

**PROPOSAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF SPECIES ON THE APPENDICES OF THE
CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD
ANIMALS**

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of *Gorilla gorilla* in Appendix I of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals.

B. PROPONENT: Republic of the Congo

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxon

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1.1. Classis: | Mammalia |
| 1.2. Ordo: | Primates |
| 1.3. Familia: | Hominidae |
| 1.4. Genus and Species: | <i>Gorilla gorilla</i> (Savage & Wyman, 1847) |
| 1.5. Common names: | English – Gorilla
French - Gorille
Spanish - Gorila
German - Gorilla |

Taxonomical remark

Gorilla gorilla is understood in the sense of Wilson and Reeder (1993), the reference established by decision of CMS CoP 6 (Rec 6.1). As such, it includes three subspecies: the Western Lowland Gorilla, *Gorilla gorilla gorilla* and two eastern subspecies, the Eastern Lowland Gorilla, *Gorilla gorilla graueri* and the Mountain Gorilla, *Gorilla gorilla beringei*.

The most usual present treatment, however, recognises the western and eastern populations as separate full species, *Gorilla gorilla* and *Gorilla beringei* respectively. The eastern and western populations are separated by approximately 1,000 km (Garner and Ryder, 1996). Western and eastern populations can be distinguished based on external features (Groves, 2002) and clear geographic and morphological distinctions can also be seen (Garner and Ryder, 1996). The western group comprises the isolated Nigeria-Cameroon gorillas now recognised as a subspecies, Cross River Gorilla *G. g. diehli*, and the Western Lowland Gorilla, *G. g. gorilla*, though there is much divergence even within this subgroup. The eastern group includes both the Eastern lowland *G.beringei graueri* and the two mountain populations of *G.b.beringei*.

2. Biological data

Gorillas are mainly terrestrial and quadrupedal. The gorilla's large size and folivorous habits mean that the animals must spend long hours feeding everyday to maintain their body weight. Of all the great apes, the gorilla shows the most stable grouping patterns. The same adult individuals travel together for months and usually years at a time. It is because gorillas are mainly foliage eating that they can afford to live in these relatively permanent groups. Foliage, unlike fruit generally and especially the ripe fruits that the ape gut require, comes in large patches than can in turn support large groups of animals. In west Africa, where fruit forms a far higher proportion of the gorilla's diet than in the East, gorilla groups tend much more often to split into temporary subgroups than they do in east Africa, as animals range far apart searching for the relatively scarce ripe fruit. Gorilla groups can include up to 30-40 animals, but more usually number 5-10.

As far as group structure is concerned, gorillas form harems. It was once thought that gorilla groups contained only one adult male, but around one third of groups in both East and West Africa have been found to host two full-grown males. Adult females in any one silverback's (dominant adult male) harem are mostly unrelated, and the social ties that exist between them are weak. In contrast to many other primates, it is the bond between each individual female and the silverback, rather than bonds between the females that hold the group together. Upon reaching maturity, both the males and females leave the natal group. The females usually join another group or a lone young adult male, whereas the males remain solitary until they can attract females and establish their own groups (Masicot, 2003). After emigration, some males may spend a large proportion of their time in their natal group's home range (Harcourt *et al.*, 1981). At least with the Mountain Gorilla, it is unusual for adult males to migrate into other groups (Yamagiwa, 1987). Of the 15 changes in the size and composition of the two main study groups between 1972 and 1974 listed by Harcourt *et al.* (1981), 11 were due to migration.

2.1 Distribution (current and historical)

Gorillas are found in two widely separated areas of Africa. The western and eastern populations were probably separated first by the massive inland Congo basin lake of the Miocene, and then, from about 5 millions years ago, by the gradual drying of the region and the retreat of forest to higher areas. Subsequently, gorillas have not spread back into the central Congo basin, either because they have not had time, or because the heavily shaded primary forest there does not allow the growth of sufficient ground vegetation to support such a large, predominantly terrestrial animal (MacDonald ed., 2001).

