



Conserving Mountain Gorillas

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Population of Mountain Gorillas



Population:

- Classified as endangered by the International Union of the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)



Major Threats Faced by Mountain Gorillas

Hunting

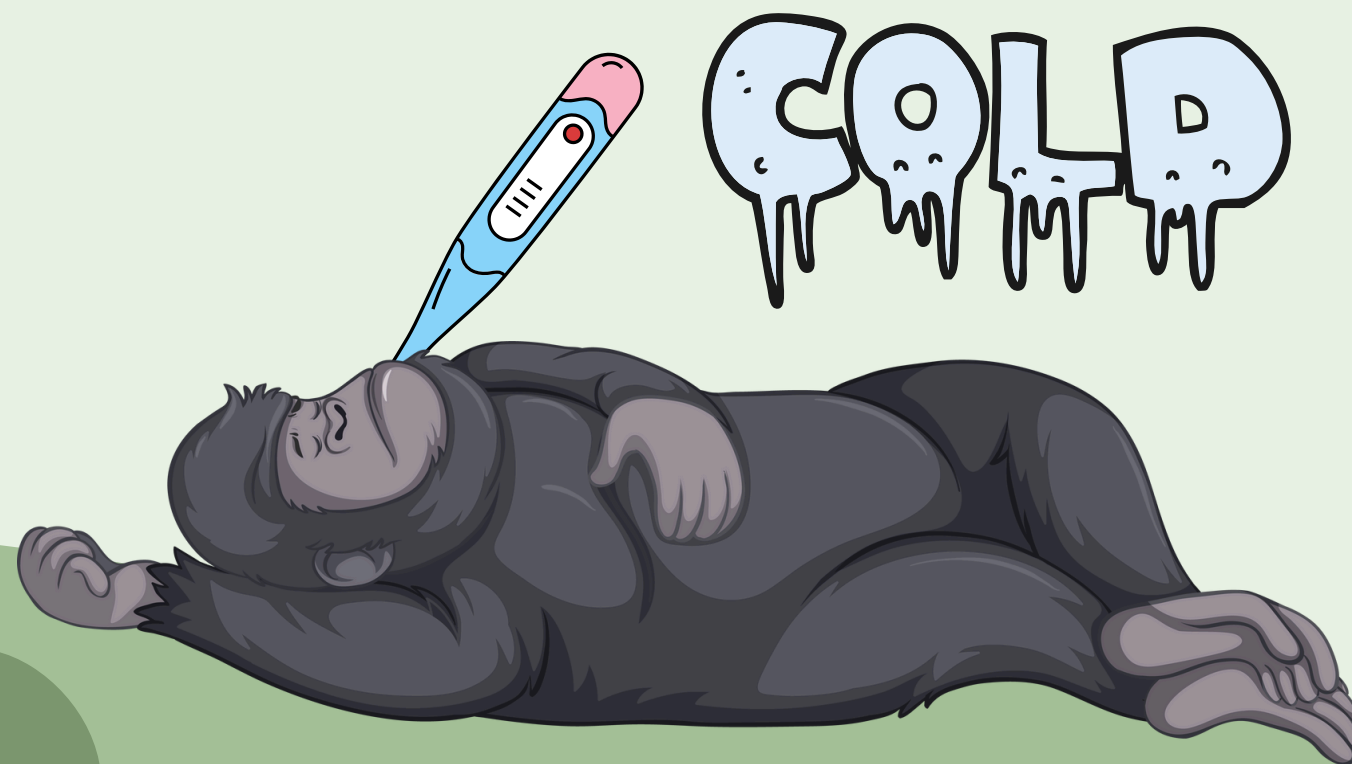
- Commercial bushmeat trade



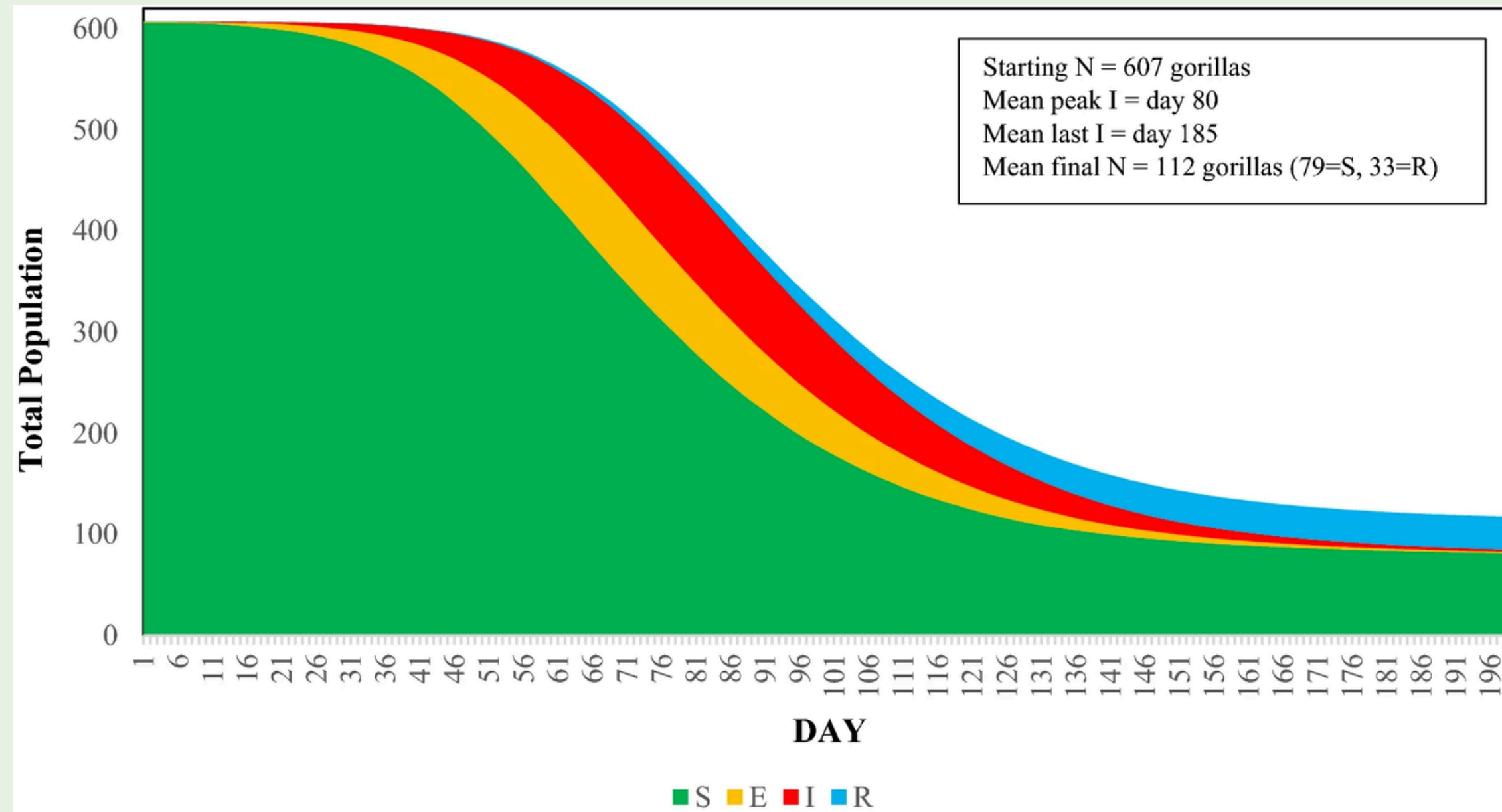
Major Threats Faced by Mountain Gorillas

Human encroachment

