



The Future of Mountain Gorillas in Uganda

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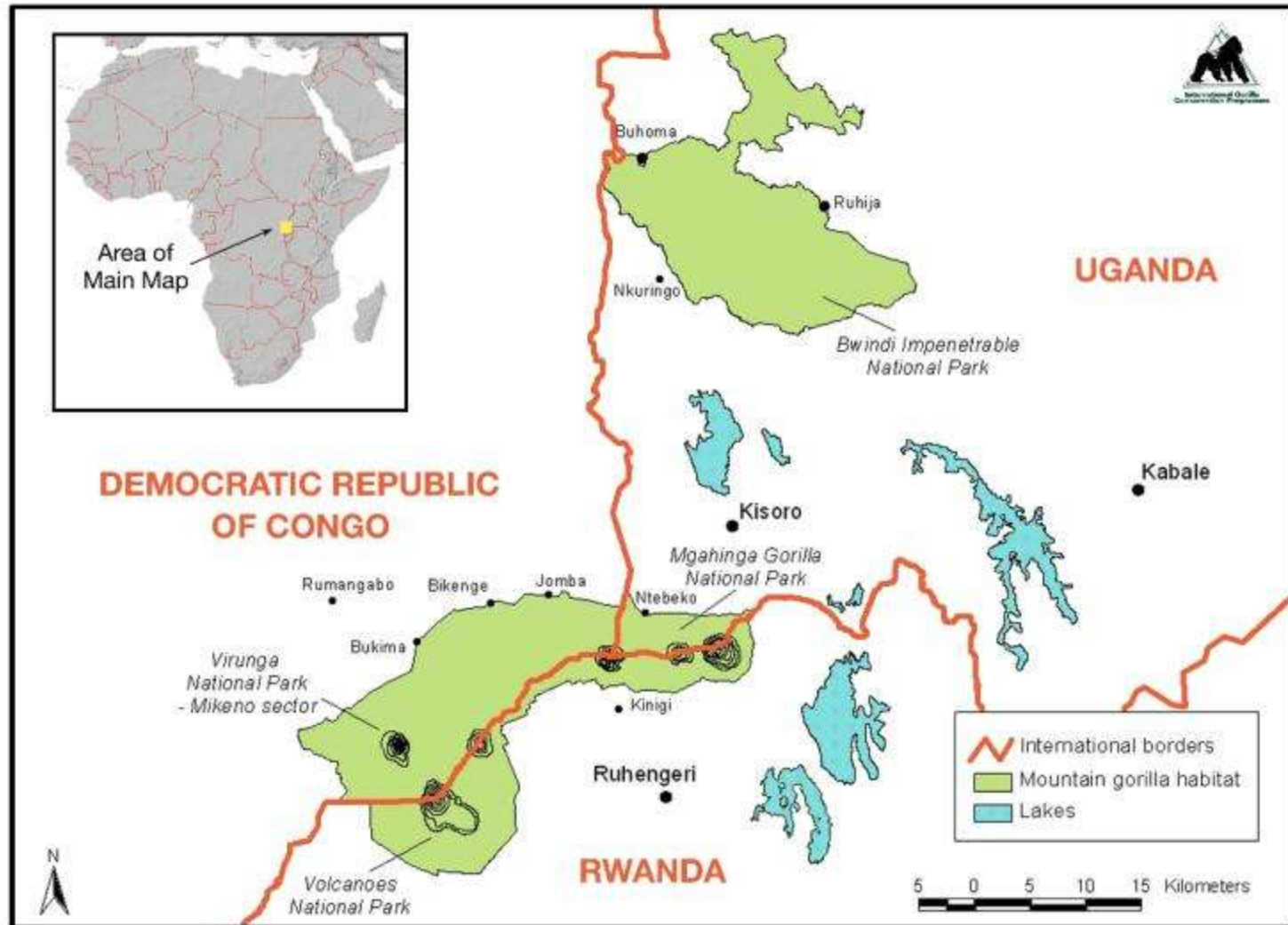
Gorilla beringei beringei

CRITICALLY
ENDANGERED
CR

- ‘Critically Endangered’ according to the IUCN
- Current total population is Estimated at **780** in two populations
- Not known to survive in zoos



Distribution of mountain gorillas



Factors determining population size:

- Habitat availability and integrity
- Predators and parasites
- Diseases
- Weather/Climate
- Warfare
- Introduction of exotic species
- Altitude
- Competition