Although they are found over only a small area of Africa, gorilla habitat includes a wide range of altitudes from sea level in west Africa to 3790m in the east. Oddly enough, it is the Mountain Gorilla (*G.g.beringei*) found in the extreme east and at the highest altitude that is the best known form; the behaviour of western gorillas is relatively little known.

There are three known populations of lowland gorillas. The Eastern Lowland Gorilla, *G. g. graueri*, is only known to occur in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Western Lowland Gorilla, *Gorilla gorilla gorilla* is the most widespread group, ranging from southern Cameroon, the south-west corner of the Central African Republic, southward into west Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and northern parts of the Cabinda enclave of Angola. In this western group, the third population, the isolated Nigeria-Cameroon gorillas are now recognised as a subspecies, Cross River Gorilla, *G. g. diehli*.

There are two known populations of Mountain Gorilla, all of which occur in national parks. One population occurs on the extinct volcanoes of the Virunga Massif along the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda (RW), and Uganda (UG) within the Virunga National Park of DRC, the Volcans National Park in Rwanda and to a lesser extent the Mgahinga National Park, Uganda. A separate population of mountain gorillas is found in the Bwindi-Impenetrable National Park in southwest Uganda, on the border of DRC (UNEP-WCMC and WWF, 2001). In this report these populations will be referred to as either the Virungas or Bwindi population of mountain gorillas.

Distribution country by country:

Democratic Republic of the Congo: The Mountain Gorilla, *Gorilla gorilla beringei* occurs in the Virunga National Park of DRC. The Virunga National Park is 790,000 hectares in size and is contiguous to Rwenzori Mountains National Park, Uganda and Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda.

The eastern lowlands gorilla, *G. g. graueri* occurs in eastern lowland forest of DRC west of the Rift (a gorilla population on Mt. Kahuzi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been referred to as *G. g. beringei* by some authors, although it is generally agreed that it is actually a population of *Gorilla gorilla graueri* (Nowak, 1999)).

Rwanda: The Mountain Gorilla, *G. g. beringei* occurs in the Volcanoes National Park, which is 12,500-13,000 hectares in size and is contiguous to Virunga National Park in DRC and Gorilla National Park in Uganda. It ranges in altitude from 2,400 m to 4,507 m (UNEP-WCMC, 2003c).

Uganda: The Mountain Gorilla, *G. g. beringei* occurs in the Mgahinga National Park, Uganda and Bwindi-Impenetrable National Park, Uganda. The Mgahinga National Park is 2,899 hectares in size and is found in the extreme south-west of Uganda on the borders with DRC and Rwanda. It ranges in altitude from 2,700 m to 4,127 m. The Bwindi-Impenetrable National Park is 32,092 hectares and ranges in altitude from 1,190 m to 2,607 m.

Nigeria: Within the western group, the isolated Nigeria-Cameroon gorillas are now recognised as a subspecies, the Cross River gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*); it is the most restricted of the gorillas, being found only in 7 or 9 isolated populations on the Nigerian-Cameroon border. It is thought that as few as 150 - 200 of these animals survive today.

Cameroon: The Cross River gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*) is distributed across the Nigeria-Cameroon border (see above). The nominal form (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*) is distributed in Cameroon south of ca 3° North along the border with Rio Muni, Gabon, Congo and Central African Republic in the East.

Congo: The Western Lowland Gorilla is still widely distributed in Congo north of the Equator, and also present in the south-western regions of Lékoumou and Bandondo. But although Gabon and Congo hold 80 percent of the world's gorillas and most of the Central African chimpanzees, there are reports stating that the population of apes in Congo declined by more than half between 1983 and 2000 (GRASP and IPS, 2004).

Gabon: The Western Lowland Gorilla is widely spread in Gabon. It occurs in particular in the three protected area of lowland forest, Lopé, Moukala-Dougoua and Wonga-Wongué (covering respectively ca 5000 km², ca 1000 km² and 5000 km²).

Equatorial Guinea: The Western Lowland Gorilla is widely spread throughout Rio Muni, the continental part of the country.

Central African Republic: The Western Lowland Gorilla is found in the south-western corner of Central African Republic. It is present in Dzanga-Nodki National Park and in the Dzanga-Sangha Reserve (ca 5000 km²). This area is contiguous with good habitats in the Congo (Sangha Region) and in Cameroon (Dja/Boumaka/Lobéké).