- Gorillas that come into contact with humans are susceptible to human diseases
- Mountain gorillas can even **die** from the common cold



Ebola Virus Outbreak



S - Susceptible, never infected, E - Exposed and infected, I - Infectious, R - Recovered

Major Threats Faced by Mountain Gorillas

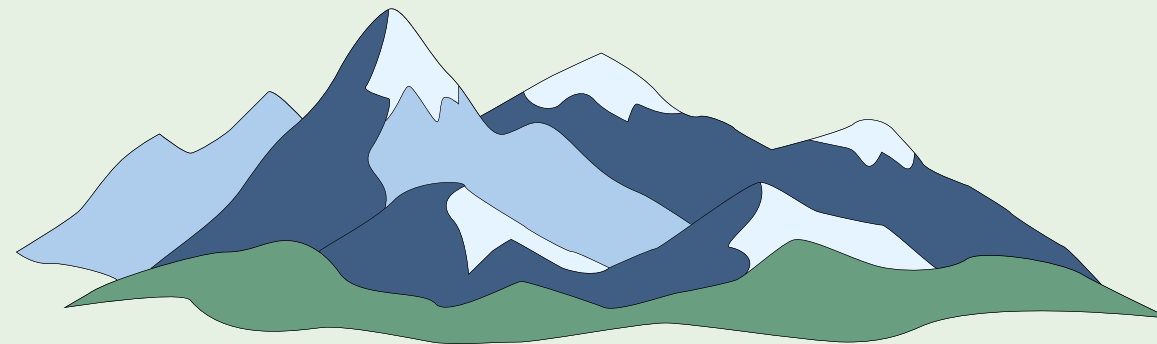


Habitat destruction

- Land is needed for agriculture
- Deforestation, and the expanding of mining and logging industries forces humans and mountain gorillas to share resources

