

Gorillas - What Else?

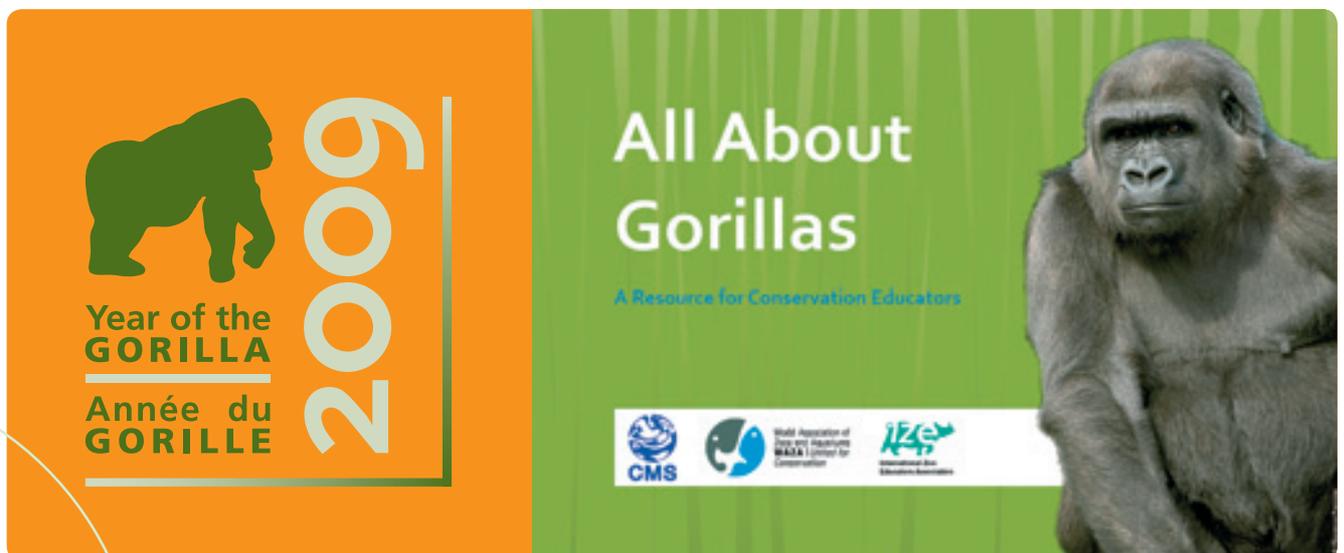
A new era of cooperation between WAZA and IZE

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Education and awareness-raising is one of the priorities of zoos and aquariums. This is not primarily the case because it has to be part of an attractive events list of institutions, but specifically because of the well known chain of cause and effect: conveying a message does not mean it is heard, hearing a message does not mean it is understood and understanding a message does not mean it leads to action. What we need today is more action!

By strategically fostering partnerships with other international organisations, WAZA is attempting to create synergies in order to support the conservation and education work of zoos and aquariums. Looking at the worldwide decline of biodiversity, the impact of climate change, the challenges of creating a more sustainable world and taking into account limited resources, makes this approach of joining forces imperative! It is therefore with great pleasure and satisfaction that WAZA and IZE have agreed on a closer collaboration from 2009 onwards. And what would be more obvious than proceeding to work jointly on an education manual and promoting conservation internationally with 'Year of the Gorilla': gorillas, what else?

The 'Year of the Gorilla' is an international joint activity of the following partner organisations: UNEP/CMS, The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the UNEP/UNESCO Great Ape Survival Partnership (GRASP) and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA). Under the auspices of CMS, an agreement on gorilla conservation has been established. WAZA supported the development of this gorilla agreement and holds a Memorandum of Cooperation with CMS. This formal agreement (which is an international treaty on gorillas) came into force in 2008. During the conference of the parties in December 2008 in Rome, all action plans for the four gorilla subspecies were adopted and simultaneously



the 'Year of the Gorilla' was launched. The official website www.yog2009.org contains all background information as well as upcoming events planned in zoos this year. Over 100 zoos have registered via WAZA as supporters of this international endeavour. As an addition to the leaflets and other more technical information, we have provided an education manual called 'All About Gorillas' which can be download from the WAZA www.waza.org, IZE www.izea.net and YOG2009 websites. The purpose is to help convey the message that gorillas are wonderful creatures, they are endangered and we can do something to help them survive!

The main goals of '2009: Year of the Gorilla' are:

- Encourage strategic approaches to gorilla conservation that are practical, easily manageable and accessible to many people.
- Raise funds for gorilla conservation action.
- Create awareness among people of ecosystem services (including carbon sequestration and storage) and illustrate the intrinsic value of flora and fauna.
- Provide income opportunities as an alternative to poaching, logging and mining through capacity building (e.g. by training forest workers and raising awareness on the importance of sustainable approaches for their own livelihoods).
- Educate the wider public on gorillas and the threats they face.
- Educate on the potential of ecotourism and carbon finance.
- Encourage cooperation between zoo-based and field-based conservation bodies, as well as wildlife rangers and forest managers to improve species preservation.
- Improve the monitoring of protected areas by utilizing technical capacities (e.g. use of camera traps and remote sensing equipment).
- Improve the capacity of government wildlife agencies for setting up anti-poaching campaigns by providing information and equipment as well as training.
- Support rangers in their activities.
- Promote cultural attitudes and traditions that are conducive to the conservation of gorillas and other great apes (e.g. taboos on hunting them and sustainable approaches to resource use).
- Promote the concept that sustainable development must be compatible with gorilla survival across the species range and even outside of protected areas.

IZE/WAZA 2010 Biodiversity Resource Manual

While many zoos are focusing this year on gorilla conservation, preparations are already underway for next year's International Year of Biodiversity 2010. After a very successful joint project for this year's gorilla theme, IZE and WAZA are teaming up again for another education manual. It will focus on zoos' potential in communicating biodiversity in 2010.

This manual, which should be available in December 2009 as a free download, will be a comprehensive reference book on biodiversity and a valuable resource for educators. Several topics will be discussed such as: "What is Biodiversity and what's it ever done for me?" Threats, solutions, zoo's potential, a recipe book, many of examples of games, interactive activities and programmes will be featured. In addition, the manual will contain information on further reading and resources. The IZE/WAZA Biodiversity Resource Manual will be an extensive instrument for you to help zoo audiences learn about and engage in biodiversity activities.