Angola (Cabinda enclave): The Western Lowland Gorilla reaches the northern part of the Cabinda enclave of Angola.

2.2 Population estimates and trends

The gorilla is a forest dwelling species, most of whose numbers live outside protected areas. A usable index of potential decline in gorilla habitat can be the national rates of disappearance of "moist forest" (Harcourt, 1996). The rate of forest destruction in Africa correlates strongly with human density and the countries economies, and will presumably continue to increase in all African countries (Barnes, 1990). The best available estimates indicate that the world gorilla population is above 100.000 individuals (112.000, Butynski, 2001; 125.000, MacDonald, 2001). According to the IUCN Red List (2002), all taxons are considered "endangered" (EN A2cd).

With the exception of the Mountain Gorilla however, accurate population estimates for gorillas are difficult to establish, because their hugely vast range has not yet been thoroughly surveyed. Population counts and estimates of gorillas are commonly carried out on the basis of nest or sleeping site counts (e.g. Inogwabini *et al.*, 2000). Adults and immature weaned animals build new nests to sleep in each night. The nests are counted and any dung adjacent to each nest examined gives a

reliable indication of group size as well as age of animal, particularly when the counts are repeated over several nights.

The Western Lowland Gorilla (*G. g. gorilla*) (IUCN 2002, EN A2cd) Nobody knows how many western gorillas currently survive in the wild. Population estimates were evaluated from protected areas, where relatively high gorilla densities occur, and these figures were then extrapolated over the rest of the region to arrive at a figure of 94,500 (Butynski 2001).

The Cross River gorilla (*G. g. diehli*) (IUCN 2002, CR A2c; C2a(i)) is the most restricted of the gorillas, being found only in 7 or 9 isolated populations on the Nigerian-Cameroon border. It is thought that as few as 150 - 200 of these animals survive today.

The Eastern Lowland Gorilla (*G. g. graueri*) (IUCN 2002, EN A2cd + 3cd + 4cd): the best available estimate for the Eastern Lowland Gorilla indicates a total population over 10,500 animals, with two main populations in two large national parks, Kahuzi Biega and Maiko NP, in DRC. New evidence suggests that the total may have been reduced to 2,000-3,000 which, if confirmed, would be a 60-80% loss in only five years (Redmond, 2001).

The Mountain Gorilla (*G. g. beringei*) (IUCN 2002, CR C2a(ii)): In Rwanda and Uganda, the entire populations are located within protected areas. The number of mountain gorillas declined throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, and some declines were seen into the 1990s (e.g Binyeri *et al.*, 2002). IUCN (1982) described a decline in the mountain gorilla numbers in the Virungas, from 400-500 in the late 1950s, to 275 in 1973 to 250 by 1981, with most of the decline occurring in the Democratic Republic of Congo section. However, since the mid 1980s, the Mountain Gorilla appears to be gradually increasing in numbers. Based on recent estimates (Kalpers *et al.*, 2003 and McNeilage *et al.*, 2001), the total number of mountain gorillas may be between 651 and 687, or according to Plumtre *et al.* (2003) there are a total of approximately 650-700 mountain gorillas. According to WWF (2002) the Virunga population of Mountain Gorilla has increased by 14% in the last 12 years. The Bwindi population is stable and may also be increasing (Uganda Wildlife Division, 2002a; WWF, 2002; McNeilage *et al.*, 2001).

2.3 Habitat

The Gorilla is a forest species. They inhabit tropical rain forests, forest edges and clearings, riverine forests, swamps, and abandoned, cultivated fields.

Western gorillas and Eastern Lowland Gorillas live in tropical forests (Congolian Coastal Forests and Guinean Moist Forests) where herb densities are lower and fruit is more abundant compared to the high-altitude montane forests which is the characteristic habitat of the mountain gorillas (reviewed in Doran & McNeilage, 1998, 2001). Many, but not all, western gorilla habitats include localised, open clearings covered with year-round herbaceous vegetation (Magliocca *et al.*, 1999; Parnell, 2002), or large swamps bordering rivers (Blake *et al.*, 1995; Fay *et al.*, 1989; Nishihara, 1995).

