

Video showings on Nov 16<sup>th</sup>: **The Great Apes**

## **Chimpanzees: Jane Goodall's work from 1960 to 1982**

She began her studies at age 26 under the sponsorship of the anthropologist Louis Leakey, who is well known for his findings of remains of ancient humans and pre-humans.

Her location: The Gombe Stream Game Reserve in Tanzania, on Lake Tanganyika

Chimps in the wild are nomadic animals, living in groups, foraging and feeding up to 7 hr/day.

Females do all the rearing of young; mother and her offspring are the only stable group. Adult males are dominant, often vying for better positions in the hierarchy.

- They engage in aggressive displays, largely bluff, in efforts to elevate their rank.
- After a noisy display, they often walk around reassuring various members of the group.
- “Mike” elevated his position from a low rank to #1 by conducting a noisy display rolling and banging empty oil cans he found in Jane’s camp.

Nests are made every day in trees, up to 60 feet above the forest floor.

Development of the male offspring of the dominant female, Flo. Flo was followed for years by Jane Goodall.

- This young male, named Flint, was dealt with tenderly and indulgently by mother
- At 6 mo, Flint began riding on his mother’s back.
- At 8 mo he began to take unaided steps.
- His older sister, Fifi, took great interest in him, often imitating her mother. At age 6, Fifi was still dependent on mother Flo.

Feeding on termites, brought to the surface in the rainy season:

- Both chimps and baboons feed on termites.
- Only the chimps can get them when they are hidden underground: They do this by making and using tools – stems of heavy grass or other vegetation stripped of leaves.

Relationships with baboons, with whom chimps coexist:

- An adult male baboon can be intimidated by a young chimp wielding a weapon – a stick or club.
- Chimps have been observed ganging up on and killing young baboons, and eating the body.

Polio epidemic at Gombe, spread from humans to chimps:

- Many baby chimps died.
- A number of adult chimps became crippled:
  - Example of an affected male whose legs became paralyzed.
  - This male was shunned by the other chimps except for one male relative.
  - The animal was able to stay alive by pulling himself into trees with his arms, but became sick and died after dislocating a shoulder while doing this.

Chimps wage war:

- The chimpanzee group at Gombe split into two groups, the smaller one moving to the southern part of the reserve.
- Later, groups of males from the larger group waged “war” on the smaller group.
- This kind of violence destroyed the view of chimpanzees as peaceful and “noble savages”. It made them seem even closer to humans.

An episode of cannibalism:

- An adult older female, “Passion”, together with a daughter started killing the babies of other chimp mothers, and eating them.
- Three attacks like this were observed, and also some unsuccessful attacks.
- Probably 10 newborns were killed by Passion and her daughter.
- This behavior was apparently abnormal. After the death of Passion, the daughter was never observed doing such killing on her own.

*Goodall and her students have written several popular books, plus a number of scientific papers and a large monograph on the chimpanzees of Gombe. Jane is still alive and active.*

## **Videos on orangutans and mountain gorillas: brief excerpts**

### **Orangutan:**

- Orangutans are being studied in Borneo by a woman aided by her husband.
- The adults are solitary foragers, eating scattered vegetation and fruits.
- They are the largest animal that is primarily arboreal, although the large adult males travel on the ground when they move long distances.
- In an effort to increase the orangutan population, efforts are underway to reintroduce animals born in captivity or rescued from captivity. These efforts are time-consuming and difficult, but have had many successes.

### **Mountain gorilla:**

- The first extensive field studies of the mountain gorillas began in 1967 by Diane Fossey, who like Goodall was sponsored by Louis Leakey and the National Geographic Society.
- Her work was done in Ruanda.
- Gorillas spend 40% of their time feeding on vegetation.
- Family group: one adult male, about 4 mature females of various ages, plus about a half dozen youngsters.
- Nests are constructed 2x daily: for a midday nap and before nightfall. These are often on the ground.
- Youngsters spend 50% of their time in rough and tumble play with each other, or sometimes alone.
- (incomplete)

*Diane Fossey has written some popular-level books on mountain gorillas as well as scientific papers. After she had trained students to follow her methods, she was*

*murdered at her camp by unknown assailants, probably some of the poachers whom she had been working against in her efforts to promote gorilla conservation. Her work was continued by students.*