

SECTION 2



INTRODUCTION

Section 2: The Status and Welfare of Great Apes and Gibbons

This section of *State of the Apes* provides details on the status and welfare of all great apes and gibbons, both in situ and in captivity, as well as on broader issues that affect each of these groups. Abundance estimates of the different ape taxa in situ are presented online, in the Abundance Annex, which is available on the *State of the Apes* website: www.stateoftheapes.com. Updated information on the number of apes in captivity is provided in Chapter 8. The regular provision of data and findings in this section is intended to allow for the identification of population trends and patterns over time.

The section is comprised of two chapters; the first focuses on apes in situ and the second on apes in captivity. In this edition, the in situ chapter explores the relevance and findings of long-term monitoring of wild populations of apes. It also considers, through four case studies, what has been learned about key threats and opportunities for influencing ape conservation and welfare. The chapter on captive apes looks at the legal context, status and conditions of apes housed in facilities across the world, the pressures that led to their captivity and the role played by people's perceptions, not only with respect to captive apes, but also in terms of people's support for ape conservation.

Chapter Highlights

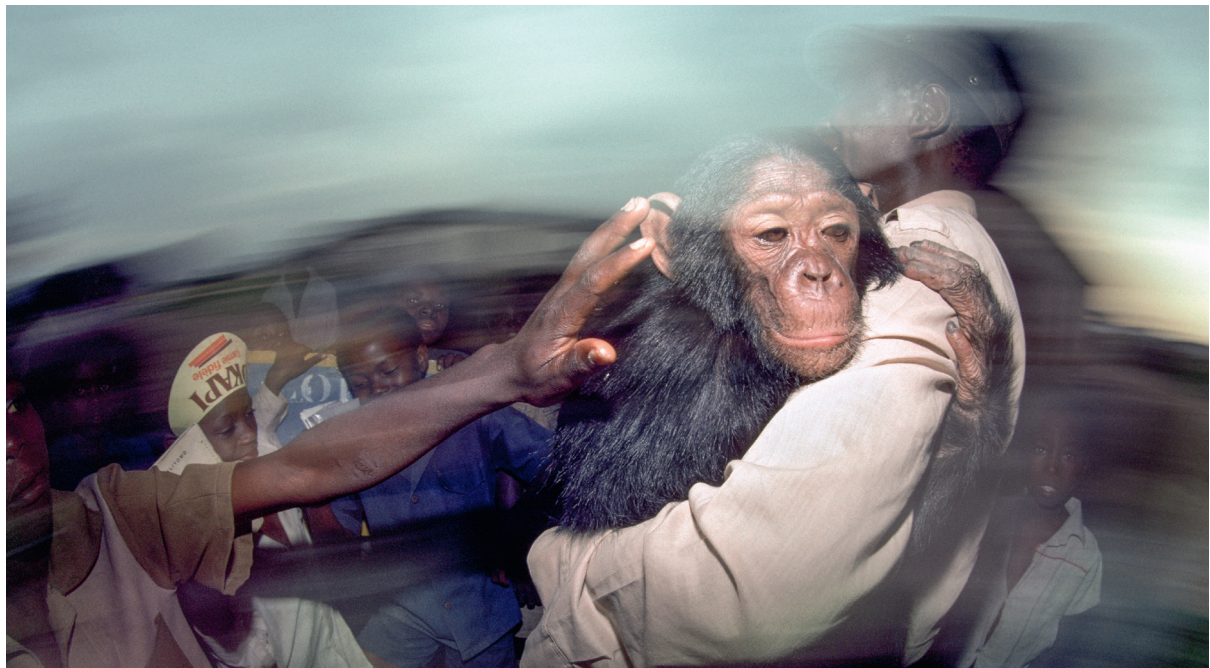
Chapter 7: Long-term Trends

This chapter presents long-term case studies on four species of apes in different locations:

- Bornean orangutans in Sabangau Forest, Indonesia;
- chimpanzees in Gombe Stream National Park, Tanzania;
- bonobos in Wamba, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); and
- silvery gibbons in Mount Halimun Salak National Park, Indonesia.

In exploring long-term datasets across different taxa and contexts, this chapter describes some of the threats to ape populations and the challenges inherent in their conservation. Three of the case studies illustrate the value of long-term engagement on a broad geographic scale, as well as the utility of understanding political and economic contexts in critical ape habitats. The fourth case study highlights the ambiguity and the gaps in our knowledge of many ape species and populations. It also demonstrates the importance of research, consistent survey methods, and the sharing of data in a way that facilitates comparison and the detection of trends, so that the information can then be used to inform and develop appropriate conservation strategies.

While the case studies expose the impacts of logging, armed conflict, habitat loss and agricultural development on the viability of ape populations, they also showcase positive trends among ape populations, particularly those that have resulted from effective protection and the application of natural resource management principles. This research underscores that long interbirth intervals make apes particularly vulnerable to even small declines in their populations; it also reveals that habitat loss, hunting and disease are



the key threats to ape survival. These threats are driven by economic development and are often compounded by political and social dynamics. All of these factors influence the capacity and drive of relevant authorities and organizations to achieve conservation outcomes. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the chapter confirms that finding a balance between economic development and wildlife conservation is an urgent and persistent challenge.

Chapter 8: Apes in Captivity

Apes are found in captivity as a result of a number of factors that range from active breeding and capture, to habitat loss and hunting. Captive apes are housed in facilities that include private residences, research centers, zoos, circuses and sanctuaries. In addition to presenting details on what is known about the number of apes in captivity in range states and adjacent regions, the chapter analyzes some of the factors that contribute to the ongoing demand for captive care. It also provides information on apes in captivity in the consumer countries

of the global North, as well as some of the issues that affect their welfare.

The chapter sheds light on the disparities between policies and social attitudes in and outside of range states and considers what these might mean for the future of apes, both in captivity and in their natural habitats. It highlights how differing legislative frameworks that provide varying levels of protection affect the capture and holding of apes in captivity. It also examines how perceptions of apes change in response to how they are portrayed in the media and kept in zoos or other sites of captivity, and how these perceptions influence the extent to which people support conservation in situ. If people feel that apes are not threatened with extinction, or thrive in captivity, they are less likely to engage or push for conservation action. The provision of accurate and appropriate information on the plight of apes could reduce the demand for apes as pets and people's desire to see apes utilized in the entertainment industry. Resulting shifts in public opinion would likely strengthen support for ape conservation.

Photo: Confiscated chimpanzee in the arms of a national park guard, Virunga National Park, DRC. © Jabruson, 2015. All Rights Reserved. www.jabruson.photoshelter.com

Photo: The overriding threat to the survival of apes is habitat loss. Forest destruction on Sumatra, Indonesia. © Ulet Ifansasti/Greenpeace

