

**These action plans are essentially based on the Gorilla report outlined by the IRSNB for the CSM in 2005; The World Atlas of Great Apes and their Conservation (published in 2005), the existing National Action Plans (NGASP), various workshops reports (Brazzaville, 2005; Limbe Botanic Garden, 2003; Calabar,2006), and many other publications.**

## **Action plan *Gorilla gorilla diehli***

**Version of September 2007**

**Two countries are directly concerned by the action plan for the *Gorilla gorilla diehli*:**

- Nigeria**
- Republic of Cameroon**

The gorillas living in the mountainous landscape between Nigeria and Cameroon at the headwaters of the Cross River were recently recognized as a distinct taxon, *Gorilla g. diehli*. The global population is estimated between 250-280 individuals, distributed across more than 10 fragmented highland sites. Those gorillas have managed to persist in a region with a dense human population, mostly because of the relative inaccessibility of their forested refuges. As the human-development activities increase, these small groups of gorillas are now dependant on conservation action (Caldecott and Miles, 2005).

The Cross River gorillas are the most northern and western of all gorilla populations. In Nigeria, they occur in the Mbe Mountains Community Forest, the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Okwangwo Division of the Cross River National Park. In Cameroon, they occur in the Takamanda Forest Reserve (contiguous with Okwangwo), the Mone Forest Reserve, and the Mbulu Hills Community Reserve.

Despite new conservation efforts, the Cross River gorilla habitat continues to regress. Given their small and highly fragmented population, and continuous threat to their survival, the subspecies has been listed as critically endangered by IUCN.

## **A. Nigeria**

The Federal Republic of Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, is also the leading African oil producer.

The Cross River gorilla occurs in the Mbe Mountains Community Forest, the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Okwangwo Division of the Cross River National Park. There are probably three distinct subpopulations of Cross River gorillas in Nigeria, plus a fourth subpopulation shared with Cameroon.

There are around 80-100 gorillas remaining in Nigeria.

Large areas of potential gorilla habitats remain in southwest of the country, where gorillas still occur: these habitats provide connectivity between many of the subpopulations. To maintain these forest corridors, new PA need to be created, and local law enforcement need to be strengthened.

### **1. Legislation**

National

All wildlife in national parks is protected by law. The Endangered Species Act of 1985 is the text through which treaties are enforceable.

International

- CMS, 1987
- CBD, 1996
- WHC, 1974
- ACCNNR, 1968
- CITES, 1973

### **2. Conservation action**

**- Protected areas of importance to the Cross-River Gorilla:**

- The Mbe Mountains Community Forest,
- The Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary,
- The Cross River National Park,
- The Okwangwo Division of the Cross River NP.

**- Current projects/activities with direct or potential implications for Gorillas conservation:**

- WCS is working on both sides of Nigeria and Cameroon borders, in collaboration with states and national government agencies, to improve conservation of gorillas. WCS runs a biodiversity research program with the Nigerian Conservation Foundation: the gorilla research and conservation component is financed by USAID and by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- WWF/EU project in Okwangwo Division of the Cross River NP until 1998: a gorilla census was carried out, as well as rural developments activities, education and conservation efforts.
- FFI is assisting the Cross River State Forestry Commission to develop better management practices at Afi Mountain.

**- Existing international initiatives with direct or potential implications for Gorillas conservation:**

- Agreement between Nigeria and Cameroon to protect the Cross River Gorilla. A collaborative partnership has been formed between the relevant government departments, WCS, FFI, GTZ and the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF).

**3. Priority actions:**

Immediate priorities for gorillas conservation are:

**Nationally:**

From: Regional action plan for the conservation of the cross river gorilla (Calabar, 2006)

*Strengthening of legislation*

- Designate new PA with a view to maintain forest corridors between subpopulations of gorillas, including a network of protected areas and corridors and a plan for the conservation of Afi-Mbe-Okwangwo area, and including also a review of the management status for the Mbe Mountains;
- Strengthen protection and law enforcement measures for all Cross River gorilla populations;
- Maintain and expand basic research into the ecology, distribution and population biology of the gorillas;
- Coordinate research and monitoring on gorillas distributions and populations throughout Nigeria;
- Strengthen and expand conservation education and awareness programmes at all levels; large scale information and education campaigns needed to inform Nigerians

of the endangered status of gorillas and attract their attention to the wildlife protection laws.