Climate change

- Mountain gorillas live at higher elevations, so they are more susceptible to faster temperature rises



Conservation Status of Mountain Gorillas



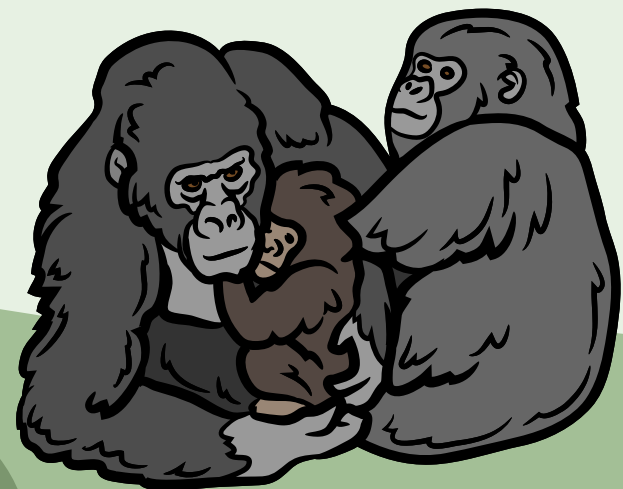
Camera trapping:

- A digital camera connected to an infrared sensor
- Provides data on species location, population size etc



Mountain Gorilla Conservation

- **Protected Areas:** Provide safe habitats free from human interference, preserving biodiversity and ecosystems.
- Examples: Virunga National Park in DRC and Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda.
- **Wildlife Reserves:** Focus on protecting mountain gorilla, supporting breeding, migration, and life-cycle processes.



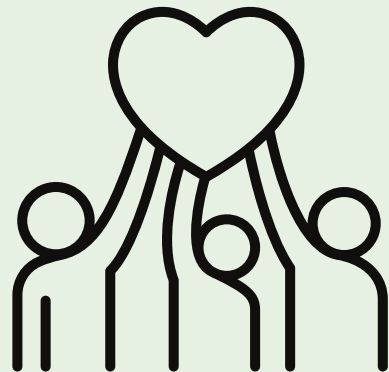
Conservation Strategies



- **Ranger-Based Monitoring:**
Patrolling protected areas to monitor gorillas, conduct anti-poaching activities, and remove snares.
Impact: Reduced poaching and improved safety.



- **Transboundary Collaboration:**
Cooperation between Rwanda, Uganda, and DRC.
Impact: Enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of conservation measures.



- **Community and Tourism Development:**
Community Involvement:
Educating locals, providing alternative livelihoods.
Example: Ecotourism lodges benefiting local communities and generating significant income.
Impact: Economic incentives to protect gorillas.



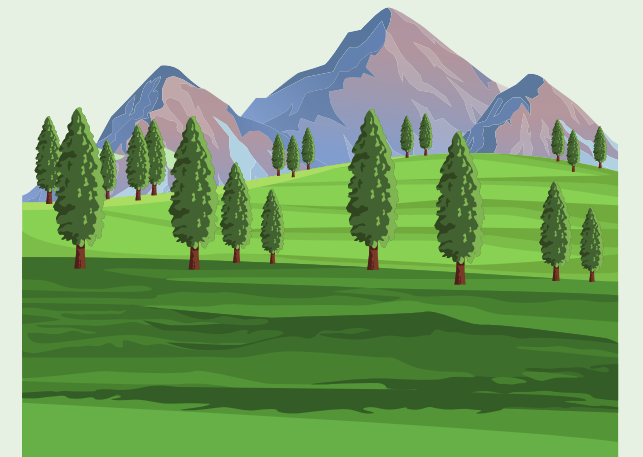
Habitat Conservation and Anti-Poaching Efforts

- **Habitat Conservation:**

Protecting and restoring gorilla habitats through reforestation and land acquisition.

