charismatic animals, warranting both research and conservation efforts. I established a long-term project on the mountain gorillas of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda in 1998 and a project for western gorillas in Gabon in 2005. Because of the wide range of ecological conditions under which gorillas live, we cannot assume that what is true for one population is valid for all gorillas.

My research focuses on the social behavior, feeding ecology, and population dynamics of gorillas. We routinely go into the forest and make direct observations on habituated gorillas to systematically record social interactions as well as what the gorillas are eating and where they go in the forest.

From a conservation standpoint, it is important to know what foods the gorillas

eat and how much habitat they need. One concern stemming from climate change is that an increase in temperature could lead to changes in growth patterns of the plants they consume. We can learn a lot about diet and habitat use from short-term studies, but it is only through long-term studies that we can understand how gorillas react to changes in their environment.

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Martha Robbins with rangers monitoring gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.

To monitor a gorilla population, it is important to study birth and death rates. The Bwindi gorillas have a longer interbirth interval (time between successive births by females) than the gorillas in the Virunga Volcanoes. This will lead to a slower population growth rate if everything else is constant. We are still trying to understand why there is this difference, with variation in ecological conditions being a likely cause. It takes decades to collect enough data to understand these lifespan patterns because gorillas take such a long time to reach maturity, they have slow reproductive rates, and they live for a long time.

In addition to research, in 2008, we established the 'Bwindi Ape Conservation Education Partnership', which focuses on raising awareness about conservation with four primary schools and the local communities next to Bwindi.

In addition to classroom lessons, we conduct forest walks, litter pick-up days, debate competitions, tree seedling nurseries, fuel-efficient stove workshops, teacher training workshops, and community film showings. These activities have benefitted more than 400 families living near Bwindi.

Over the past decades, we have learned a great deal about the Bwindi mountain gorillas that contributes to their conservation

and our understanding of the diversity of gorillas across Africa. There is still much to learn. It has been a privilege to have the gorillas let me into their world so I can share it with others. It is the responsibility of all of us to ensure a future for them.



The research station of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. On the wall are the individual photos of the mountain gorillas being observed.

Mountain Gorillas and surrounding communities LIVE AS NEIGHBORS

Traditionally, the mountain gorillas did not play a prominent role in the local culture around Bwindi. People rarely saw the gorillas and they did not hunt them. The gorillas were thought to be dangerous. Intriguingly, the folklore around Bwindi was that gorillas were a bad omen. Anyone who bumped into gorillas while in the forest would consider it bad luck and return home immediately.

Historically, people used the area that is now Bwindi Impenetrable National Park for hunting and obtaining resources such as timber. Bwindi became a Forest Reserve starting in 1938, which allowed people to use the forest for timber, medicinal plants, and other non-timber forest products. When Bwindi was gazetted as a National Park in 1991, access to the park by local people was largely stopped. Unsurprisingly, local people were unhappy about this and

Dennis Musinguzi, employee of the MPI research station shows how the farmland borders directly on the rainforest where the mountain gorillas live.

held negative views towards the park. They had viewed Bwindi as part of their home and their livelihoods were being adversely affected. People were disenfranchised because they could not go into the park, yet outsiders (tourists) could go see the gorillas. Most people living aside Bwindi who farm small tracts of land, do not use any mechanical equipment to plow or harvest, and typically grow only enough to feed their families. It is a difficult life and the majority of people live in poverty. Furthermore, the gorillas sometimes leave the park and feed on villagers' crops, leading to further tension between the local communities and the park.



Recent conservation efforts have led to local people obtaining greater benefits through projects such as farming methods, beekeeping, and agroforestry. Conservation education programs provide information about the value of the park. People's attitudes towards the park have improved over time. It is imperative that conservation efforts concentrate not only on protecting the gorillas inside the park, but also work with local communities to resolve human-wildlife conflicts and improve their livelihoods. Conservation must focus on people with the greatest needs through such actions as improving access to water, trees, education, and employment.

Gorilla tourism has turned the gorillas from a bad omen into 'gold', as some local people say, with both local and national benefits. Gorilla tourism provides jobs such as park rangers, handicraft makers, and hotel staff, yet it provides employment for relatively few people living around Bwindi. Tourism must be managed properly so the gorillas as a 'resource' are here for future generations. Conservation efforts must work on many levels: international, national, and especially with local communities. For gorillas to truly be gold, the benefits must reach both the gorillas and their neighbors.

