

"Le Gorille 2"

(March 2000) has been produced by ICCN and PNKB-GTZ. The printing funds were provided by IPPL (International Primate Protection League, www.ippl.org), Nouvelles Approches (website in progress), Wild Images (www.wild-images.com), and an individual contributor. The translation was prepared by Julee Roth (www.snuggleme.com), Jo Thompson (Lukuru Wildlife Research Project, www.members.aol.com/jat434/index.htm) and Catherine Cussaguet.

EDITORIAL

On the threshold of the 3rd millennium, with the entire world conscience focusing on the importance of protecting nature for present and future generations, in Africa's Great Lakes Region, especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Kahuzi-Biega National Park (PNKB), a World Heritage Site, has been in the grips of a destructive, vicious war for more than 3 years.

While before the war, PNKB was one of the best national parks monitored in Africa, thanks to the support of the German Cooperative (GTZ), today the control of some 95% of its 6,000 km² is avoiding the benefits of Institute Congolese for the Conservation of Nature (ICCN) protection. In other words, only 5% of the 6,000 km² Park is currently being monitored by PNKB-GTZ staff.

Following this current war, the Rangers who were based in both sub-stations (Itebero & Nzovu) and in the 7 patrol posts have been left disarmed. Attacking numbers of guerrillas victimized the Rangers, forcing them to flee the premises they had been assigned, withdrawing to seek refuge in the Park headquarters (Station Tshivanga) about 32 km from Bukavu. Therefore, the activities that were progressing in 95% of the Park environs were interrupted. The organizational infrastructure at the Park's core, built around the hierarchy of the station, the sub-stations, and patrol posts, is strongly damaged.

Intruder movements and activities, in the 95% of the Park outside ICCN control, are alarming: the Park has become a site where the pillage(looting) of trophies and of precious materials is organized not for the interests of the local people, but for the foreigner countries.

Despite this disaster, ICCN struggles, with the support of its German partner, for control of the tourist area (5% of the sprawling Park) so that it protects those surviving habituated gorillas. The sale of some Park lands, located in the ecological corridor, to about ten fat and rich people from the town of Bukavu by some state services is denounced by the governmental officials.

The poachers have been arrested and their organization network information has been made available. The monitoring of the gorilla families is constant. Although several institutions and state enterprises have reduced or stopped their activities during this conflict, PNKB maintains its presence along side the local population blending its support with development initiatives. The State is informed of issues which threaten the protection of the Park.

We are launching an ultimate plea to the people of South Kivu and North Kivu in order that this population split from the hungry merchants who push them to the total destruction of PNKB. We ask international organizations for help safeguarding those inhabitants of their World Heritage Site and for a firm condemnation of ecocide (destroying the habitat) of the last Grauer's gorillas and elephants to perpetuate in PNKB. We asked that their good intentions will be accompanied by concrete actions.

ECHOES OF KAHUZI-BIEGA

PNKB is a victim of wars said to liberate but which are killing the RDC since 1996. Since that time, 95% of the vast expanses of the Park are no longer controlled by ICCN. The factions in war who occupy this part are devoted to the exploitation of trophies, gold, coltan (the tantalum-rich variety of the mineral columbite, an important ore whose elements serve as constituents of corrosion-resistant metal alloys), and cassiterite (the only commercially important ore of tin). The camps of many thousands of people are growing and putting pressure on the Park at Kakelo, Nzovu, Busakala, etc. The fate of approximately 8,000 gorillas and 3,600 elephants estimated before 1996 is not known. Those responsible for the Park don't know if there still remains a single animal in this controlled area after more than 3 years of massacre.

On the other hand, the situation of the flora and fauna in the 5% of the Park controlled by ICCN is relatively well know. This portion, generally situated in the territory of Kabare and Kalehe around the station of Tshivanga, sheltered 258 gorillas and nearly 350 elephants before 1996.

Currently (February census) the Park Rangers count nearly 70 gorillas and tracks from five elephants. Those animals have been massacred by the poachers and their trophies flood the markets of the neighboring countries. The three families of habituated gorillas, tourists knew as Mubala, Nindja, and Mushamuka, have been decimated. This is the same for the silverback (head of the family) Maheshe II, whose life you read about in "the Gorilla #1." He was murdered. The forest of the Park is actively being destroyed in a rhythm without precedent: 3,500 hectares, sold by certain State services during the war, have been deforested and burned by about ten men and women for their own use, growing rich, exploiting a rightful heritage of all.

