



Benefits of conserving gorillas

“In upper Nyong division in East Cameroon, a hunter can earn 35,000 – 45,000 fcfa from killing a gorilla. A live gorilla, habituated to the presence of humans in its environment, can be much more valuable. This is illustrated by some figures relating to mountain gorilla tourism.

1. During peace time, profits from gorilla tourism represented Rwanda’s third largest source of foreign income, after tea and coffee. As long ago as 1989, the Volcano National Park generated more than one million US \$ from entry permits to see the gorillas. The current price of gorilla visits in Rwanda is around \$200.
2. In Uganda, three families of gorillas produce the equivalent of more than 5 million fcfa every year, from entry permits alone. Taking hotel and restaurant income into account would triple or quadruple the figure.
3. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, gorilla in the Kahuzi-Bienga Park, which is linked to the Virunga Park, produced approximately \$818,000 in 1990.

If a tourist was willing to pay 140,000 fcfa to see gorillas (and they are) and an average of fifty tourist visited the habituated groups each year, the resultant annual income would be around 7,000,000 fcfa from the entry permits alone. This is not only more profitable and sustainable than hunting gorillas, it is also preferable to a sale of standing volume (timber sales), the income from which is spread over two or three months.”

Taken from an article called ‘Gorilla based tourism: a realistic source of income in Cameroon? Case study of the villages of Koungoulou and Karagoua.’ The article was written by Elias Djoh of a Lomie based NGO and Mark van der wal of SNV. It was published in the British Forestry Network magazine in July 2001.