



Young bonobo

The Fourth Great Ape - Bonobo

If you ask most people to name the four species of great apes, usually you can get three - gorilla, orangutan and chimpanzee. The fourth great ape is the one that stumps most responders. Why don't people know about bonobos?

The following information was copied from lolayabonobo.org, and it should help with the understanding of the "fourth great ape."

7 Facts About Bonobos

1. Our closest living relatives

We are more closely related to bonobos (and chimpanzees) than we are to any other animal on

earth. We share 98.7% of our DNA with bonobos - this means that bonobos are more closely related to us than they are to gorillas. This leads to many similarities between bonobos and humans, but also some key differences.

2. Females in charge

The main reason that bonobos are so peaceful is that males are not in charge. The dominant bonobo in any group is never a male. This is unusual in the animal kingdom. Usually, if females are in charge, they are a lot bigger than the males. Bonobo females are smaller than males, but the females have very special friendships. If any male in the group becomes aggressive, the females join forces and prevent him from hurting anyone. Over evolutionary time, bonobos have become much less aggressive than their ape relatives, including humans.

3.. Peaceful

Most of us believe that humans are the most

intelligent animal on earth. It's true that we have been extremely successful, and we have impressive technology. But there is one problem we have not been able to overcome. We have not figured out how to avoid, murder, war, and bloodshed. We share this trait with our other closest relative, chimpanzees. In fact, the murder rate of chimpanzees and humans (before we had modern weapons) is about the same. Bonobos are the only great ape that have never been seen to kill their own kind. If we can figure out bonobos' secret, we might be able to make our greatest accomplishment - world peace.



Adult bonobo

4. Conflict avoidance

Bonobos have evolved to avoid fighting, about anything. Researchers

working at our sanctuary discovered that in a situation that had the potential to cause conflict (two individuals were in competition over food), chimpanzees had an increase in testosterone, which is related to competitiveness, and bonobos had an increase in cortisol, which is related to stress. This stress response leads bonobos to seek social reassurance and they hug and share instead of fight.

5. Good Samaritans

Recent research at Lola has shown that bonobos are truly good Samaritans, perhaps even better than people. We prefer to help people we are related to, or people we know, rather than strangers. Bonobos do love to share, and feel empathy towards family and friends, but when given a choice bonobos prefer to share food with strangers.

6. Bonobo Handshake

The main way bonobos diffuse tension is certainly original - they have sex, or more specifically, they use social sexual contact. To strengthen their relationships, females will rub their genitals together. If anyone in the group, male or female is feeling stressed, anxious, or irritated, someone will run over and give them a 'bonobo handshake'. This kind of conflict resolution seems to be at the heart of their peaceful society.



Bonobo family

7. Highly Endangered

Bonobos live only in one country, the Democratic Republic of Congo. They live in the Congo Basin, which is a huge forest, almost three times the size of France. However, the bushmeat trade has left them vulnerable to hunting. Bonobos are the most endangered great ape. No one is sure how many are left in the wild, but it could be as few as 5,000.

For additional information on bonobos, see www.lolayabonobo.org www.bonobo.org



Join Us for
Upcoming ACE
Events

By Michele Dave

We have an exciting remainder of the year for ACE! We are planning on having a **July dinner** night-out, so stay tuned for the when and where. We are still in the planning stages but would like to see if there will be interest in an outing to

Monday Night Brewery or a brand new brewery in Grant Park - Eventide.

Don't forget about **Gorilla Golf** and the **Run for the Redheads**, both in September.

In October we hope to plan **another dine out night** at a different location. Another **night hike** is being planned for October or November. Again, stay tuned for an ACE fundraising email.

If you have any questions or suggestions for a fun outing or even a fundraiser, please feel free to email me at fundraising@apeconservationeffort.org.

ACE has always been a highly participatory group of people working on projects to raise money to help great apes in the wild. Whether a voting or non-voting member, please consider helping with our big fundraisers.

Run for the Redheads will be September 12, 2015.

Contact Julie Gaines at redheadrun@apeconservationeffort.org to see how you can help.