This ecocide, perpetuated against PNKB, becomes stronger by the displacement of the tens of thousands of people of Kalonge from the west to the east of the Park. This displacement creates two problems. The first is the increased density of humans in the rural territory of Kabare, a zone which surpassed 300 people/km². The demands on the Park have increased sensibly. The population of Kalonge, who have previously defended the Park, finds itself obligated to deforest to survive. The second problem is that by fleeing their territory, the people of Kalonge have left their executioner. They have no other place to get meat or provisions except what is in the Park.

Worse yet, the extermination of elephants exposes the remaining gorillas to danger. In fact, it is the elephant who makes the road for the gorillas who remain. Also, thanks to the elephant, it is the germinated plants they eat that make up the food of the gorilla. Without the elephant, the gorillas are not able to beneficially move nor have sufficient plants to eat to survive. Therefore, with certainty, the Congolese and our entire humanity risk losing Grauer's gorillas; a sub-species that can no longer be observed anywhere else in the world in its natural state, as in PNKB.

What is worrying is that in spite of distress calls thrown to the political authority, concrete actions in order to stop this slaughter are occurring. The political rhetoric is full of sympathy for protecting our heritage. Written instructions exist from the different levels of authority with the goal of protecting the Park, but those who destroy the Park are known and circulate without being worried. They brandish with impunity the registered trophies obtained in violation of the law in full view of the authorities who are supposed to enforce the law. The salary of the Park Guards has not been paid. These same Guards are not sufficiently equipped to reverse the comparable force needed to overthrow the armed poachers.

It is time for good will gestures to save those who remain in PNKB. It's imperative to equip the Guards, to train and motivate them.

In addition to this, other good will gestures are necessary: to expel the dozens of farmers who occupy the ecological corridor of PNKB and, above all, to stop the war.

The situation in the 5% of the Park under control:
of the 258 gorillas estimated in 1996, there are +/- 70.
of the 350 elephants estimated in 1996, we have only seen the tracks of 5.
3,500 hectares of the World Heritage Site have been sold.

The situations in the 95% of the Park outside control:
the fate of +/- 8,000 gorillas, +/- 3,600 elephants, and buffaloes, is very concerning.
the scene risks one day to be desolated and dark.

MY COMPANIONS

“You have surely already heard from us. Our scientific name is *Loxondota africana cyclotis*, the tropical forest elephant. This last time, we were victims of horrible massacres and I’m not able not to denounce it. Because too much is too much. If we are hunted in the 5% under control of PNKB, I ask myself what is the fate of my living brothers in the 95% outside the control?”

We are threatened, very threatened. The threat is not limited to the destruction of our habitat, but also to the point of our very extermination. What is disgusting is to notice that those who showed pride in their forests and to whom we were giving services are unfortunately accomplices in the acts of destruction and in reality win nothing.

This is truly a surprise when one sees how the Congolese make their country lose their natural riches. For a small amount, they actually kill us to enrich foreigners. Can you take a lesson from that and stop massacring us?

I send a cry of alarm to the Congolese who still have a conscience and who love their country. In order that they fight to save us, let me remind you a little of our life. Maybe this will help you to return to reason.

Our gestation lasts 22 months at the end which a little one comes into the world. It takes another 4 years before a birth follows. The females (cow elephant) can have only 8 to 9 young in their lifetime but only half reach adult age. It takes us many tens of years to reconstitute our families which are right now being decimated.

Those who know us well call us creature of the environment (landscape), since after our passage we clear the forest. For the other animals who have difficulties penetrating into the forest they will find some clearing behind us where they are able to live easily. This isn’t all. Certain tree seeds can grow only after vacationing in our intestines, trees whose fruits and leaves provide food for other compatriots of the forest and serve as future medications for today’s incurable illnesses. Can you imagine how many species of vegetable and animal you have lost while exterminating us thus?

Yesterday we were more or less 350 in the highest part of the Park. Today I stay alone without hope. Poor survivor!