Impact: Expanded and improved habitats supporting population growth.

Example: African Wildlife Foundation's land purchase for Volcanoes National Park expansion.



- **Anti-Poaching Activities:**

Training rangers for patrols and removing illegal traps.

Impact: Reduced poaching and increased safety.

Gorilla Trekking and Conservation

- **Habituation and Safety:**

Visitors trek to see habituated gorilla troops.
Rangers build relationships to ensure safe interactions.

- **Reason for Conservation:**

Economic motivation: tourism revenue supports conservation.

Tourism funds contribute to gorilla longevity.

- **Ecotourism Development:**

Gorilla tourism increases park protection.
Generates significant revenue.



Captive Breeding Programs

- **Purpose:** where animals are bred in controlled environments to boost populations and reintroduce them into the wild, supporting endangered species and restoring their numbers.

- **Challenges:**

Genetic Issues:

Inbreeding reduces genetic diversity and increases health risks.

Captive conditions may lead to genetic changes not suited for the wild.

Habitat Suitability:

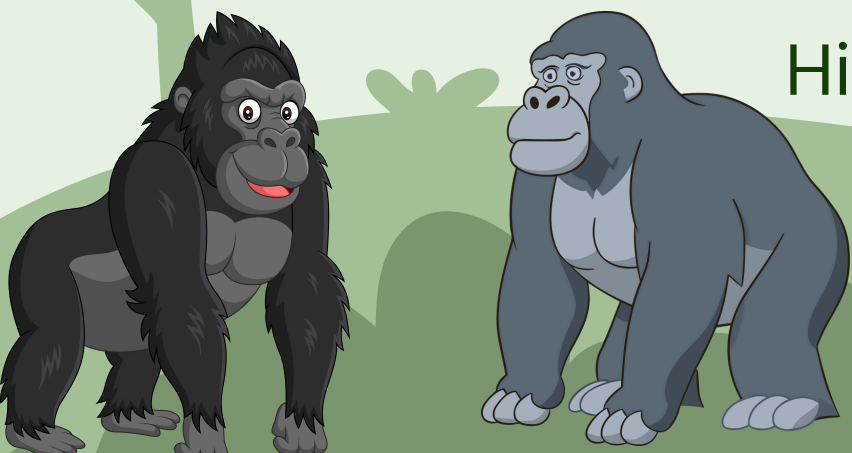
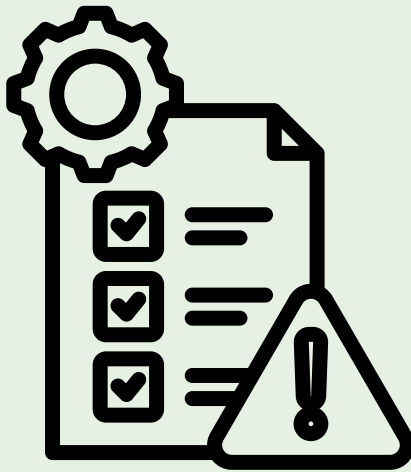
Captive-bred gorillas may struggle with wild adaptation and lack survival skills.

Health and Welfare:

Health problems and stress from confinement and unnatural conditions.

