

Trafficking of baby gorillas poses new threat to endangered species

Level 2 • Intermediate

1 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

infant	trafficking	poacher	endangered	penniless
ranger	surveillance	parasite	under-resourced	rumour

- _____ is the business of buying and selling things illegally. (title)
- An _____ species is a type of animal that may soon become extinct. (title)
- A _____ is someone who illegally catches or kills animals. (para 1)
- A park _____ is someone whose job is to look after a forest or an area of countryside. (para 1)
- If an organization is _____, it does not have enough money or equipment. (para 3)
- An _____ is a very young child or animal. (para 4)
- A _____ is an animal that lives in or on another animal and feeds on it. (para 5)
- A _____ is unofficial information that may or may not be true. (para 8)
- If you are _____, you have no money. (para 8)
- _____ is the process of carefully watching a person or place that may be involved in criminal activity. (para 9)

2 Find the information

Scan the article to find the information below.

- How many mountain gorillas remain in the world?
- Which three countries share the Virunga Volcanoes Conservation Area?
- How many mountain gorillas are there in Uganda?
- What does MGVP stand for?
- What two medical problems does the newest orphan baby gorilla have?
- What is the likely destination for smuggled baby gorillas?

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David Smith, Africa correspondent
17 October, 2011

- 1 There has been an increase in the trafficking of baby gorillas, and this is putting the endangered species in the Democratic Republic of Congo in great danger. Poachers, who were demanding \$40,000 for one baby gorilla, were caught by park rangers early in October. It was the fourth case since April, which makes this a record year for the number of poachers caught with baby gorillas.
- 2 Mountain gorillas are critically endangered. Around 790 remain in the world – about 480 in the Virunga Volcanoes Conservation Area (shared by DR Congo, Rwanda and Uganda) and just over 300 in Uganda itself. Eastern lowland gorillas are more numerous but their numbers are also falling.
- 3 Emmanuel de Mérode, Director of Virunga National Park, said: “We are very worried about a growing market for baby gorillas that is feeding dangerous trafficking activity in eastern Congo. We cannot control the international trade in baby gorillas, but our rangers are doing everything they can to stop it here.” He added: “Four baby gorillas taken in less than a year is unusually high ... [but] it’s only the tip of the iceberg: we can only catch a small number of poachers because the wildlife service is under-resourced in Congo.”
- 4 An infant gorilla was rescued on 6 October in an undercover operation. A team of park rangers, dressed in civilian clothes, made contact and agreed a price for a male eastern lowland gorilla that poachers were hiding in a small backpack. When they had possession of the gorilla, the rangers arrested the poachers. Christian Shamavu, the leader of the operation, said: “It’s very likely that the mother and other gorillas were killed because it’s very difficult to take a baby gorilla from its family. The poachers will never admit to this, though.”
- 5 Baby eastern lowland gorillas were taken from poachers in DR Congo in April and June, and Rwandan police found a baby mountain gorilla that poachers were trying to smuggle over the border in August. The animals suffer physical pain during the process. Dr Jan Ramer, a vet with Mountain Gorilla Veterinarian Project (MGVP), partners with Virunga National Park, said: “Many of these young animals are injured from ropes around their hands, feet or waist, and some are quite ill, which is not surprising as they are extremely stressed and poorly fed.” But the newest orphan gorilla appears to be in good health, Ramer added. “He appears to be quite healthy apart from some parasites and dry skin.”
- 6 The black market price for infant gorillas can reach \$40,000, but officials say they do not have the resources or legal power to investigate where the gorillas are going or who is responsible for the trafficking.
- 7 International experts said they believe the gorillas go east. Ian Redmond, of the conservation group the Ape Alliance, said: “We think the Middle East is a likely destination – rich animal collectors and a tradition of giving big gifts to win favours – and maybe rich Russians, but we don’t have much real evidence.
- 8 “What we do know is that just the rumour that someone is looking to buy a baby ape can be enough for penniless hunters to think: ‘I could get one of those and sell it for \$\$\$\$!’ In eastern Congo, after a baby gorilla is caught, it is likely to be smuggled east through either Rwanda or Uganda.” A report on ape trafficking by filmmaker Karl Ammann claimed that dozens of gorillas and hundreds of chimpanzees have been taken from Cameroon via Nigeria to Egypt.
- 9 Emmanuel de Mérode added: “Surveillance is the answer – at the borders, in the towns, along the roads. The local community are the best surveillance system, if they support us. A lot more could be done in international trade, especially in the market countries where there is demand for baby gorillas. These countries must make laws and enforce them. As far as I know, very little has been done to help to stop baby gorilla trafficking.”

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3 Comprehension check

Are these statements true (T) or false (F) according to the text?

1. More poachers have been caught with baby gorillas in 2011 than ever before.
2. There are more mountain gorillas than lowland gorillas.
3. Park rangers only catch a small number of poachers because they do not have enough money or equipment.
4. Poachers often kill the mother and other gorillas when they catch a baby gorilla.
5. Rich animal collectors from the Middle East catch baby gorillas.
6. Hundreds of chimpanzees have been taken from Egypt.

4 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

1. a two-word noun phrase meaning *an area of land that is protected from being damaged* (para 2)
2. an adjective meaning *existing in large numbers* (para 2)
3. a five-word expression meaning *a problem or difficult situation which shows that a much more serious problem exists* (para 3)
4. a two-word expression meaning *a secret action that tries to catch criminals* (para 4)
5. a verb meaning *to take something illegally from one country to another* (para 5)
6. a two-word expression meaning *not given enough food* (para 5)
7. a two-word expression meaning *the illegal buying and selling of things* (para 6)
8. a noun meaning *the amount of a product that people want or the fact that they want it* (para 9)

5 Verb + noun collocations

Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns or noun phrases in the right-hand column.

- | | |
|------------|---------------------------|
| 1. suffer | a. contact |
| 2. agree | b. the trade in something |
| 3. make | c. a criminal |
| 4. enforce | d. pain |
| 5. catch | e. a law |
| 6. control | f. a price |

6 Word-building

Complete the table with words from the text.

	noun	adjective
1.	health	
2.	stress	
3.	surprise	
4.	east	
5.	number	
6.	injury	

7 Discussion

Is it important to try to protect endangered species? Why? Why not?

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KEY

1 Key words

1. trafficking
2. endangered
3. poacher
4. ranger
5. under-resourced
6. infant
7. parasite
8. rumour
9. penniless
10. surveillance

2 Find the information

1. around 790
2. DR Congo, Rwanda and Uganda
3. just over 300
4. Mountain Gorilla Veterinarian Project
5. parasites and dry skin
6. the Middle East

3 Comprehension check

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. F

4 Find the word

1. conservation area
2. numerous
3. the tip of the iceberg
4. undercover operation
5. smuggle
6. poorly fed
7. black market
8. demand

5 Verb + noun collocations

1. d
2. f
3. a
4. e
5. c
6. b

6 Word-building

1. healthy
2. stressed
3. surprising
4. eastern
5. numerous
6. injured