- Build up the capacity of relevant institutions in Nigeria and Cameroon (including Government departments, universities, NGOs),
- Incorporate local community needs into the development of management strategies, including the study of alternative livelihoods options,
- Reinforce collaboration amongst all stakeholders,
- Delegate a working group to formulate more detailed recommendations based on the deliberations of the 2003 Limbe Botanic Garden workshop

### *Research*

- Maintain and increase fundamental research on ecology, gorillas populations distribution and biology.
- Coordinate the research and monitoring on the distribution and numbers of gorillas in whole Nigeria.
- Keep researchin at the genetical level of the populations.

### *Education and awareness*

- Improve and strengthen educational programs and awareness for the preservation at all levels; information and education campaigns on a large scale should inform nigerians of the endengered species status which is of the gorilla, and draw their attention on the laws protecting the fauna. Produce a local movie, to show in schools and villages. Draw posters, circulate a punctual information.
- Increase the ability of the concerned institutions in Nigeria (including governmental departments, universities, NGO)

### *Communal development*

- Incorporate local communities needs for gestic strategies development, including alternate incomes options studies.
- Sensitize the local communities to the benefits of the natural ressources conservation (protection of the slove basins, checking of the soil's erosion, etc)
- Reinforcement of the local abilities, in order to allow the local comunities to share responsibilities as regards ecotourism and participation to the application of the law.

- Enclosed territories: anthropogenic activities limited to actual borders, through land use planning, support emigration out of the protected areas.
- Promote a land use planning, improved agricultural practices, and identification of principles of use of shared forest resources in the adjacent areas of protected areas, in order to delimit buffer zones.
- Improve collaboration between all users.

### **Internationally/transborder cooperation:**

Further reinforce existing transborder agreements and initiatives, in particular:

- Establish a trans-boundary protected area for the Takamanda-Okwangwo complex, in particular by upgrading the protection status of the Takamanda Forest Reserve
- Establish Cross River gorilla management committees in Cameroon and Nigeria, in order to improve communication between administrators, elaborate common strategies and improve information exchange.
- Encourage and initiate common activities between the administrators of protected areas, in order to develop cooperative preservation strategies (exchange visits, common patrols, integrated inventories).
- Develop a SIG, as a common tool for preservation.
- Seeking for further international support (UNESCO's world heritage, etc)

### **Actions to take in the level of areas of *G.g. dielhi* in Nigeria**

#### **1. Sanctuary of the Afi mounts (AMWS)**

- Organise a workshop to solve illegal agriculture problems.
- Improve the infrastructures: watchrooms, central buildings, connection network, paths, etc
- Application of the laws, anti poaching patrols.
- Train guards for gorilla populations follow-up.
- Inventorization, cartography and securisation of habitat corridors between Afi-Mbe and AMWS-ARFR.
- Develop land use planning for the buffer zones and corridors, within the framework of communal development.
- Complete the feasibility study for a "vision tourism".

- Develop a gestion plan for the sanctuary.
- Arrange a workshop to determine a plan for fire protection.

## **2. The Mbe mounts**

- Strengthen the Assosiation for the preservation of the Mbe mounts (CAMM)
- Search the lasting financing options of the site.
- Develop a research station.
- Help to put in place a monitoring patrol system based on local communities.
- Arrange a workshop to determine a protection plan against fire.
- Inventorization, cartography and securisation of habitat corridors between Mbe and the Cross River National Park.
- Complete the legal demarcation and designation of the site.
- Develop a gestion plan.
- Develop land use plannings for the buffer zones and corridors, within the framework of a communal development.

## **3. Cross River National Park: Okwangwo Division**

- Anti poaching measures improvement.
- Train the CRNP staff for the anti poaching struggle, and for gorilla populations follow-up.
- Review the relocalisation plans and its financing.
- Finalizing the Park's plan of operations.
- Review of the external landmarks of the park.
- Strengthening of the watchrooms, including the equipment.
- Planning the vision tourism, in cooperation with the Cross River State Tourism Bureau.