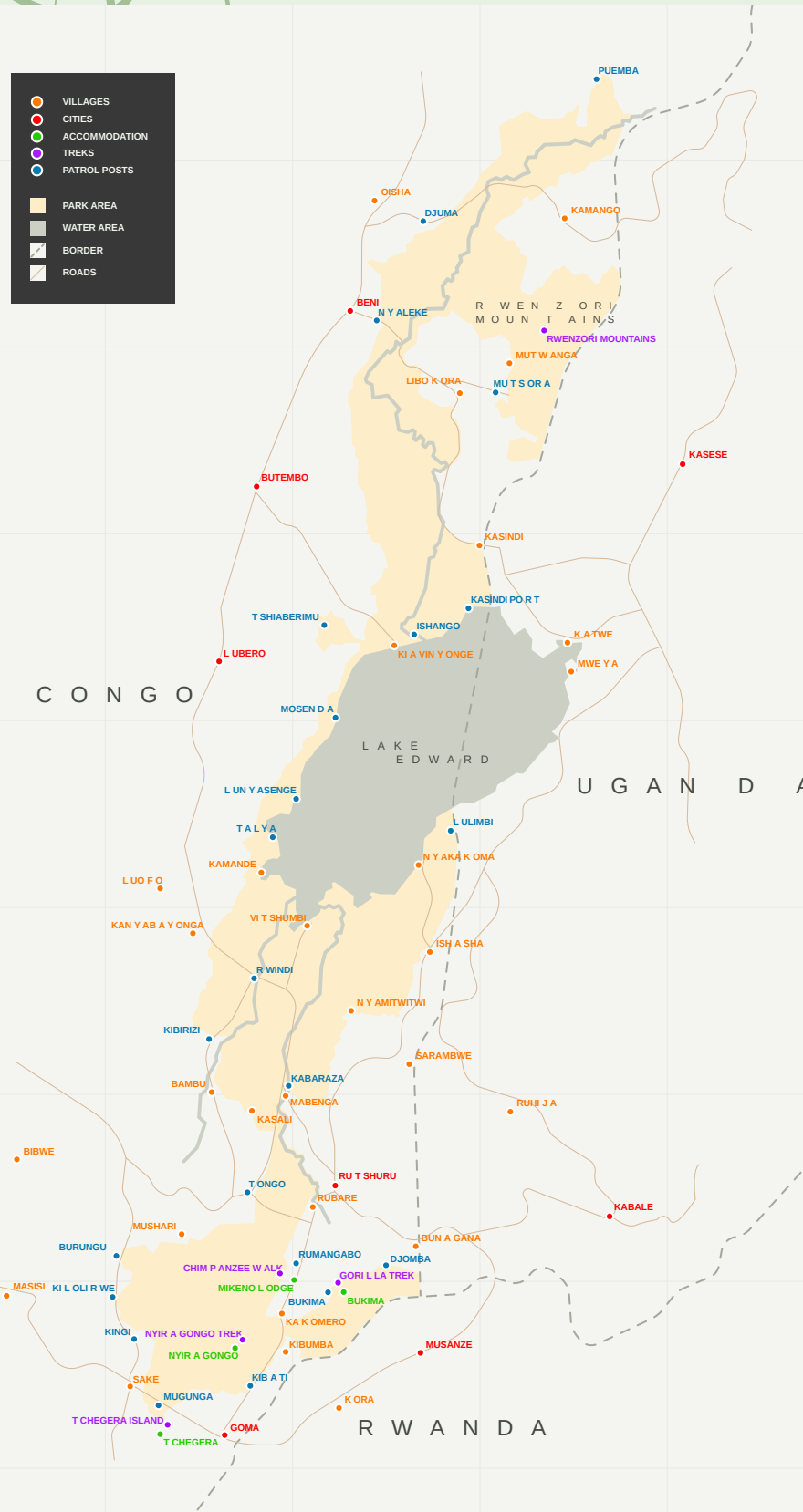
Resource Allocation:

High costs; funds might be more effectively used for habitat protection.



Successful Case Studies

- **Mountain Gorillas in Virunga National Park:**
 - Success: Population increased from 253 in 1981 to 480.
 - Strategy: Intensive conservation efforts including ranger patrols, veterinary care, and community education.
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- **Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge, Rwanda:**
 - Success: Community-owned tourism lodge generating income and supporting conservation.
 - Strategy: Partnership between private operators and local communities.



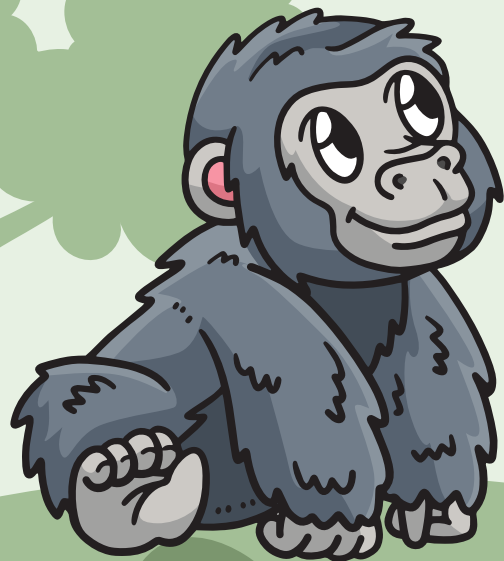
Reintroduction and Translocation

Goals and Methods

- **Purpose:** Reestablish mountain gorillas in natural habitats or safer locations.
- **Methods:**
 - **Reintroduction:** Release captive-bred or relocated individuals into the wild.
 - **Translocation:** Move individuals from threatened areas to safer habitats.