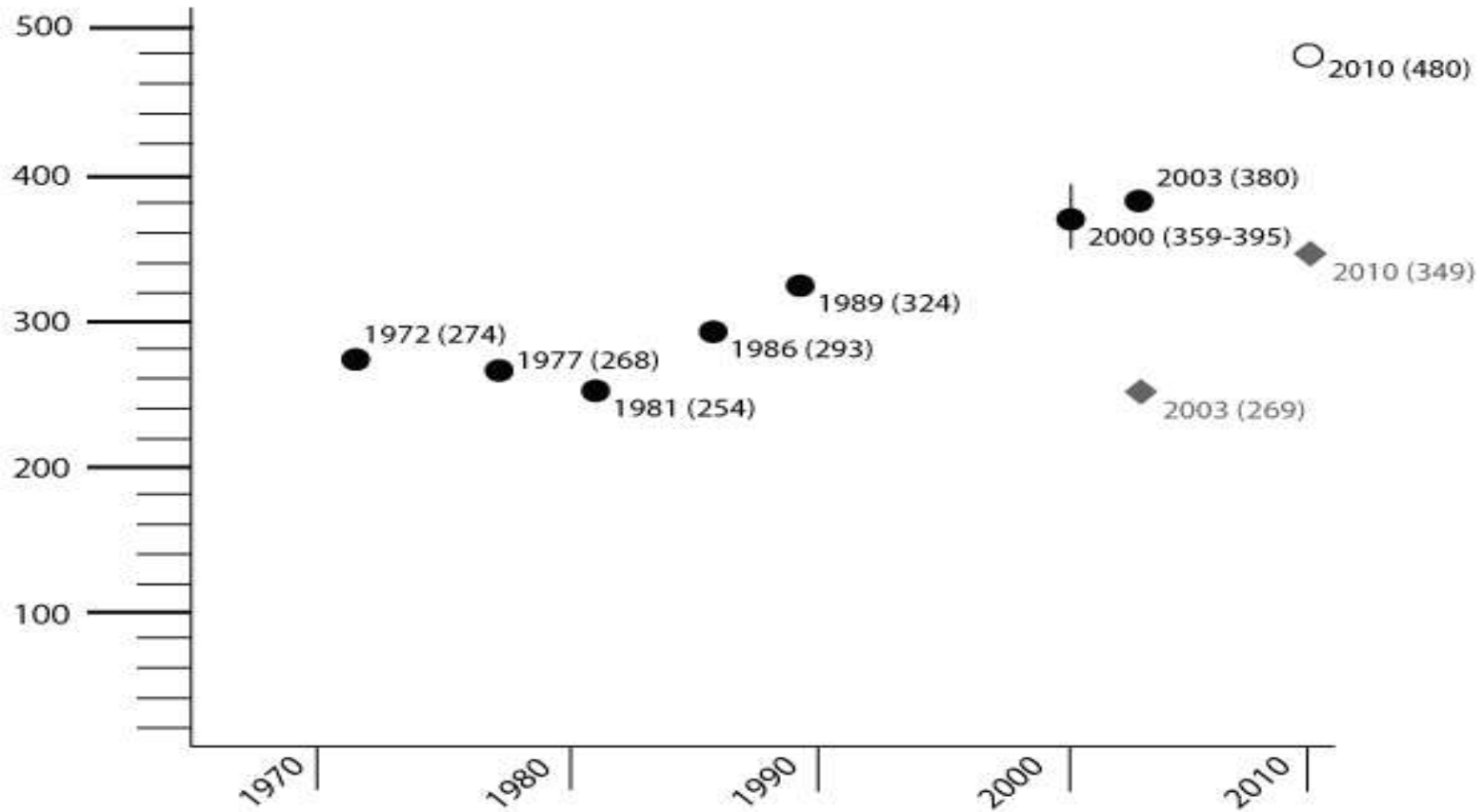
Threats to survival of Mt. Gorillas

- Poaching
- Disease
- Habitat loss and degradation
- Climate change
- Human population pressure and demand for natural resources from the forest
- Conflict and civil unrest
- Disenfranchisement of local community
- Insufficient regional collaboration

The Positive postings

- Population increasing
- Increasing information on the Gorillas
- Increasing awareness on their plight
- Demonstrated economic significance-45m\$ at 2011, 7 jobs /permit (2004)
- Increasing support for its conservation at different levels
- Regional collaboration for NRM incl: Gorilla Conservation