I know that certain people among you accuse us of ravaging their cultivated land. To these people I ask their pardon in the name of my entire family which has disappeared. But here I also must say to you that the source of this problem is because of the occupation of the Nindja ecological corridor by farmers. This low altitude corridor is where we looked for food which allowed us to go to the low elevation searching for food. Thus now we find ourselves concentrated in the very reduced, high altitude zone where we have limited movement and problems finding

the suitable compliment of food. This is why we detoured our food choices to include foods in your fields. I think you excuse us. Now that I am alone, am I able to restore all that you have lost as you have killed my brothers of the high altitude? I don't even know if it is the same fate for my brothers of the low altitude or even if they are still alive.

You who still have a voice and power, won't you drive off those who cross our path through the low altitude and who massacre our cousins of Nzovu and Itebero? In the proceeding fashion, you would still give me the chance to see my brothers again."

CURIOUS CORNER

Adventures of a Ranger team on patrol.

"Phew! The patrol is very painful today," explains the head of the team of patrol in a section again controlled by Park Rangers. "According to my watch it's 3:00 p.m. Since 7:30a.m. we have been in the forest to look for the poachers that we had been told about yesterday. Our wilderness portion (lunch) we have swallowed around noon. Now we have an empty belly. My boys, have courage! We are already on the fresh tracks of those outlaws. See how we act to surprise them. Each will have to jump on a fugitive to immobilize him and tie him up to bring him back to the station. We will have ..."

The head of the team has not finished the sentence when he hears men's voices not far from them and calls his co-team to guard their silence. Whispering, he reminds them that they must be aware of his orders during this delicate moment of their day.

Curiously, the poachers advance in the direction of the Guards who are preparing their attack. These poachers speak in loud voices without thinking of the effect. They are more or less 20 meters from the Guards hiding place but the view is not good because of the tall grass. In the moment where the team leader should give the assault order, he hesitates, then whispers, "Lie down and don't move."

The Guards comply, but understand nothing. The poachers proceed calmly along their path without the least idea of ambush. They joke (laugh) strongly in a reassuring manner as if they mock the Guards hiding in their passage. Just after they turn their backs to the Guards, the courageous team leader opens fire and shoots three rounds into the air creating panic among the poachers. He doesn't hesitate despite the number and the quality of sophisticated arms that the poachers hold. Following the shooting, the poachers disperse letting drop their different loads. There is a stampede. Some seconds later a voice screams for help from under the grass, not far from the path. The team leader, in a position to shoot, advances and discovers a poacher moaning. His heavy load fell on his leg. It's broken. "Hold the victim. Collect all that we can to show evidence of our triumph. Go under the

large myrianthus tree where we are going to rest ourselves.” With a happy air which disguises fatigue, the Guards collapse under the tree. Showing a face full of emotion and satisfaction, the team leader makes a speech and reflects to his co-team. “One has always said that when one wants, one can.”

“We have just steered clear of dozens of men with three weapons of war. We have intercepted a gun of war, two ivory tusks and four machetes.”

This is good but when I think about the big part of the Park that we have not controlled for over three years I have fever in the blood. I ask myself if it exists as a lone animal in this part where the law of the jungle actually reigns.

“This is sad. It has been exactly two months since we stopped this poacher in the Park near Musisi and he was transferred to the central prison. Some days after, he was freed without reason. He was making fun of us in the village. Here he is again in the Park. Believe me, he works on behalf of the men who pretend to be the strong men today. In spite of this apparent force they will be one day judged for violating the law and for spoiling our heritage for future generations.

No, it is time that the state takes its responsibility and that justice makes right work (prevails). Who will live, will see.”

POPULATION PNKB

Even though PNKB continues to be subjected to the harmful effects of pillaging of its natural resources by certain people without fearing god or law, it doesn't stop to count on the collaboration of the people for safeguarding this heritage of great value.

This intensification of destruction of natural resources of the Park is tied to a lot of factors including the irresponsibility of the state and certainly these wars which have become permanent.

While other institutions and enterprises (private and state) have reduced or completely arrested their activities since the repeating of war, PNKB has maintained its presence along side the local people like an old African man obligates himself to help his neighbor when his hut just burned!

In this sense, the collaboration between the Park and the people has always been focused on the satisfaction of certain interests of the people and safeguarding the natural resources of the Park by certain concrete actions. Through these activities, in favor of the people, one could note the support of agricultural activities (making the availability of seeds) and the social infrastructure of Nindja to Kalonge and in the intervention zone of Tshivanga. About forty of their local development initiatives were formed and continue as improvements to homes of Nindja and Tshivanga and the main road to Miti-Katana.

