

# Year of the Gorilla -- a Partnership of CMS, GRASP and WAZA

Compiled by SRW, ZOO

According to a Concept paper issue by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, WAZA has become a partner with the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild animals Concept paper for the Year of the Gorilla (CMS or Bonn Convention) and the UNEP/UNESCO Great Ape Survival Project or GRASP in a campaign to stop the decline of great ape populations.

The partners have organised the Year of the Gorilla 2009 (YoG) that will be launched on 29 November 2008 by the UNEP Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) with its partners, GRASP and WAZA, on the occasion of the 9th CMS Conference of the Parties in Rome, Italy. Thus CMS, GRASP and WAZA have joined hands to declare 2009 the Year of the Gorilla (YoG).



Convention of Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals works for the conservation of a wide array of endangered migratory animals worldwide through the negotiation and implementation of agreements and species action plans. With more than 110 parties, many of them in Africa, CMS is a fast-growing convention with special importance due to its expertise in the field of migratory species.

The GRASP is a strategic alliance of UN agencies, governments, NGOs, foundations and corporate sponsors. CMS is one of the members of the international



GRASP partnership to stop the decline of great ape populations. Mobilizing and pooling resources by providing a communication platform for scientists will improve coordination among NGOs. National plans have helped great ape range countries develop tailored conservation strategies.



WAZA is the umbrella organisation for the world zoo and aquarium community. Its members include selected zoos and aquariums, and regional and national Associations of Zoos and Aquariums, as well as some affiliate organisations, such as zoo veterinarians or zoo educators, from all around the world. WAZA can be a key partner for educational/awareness aspects.

## What the YoG aims to do

The Year of the Gorilla will have its main focus on conserving gorillas in the wild. Besides featuring scientific information, educating the wider public and raising awareness, the campaign provides a great possibility to raise funds for conservation projects, as well as to attract significant public and political support

for great apes conservation. **A major objective of the campaign will be the implementation of the new CMS Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and their Habitats** (became active in June 2008).

The campaign will feature a website with information on the situation of and threats to gorillas, as well as regular news updates on the events and achievements of the Year of the Gorilla. Ministries of Environment of the range states and CMS Focal Points will receive written advice on the YoG Campaign and be invited to participate. It will also be designed as a communication platform between partners, the scientific community and interested laymen.

## YoG Objectives:

- Encourage strategic approaches to gorilla conservation that are practical, easily manageable and accessible to many people.
- Create awareness among people of ecosystem services (including carbon sequestration and storage) and the intrinsic value of flora and fauna.
- Provide income opportunities alternative to poaching, logging and mining through capacity building, e.g. by training forest workers and making them realize the importance of sustainable approaches for their own livelihoods.
- Educate the wider public on gorillas and the threats they face.
- Educate on the potential of ecotourism and carbon finance.
- Encourage cooperation between zoo-based and field-based conservation bodies as well as wildlife rangers and forest managers to improve species preservation.
- Improve the monitoring of protected areas by bolstering technical capacities, e.g. use of camera traps and remote sensing equipment.
- Improve the capacity of government wildlife agencies for setting up anti-poaching campaigns by providing information and equipment as well as training.
- Promote cultural attitudes and traditions that are conducive to the conservation of gorillas and other great apes, e.g. taboos on hunting them and sustainable approaches to resource use.
- Support rangers in their activities.
- Promote the concept that sustainable development must be compatible with gorilla survival across the species range, even outside of protected areas.

**Mysore Zoo** is the only zoo in South Asia to hold a gorilla currently. The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums has invited the Director of Mysore Zoo to join the campaign and he has secured the permission of Central Zoo Authority and the Zoo Authority of Karnataka and agreed. It is good that India and South Asia can be part of this important primate campaign even though we have no wild great apes. We have a small ape, however, our Hoolock Gibbon !

## CMS Gorilla Agreement

At this website <http://www.cms.int/species/gorillas/index.htm> you can find :

CMS Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats, Introduction, Documents, Signatories to the Agreement, Signatories to the Final Act, Signatories to the Paris Gorilla Declaration

**Introduction :** Large primates, especially Gorillas, have always generated fascination for people of all continents. National and international, g.o.s and ngo's, are working for conservation actions to remedy this critical situation. These initiatives include anti-poaching campaigns, reforestation efforts, development of eco-tourism, implementation of development projects in the regions bordering the areas protected for gorilla conservation and programmes of rehabilitation.