SAFE
ZONE



Key Challenges

Habitat Suitability

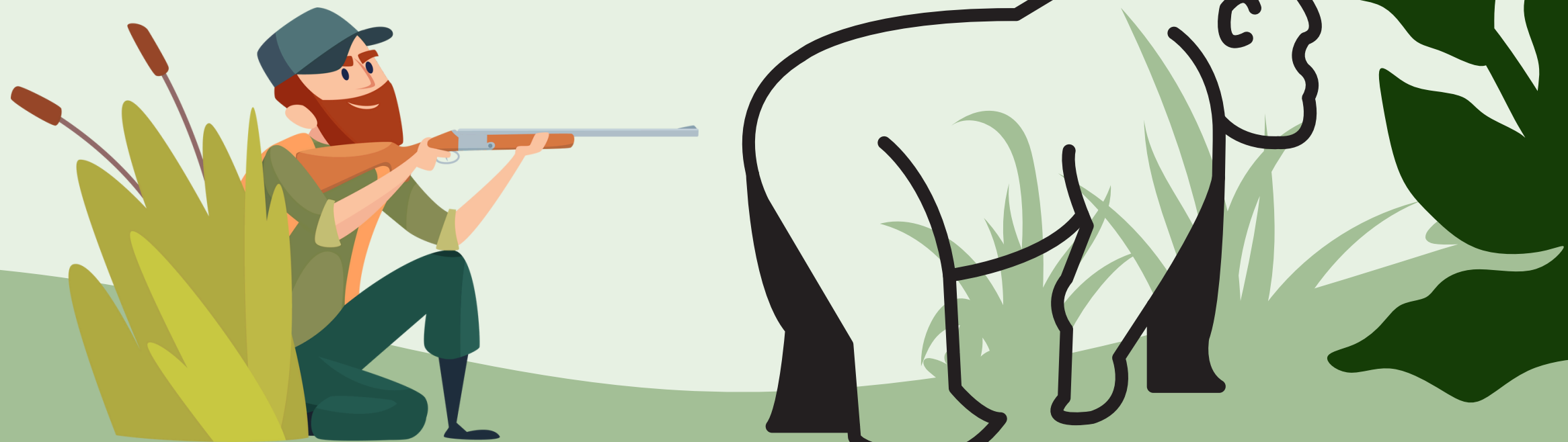
- **Criteria:** Match natural habitat needs (food, shelter, climate).
- **Challenges:** Deforestation, fragmentation, pollution.

Health Risks

- **Diseases:** Risk of disease transmission; need for health checks and quarantine.
- **Monitoring:** Essential for pre-release health assessments.

Human Interference

- **Infrastructure:** Roads, settlements, agriculture disrupt habitats.
- **Conflicts:** Poaching and encroachment risks.



— Why are there no mountain gorillas in captivity?

In the 1960s and 1970s, numerous attempts were made to capture live mountain gorillas and start a captive population. Many adult mountain gorillas were killed to obtain live babies, none of which survived in captivity. The reason why they failed to survive is unclear, since lowland gorillas have been kept and even bred successfully in captivity. Perhaps their dietary needs are more specific, or they were affected by stress and therefore succumbed to disease more rapidly. To date, no mountain gorillas are known to exist in any captive facility.

Key Considerations for Success

- **Funding and Resources**

Secure adequate budget for reintroduction and long-term monitoring.



- **Release Location**

Safety: Choose sites with minimal disease risks and no ongoing threats.

Habitat: Ensure it meets the needs of mountain gorillas and is free from previous threats.

- **Community Engagement**

Education and Involvement: Inform local communities and address their concerns.

Collaboration: Work with stakeholders for effective conservation.



- **Monitoring and Follow-Up**

Regular tracking and adjustments based on the health and adaptation of released individuals

Ethical Considerations

Animal rights philosophy: Right to live life without unnecessary pain(sentience) or death.



Conservation ethics philosophy: Preservation of natural-occurring biological diversity arising from natural, evolutionary processes.



Exploitation for Economic Benefit

Argument against mountain trekking: Using mountain gorillas as a tourist attraction.

Argument for mountain trekking: Money from gorillas for gorillas, measures to mitigate harmful effects



Transmission of illnesses

Gorillas are susceptible to diseases: A common cold or respiratory disease can take out their whole population.