## ***B. Republic of Cameroon***

Compare with the other countries in the region, Cameroon has experienced relative stability in the last decades (apart from a border dispute with Nigeria over the Bakassi Peninsula, ongoing since 1992), allowing the steady development of infrastructure, agriculture and the oil and timber industries.

Cameroon is host to both the Cross-River Gorilla, *Gorilla g. dielhi*, and the Western lowland Gorilla, *Gorilla g. gorilla*.

The Diehli gorilla can be seen in the Takamanda forest that contains 4 underpopulations (3 in the national forest, that shared with Nigeria (Okwango-Takamanda), Takamanda east, Takamanda North, and out, Takamanda South), in the Mone's national forest (Mone North), in the Mbulu hills communal reserve (Upper Mbulu) as well as in the proposed sanctuary of the Kagwene and Bechati mounts.

The latest researches indicates that there might be up to 180 Dielhi gorillas surviving in the wild in Cameroon and that they are maybe more than we previously thought. Even if the discovery of new groups is encouraging, some of these groups are very isolated, and then set a big deal of preservation.

## **1. Legislation**

National

Law n° 94/01 (1994) sets out the country's forestry, wildlife, and fishery regulations, and lists gorillas as Category A species, which are fully protected against hunting, capture, or sale, in whole or in part.

National Parks and wildlife reserves may be established under the auspices of the Direction de la Faune et des Aires Protégées (DFAP), of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MINEF), which is also responsible for the country's biodiversity in general.

International:

- CMS 1983
- CBD 1994
- WHC 1982
- ACCNNR 1968
- CITES 1981

## **2. Conservation action**

**- Protected areas of importance to the Cross-River Gorilla:**

- Takamanda Forest Reserve
- Mone Forest River
- Kagwene Mountain Cross River Gorilla Sanctuary

**- Important non-protected areas for the Cross River gorilla:**

- Mbulu forest
- Bechati Fossimondi Besali forest

**- Current projects/activities with direct or potential implications for Gorillas conservation:**

1. WCS involved in Cameroon since 1998. Involved in program to control the illegal transportation of bushmeat.
2. Global Witness on the issue of illegal logging
3. A number of international organisations involved with research and education activities, Living Earth, Bristol Zoo, FFI, WWF...
4. Bushmeat Project, involving hunters in fauna protection in eastern Cameroon.
5. A number of awareness programs are run by national and international NGOs, and public education is a component of most current conservation and development projects.
6. The Limbé wildlife centre is a rehabilitation centre for great apes and other species.

**- Existing international initiatives with direct or potential implications for Gorillas conservation:**

- Agreement between Cameroon and Nigeria to protect the Cross River Gorilla. A collaborative partnership has been formed between the relevant government departments, WCS, FFI, GTZ and the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF).

**3. Priority actions:**

Immediate priorities for gorillas conservation are:

**Nationally:**

From: Regional action plan for the conservation of the cross river gorilla (Calabar, 2006)

*Strengthening of legislation*

- Develop land-use plans for the Takamanda-Mone-Mbulu area;
- Maintain and expand basic research into the ecology, distribution and population biology of the gorillas;
- Strengthen and expand conservation education and awareness programmes at all levels; large scale information and education campaigns needed to inform Cameroonians of the endangered status of gorillas and attract their attention to the wildlife protection laws;
- Build up the capacity of relevant institutions in Cameroon (including Government departments, universities, NGOs);
- Incorporate local community needs into the development of management strategies, including the study of alternative livelihoods options,
- Reinforce collaboration amongst all stakeholders,
- Delegate a working group to formulate more detailed recommendations based on the deliberations of the workshop

#### *Research*

- Maintain and increase fundamental research on ecology, gorillas populations distribution and biology.
- Coordinate the research and monitoring on the distribution and numbers of gorillas in whole Cameroon.
- Keep researchin at the genetical level of the populations.

