

AKIBO KING OF THE
GORILLAS

Akibo king of the Gorillas

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Epanda Manfred Aimé

This book belongs to _____

Do you want to discover the secrets of the forest?

Do you want to help protect gorillas?

Then read carefully this fascinating story of Akibo and his group, and you will find solutions to help preserve this magnificent species.



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AKIBO

Akibo, a courageous gorilla, commands respect with his grey coat and impressive musculature, which testify to his power. When he walks through the forest, the branches seem to part as he passes. He likes to eat the stems and leaves of tall trees and the fleshy fruits of the forest.



Mada

The mother of a baby gorilla. A protective and caring female gorilla, she always carries her baby gorilla on her back and is ready to indulge its every whim. She loves to climb the tallest trees. When she realises that the others are watching her from below, she swings even harder, using only one hand.



The story begins in the lush forest of Africa with a family of gorillas living peacefully among the tall trees. The family consisted mainly of young gorillas. One of these gorillas is called AKIBO. AKIBO is a brave alpha male who loves adventure and challenges. But behind his robust appearance, Akibo also hid great wisdom.


AKIBO's family used to go down to the swamps to feed on nutrient-rich plants, after roaming the great forest in search of fruit and fresh leaves.



One day, while the family was on their way to the swamp to feed on grass, Mada, a female gorilla in the family, strayed from the group with her baby in search of greener and more abundant plants. The rest of the troop did not realise that Mada and her baby were missing.

Meanwhile, Mada and her baby were enjoying tasty grasses and roots on the other side of the swamp. Suddenly, a group of poachers arrived near Mada and her baby. Mada saw the danger and tried to protect her baby from the poachers.





While Mada was defending herself, she was struck on the arm with a machete. The wound was not serious, but it weakened Mada. One of the poachers captured the baby gorilla and put it in a hunting bag.

Mada fled and the poachers returned to their hunting camp. Meanwhile, Mada returned to where the gorilla family was gathered, expressing her despair and sadness to the members of the troop. After explaining what had happened, the rest of the gorillas in the family were frightened and filled with terror at this tragic situation.





AKIBO was furious about this tragic situation and began to motivate the group, saying, “We cannot leave a member of our group in danger and stand idly by. We must do something and find a solution.”

The whole family replied, ‘Exactly, AKIBO, we must do something.’

AKIBO replied, “Hoo haa hoo haa, let’s be brave and go rescue Mada’s baby from the poachers”.

The family replied, ‘Weee hoo haa hoo haa, let’s go.’

The gorilla family gained confidence and courage thanks to AKIBO’s motivation. AKIBO took command of the movement.

The group set off in search of the poachers’ camp. Once they found the camp, the gorillas began to observe it from a distance and hesitated to attack because of the firearms and traps present in the camp. A spirit of discouragement settled among the gorillas. Akibo noticed this and began to think, and then a brilliant idea came to him.



He mobilised the troop to go and gather wild mango fruit in the forest and bring it back to the poachers' camp. Once they had gathered, Akibo explained the plan of attack to the other members of the group.

Akibo replied, 'You will hide behind the tall trees and, on my signal, you will throw the fruit.'

The family replied, "We await your signal, Akibo."

Once the plan was in place, one gorilla entered the camp to make noise and attract the poachers' attention. When the poachers came out of their huts, the rest of the gorillas began throwing wild mango fruit at the poachers in the camp. The poachers were surprised by this ambush because of the multitude of fruit falling on them.



The poachers could not believe that gorillas could have such a brilliant idea to launch an attack like this.

One of the poachers exclaimed, “Waayaa, we’re done for, guys. It’s better to leave our hunting camp and the loot and run for our lives.” The poachers tried to retrieve their guns from their huts, but, trapped by the gorillas’ attack, they began to panic and eventually fled in fear.



Meanwhile, AKIBO seized the opportunity to rescue the captured baby gorilla.

Once the baby gorilla was saved, the family members left the poachers' camp and returned to the heart of the forest.

The baby gorilla was reunited with its mother, Mada, and an atmosphere of joy filled the group. Meanwhile, the young gorillas of the family decided to choose AKIBO as the leader of the forest gorillas. AKIBO ruled over the forest of tall trees and an atmosphere of peace was felt, and the poachers never returned to the forest.



About gorillas

Gorillas are primates that live in the virgin forests of Africa. They are found nowhere else in the world. There are two species of gorillas, each divided into two subspecies: the western gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*) includes the western lowland gorilla and the Cross River gorilla, while the eastern gorilla (*Gorilla beringei*) includes the mountain gorilla and Grauer's gorilla. These gorillas live in the tropical forests of Africa, with notable differences in distribution, population and physical characteristics.