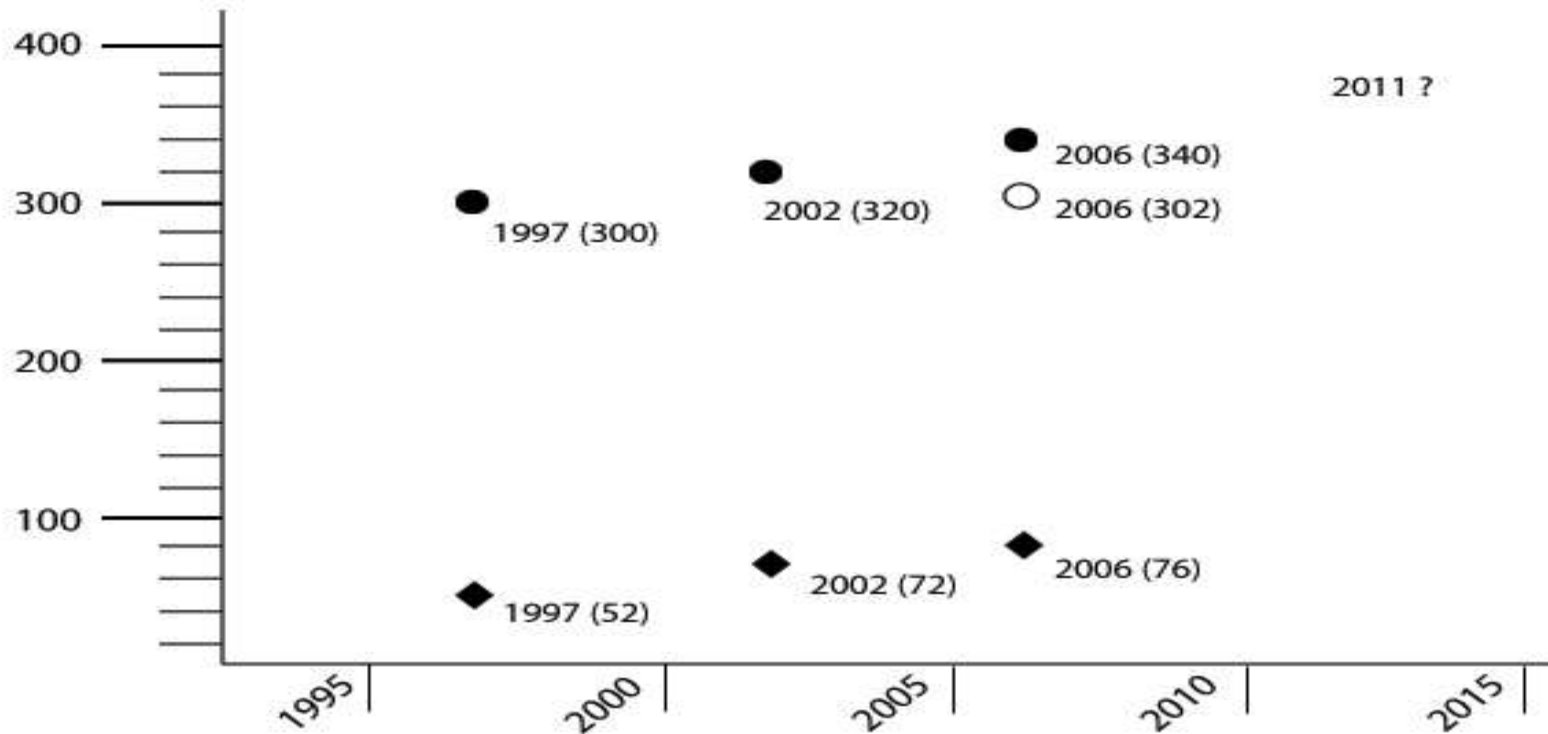
Pops increasing: Virunga Pop trends 1972-2010



- = total number of mtn. gorillas, various methods
- = total number of mtn. gorillas, sweep + genetic verification (currently used method)
- ◆ = number of habituated mountain gorillas



Pops increasing: Bwindi Pop trends 1997-2006



- = total mountain gorillas indirect sweep method
- = sweep + genetic verification (currently used method)
- ◆ = number of habituated mountain gorillas



The concerns:

1. Habitat Loss and Degradation

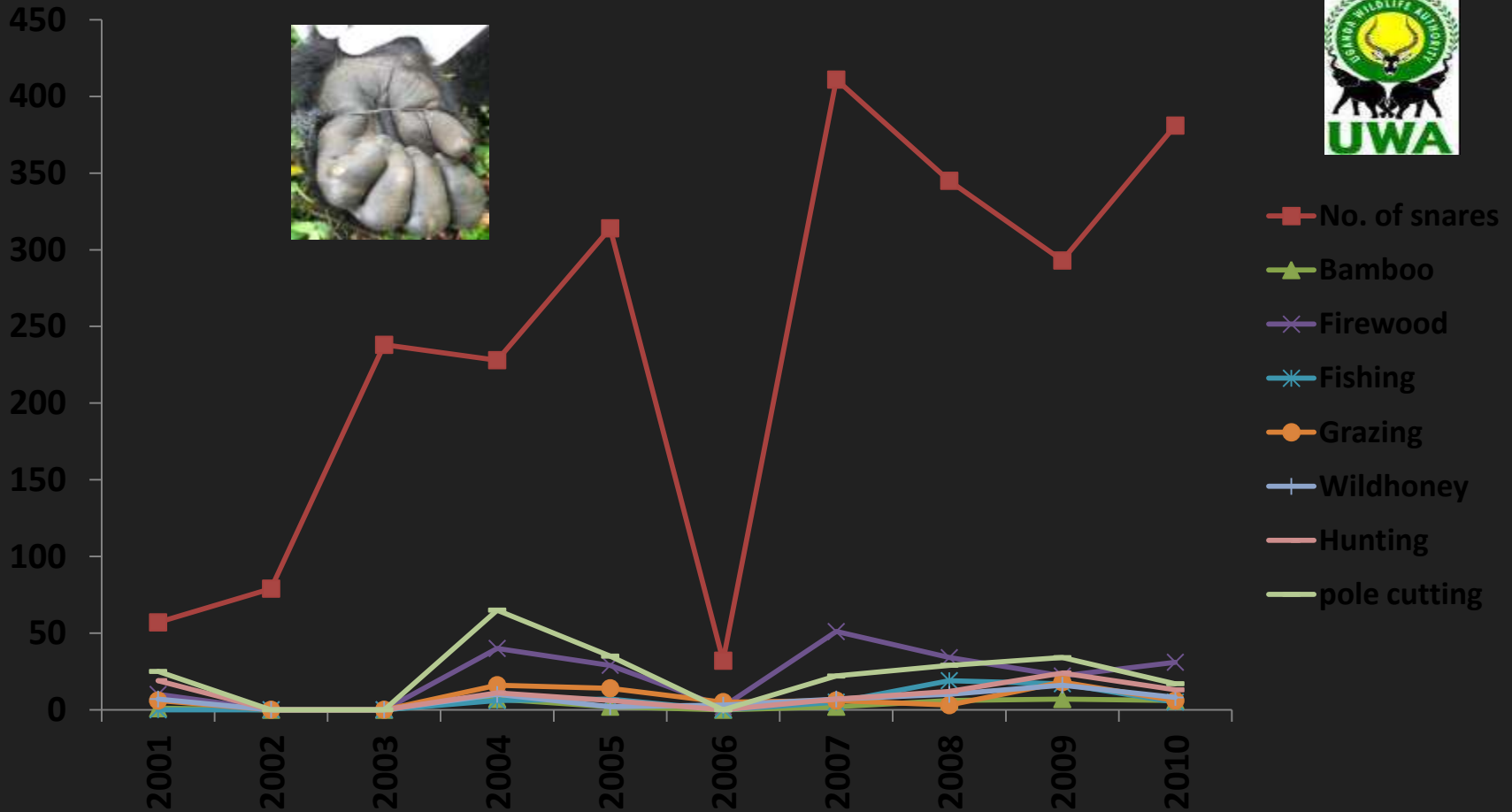
- Currently minimal but threat is real considering :
- Nos and livelihood of forest edge communities
- Pressure for mining and mineral exploration



2. Poaching

- Poaching of mountain gorillas for food is extremely rare.
- Largely the result of unselective hunting with snares
- In order to capture babies 'commissioned' by unscrupulous dealers remains a very real threat.

Snaring records



3. Disease transmission

Disease most dramatic threat

- Gorillas:
 - closely related to humans, vulnerable to many of the same diseases.
 - have not developed necessary immunities.
 - live in small groups that may never recover from a sudden pop fall due to disease.