By Dr Martha Robbins



Campaign Ambassador

INTERVIEW WITH IAN REDMOND



British biologist, conservationist and non-fiction author Ian Redmond.

You are the founder of Ape Alliance, a loose coalition of 100 NGOs that aims at helping to save Orangutans, chimpanzees, bonobos, gibbons and gorillas. What is it that makes you dedicate large parts of your life to the protection and conservation of species, particularly apes?

IR: The death of Digit on the last day of 1977 was a turning point for me. He was a young silverback who I regarded as a friend. I met him in 1976 and he was one of those individuals who seemed to enjoy my company; I certainly enjoyed his! If someone spears to death and decapitates your friend, it rather motivates you to do something about it. But once you have had your eyes opened to the fact that all apes are self-aware, autonomous beings, clearly you can't just care about the individuals you happen to know personally.

One of the first things I learned about you is that you said "I can truthfully say that some of my best friends are gorillas". What does friendship with a mountain gorilla feel like? What is it that makes gorillas good friends?

IR: Gorillas express friendships with each other through play, grooming and proximity when resting. When I first began this work, the gorillas were a bit curious because I was a new face. They seemed disinterested for some months until one day, one of the youngsters came over and chose to spend the day-rest period next to me – it felt as though I'd gone from being a tolerated presence to almost an honorary member of the group. Once they trust you, young gorillas especially are curious and will investigate



Ian Redmond grooming and shaking hands with silverback mountain gorilla Pablo in Rwanda in the 1980s. Nowadays, where a lot of tourists visiting the mountain gorillas, such close contact is not allowed anymore. This is to protect the animals that can become infected with human diseases. A maximum of eight people are allowed to visit a gorilla group every day and they must keep a distance of ten meters.

You can read the entire interview with Ian Redmond at www.gorillafriends.org

you and your belongings, so you feel they are studying you just as you study them!

Was Ruhondeza also a friend of yours?

IR: I met him a few times when leading special interest tours to Bwindi, but no, he was more of an acquaintance as I have not yet had the chance to spend long periods doing research in Bwindi.

Any story or anecdote that you can recall?

IR: I was struck by the differences between him and the silverbacks I knew so well in the Virungas. The nostrils rims are smaller and the brow-ridge less hairy in Bwindi gorillas and they look like they have

been working out as their massive muscles seem to have better definition. Watching Ruhondeza and his family feeding in trees, I realized that there are more fruit trees at this lower altitude than in the Virungas, so Ruhondeza really had been working out - climbing trees every day to feed on fruit in the canopy.

A commentary by Dirk Wahlscheidt, editor of the MONDBERGE magazine

WHY ARE MOUNTAIN GORILLAS SO IMPORTANT?

Meeting mountain gorillas is the ultimate wildlife experience. It is such an incredible moment of excellence that you can't really prepare for, you just have to experience it. That inspiring moment, when you first take a look at these human-like, tall and proud-looking creatures, it just gives you goosebumps. Perhaps our fascination comes from seeing in

them what we wish to see in ourselves, with whom we share almost 99% of our genetic makeup.

The future of the gorillas depends on the human neighbors and farming communities around the gorillas habitat, as well as the preservation of the rainforest. Uganda has the largest mountain gorilla population of around 500 gorillas living in two national parks. The Bwindi is one of the oldest rainforests in Africa and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. From our point of view, it is urgently necessary to protect flora and fauna and to support the inhabitants in order to achieve this together. We know that it is in everyone's best interest to maintain a healthy ecosystem so that we all participate - THE WORLD AND US.

The author of this post tracking gorillas in the Bwindi Rainforest.



The last thousand or so mountain gorillas live in East Africa in Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



A strong network for species protection

THE MONDBERGE-PROJECT



With the Mondberge project, the publishers of the MONDBERGE magazine have been generating and collecting funds for environmental, nature and species protection since 2009. These funds come from donations and the sale of the MONDBERGE magazine, books, calendars, reports and lectures. The goal is to provide journalistic information, to entertain, enlighten and to inspire - in order to create awareness - and thus help protect the last mountain gorillas. The people of Uganda and the environment benefit directly from this.