The habitat of the Mountain Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla beringei*) consists of subtropical-tropical Moist Forest (IUCN, 2002). Forest edges and regenerating or secondary forest are favoured gorilla habitat (IUCN, 1982). A number of vegetation zones have been identified in the Mountain Gorilla habitat of the central Virungas Volcano region, which mostly consist of Hagenia-Hypericum woodland with a relatively open canopy and extremely dense herbaceous understorey (Watts, 1997). Mountain gorillas range up to 3400 m in altitude with occasional forays even higher (IUCN, 1982). Bwindi gorillas tend to live in lower elevations, warmer temperatures and are more arboreal than Virunga gorillas (Sarmiento *et al.*, 1996). The area of habitat occupied by the Mountain Gorilla in the Virungas is approximately 375 km² and the Bwindi gorillas occupy an area of approximately 215 km² (Butynski, 2001).

2.4 Migrations

Western Lowland Gorilla groups travel within a home range averaging 5.6 to 15.4 sq. km. Gorillas do not display territorial behaviour, and neighbouring groups often overlap ranges (Dixson, 1981, Bermejo, 2004, Doran *et al.*, 2004). The group usually favours a certain area within the home range but seems to follow a seasonal pattern depending upon the availability of ripening fruits and, at some sites, localised large open clearings (swamps and "bais"). Gorillas normally travel 0.5-2.0 km per day (Dixson, 1981, Doran *et al.*, 2004).

The mountain gorillas of the Virunga volcanoes inhabit an area that is shared between three countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. Gorillas have a home range of between 5 and 30 km² (UNEP-WCMC and WWF, 2001), which may include land in more than one country and hence daily foraging movement may involve crossing international borders. The area of habitat occupied by the Virungas Mountain Gorilla is approximately 375 km² and that occupied by the gorillas of Bwindi-Impenetrable National Park is approximately 215 km² (Butynski, 2001).

A study by Vedder (1984) in Volcans National Park of Rwanda indicated that, within each of the dietary seasons (October-November and December to September), gorillas responded to decreases in food abundance by expanding their range and travelling further by day, as well as by altering their diet. This group of gorillas travelled through an area of 8.56 km² during a 12 month period. Solitary male mountain gorillas travel further and expand their home range as long as they are unmated, and Mountain Gorilla home ranges typically overlap extensively (Watts, 1994). Watts (1998) found that they used areas less than or equal to 25 km² and that annual home range size and core area size varied considerably both with groups and across years. Food and male mating competition can influence the home range and core area selection and size.

3 **Threat data**

Major threats

The major threats to gorilla populations are habitat loss or modification (e.g. through deforestation, wood extraction, infrastructure development, human settlement and agricultural crops (IUCN, 2002)) and forest encroachment (Muruthi *et al.*, 2000), direct killing (for the bushmeat trade mostly) or hunting (for live animals trade), disease and disease transmission from humans and war or political unrest (Plumptre *et al.*, 2003; Muruthi *et al.*, 2000; IUCN, 2002).

3.1 Direct threats

- **the bushmeat trade**

If habitat loss or degradation have been regarded as the major threats to gorilla populations, much recent concern has been focused on the bushmeat trade. Forest is being converted to crop production and livestock grazing in many parts of Africa. Where new routes are opened up for timber or mineral extraction, exploitation of forest animals for food use (bushmeat) rises in order both to support the incoming labour force and to export bushmeat to urban markets. Although bushmeat has been, and still is culturally and nutritionally important in many regions, the impact of bushmeat hunting is now more widespread and serious on many species because it is increasing rapidly with increasing access into remote areas, and new markets are being developed to serve rising demand among urban populations, where it is considered a delicacy. Gorilla meat forms only a small proportion of the commercial bushmeat trade, but the impact on ape populations is disproportionately great because of their slow reproductive rate and the social consequences of silverbacks being killed (infanticide may ensue when nursing mothers join a new male).

