

Baby gorillas being trafficked endangers species

In recent months the Democratic Republic of Congo has seen a surge in the number of baby gorillas being trafficked *The Guardian* newspaper in Britain recently reported. This is posing a fresh risk to the endangered species wildlife officials have warned. The authorities in the country say they are powerless to combat the trade in which poachers demand up to US\$40,000 (£25,350 or €29,150) an animal. In an undercover sting operation recently by the authorities the poachers demanded this price. This has been a record year for the poachers who are trying to feed a growing black market demand for baby gorillas. Mountain gorillas are critically endangered, with about 790 remaining in the world - about 480 in the Virunga volcanoes conservation area (shared between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda) and just over 300 in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in Uganda. Eastern lowland gorillas are more numerous but are largely outside protected areas and are still in decline. The baby gorilla trafficking is in the rebel controlled areas of eastern DRC.

Emmanuel de Merode, director of Virunga National Park said, "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." This year so far four trafficked baby gorillas have been saved. Merode added, "It's only the tip of an iceberg, as we can only manage to catch a small proportion of the offenders because the wildlife service is under-resourced in Congo." Christian Shamavu, leader of the sting operation: "It's likely 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 this though."

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He added, "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 dollars' and in eastern DRC, once one is captured it is likely to be smuggled eastwards through either Rwanda or Uganda, the traditional trade routes for all goods in that area."

Category: Africa / Gorillas / Endangered Species

Level: Intermediate / Upper Intermediate

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EXERCISES

1. **Endangered species:** Briefly, what three things do you know about endangered species? Go round the room swapping details.

2. **Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

3. **Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

4. **Vocabulary:** Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

5. **The article:** Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?

6. **Geography: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC):** Where is it? What countries surround it? What is its capital? Draw a map on the board then **look on Google maps** to help you. (The answer is on page 8)

7. **Baby gorillas:** In pairs, think of three countries where you will find baby gorillas. Then add three things you know about baby gorillas. Write them below. Discuss together.

Countries with baby gorillas	What you know about baby gorillas
1	1
2	2
3	3

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

8. **Endangered species!** In pairs, think of three other endangered species. Then add three countries where these species are endangered. Write them below. Discuss together.

Endangered species	Country of endangered species
1	1
2	2
3	3

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

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9. **Let's think!** In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with **Baby gorillas**. One-two minutes. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

10. **Let's roleplay: NBC News:** In pairs/groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *NBC News* TV studio in London. Today's interview is about: *Baby gorillas being trafficked endangers species*. 5-10 minutes.

1	Christian Shamavu	3	A poacher
2	Ian Redmond	4	Emmanuel de Merode

The teacher will choose some pairs to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

11. **Let's roleplay 2:** In pairs. You are in sleazy bar in the jungle in the DRC. One of you is a poacher. The other is a wealthy buyer of baby gorillas. Between you get talking. The buyer has a rich Middle Eastern client who wants to purchase an illegal baby gorilla. (Make it up!) 5-minutes.

12. **Presentation:** In pairs, groups or individually: Prepare in class or at home a two minute presentation on: **Gorillas in the mist**. Stand at the front of the class to give your presentation to the class. The class can vote on the best presentation.

13. **Let's do 'The Article Quiz':** Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) Name the countries.
- 2) How much is a baby gorilla worth?
- 3) Who is Emmanuel de Merode?
- 4) What do international experts believe?
- 5) What do penniless hunters think?

Student B

- 1) Who is Christian Shamavu?
- 2) What is the tip of an iceberg?
- 3) What does 'tip of an iceberg' mean?
- 4) What does 'to curry favour' mean? (See page 8 if you don't know!)
- 5) How many Mountain gorillas are there?

14. **Let's write an e-mail:** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: '**Baby gorillas being trafficked endangers species**'.

15. **Sentence starters:** Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) Baby gorillas _____
- b) Gorillas _____
- c) International experts _____

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Why do wealthy people like to keep illegal pets?
- 3) Would you like to keep a baby gorilla?
- 4) How do you think a baby gorilla feels when it is taken from its mother?
- 5) What advice would you give to the national park keepers?
- 6) Why are baby gorillas traded?
- 7) Would you like to be bought and sold?
- 8) Is the trade of baby gorillas only the tip of an iceberg? Explain.
- 9) Where is the safest place for baby gorillas to live?
- 10) Why does man kill gorillas?

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) Have you learnt anything in this English lesson?
- 3) Would you support a charity to help save baby gorillas?
- 4) Should more be done to stop this illegal trade?
- 5) What should governments do to combat this trade?
- 6) Why does a poacher look for baby gorillas?
- 7) Would you like to visit the DRC? Explain.
- 8) What should be done to help preserve the number of gorillas left on this planet?
- 9) Do you think this trade in illegal poaching of baby gorillas will continue?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

Let's discuss! Is the trafficking of baby gorillas only the tip of an iceberg?