THERE ARE TWO SPECIES OF GORILLAS

WESTERN GORILLAS

divided in two subspecies



Western lowland gorilla

Cross River gorilla



EASTERN GORILLAS

divided in two subspecies



Mountain gorilla

Eastern lowland gorilla



Western lowland gorilla



IUCN status: critically endangered

- 👉 Size: larger and stockier than the Cross River gorilla.
- 👉 Head: longer skull, with a less visible bony crest.
- 👉 Jaw: less prominent.
- 👉 Coat: thicker and darker, often black with brown highlights.
- 👉 Body: more massive, with very powerful arms and a broad chest.
- 👉 Population: the most numerous of the gorillas, with hundreds of thousands of individuals.

Cross River gorilla



IUCN status: critically endangered

- 👉 Size: slightly smaller and slimmer than other gorillas.
- 👉 Head: shorter and wider skull, with a bony crest on top (in males).
- 👉 Jaw: more prominent than other gorillas.
- 👉 Coat: lighter in colour and less thick.
- 👉 Body: slimmer, with a less broad chest.
- 👉 Population: very rare! Only about 250 to 300 individuals remain, living between Nigeria and Cameroon.

Mountain gorilla



IUCN status: endangered

- 👉 Size: fairly large and very robust.
- 👉 Head: broad skull, pronounced forehead.
- 👉 Coat: very thick and long, black in colour (adapted to the cold mountain climate).
- 👉 Body: sturdy, with powerful shoulders.
- 👉 Habitat: lives at high altitudes (2,000–4,000 m), in mountain forests and bamboo areas (Rwanda, Uganda, DR Congo).
- 👉 Diet: eats mainly leaves, stems and bamboo.
- 👉 Population: rare, approximately 1,000 individuals.

Eastern lowland gorilla



IUCN status: critically endangered

- 👉 Size: the largest of the gorillas! Males can weigh over 200 kg.
- 👉 Coat: black, shorter than that of the mountain gorilla.
- 👉 Body: very massive, with a broad chest and long arms.
- 👉 Habitat: low-altitude forests in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- 👉 Diet: eats leaves, stems, fruit and bamboo.
- 👉 Population: endangered, approximately 6,000 individuals remaining.

General characteristics of gorillas

- ➡ Gorillas are larger than humans, with adult males reaching a height of 180 cm and weighing up to 230 kg, while females can reach a height of 160 cm and weigh up to 110 kg.
- ➡ Gorillas generally move on the ground, but they are capable of climbing trees..
- ➡ Gorillas are herbivores and feed mainly on leaves, fruit, stems and roots.
- ➡ Gorillas live in small groups, usually led by a dominant male also called silver back, consisting of three to four females and four to five children.
- ➡ Their coat is black, with adult males having silvery grey hair on their backs.
- ➡ Gorillas are considered highly intelligent animals, capable of solving problems and communicating with each other in complex ways.

- ➡ Gorillas are social animals that spend a lot of time feeding, resting and interacting with each other. They communicate with each other using vocalisations, gestures and postures.
- ➡ Each gorilla family occupies a large territory of around 10 to 20 km². In the wild, gorillas can live for up to 50 years.

Similarities with humans

Gorillas and humans are very similar in many ways. They are highly intelligent animals that can use objects just like us humans. They live in families, have their own personalities and, like all animals, can feel pain or sadness.

Despite this, gorillas are now in great danger according to the IUCN Red List. All species are classified as endangered or critically endangered. The Cross River gorilla and the eastern gorilla are the most threatened, with only a few hundred individuals remaining. Western lowland gorillas are more numerous, but their population is also declining rapidly. The mountain gorillas are in danger with more than 1000 individuals.

Main Categories Explained



- ◆ **Least Concern (LC):** The species is doing fine, there are still many.
- ◆ **Near Threatened (NT):** Not in big trouble yet, but we need to watch out.
- ◆ **Vulnerable (VU):** The species is getting fewer.
- ◆ **Endangered (EN):** The species could disappear if we don't protect.
- ◆ **Critically Endangered (CR):** Very close to extinction, almost gone.
- ◆ **Extinct in the Wild (EW):** No more individuals live in nature, only in zoos or reserves.
- ◆ **Extinct (EX):** The species is gone forever from Earth.