Gorillas prevent spread of disease: Limit zoonotic disease spillover

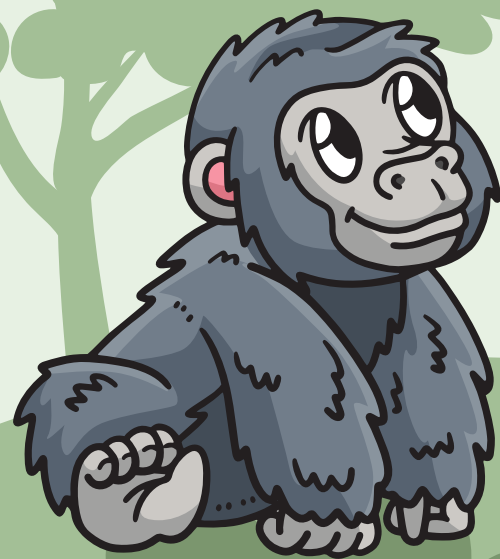
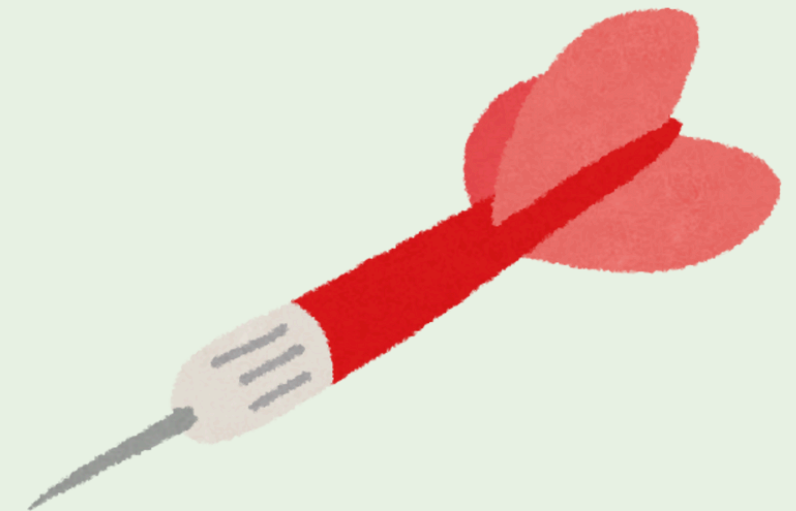


interventionist Approach

Use of tranquilisers: Causes harm to the mountain gorillas

Medical procedures: Treatment of ailments such as respiratory infections and snare removal.

Argument of disruption in natural behaviour: Any negative impacts are outweighed by the improved monitoring and protection.



Human impact

GORILLA



LIVES

MATTER

Unhabituated and habituated gorillas: 4% increase in habituated gorilla population and slight decrease in unhabituated population.

Gorilla doctors: The reason for half of the habituated gorilla population's growth