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

Discuss the following:

Is the trafficking of baby gorillas only the tip of an iceberg?
--

The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING:

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Baby gorillas being trafficked endangers species

In recent months the Democratic Republic of Congo has seen a (1)_____ in the number of baby gorillas being (2)_____ *The Guardian* newspaper in Britain recently reported. This is posing a fresh risk to the endangered (3)_____ wildlife officials have warned. The authorities in the country say they are powerless to combat the trade in which poachers demand up to US\$40,000 (£25,350 or €29,150) an animal. In an undercover (4)_____ operation recently by the authorities the (5)_____ demanded this price. This has been a record year for the poachers who are trying to feed a growing black market demand for baby gorillas. Mountain gorillas are critically endangered, with about 790 remaining in the world - about 480 in the Virunga volcanoes conservation area (shared between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda) and just over 300 in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in Uganda. Eastern lowland (6)_____ are more numerous but are largely outside protected areas and are still in (7)_____. The baby gorilla trafficking is in the (8)_____ controlled areas of eastern DRC.

species

decline

trafficked

surge

gorillas

poachers

rebel

sting

Emmanuel de Merode, director of Virunga National Park said, "We are powerless to control the international trade in baby gorillas, but our (1)_____ are doing everything they can to stamp it out on the ground." This year so far four trafficked baby gorillas have been saved. Merode added, "It's only the (2)_____ of an (3)_____, as we can only manage to (4)_____ a small proportion of the offenders because the (5)_____ service is under-resourced in Congo." Christian Shamavu, leader of the sting operation: "It's likely 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 this though." International experts believe the escape route for traffickers lies east. Ian Redmond, chairman of the conservation group: "We think the Middle East is a likely source of demand, (6)_____ animal collectors and a tradition of giving big gifts to (7)_____ favour...and maybe wealthy Russians, but there is little hard (8)_____."

wildlife

tip

curry

evidence

catch

rangers

iceberg

wealthy

GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Baby gorillas being trafficked endangers species

In recent months the _____ has seen a surge in the number of baby gorillas being trafficked _____ in Britain recently reported. This is posing a fresh risk to the endangered species wildlife officials have warned. The authorities in the country say they are powerless to combat the trade in which poachers demand up to US\$40,000 (£25,350 or €29,150) an animal. In an undercover sting operation recently by the authorities the poachers demanded this price. This has been a record year _____ are trying to feed a growing black market demand for baby gorillas. Mountain gorillas are critically endangered, with about 790 remaining in the world - about 480 in the Virunga volcanoes conservation area (shared between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda) and just over 300 in the Bwindi _____ in Uganda. _____ gorillas are more numerous but are largely outside protected areas and are still in decline. The baby gorilla trafficking is in the _____ of eastern DRC.

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International experts believe the escape route for traffickers lies east. Ian Redmond, chairman of the conservation group: "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 _____, but there is _____."

GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Baby gorillas being trafficked endangers species

In recent months the Democratic Republic of Congo has seen a surge in the number of baby gorillas being trafficked *The Guardian* newspaper in Britain recently reported. (1)___ is posing a fresh risk to the endangered species wildlife officials have warned. The authorities in the country say (2)___ are powerless to combat the trade in (3)___ poachers demand up to US\$40,000 (£25,350 or €29,150) an animal. In an undercover sting operation recently by the authorities the poachers demanded this price. This has been a record year (4)___ the poachers who are trying to feed a growing black market demand for baby gorillas. Mountain gorillas are critically endangered, (5)___ about 790 remaining in the world - about 480 in the Virunga volcanoes conservation area (shared between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda) and (6)___ over 300 in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in Uganda. Eastern lowland gorillas are (7)___ numerous but are largely outside protected areas and are (8)___ in decline. The baby gorilla trafficking is in the rebel controlled areas of eastern DRC.

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SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings:

Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20

1	gorillas	11	powerless
2	undercover	12	numerous
3	endangered	13	impenetrable
4	surge	14	conservation
5	rangers	15	volcanoes
6	everything	16	officials
7	proportion	17	poachers
8	sting	18	mountain
9	though	19	authorities
10	penniless	20	critically

LINKS

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/oct/17/baby-gorillas-trafficking-increase-congo>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2050453/Gorilla-trafficking-DR-Congo-Baby-Shamavu-rescued-poachers-bag.html>

<http://theanimal-zone.blogspot.com/2011/10/terrified-face-of-trafficked-gorilla.html> - also video on this page to watch!

Meaning: To curry favour = To try to make someone like you or support you by doing or saying things to please them, e.g. the candidate has promised lower taxes in an attempt to curry favour with the voters.

Geography – Countries = Angola, Zambia, Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, United Republic of Tanzania, South Sudan, Central African Republic. The capital = Kinshasa.

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