In addition to this, the Rangers of the Park are more and more trying to exchange with the people about the interests to ultimately protect the natural resources of PNKB which should be considered as a tourist industry for the Province of South Kivu and for the whole Congo.

Regarding the activities of protecting the natural resources of PNKB with the people, one can know that certain groups, like those of Kalonge, have already manifested their determination to contribute in any possible way to the conservation of the Park during the war of October 1996.

As an example, while the Guards were disarmed by the fleeing troops, it is the local people of Kalonge who have insured the protection of the natural resources and other goods of the Park.

This practice continues to be experienced under diverse forms in other groups and localities around PNKB. Between the groups Bushwira and Irhambi/Kitana, certain poachers who were formally destroying the Park have converted to Rangers.

Since then, they help the Guards to discourage their colleagues who persist in this dishonorable profession. Beyond the collaboration with chiefs and local police to sensitize more about the respect of the Park limits and resources, this experience has allowed to diminish human pressure on the natural resources of the controlled part of the Park, especially in the massacre of large mammals.

Besides, from the study about the management of natural resources in PNKB which was done by the Rangers of ICCN in December 1999, it appears that the interventions of the Park and its supporting project (PNKB-GTZ) have a social characteristic and community impact while the interests of the different actors and, for most of the time, those implicated in the destruction of the Park are essentially economical for the individual. This official report could be expected, that's why PNKB has envisioned the support of revenue generating activities. Unfortunately, these types of activities demand a minimum of security which isn't actually available and which doesn't allow PNKB to respond to preoccupation of the different families. By leading this study about the management, PNKB was cared specially for seeing the population of South Kivu in general and the surrounding population to implicate itself efficiently in saving this heritage instead of leaving it in the hands of some selfish people who choose to destroy everybody's future.

Some activities realized in the 2nd half of 1999 with the people:

- agricultural assistance to 259 members of 13 ILD woman.
- primary schools of Bushwira, Muyeye, Mudusa and Ishamba Institute each have received 45 desks and some black boards.
- 126 members of 56 ILD have been trained in FA and 133 already use it.
- 31 km of the Park limits have been consistently maintained.

- 6 Rangers houses have been rehabilitated.
- Radio Show about the Park each Tuesday at 4pm on Radio Kahuzi.

RESEARCH

Domestication of endemic species.

Facing human pressure on the natural resources of the Park in general and specifically flora, a study on the forest products taken in the Park by the people was done in the month of August 1999 by the Unit of research in the groups Mitit, Mudaka, Bugorhe and Inhambi/Katana. To the issue of this study, the unit in charge of the researcher has recommended to domesticate certain species identified and looked for traditional and modern medicines. Forest products used like heating fuel wood, source of forage, object of commerce, wood to be worked and used for building, and food belong in this program.

Since September 1999, 5 species are in trials. They are *Sina Arundinaria alpina* <<Mulonge>>, *Polyscias fulva* <<Lunga ou Tongi>>, *Prunus africana* <<Muhumbahumba>>, *Myrianthus holstii* <<Bwamba>>, and *Hagenia abyssinica* <<Mwizuzi>>. The trial is done by seed/grain, wild transplants, or cuttings.

In summary 3 to 4 months after, the nontreated seeds well germinated and the wild transplants are a well composed nursery compared with the cuttings. These kinds of tree species are among the tree species most threatened. More than one house of commerce commands its delivery by stripping in the Park for exportation. The *Prunus* is appreciated because it contains the active principles very important to following the example of other plants used in modern medicine. For other tree species only the wild cutting for the *Polyscias* and *Hagenia* have done well. However, the wild transplant of bamboo taken from the Park still gives doubtful results. For this reason of durability, only the development of species which have given good results by seeds could be recommended. By comparison to the tree seeds like *Polyscias* and *Hagenia* who risk the sampling continues of the seed based in the Park it is appropriate to constitute a seed bank. Good results and integrating the seeds in our cultural techniques is also a noble manner of saving the tropical forests in general and protects this bank of genes of PNKB in particular. Considering that the *Prunus* bark can be bought as well as the bark of quinquina, it's popularization would also be a way to contribute to the growth of revenue of the rural people.

Participating Management as a process.