- **Other forms of direct exploitation**

In the Virunga and Volcano National Parks of DRC and Rwanda, infant gorillas may be captured for sale, and adult males killed so that their skulls can be sold as souvenirs to tourists. Adults may also be killed in order to gain access to the infants. An infant can reportedly fetch as much as £86,000 on the black market (Vesperini, 2002). At least three infants were stolen in the Virunga Volcano Region in 2002 (Anon., 2002). Binyeri *et al.* (2002) reported a number of incidents in the Virunga National Park of DRC in which infant gorillas were abducted for sale, and adults killed to gain access to the infants.

- **Diseases**

Beside severe impacts on human populations, several outbreaks of the Ebola virus since 2000 might have claimed thousands of great apes. The first, in 2000 and 2001, was centred in Uganda, the second outbreak occurred in 2001 and 2002 in Uganda and the Republic of the Congo. Ebola hemorrhagic fever is a severe, often-fatal disease that affects humans and non-human primates, such as monkeys, gorillas and chimpanzees. Many scientists believe the disease is spread through the butchering and handling of primate bushmeat. The disease has been confirmed in six African nations: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, and Uganda.

Another potential threat to gorillas is exposure to human diseases (e.g Graczyk *et al.*, 2001a; Graczyk *et al.*, 2001b) particularly for habituated gorillas that come into contact with humans, in areas of gorilla tourism (UNEP-WCMC and WWF, 2001). Gorilla tourism exposes gorillas to humans and hence to any diseases that humans may be carrying, some of which the gorillas may never have been exposed to before. Williamson (1999) reported that in Volcans National Park the most serious threat to the gorillas may be the acquisition of human parasites and disease and recently a number of gorillas in this Park have died of an unknown illness (UNEP-WCMC, 2003c). An outbreak of a respiratory disease, with the possibility of measles as the primary infection, in the Parc National des Volcans in Rwanda claimed six gorilla lives, and 27 other gorillas were successfully treated (Wallis and Lee, 1999). However, there are few data on the impacts of disease, particularly outside the Virungas (Plumptre *et al.*, 2003). In Rwanda, strict rules are in place to regulate tourist visiting times and the number of tourists per group (Plumptre *et al.*, 2003). Other measures are in place and include limiting the approach of humans to 5 m, burying human excrement deeper than 30 cm and chasing gorillas from private lands surrounding the parks (Kalema-Zikusoka *et al.*, 2002).

3.2 Habitat destruction

Throughout the gorilla's range, the forests on which it depends for survival are being cut down for timber and to make way for agriculture. Habitat loss is a major threat to gorillas as forests are rapidly being lost to commercial logging interests and subsistence agriculture. The rate of forest destruction in Africa correlates strongly with human density and the countries' economies, and will presumably continue to increase in all African countries (Barnes, 1990). There is also a strong link between habitat loss and the bushmeat trade, as forests opened up by timber companies are more easily accessible to hunters, who often sell meat to employees of the logging companies.

In particular, the Mountain Gorilla lives in an area where there is a high human population. In Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, including Bwindi Impenetrable Forest Reserve, fragments of forest form part of a landscape that supports one of the highest densities of rural human populations in Africa (Taylor *et al.*, 1999). The main threat to gorillas in DRC is forest clearance and, although no land has been appropriated from the habitat of the Virunga gorillas there, declines may be due to the presence of livestock in the Virungas (IUCN, 1982). Deforestation to supply refugees' demand for fuelwood has affected 105 km² of the park, of which 35 km² has been completely stripped (UNEP-WCMC, 2003b). Logging is likely to increase in DCR, with the end of the political conflicts. However, gorillas often favour areas of secondary vegetation and so could coexist with logging, if adequate protection was insured (Plumptre *et al.*, 2003). Forest clearance also threatens the population of Mountain Gorillas in the Volcans National Park of Rwanda (IUCN, 1982). In Mgahinga National

Park, Uganda, agricultural and pastoral activities are major threats. Deforestation by residents of the lower slopes is destroying more gorilla habitat and this was further exacerbated by allowing restricted bamboo cutting annually in the reserve before 1982. The area seems to be less well protected than neighbouring protected areas in DRC and Rwanda. There are about 400 gorillas in this whole region, but only one group is found in the Ugandan sector (UNEP-WCMC, 2003d). The Bwindi-Impenetrable Forest National Park population is relatively well protected. Only manual extraction of timber is permitted, and hence logging is very selective although it is allowed throughout the whole forest reserve (now National Park) (IUCN, 1982) and only about 10% of the forest remains free from human disturbance (UNEP-WCMC, 2003a). However, relatively intensive logging and the extraction of gold and charcoal does occur in certain areas, although most illegal activity has been reduced to sustainable levels. Agricultural encroachment is the major threat to forest integrity (UNEP-WCMC, 2003a).