Strong partners and supporters right from the start are the **TiPP 4** advertising agency and publishing house from Rheinbach near Bonn, the printing and media company **druckpartner**, the paper manufacturer **Sappi** and the tour operator **Wigwam**.

Another important mentor and now friend is the actor and documentary filmmaker **Hannes Jaenicke**. Over the years, **Abendsonne Afrika**, the **proWIN pro nature foundation** and the **“Gorilla” coffee roastery Jörges** have been added as additional sponsors. Since the beginning of 2020, we have also been able to count the



well-known TV presenter and species conservationist **Frank Elstner** as a “Mondberge” friend and supporter in our team. Not to mention the many travel companions, photographers and like-minded people who have been happy to help us over the years.

Since November 2009, Mondberge has been supporting several environmental, nature and species protection projects in Ruhija, a small town on the edge of the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in south-west Uganda, year after year without exception. We have teamed up with American gorilla researcher Martha Robbins, who has been researching mountain gorillas for more than 30 years and is very committed to local people and gorilla conservation. On site, we cooperate with the Ugandan ITFC (Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation).



The three activists of the Mondberge project Andreas Klotz (left), Michael Matschuck (middle) and Dirk Wahlscheidt (right) with the gorilla researcher Dr. Martha Robbins and rangers in the Bwindi Rainforest.

Above all, our projects help to educate the population. Tree planting campaigns have been supported over the years, as well as gorilla research. Four schools and the hospital in Buhoma are now involved in the project – the only one in a wide area and therefore extremely important for the population.

A report about the »Local Champions of Ruhija«

WATER TANKS FOR EDUCATION AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



Everything is connected. Except for the three to four-months of the year when it rains regularly, the people living around Bwindi - like in the small town Ruhija on the edge of the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda - lack water, like everywhere in the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. It is a very hilly location and on the hilltops, there are no springs and certainly no running water from pipes. During the rainy season, sufficient water can be collected in concrete water tanks, but there is a lack of such tanks. Furthermore, the community lacks the financial resources to promote change because most people live in poverty.

Handover of the voucher for the construction of the first water tank financed by the campaign. From left to right: Pauson Twinamasiko from the Ruhija Canteen Trading Center community, for whom the tank is being built, Dieter Beller, co-initiator of the campaign »GORILLAS our friends FOREVER«, Emily Turinawe from the Bwindi Apes Conservation Education Partnership (BACEP) who coordinates the project and Gerevazio Byarugaba, the mayor of Ruhija.



It takes about 4–6 weeks to build a water tank.



Teacher, Furida Tukwasibwe, in front of the primary school in Ruhija. Education on species protection is an integral part of the lessons for the 671 students.

In early 2022 I visited Ruhija village and donated a voucher for the construction of a new 15,000-liter water tank to the Community Ruhija Canteen on behalf of the “GORILLAS our friends FOREVER” campaign. The construction of the water tank will be completed by the time you read this report. The school children of the local primary school will have painted it in vibrant colors under the



guidance of a Ugandan artist, with motifs of mountain gorillas in the rainforest. Throughout the course of the campaign, donations for additional water tanks will be collected.

What does this have to do with education and species protection? As stated at the beginning: everything is connected. Actually, it is quite easy to understand.

It is almost always the young girls who have to get the water for the families from the valleys below. It takes an hour to go

Traditional dance of women in Ruhija with a girl dressed as a gorilla in the foreground. "Gorillas are our friends," they sing. Thanks to many initiatives and the commitment of all the "Champions of Ruhija", more and more people now understand that the preservation of the mountain gorillas is only for the benefit of the communities.

down and an hour and a half back up the hill with a full 20-liter canister that weighs about 20 kg. The children usually fetch water twice a day, in the early morning and in the afternoon. Even if they still attend school in between, where are they supposed to find the energy and motivation to learn under these circumstances? With the water tanks, we enable the young girls in particular to focus on their education under relatively normal conditions.

Education and training, in turn, are closely related to the protection of the rainforest and the gorillas that live there. We can only understand how important nature and species protection are for the future through a solid education. Additionally, only under socially acceptable living conditions can people live in harmony with nature and act sustainably.

Except during the rainy season, the girls, like Clemencia Naturinda from Ruhija, 14 years old, usually have to fetch water from the valley twice a day.