Many of these organisations, and the governments involved are now part of GRASP, a partnership between governments, international institutions (notably UNEP and UNESCO), NGOs and the private sector whose objective is great ape conservation. CMS and GRASP had agreed that the main CMS contribution would be to facilitate a CMS Agreement and Action Plan to support gorilla conservation. For gorillas, CMS has established the legal structure necessary to make all the initiatives durable and to integrate conservation actions.

For more than 20 years, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) has been developing and implementing regional agreements under the terms of Article IV of the Convention. These agreements are one of the main conservation tools of the Convention. The CMS COP sought to develop an Agreement under Article IV of 10 States of the distribution range of the gorilla: Angola, Cameroon, Republic of Central Africa, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, Uganda and Rwanda, for the conservation of gorillas and of their habitats.

All the Gorilla taxa were listed in Appendix I at the last CMS COP to make possible the development of this new Agreement. Through 2007 the UNEP/CMS Secretariat worked with the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences, in partnership with the UNEP/UNESCO GRASP Secretariat, and in consultation with the gorilla Range States and the other partners of GRASP, to prepare, draft and negotiate this Agreement, and initiate its implementation via a regional, transborder Action Plan. The Range States, CMS &

partners develop and negotiated this Agreement, concluded in Paris October 07, providing gorilla range states, and other gos/ngos with a legal framework to reinforce and integrate conservation efforts. The draft Action Plan offered to range states is centred on conservation of gorilla populations and their habitats, on reinforcement of national capacities, on transborder aspects and on taking into account the socio-economic needs of the populations whose needs are linked to the resources of the forest habitats of the gorillas

The Plan will be achieved through:

- integration of conservation of gorilla populations in policies in range states;
- reinforcement of regional, national & international awareness of common heritage value of great apes, gorillas;
- reinforcement of transborder collaboration, especially within p.a.'s;
- reinforcement of special PA network;
- reinforcement of inter-state and inter-organisational cooperation by establishment of a decision making system at local, natl & intl levels;
- establishment of a data collecting / surveillance network, use/exchange of scientific/ technical information on gorilla conservation, and mutual reinforcement of capacities;
- reinforcement of illegal trade control measures;
- development of gorilla eco-tourism, particularly in less visited sites;
- The involvement of local communities by the establishment of a discussion framework allowing dialogue with local populations ; and
- development of financing/fundraising mechanisms to permit the implementation of the regional transborder Action Plan.

We hope this Agreement, as well as projects resulting from it, contribute to promoting long term survival of gorillas, their forest habitats and dependent human populations. This will make a tangible contribution to the 2010 targets for biodiversity, and allow the States concerned to combine conservation and durable economic development.

ACCORD CMS GORILLA



## Introduction to Convention on Migratory Species CMS

CMS aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is an intergovernmental treaty, concluded under UNEP, concerned with conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale. Since the Convention's entry into force, its membership has grown steadily to include 109 (1 August 08).

Migratory species threatened with extinction are listed on Appendix I of the Convention. CMS Parties strive towards strictly protecting these animals, conserving or restoring the places where they live, mitigating obstacles to migration and controlling other factors that might endanger them. Besides establishing obligations for each State joining the Convention, CMS promotes concerted action among the Range States. Migratory species that need or would significantly benefit from international co-operation are listed in Appendix II of the Convention. For this reason, the Convention encourages the Range States to conclude global or regional Agreements. Thus CMS acts as a framework Convention. The Agreements may range from legally binding treaties (called Agreements) to less formal instruments, such as Memoranda of Understanding, and can be adapted to the requirements of particular regions. The development of models tailored according to the conservation needs throughout the migratory range is a unique capacity to CMS.

Several Agreements have been concluded to date under the auspices of CMS. They aim to conserve: Populations of European Bats, Cetaceans of Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea & Contiguous Atlantic Area, Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas, Seals in the Wadden Sea African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, Albatrosses and Petrels, Gorillas & Habitats Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) have been concluded to date under the auspices of CMS. They aim to conserve Siberian Crane, Slender-billed Curlew, Marine Turtles, Atlantic Coast of Africa, Marine Turtles of Indian Ocean & SE Asia Middle-European Population of Great Bustard, Bukhara Deer, Aquatic Warbler, West-African Pops of African Elephant Saiga Antelope, Cetaceans of Pacific Island States, Dugongs, Med Monk Seal, Ruddy-headed Goose, Grassland Birds.

A Secretariat under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides administrative support to the Convention. The decision-making organ is (COP).