In the long run, only preventing continued unsustainable exploitation of Africa's forests would ensure the well being of the gorilla.

3.3 Indirect threat

Impact of Conflict:

The impact of wars and political conflicts is particularly well documented for the Mountain Gorilla. The early 1990s saw the outbreak of fighting in Rwanda, which by April 1994 had expanded into DRC and resulted in a stream of refugees pouring into gorilla habitat. Indeed, approximately 50% of Rwanda's civilian population were displaced during this conflict, of which 860,000 refugees were concentrated in the vicinity of Virunga National Park (Dudley *et al.*, 2002). Shortly after the influx of Rwandan refugees in 1994/1995 into DRC, came the 1996 war between the armed forces of DRC and the rebel movement of Kabila, backed by Angola, Rwanda and Uganda. Subsequently fighting again broke out in 1998 between Rwandan and Ugandan troops and the DRC army. The streams of refugees that were displaced during these conflicts led to uncontrolled firewood harvesting, and increased poaching in the Virungas National Park and the death of more than four silverback mountain gorillas (UNEP-WCMC and WWF, 2001) and disruption of natural animal migration patterns (UNEP-WCMC, 2003b). Three of the four refugee camps in North Kivu were located in or near to the park buffer zone, and it is estimated that at least 500,000 ha of the park have been affected by wood harvesting or poaching (UNEP-WCMC, 2003b). After the refugees left in 1996, conflict in the DRC led to looting and destruction of infrastructure in the Park, as well as the possible death of 15 Virunga mountain gorillas (UNEP-WCMC and WWF, 2001). Kalpers *et al.* (2003) report that between 12 and 17 gorillas are known to have died between 1992 and 2000 in the Virungas volcanoes region as a direct result of military activity. Concern for the protection and management of the site, especially with regards to recurring encroachments, deforestation, poaching, population growth, and the refugee related problems that have arisen due to civil unrest in Rwanda, led to the site being placed on the World Heritage in Danger List in 1994 (UNESCO, 1994). The situation around Virunga is unstable, militia groups may still be active in the region, aerial census of the area has not been possible since 1995 and there are frequent reports of poaching, deforestation and illegal gold mining in the park (UNEP-WCMC, 2003b). Much of the Virungas has clearly been severely affected by conflict.

3.4 Threat connected especially with migrations

No threat are especially connected with migration, other than what already mentioned in the previous section on the impact of wars and conflicts. This can of course potentially be a threat for groups of gorillas established across national borders.

3.5 National and international utilisation

As indicated in section 3.1, the bushmeat trade is nowadays a very serious and growing concern. Even though Gorilla meat represents only a small proportion of the commercial bushmeat trade, the impact of the trade on the species is very important, due to its slow reproductive rate and the social consequences of a dominant male being killed. Trade in live specimens is also referred to in section 3.1.

3.6 Other identified threats

Accidental entrapment in snares used to trap other wild animals is also a threat to the mountain gorillas. Plumptre *et al.* (1997) stated that the setting of snares for ungulates in the Volcans National Park, Rwanda is one of the greatest threats to *Gorilla gorilla beringei*. However, Williamson (1999) reported that at least 99% of the three research groups in the Volcans National Park, Rwanda were in good physical shape.

The isolation and low numbers of Mountain Gorilla populations have given rise to concerns about inbreeding (Garner and Ryder, 1996). The mitochondrial DNA of the Virunga and the Bwindi Mountain Gorilla exhibited low variability further strengthening this concern, although more extensive sampling is required (Garner and Ryder, 1996).

