



World Association of  
Zoos and Aquariums  
**WAZA** | United for  
Conservation



## A New Book on Gorillas Helps to Save the Gentle Giants during the Year of the Gorilla

Bonn, 5 March 2009 - The launch of a new publication on gorillas today will support the survival of gorilla populations and mark the Year of the Gorilla 2009. Gorillas in the wild are seriously endangered in their natural habitat in Western, Central and Eastern Africa. They are exposed to hunting for bushmeat, commercial trade of live infants, habitat destruction, armed conflicts and diseases such as Ebola.

**"Gorillas - the Gentle Giants"** by Martin Harvey and Letitia Farris-Toussaint will support the educational objective of the Year of the Gorilla to raise awareness of these amazing creatures and the threats they face. Ian Redmond OBE, Ambassador of the Year of the Gorilla, has lent his scientific expertise to review the book.

The UNEP Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) has signed an agreement with Evans Mitchell Books, which publishes the new book **"Gorillas the Gentle Giants"** on 5<sup>th</sup> March, to support the Year of the Gorilla 2009.

The publishing house will donate money from the sale of each copy of **"Gorillas - the Gentle Giants"** to the UN campaign. The funds raised from their worldwide sales will be used to help fund expert-selected, high-priority projects to protect gorillas and their habitats. Robert Hepworth, CMS Executive Secretary said: "This nature book pursues a twofold aim: It allows us to access the mysterious world of these awe-inspiring giants of the forests that so desperately need our help. At the same time, this book will help us to support projects under the UN Year of the Gorilla to save the remaining populations of these great apes."

**"Gorillas the Gentle Giants"** is a stunning hard-back book, with 132 pages of amazing photography and fascinating text. Gorillas have always been a source of inspiration and fascination, and have long been the subject of extensive observation by field biologists, wildlife photographers and writers. In **"Gorillas - the Gentle Giants"**, the authors use beautiful and close up photography, alongside informative text, to take us through the history, features and habits of these amazing animals. They also discuss their fight for survival, faced with the problems of poaching, disease, deforestation, and the effect of armed conflict.

Senior scientist and Ambassador of the Year of the Gorilla Ian Redmond said: "If we don't take immediate action, gorillas will become extinct within the next decades. Due to their key role in their forest ecosystem, we depend on them to safeguard the African rainforests, one of the key pillars keeping the world's climate in balance. The Year of the Gorilla has enhanced cooperation among the United Nations, governments and conservation bodies to save one of our closest relatives. This book illustrates their ecological importance as well as their unique beauty."

One of the objectives of the Year of the Gorilla 2009 is to educate the wider public about gorillas and the threats they face. The partners of this campaign, CMS, the Great Apes Survival Partnership and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums in cooperation with UNEP and UNESCO hope that the publication of this new book will be able to help achieve that.

**"Gorillas the Gentle Giants"** will be available from 5<sup>th</sup> March 2009 at all good book stores priced £14.99, or from the publisher's website [www.embooks.co.uk](http://www.embooks.co.uk)

## Notes to Editors:

### The Year of the Gorilla 2009

The UN has designated 2009 the Year of the Gorilla as a celebration of one of our closest relatives and an appeal to everyone to join the efforts to halt their decline. Gorillas are seriously threatened by hunting, habitat loss and other manmade threats. Therefore, the Year of the Gorilla will aim, using this magnificent species as a flagship, to conserve not only the gorilla, but also its habitat. The Year of the Gorilla will promote educational initiatives and schemes to involve local communities and improve their livelihoods. There will be a strong emphasis on promoting responsible ecotourism, which is already a major source of income in Central African countries. The biologist and conservationist Ian Redmond (OBE) is the Ambassador for the Year of the Gorilla.

Year of the Gorilla Website

[www.yog2009.org](http://www.yog2009.org)



Other links: [www.cms.int](http://www.cms.int)

[www.unep.org/grasp](http://www.unep.org/grasp)

[www.waza.org](http://www.waza.org)

**Martin Harvey** is a BBC award winning South African photographer. He has over 15 years experience photographing wildlife in 45 countries from the Arctic regions of North America to the deserts of Australia. His photographs have been published in books and magazines throughout the world, including publications such as National Geographic, BBC Wildlife, Geo, Natural History and International Wildlife. He is frequently commissioned by the World Wide Fund for Nature to cover conservation projects. He photographs many different subjects from insects to elephants, and of course gorillas.

**Letitia Farris-Toussaint** is originally from California. She studied primate behaviour in Paris under pioneering lemur specialist Jean-Jacques Petter. She later turned to conservation and communication, covering projects ranging from managing a campaign in French Guiana for the World Wide Fund for Nature, to organizing events in France for the Dian Fossey Fund (now the Gorilla Organization). She currently devotes her time to writing and working with French organizations to communicate outside France on nature and the environment.

### For more information please contact:

Veronika Lenarz

UNEP/CMS Secretariat

Coordinator Year of the Gorilla

Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10

53113 Bonn, Germany

T. +49 228 815-2409

F. +49 228 815-2449

[vlendarz@cms.int](mailto:vlendarz@cms.int)

[www.cms.int](http://www.cms.int)