Disease transmission-contd

- Any human contact is potentially harmful, even life-threatening.
- Debris and human waste poorly disposed of in the park
- Contact with surrounding community and their livelihood activities-High pop density,

4. Success of Gorilla Tourism

- Gorilla Tourism universally accepted, supported and lucrative tool for Gorilla conservation:
- Has raised conservation funding
- Has generated publicity for the range states
- Created employment
- Earned national governments taxes
- Made money for the private sector
- BUT:

Success of Gorilla Tourism-CONT

- Success is leading to constant pressure to:
 - Habituate more
 - Lower safe guards for Gorilla health
 - Bringing thousands of people from all over the world into proximity with gorillas (15,360ple for BINP at 80% occupancy)
 - Behavioral disturbance and stress leading to immunosuppresion

5. Conflict and civil unrest

- Killing of gorillas
 - 1995 : 4 gorillas in Bwindi-Community reprisal
 - 2002: An attempt thwarted in Nkuringo
 - 2007 : 10 gorillas in Virunga NP
- Exploitation of habitat
- Abandonment or downscaling of management
- Drop in Tourism
- Quality of habitat- garbage

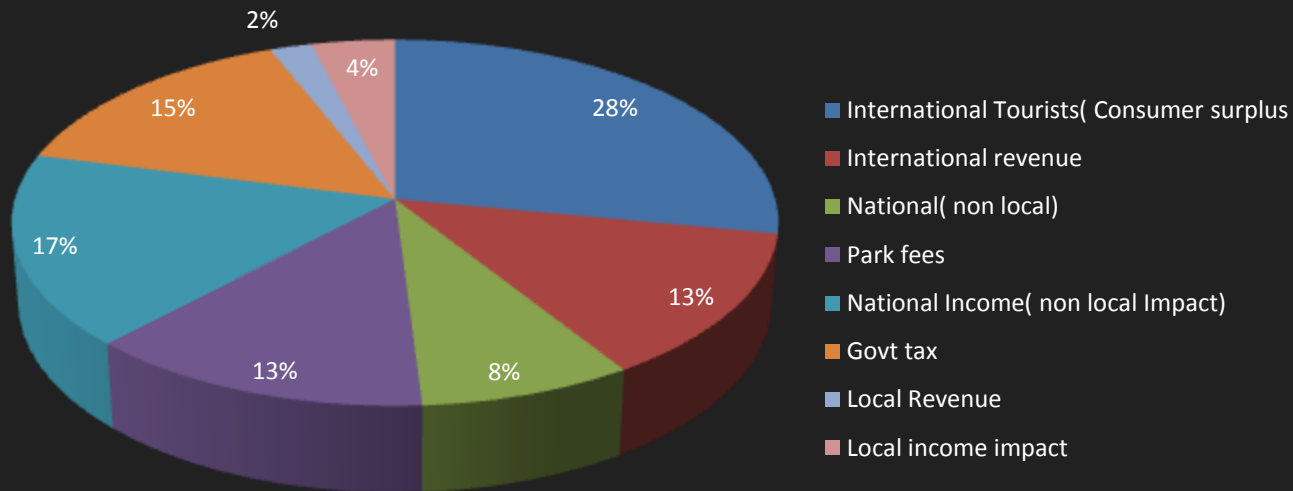


6. A feeling of disenfranchisement among local communities,

- Crop raiding
 - [Gorillas on community land](#)
 - Annual losses around BINP 0.9m \$

A feeling of disenfranchisement among local communities

- Limited benefits from Tourism



Climate change

- Reduction in habitable lands
- Change in community production systems and approaches

7. Insufficient regional collaboration

Recommendations

1. Increase community stake in conservation through related and dependant interventions
2. Research into and routinely monitor their habitat, interventions, social parameters and use information for adapting management
3. Rationalize land use around habitats



Recommendations-Contd

4. Introduce/intensify programmes to reduce population and increase quality of life of community
5. Implement recommendations to minimize disease spread:
 1. Proper Garbage , and fecal matter disposal
 2. Improving health status of local communities
 3. Active sensitization campaign-Create a gorilla conscious tourism movement
6. Awareness raising of tour operators and continued training of PA staff in health issues

Recommendations-Contd

7. Investigate reasons for Gorilla exits
8. Undertake total economic valuation of the Parks
9. Explore incentives and disincentives for good Gorilla conservation practice for communities, private sector
10. Ratify treaty for regional collaboration
11. Implement /roll out strategies for climate change adaptation



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