The management considered as a form of partnering and allowing the different protagonists interested to share the function, the rights, and responsibilities relative to management of a territory or different resources being protected is not new for PNKB. A process aiming to make the people participate in the safeguarding of resources of PNKB has since 1985 reproached the conservation interests to development. Among considerable actions of this experience of management in PNKB, we can keep the connection to the Park and local people and the growing

interests of the agents of conservation for collaboration. The common way of managing the Park is the optimism that the problems related to the participation will find answers by participation. In the worries of putting the finishing touches on this strategy of implicating the people, a study of the parties to the process has been done in the groups Miti and Mudaka. The mission of this study was to essentially identify the categories concerned by the natural resources of the Park, the impact of their activities, their relationships and interests regarding the natural resources, their strategies and perception regarding their interests, the criteria of selection that they judge adequate to choose the member of the eventual structure of co-management and their vision about the level of intervention to reach efficiency in conservation and development.

From this study, it has been determined that the destruction of natural resources gets bigger and bigger because of the diminishing vital space because of the successive wars and specially of the resignation of the State which should take its responsibility. Facing the numbers of problems of horrible destruction of PNKB as well as the one related to development of the surrounding areas the different identified protagonists have estimated that it is the re-enforcement of processes of participating management which makes a durable solution.

OPEN EYES

The armed conflicts, the pushing of demographics, and the continual impoverishment of neighboring populations constitute the principle causes of problems that affect the protected domain situated in this turbulent region. Their natural resources, objects of covetousness, pay the heavy tribute.

PNKB, situated in the most densely populated region where the people are poor and where armed conflict happens, is rich in natural resources actually being badly destroyed. Other parks across the world have similar difficulties. This is the case of the National Park of Mount Elgon in Uganda.

In fact, a part of this protected domain has been deforested by neighbors looking for space for farming the cuttings of creeper vines, for honey, and the exploitation of wood.

The damage was so extensive that the government of Uganda saw itself obligated to investigate in the resolution of problems of the Park.

This government adapted the legal cadre and material conservation and made respect for safeguarding the Park. It opted for a farming cooperative with the people to protect it. The people are satisfied and are implicated in conservation.

As for PNKB, for 10 years it has been benefiting from the support of the different Congolese governments. But none of us has managed to resolve the conflicts of the ecological corridor of PNKB which opposes the ICCN to irregular farmers.

The farmers show themselves to be above the law, because all the decisions held by the government are the remains of dead letters. Such is the case of recommendations formed recently by technical services of the State under the authority of the province regarding the illegally installed concessions in the corridor of PNKB. It was recommended to abolish by the course and tribunal the title of property (certified by registration) delivered in violation of ordinance #75/238 of July 22, 1975 bearing limited modification from PNKB. Driving off the despoilers has been recommended in the management of State services concerned with the property tax conflicts, which report was addressed to the Governor of the South Kivu Province in the month of June 1999. This recommendation regards among others, the following concessions:

- Muhimuzi Ernest	105 hectares
- Baheneka Maroyi	115 hectares
- Bashizi Ba Lugwira	100 hectares
- Balola Ludunge	175 hectares
- Sebisaho Rumashane	125 hectares
- Byeragi Ntanyabwigire	104 hectares
- Adili Katoto Prince	158 hectares
- Shengeqi Munguaranyi	138 hectares

These 1,020 hectares are a part of the 3,500 hectares sold during the two successive wars. The list of despoilers presented above is not exhaustive. Other people exist not sufficiently identified which occupy owned concessions after splitting by a third party and by attribution of responsible Territorial Chief or which would inevitably establish by themselves.

While this recommendation molds in the drawer, the national resources of PNKB continue to be destroyed in different ways. These merchants are taking advantage of the situation to practice farming of the land of the Park. They are getting rich on the backs of the farmers. During the arresting of the poachers, its these farmers that unfortunately pay the price.

The neighboring population of PNKB should understand that by rallying to the distracters of the Park, it doesn't resolve its' problems. On the contrary, it's getting more impoverished. It should also understand that it is the first guard of the Park. In this meaning it has interest to separate from the distracters because this destruction of one part of PNKB is a handicap for pursuing the reflection with the people regarding the approach of participatory management. The application of this one requires that there are no more destroyers of the Park among the people. People around, open your eye and the good one, you are getting poorer while paying cows, goats, money to a few rich people who never the less are against your future and the one of the future generation.