Gorilla Golf will be September 29, 2015. Contact Jodi Carrigan at gorillagolf@apeconservationeffort.org to see how you can help.

Studying and Protecting Endangered Garuer's Gorillas

(Article shared from DFGFI Gorilla Council)

While the mountain gorillas of Africa's Virunga massif receive a lot of attention and monitoring efforts, another type of eastern gorilla is found nearby in the Democratic Republic of Congo and receives much less study and protection. Grauer's gorillas (formerly called eastern lowland gorillas) live in an area that has been subjected to long-term conflict and other dangers, and their numbers are estimated to have declined dramatically in the past decade.

The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund has established a Grauer's Gorilla Research and Conservation Program in Congo not only to assess the numbers and stability of the current population in the region, but also study and protect them. Since 2012, from a research and conservation field station in the village of Nkuba, at the edge of a pristine forest, the Fossey Fund has conducted an intensive survey of a 700-square-kilometer area and

located 14 groups of Grauer's gorillas, containing about 150 gorillas. This now allows for regular tracking, protection of their habitat, and study of critical aspects of their lives, such as diets, ranging patterns, and social systems. In addition, the presence of Grauer's gorillas in two larger contiguous forest areas has also been established.



Photo by DFGFI
Movement of Grauer's Gorillas captured by remote photography

However, these gorillas are not habituated to human presence, so tracking them, especially in this primary forest, is extremely challenging. Fossey Fund teams follow the trail of gorillas from one nest site to another, always keeping a day's distance between the gorillas and the trackers. To remain at this distance, trackers need to find very subtle signs, such as food remains, direction of bent vegetation or footprints. In addition, remote cameras are placed in the forest to document the gorillas' presence as well as that of other important species, such as

chimpanzees, leopards, giant pangolins, and others.

The Fossey Fund's next plan is to establish a permanent forest camp in the heart of Grauer's gorilla range, 25 kilometers from the Nkuba base camp. This will enable the uninterrupted tracking of Grauer's gorillas groups, along with their protection. The Fossey Fund also works with local communities in the area to promote gorilla conservation and identify actions to ensure the sustainability of wildlife.

To read more about the Fossey Fund's work tracking Grauer's gorillas, see www.gorillafund.org.



ACE Night Hiking

By Michele Dave

ACE had another great night hike on Father's Day, June 21, 2015! The weather may have been hot and humid, but there were critters to be seen!



photo by Michele Dave
2015 ACE Spring Night Hike group

We had a small group of eight, who met at the Bird Watchers parking lot across from the Mall of Georgia. Robert Hill, our personal guide, talked briefly about the location and how it became a protected natural area. Mill Creek Nature Center is owned and operated by Georgia Wildlife Federation. The loop we hiked is about one and a half miles.



photo by Michele Dave
A lesson on identifying poison ivy was part of the walk.

Boy scouts have come through in recent years to help clear out the invasive privet and build all types of bird boxes. We were hoping to see an owl in a box, but unfortunately, no one was home. It took us just under two hours to hike in and then come back. On the trail a frog was seen hopping across the path. On the way in, we saw a huge spider that on the way back had found a potential mate.



photo by Michele Dave

We saw what was most likely a young beaver swimming through the wetland. We heard many green tree frogs, gray tree frogs, narrow mouth toads, and green frogs. Robert was able to pick out each call and give us a lesson on how to tell which frog was which.



photo by Michele Dave
A millipede was seen on the night hike.

When we got to the observation deck at the end of our hike, we looked in the wetlands and tried to determine eye shine from dew. The moon was a beautiful quarter moon, and even though we could hear slight sounds from I-85, we felt like we were fully in nature. We sat in silence and darkness to watch a group of fireflies light up a tree like a Christmas tree. There were so many fireflies throughout the hike!

If there is enough interest, we hope to do another hike in the fall. Stay tuned for ACE fundraising email to stay in the loop.



Did you know?



Membership in the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil can be found on their website: www.RSPO.org.



This seal can be found on products produced by companies refraining from using unsustainable palm oil.



Orangutan babies at play

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