Fasha



Funding & Partnerships

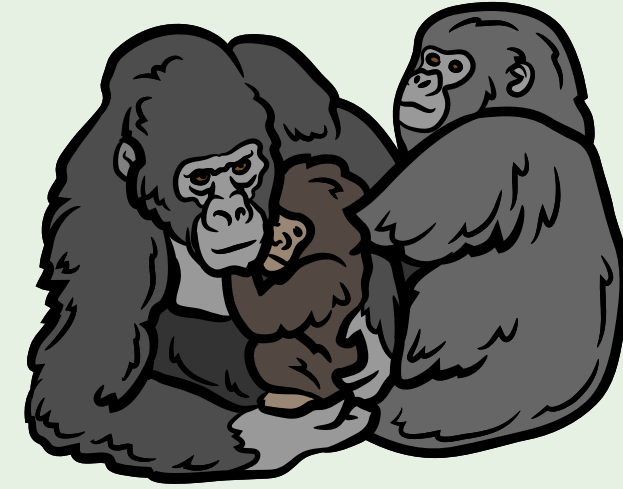




IUCN SSC
PRIMATE
Specialist Group



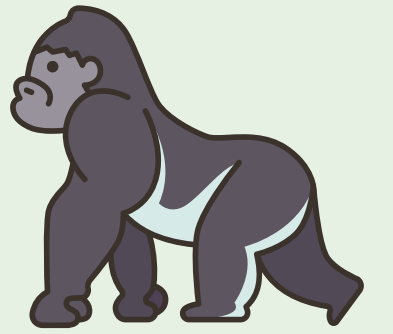
PSG



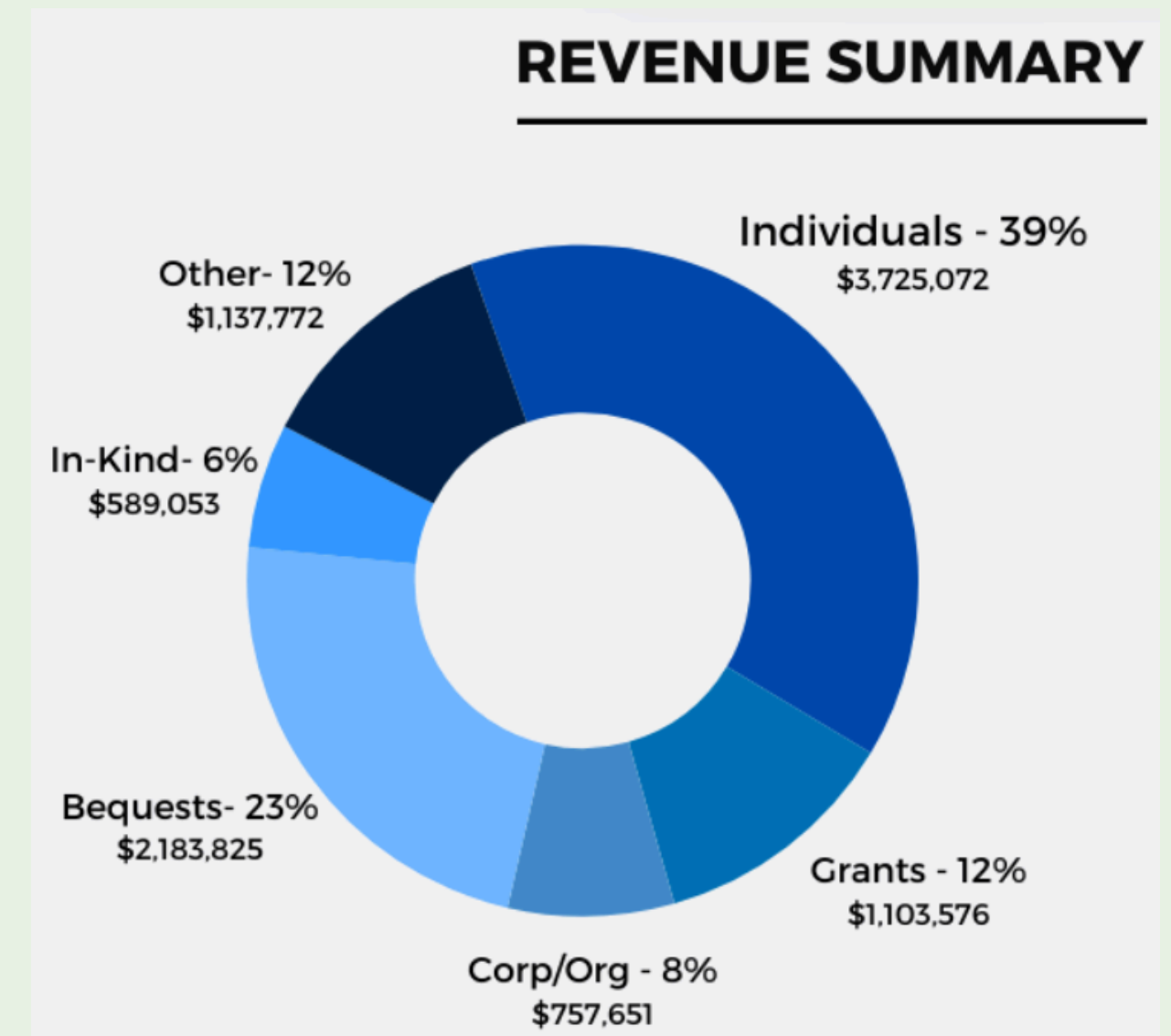
- Contacted 16 numerous development and private sector projects in 2022 to provide advice on how to mitigate their impacts on apes
- 1 million dollars raised for primate conservation measures in 2021



Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund



- Helping in the conservation of mountain gorillas since 1978.
- Current revenue of 10 million dollars, from a stream ranging from individuals to grants from governments.



Plan to Secure Financial Support

1. Assess current situation and needs

2. Raise funds for conservation

3. Have a concrete plan for conservation action

Ensuring Long-Term Support



1. Sustainable Funding

2. Education and community support

3. Adapting to mountain gorilla needs

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Thank
You!