

Trafficking of baby gorillas poses new threat to endangered species

Level 3 • Advanced

1 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

anguish
ranger

smuggle
captor

poacher
trafficking

confiscate
pose as

penniless
in decline

- _____ is the business of buying and selling things illegally.
- A _____ is someone who illegally catches or kills animals.
- A park _____ is someone whose job it is to look after a forest or an area of countryside.
- If something is _____, it is getting less or worse.
- If you _____ someone, you pretend to be that (type of) person in order to trick people.
- If you _____ something, you officially take it from someone for legal reasons.
- If you _____ something, you take it secretly and illegally into or out of a country, especially as a way of earning money.
- _____ is a feeling of great physical or emotional pain.
- A _____ is someone who is keeping you as a prisoner.
- If you are _____, you have no money.

2 Find the information

Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F). Then check your answers in the text.

- There are fewer than 800 mountain gorillas remaining in the world.
- There are more lowland gorillas than mountain gorillas.
- Mountain gorillas mostly live in Asia.
- Eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo are controlled by rebels.
- Baby mountain gorillas are generally sold for up to \$400,000.
- Many wealthy animal collectors are thought to be based in the Middle East.

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David Smith, Africa correspondent
17 October, 2011

- 1 A surge in the trafficking of baby gorillas is posing a fresh risk to the endangered species in the Democratic Republic of Congo, wildlife officials have warned. Poachers demanding \$40,000 for one of the animals were caught by park rangers earlier this month in an undercover sting operation. It was the fourth such incident since April, making this a record year for the poachers trying to feed a growing black market caught with baby gorillas.
- 2 Mountain gorillas are critically endangered, with around 790 remaining in the world – about 480 in the Virunga Volcanoes Conservation Area (shared by DR Congo, Rwanda and Uganda) and just over 300 in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in Uganda. Eastern lowland gorillas are more numerous but largely outside protected areas and still in decline.
- 3 Emmanuel de Mérode, Director of Virunga National Park, said: “We are very concerned about a growing market for baby gorillas that is feeding dangerous trafficking activity in rebel-controlled areas of eastern DRC. We are powerless to control the international trade in baby gorillas, but our rangers are doing everything they can to stamp it out on the ground.” He added: “Four baby gorillas seized in less than a year is unusually high ... [but] it’s only the tip of the iceberg, as we only manage to catch a small proportion of the offenders because the wildlife service is under-resourced in Congo.”
- 4 An infant gorilla was rescued on 6 October when a team of park rangers went undercover posing as potential buyers in the town of Kirumba, near the western border of the park.
- 5 Dressed in civilian clothes, they made contact and agreed a price for the one-and-a-half-year-old male eastern lowland gorilla that poachers were hiding in a small backpack. Rangers arrested the three poachers once they had possession of the gorilla. 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.”
- 6 Baby eastern lowland gorillas were confiscated from poachers in DR Congo in April and June, and Rwandan police recovered a baby mountain gorilla as poachers attempted to smuggle it over the border in August. The animals suffer physical anguish during the process. Dr Jan Ramer, a vet with the Mountain Gorilla Veterinarian Project, partners with Virunga National Park, said: “Many of these infants are injured from ropes around their hands, feet or waist, and some are quite ill, which is not surprising as they are generally in close contact with their human captors, extremely stressed, and with very poor nutrition.”
- 7 But the newest orphan gorilla, named Shamavu after the ranger who rescued him, appears to be in good health, Ramer added. “He appears to be quite healthy other than some parasites and dry skin.”
- 8 The market price for infant gorillas can reach \$40,000, but officials say they lack the resources or jurisdiction to investigate where the gorillas are headed or who is behind the trafficking.
- 9 International experts said they believe the route lies east. Ian Redmond, Chairman of the conservation group the Ape Alliance, said: “We think the Middle East is a likely source of demand – wealthy animal collectors and a tradition of giving big gifts to curry favour – and maybe wealthy Russians, but there is little hard evidence.
- 10 “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 \$\$\$\$!’ And in eastern DRC, once one is captured it is likely to

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be smuggled eastwards through either Rwanda or Uganda, the traditional trade routes for all goods in that area." A report on ape trafficking by Karl Ammann, an investigative film-maker, claimed that dozens of gorillas and hundreds of chimpanzees have been taken from Cameroon via Nigeria to Egypt.

surveillance system, if they are on our side. A lot more could be done with respect to international trade, especially in the market countries where there is demand for baby gorillas. There, it's a question of enacting legislation and enforcing. As far as I know, very little has been done that's effective with respect to baby gorilla trafficking."

- 11 Emmanuel de Mérode added: "Surveillance is the key – at the borders, in the towns, along the roads. The local community are the best

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3 Comprehension check

Choose the best answer according to the text.

- Why are only a small number of gorilla traffickers caught?
 - because the international trade in baby gorillas cannot be controlled
 - because the wildlife service in Congo doesn't have enough resources
 - because not enough is done in the market countries
- How was the baby gorilla rescued on 6 October?
 - Park rangers pretended to be potential buyers and arrested the poachers.
 - Rwandan police found it when the poachers were trying to smuggle it over the border.
 - The local community informed the police.
- What often happens when a baby gorilla is taken from its family?
 - It suffers mental anguish during the process.
 - The mother and other gorillas are killed.
 - The poachers are injured by other gorillas.
- What is the most likely destination for baby gorillas?
 - Cameroon.
 - Russia.
 - The Middle East.

4 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

- a noun meaning *a sudden increase* (para 1)
- a two-word expression meaning *a trick prepared by the police to catch criminals* (para 1)
- a two-word phrasal verb meaning *to end something bad or unpleasant by taking decisive action* (para 3)
- a five-word expression meaning *a problem or difficult situation which shows that a much more serious problem exists* (para 3)
- a two-word adjectival expression meaning *without enough money or equipment to operate effectively* (para 3)
- a two-word expression meaning *to work secretly in order to catch criminals* (para 4)
- a noun meaning *the right or power to make legal decisions* (para 8)
- a two-word expression meaning *to try to make someone like you or give you something* (para 9)

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5 -er or -or?

Complete the noun forms of these words using **-er** or **-or** endings. In one case you will also need to add another letter.

1. collect ____
2. direct ____
3. offend ____
4. traffic ____
5. capt ____
6. poach ____

6 Word-building

Complete the sentences using the correct form of the words in brackets at the end of each sentence.

1. Mountain gorillas are _____ endangered. [CRISIS]
2. Experts believe _____ is the key to the problem. [SURVEY]
3. Karl Ammann is an _____ film-maker. [INVESTIGATE]
4. The Director of the Virunga National Park says they are _____ to control the international trade in baby gorillas. [POWER]
5. The Bwindi Forest in Uganda is known as the _____ Forest because it is almost impossible to enter it. [PENETRATE]
6. The number of baby gorillas seized in 2011 has been _____ high. [UNUSUAL]

7 Discussion

What measures should be taken to prevent the trafficking of endangered species?

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KEY

1 Key words

1. trafficking
2. poacher
3. ranger
4. in decline
5. pose as
6. confiscate
7. smuggle
8. anguish
9. captor
10. penniless

2 Find the information

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

3 Comprehension check

1. b
2. a
3. b
4. c

4 Find the word

1. surge
2. sting operation
3. stamp out
4. the tip of the iceberg
5. under-resourced
6. go undercover
7. jurisdiction
8. curry favour

5 -er or -or?

1. -or
2. -or
3. -er
4. -ker
5. -or
6. -er

6 Word-building

1. critically
2. surveillance
3. investigative
4. powerless
5. impenetrable
6. unusually