#### *Education and awareness*

- Improve and strengthen educational programs and awareness for the preservation at all levels; information and education campaigns on a large scale should inform cameroonians of the endengered species status which is of the gorilla, and draw their attention on the laws protecting the fauna. Produce a local movie, to show in schools and villages. Draw posters, circulate a punctual information.
- Increase the ability of the concerned institutions in Cameroon (including governmental departments, universities, NGO)

#### *Communal Development*

- Incorporate local communities needs for gestion strategies development, including alternatne incomes options studies.

- Sensitize the local communities to the benefits of the natural resources conservation (protection of the slope basins, checking of the soil's erosion, etc)
- Develop alternative sources of income in order to reduce the pressure on forests (generating-income activities, microbusinesses, lasting methods of forest products use)
- Reinforcement of the local abilities, in order to allow the local communities to share responsibilities as regards ecotourism and participation to the application of the law.
- Enclosed territories: anthropogenic activities limited to actual borders, through land use planning, support emigration out of the protected areas.
- Promote a land use planning, improved agricultural practices, and identification of principles of use of shared forest resources in the adjacent areas of protected areas, in order to delimit buffer zones.
- Improve collaboration between all users.

### **Internationally/transborder cooperation:**

Further reinforce existing transborder agreements and initiatives, in particular:

- Establish a trans-boundary protected area for the Takamanda-Okwangwo complex, in particular by upgrading the protection status of the Takamanda Forest Reserve
- Establish Cross River gorilla management committees in Cameroon and Nigeria
- Establish a protected transboundary area around the Takamanda-Okwangwo complex, particularly by improving the Takamanda national forest status.
- Establish committees for the gestion of the Cross-River Gorilla in Cameroon and Nigeria so as to improve communication between administrators, develop common strategies and improve information exchange.
- Support and initiate common activities between protected areas administrators, in order to develop cooperative preservation strategies (exchange visits, common patrols, integrated inventories)
- Develop a GIS, as a tool for the common conservation.
- Seeking for further international support (UNESCO's world heritage, etc)

### **Actions to be taken at the level of *G.g.dielhi* areas in Cameroon**

#### **1 Takamanda Forest Reserve (Suggested National Park)**

- Complete the appointment of the Takamanda Forest Reserve, on the same way as the Cross River National Park.
- Complete a gestion strategy.
- Mark down the boundaries of the suggested Park.
- Strengthen the application of the law, recruit eco-guards.
- Establish a transboundary gestion committee.

## **2 Mone River Forest Reserve**

- See again the conservation status of the Mone River Forest Reserve, on the basis of new biological and socio-economical data still to acquire.
- Elaborate a conservation strategie for the area.
- Feature again Mone River Forest Reserve boundaries.
- Strengthen the application of the law, recruit eco-guards, strengthen watching patrols.

## **3 Mbulu Forest**

- On the basis of new biological and socio-economical data still to acquire, develop a protected areas and corridors network.
- Complete the designation procedure of the both intending protected areas (Upper Mbulu and Atolo)
- Mark the boundaries of the areas and elaborate gestion strategies for the new protected areas.
- Strengthen the application of the law, recruit eco-guards, strengthen watching patrols, contract curators for the new protected areas.

## **4 Kagwene Mountain (Suggested Gorilla Sanctuary)**

- Complete the appointment of the Kagwene Gorilla Sanctuary, and complete the area's limit.
- Elaborate a conservation strategy for the sanctuary, including measures of salvage.
- Strengthen the application of the law, recruit eco-guards, strengthen the watching patrols.

- Recruit a MINIF OF curator.
- Relocate the cattle at present in the sanctuary.

### **5 Bechati Fossimondi Besali Forest**

- Acquire new biological and socio-economical data permitting to develop a protected areas and corridors network between Bechati and the Mone River Forest Reserve.
- Produce a land use map, review and formalize the Bechati Fossimondi Besali Forest status.
- Elaborate a preservation strategy for the area, in collaboration with the local association (Forest Community Association) and the villager's forests gestion committees, including the demarcation of the conservation area.
- Strengthen the application of the law, recruit eco-guards, strengthen the watching patrols and develop communal mechanisms of application of the law.
- Develop alternate sources of income in order to minimize the consequences of the creation of the protected area.
- Arrange workshops on the consequences of the illegal agriculture on the Gorilla's habitats.