Threats to gorillas

Gorillas are threatened by several factors, including;

- ◆ Habitat destruction, such as deforestation to convert forests into agricultural land or urban areas, reduces the habitat available to gorillas.
- ◆ Poaching is a major danger, as gorillas are hunted for their meat, and baby gorillas are sometimes captured to be sold as pets.
- ◆ Gorillas are vulnerable to certain diseases, such as Ebola, tuberculosis, salmonellosis and others, which can have a significant impact on their population.
- ◆ Conflicts between humans and gorillas, such as wars, civil unrest and land expansion for agriculture, can disrupt their habitat and behaviour.
- ◆ Unsustainable tourism can disturb gorillas and their habitat and can also increase the risk of disease transmission.
- ◆ Climate change is altering the availability of food and water resources for gorillas, which has an impact on their survival and well-being.



The Effects of Deforestation and Poaching on Gorillas

Solutions for gorilla protection

Deforestation, pollution and gorilla protection are common challenges to the African continent. It is essential that we act collectively to protect these great apes and their environment as solution we have;

- ✔ The protection and restoration of forest habitats is essential for the survival of gorillas.
- ✔ Combating poaching and the illegal trade in gorillas is crucial to preserving the species.
- ✔ Educating and raising public awareness of the issues facing gorillas can help reduce the consumption of gorilla meat and promote conservation.
- ✔ Scientific research can help us understand the needs and behaviours of gorillas, which can inform conservation efforts.

- ✔ Sustainable tourism can help promote gorilla conservation by generating income for local communities and raising tourist awareness of the importance of conservation.
- ✔ Protecting ecological corridors to help maintain connectivity between gorilla habitats.
- ✔ Collaboration between governments, conservation organisations and local communities for the protection of gorillas.

Despite the threats to gorillas, efforts are being made every day to preserve and protect this magnificent species. Several organisations contribute to the protection of gorillas. Protecting gorillas means protecting an essential part of our natural heritage. Tropical Forest and Rural Development (TF-RD) and the Great Ape Conservation Alliance in Central Africa (GSAC) are joining forces to preserve these endangered species and their forests. This book is not only intended for Cameroon but has been designed as an educational tool for the whole of Africa, to inspire, educate and encourage everyone to participate in the conservation of great apes and their environment.



Tree Planting for the Protection of Gorilla Habitats

How can I contribute to the protection of gorillas?



- ✔ Do not buy gorilla meat or wild animal meat.
- ✔ Talk about gorilla protection with those around you.
- ✔ Join nature clubs at school.

Join us and become a Gorilla guardian in your environment

About Alliance (GSAC)



The Great Ape Conservation Alliance in Central Africa (GSAC Alliance) is a sub-regional network composed of civil society organizations network in the countries of the Congo basin in Cameroon, Gabon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo.

These NGOs work on community conservation issues and the protection of great apes, based on an inclusive and participatory approach involving indigenous populations. Their goal is to promote the economic and social development of local populations. This network brings together organisations working in the forest landscapes of the Congo Basin, within the area covered by the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC).

GSAC members



Exercises

1. Who is the brave gorilla and hero of the story?
 - A. Samba
 - B. Akibo
 - C. Mada
 - D. Zozo
2. What type of forest does Akibo and his family live in?
 - A. The lush forests of Africa
 - B. The forests of Asia
 - C. The lush forests of the Amazon
 - D. The forests of Europe
3. What is the name of the baby gorilla's mother mentioned in the story?
 - A. Kimba
 - B. Mola
 - C. Akibo
 - D. Mada
4. What is the name of the fruit used by gorillas to chase poachers out of the forest?
 - A. Lemon
 - B. Mango
 - C. Wild Mango
 - D. Moabi



About this story

Akibo, King of the Gorillas is a story adapted to the critical situation of gorillas in Africa. This species is considered endangered due to human activities and climate change. This environmental education book about gorillas was designed to raise awareness among children and young people about protecting nature and great apes. The examples and images used come partly from Cameroon, but the messages and activities proposed are relevant to all African countries. Deforestation, pollution and gorilla conservation are challenges common to the African continent.

We also present organisations such as the Great Ape Conservation Alliance (GSAC) and Tropical Forest and Rural Development (TF-RD) to showcase concrete initiatives. These local experiences can inspire other countries to develop their own solutions and strengthen African cooperation to protect our forests and gorillas.

This book is therefore an open educational tool that any school, NGO or ministry can adapt to its national context to encourage young people and local communities to become guardians of African biodiversity.

Answers

1. B
2. A
3. D
4. C
5. A
6. D

Answer yes or no

1. Yes
2. Yes
3. Yes

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If you would like to share your experiences with this publication or start a collaboration, please send us an e-mail at the following address: **tfrd2009@yahoo.fr**.

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This book was designed and published by Tropical Forest and Rural Development (TF-RD), Cameroon, with the aim of raising children's awareness about the protection of gorillas and the preservation of their natural environment.

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