International trade in live gorillas and gorilla parts, which used to be a threat, has declined since the gorilla was listed in Appendix I of CITES. But is still a real risk, and recent incidents have been reported.

4 **Protection status and needs**

4.1 National protection status

International trade in live gorillas and gorilla products, formerly a significant threat to the species, has declined since the gorilla was listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1977. National laws for control of hunting and capture exist in all countries with gorilla populations, but lack of funds and inaccessibility make wide enforcement of this legislation rare.

Gorillas are protected under national legislation in all countries where it occur. All Mountain Gorilla populations occur within national parks, therefore they and their habitat have some degree of protection. However, political and institutional instability as well as illegal hunting and poaching may undermine such protection. National laws in all range states exist for the control of hunting and capture of the gorillas, although wide enforcement of the legislation is difficult due to lack of funds and inaccessibility (Nellemann and Newton, 2002).

Democratic Republic of the Congo: The Mountain Gorilla is given total protection in the DRC through the Décret relatif à la chasse et à la pêche of 1937 (Decree on hunting and fishing) - possession, transport, and/or national trade is prohibited or regulated. It is also referred to in the Hunting Act of 1982 and in the 1973 Departmental Order regulating the issuance of special elephant hunting permits and listing protected animals (ECOLEX, 2003). In addition, under Ordonnance-Loi relative à la conservation de la nature of 1969, any person that takes gorillas in a strict nature reserve is liable to a penalty of imprisonment of 1-10 years.

Rwanda: The Mountain Gorilla is given total protection in Rwanda through the Ordonnance-loi portant création de l'office Rwandais du tourisme et des parcs nationaux (Ordinance establishing the Office of Tourism and National Parks of Rwanda) of 1973 - possession, transport, and/or national trade is prohibited or regulated (ECOLEX, 2003). The Volcans National Park in Rwanda is a Biosphere Reserve.

Uganda: The taking of mountain gorillas is prohibited by national legislation (Uganda Wildlife Division, 2002a). Relevant legislation includes the Uganda Wildlife Statute, No. 14 of 1996, and the National Environment Statute, No. 3 of 1995. The Uganda Wildlife Statute, No. 14 of 1996 states that "species which migrate to or through Uganda which are protected under any international convention or treaty to which Uganda is party and which section 91 applies shall be protected species under this Statute" (ECOLEX, 2003); the Mountain Gorilla is included.

In Bwindi-Impenetrable National Park, protection is total, although extractive use may be sanctioned by the Board of Trustees (UNEP-WCMC, 2003a). When Bwindi-Impenetrable National Park and Mgahinga National Park were created, entry to the parks by anyone except authorised researchers was prohibited, thus stamping out large scale logging and gorilla poaching (Nowak, 1995). The parks were later opened to regulated tourism.

4.2 International protection status

The Mountain Gorilla, *Gorilla gorilla beringei*, is listed in Appendix I of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). The gorilla, *Gorilla gorilla*, was listed in CITES Appendix I on 1st July, 1975, and all Range States are Parties. The gorilla is listed in Class A of the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (1969). Both Virunga National Park and Bwindi-Impenetrable National Park are World Heritage Areas. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has ratified and Uganda and Rwanda have accepted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention).

4.3 Additional protection needs

Implementation of recommendations from International Primatology Society, concerning Ebola epidemics.

5 Range States

Range states for *Gorilla gorilla* are Angola, CAMEROON, Central African Republic, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, NIGERIA, REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, RWANDA and UGANDA.

At lower taxons level, range states for *G. g. gorilla* are Angola, CAMEROON, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO; for *G. g. diehli* are NIGERIA and CAMEROON; for *G. g. graeuri* is the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO; and for *G. g. beringei* are the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, RWANDA and UGANDA.

6 Comments from Range States

7 Additional Remarks

Although the Mountain Gorilla is already listed in Appendix I of the Convention on Migratory Species, it is important, in the light of recent events (Ebola virus, bushmeat crisis) to request now the entire taxon *Gorilla gorilla sensu lato* to be included in Appendix I, as it would help stimulate concerted conservation actions to be undertaken between range states, and support and complement the GRASP programme.

8 References

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