Campaign partner: Berggorilla and Regenwald Direkthilfe e.V.

FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MOUNTAIN GORILLAS AND THEIR HABITAT

The German NGO “Berggorilla & Regenwald Direkthilfe e. V.” (BGRD) was founded in 1984 and since then has been actively involved in protecting particularly endangered gorilla populations as well as in preserving the rain forests in Uganda and other African countries. Neither the board nor the other active members among the more than 400 members of the organization are paid for their commitment.



**Berggorilla & Regenwald
Direkthilfe e. V.**

Berggorilla & Regenwald Direkthilfe is recognized as a non-profit organization and can therefore issue tax-deductible donation receipts to supporters. Almost 100% of donations are forwarded directly to the respective aid projects without high administrative costs and similar expenses.



School children in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park in Uganda. A children's book was printed for the schools in the area surrounding the park. The park administration was equipped with a digital camera and a card reader.

The organization supports several protected areas on a permanent basis and helps partner organizations' gorilla protection projects quickly and unbureaucratically if something is urgently needed

there. B&RD therefore does not see itself as a competitor, but as a complement to other aid organizations.

B&RD projects include; supporting park staff with clothing, equipment and food or equipping national parks with equipment such as navigation devices, cameras and even bicycles. Other aid projects serve to mark protected areas, build or renovate ranger posts, or even reforest deforested areas.

Supporting the population and educational work in schools and communities is also very important to the organization, because the gorillas cannot survive without the help of the local people.

Trackers at the Saramwe Reserve in Congo, which borders Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, have been outfitted with new clothing and gear by B&RD.

www.berggorilla.org

The "Gorilla Journal" published by the NGO reports regularly on gorillas, their habitat and the threats they face. It also informs the conservationists on site and offers them the opportunity to report on their work.



THE MAKER OF THE ECO-BOX AND THE MEDIA

Various companies, organizations and individuals have made the production of the EcoBox possible through their labor, supply of materials, art and generous donations. With this support, 100% of the proceeds from the campaign can go to the aid projects in Uganda.

Feinhütte Halsberge produced the special metal alloy for the pewter figure. The use of recycled materials prevents child labor and the exploitation of metal mines in crisis areas.

The printing house druckpartner Druck- und Medienhaus produces the diorama and the other components of the eco-box. The high-quality MONDBERGE magazine for environmental protection, nature conservation and species protection is also regularly produced at druckpartner.

Koehler Paper donated the high-quality recycled paper for the campaign. Awarded with the “Blue Angel” environmental label, these papers, made from 100% secondary fibers, impress with their natural feel, among other things.

The packaging manufacturer RISSMANN developed the concept for the high-quality Eco-Box and manufactured it in part by hand.

The advertising agency TiPP 4 created the design of the eco-box and created the booklet.

The trainees from w&co created the concept for the homepage, realized the design and the implementation of the website.

 **FEINHÜTTE**
HALSBRÜCKE


RISSMANN
unique packaging


druckpartner
Druck- und Medienhaus

 **Koehler**
PAPER

Illustrator Sascha Lunyakov created the drawing of Ruhondeza and his gorilla family.

The engraver Regina Sonntag hand-engraved the pewter figure in slate and painstakingly cast the thousand small memorials for Ruhondeza by hand.

The miniature painter Suzanne Piédavent completed the pewter figure with an artistic color staging, which is shown on the postcard that accompanies the Eco-Box.

The KLIO, the world's largest association of collectors of cultural-historical pewter figures, published a call for support to all members to promote the campaign by painting the gorilla figure.



The Ecobox was mostly manufactured in elaborate manual work.

bellazinnfigur is the brand of Dieter Beller, a private publisher of historical pewter figures. Dieter Beller coordinates the campaign on a voluntary basis.

TIPP 4



KLIO

bellazinnfigur



save
mountain gorillas



planting
trees



support
people

DONATE NOW TO ONE OF THE PROJECTS IN THE BWINDI RAINFOREST!

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Help to protect nature, support the local people and save the mountain gorillas from extinction. On our homepage you can find detailed information about the projects "Water tanks for Ruhija", "Gorilla Health Centre Laboratory" and the "Mondberge-Tree network".



www.gorillafriends.org