

Fall 2011

Will Bonobos Be The Next to Go?

hey have been called the "hippie chimps" because they "make love not war." The Bonobo is as close as a being can get to a human without actually being one, sharing more than 98% of our DNA. Bonobos, also known as pigmy chimps, were unknown to most of the world until the 1930s, yet, at their current rate of extinction,

they could vanish from the wild in as little as two years.

Found only in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), Bonobos dwell high above the ground in treetop nests in the tropical forests of the Congo Basin south of the Congo River. For protection they usually sleep together in groups, although some adult Bonobos sleep in pairs,

a behavior found in no other great ape species.

Bonobos share other human traits: they have unique characteristics which identify them, and they socialize their young by teaching Bonobo manners along with the use of tools and how to collaborate in problem solving. Bonobos have a silhouette that is much more human than chimpanzee, and they are extremely comfortable walking upright, spending as much as 20% of the time they are on the ground walking on two feet.

In a laboratory environment researchers have had remarkable results communicating with Bonobos through symbols and the spoken word.

Living in mostly matriarchal "troops" (usually an alpha male, several females and their offspring), they are one of the only species known to engage in sexual behavior for pleasure. Bonobos have been observed to be bisexual and resolve conflicts or disputes through sexual favors. They are known for greeting rival groups with genital caresses and sensuous massages. Females develop very close bonds with other females in the troop and may use same-sex activity to cement those relationships or to forge

Photo: Vanessa Woods/photobucket.com

alliances against males. They have no clearly-defined "mating season," and, despite all the sexual activity, females only give birth to a single baby Bonobo every few years. Infants are born almost helpless and must be carried everywhere by their mothers for the first two years, and stays close to her while s/he grows and learns the

ways of the Bonobo. Using touch to reassure and comfort each other, they form close relationships with other members of the troop, even after they are grown. Males stay close to their mothers their entire lives, while females leave the troop when they are ready to mate and bear young. Although Bonobos can reach their sexual maturity at 6 to 8 years of age, the females don't usually have their first offspring until they are about 12 years old.

Classified as Pan Paniscus, Bonobos have been studied in the wild since the mid-1970s, despite being known for hundreds, if not thousands of years to indigenous people, who have many legends about how Bonobos and man were

(continued on page 7)



Dear Friends,

As we head toward our holiday season we at the foundation wish to thank all of you who have so generously given to keep us afloat during these difficult times. I would like to single out the enormous generosity of my "girls" from my online fan base, and all of those whose donations have made possible the construction of the Julie Powers Memorial Library named for my Mother.

As I have traveled around the U.S. and in the U.K. promoting my memoir One From the Hart, we have gained many new supporters as members of the foundation and I welcome you and thank you for your commitment.

I hope you will enjoy the articles in this newsletter which have been carefully researched by myself and Donna Wade, who designs and puts our newsletters together. Thank you, Donna.

And as we come near the end of a tumultuous year for many of us, I wish you better times and hopes for the New Year.

Regards,

Stefanie Powers

President

News from Kenya

Editor's Note: After visiting the Education Center, students are asked to write essays about what they learned during their visit. Here, in their own words, are some of their observations, presented so that you, our donors and friends, may hear directly from those who benefit from WHWF's educational program.

Submitted by the students of Saint Mary's Sportview Academy on April 14-16,2011.

... "Since the first time our class 8 of 2010 told us about their experience at the Education Center we could not wait to get to class 8 because we were green with envy. We were greatly humbled by the affectionate reception from your members of staff ... without forgetting Castor the dog. At first we were terrified of him because of his size but we later learned how friendly he was and we fell in love with him.

After a while we were issued with questionnaires by the wardens and we were divided into six groups each with a leader where our skills were put to the test. From the lectures, we were taught about a man who had a passion for conservancy of the environment and the wildlife at large, an actor by the name of William Holden. He fell in love with the beautiful scenery in Kenya and the rich wildlife, and since his passion was for conservation, he captured the endangered species and relocated them to the game ranch. This gesture made him stand out because as other hunters were doing it for fun or for sport, his kind of hunting was for a good cause which was conservation.

In conservation of the environment, we were taught alternative sources of energy such as using biogas, briquettes made from dung balls (animal waste), saw dust and a little water instead of firewood and charcoal, which are harmful to the environment due to deforestation. We also learned about solar panels which the Education Center uses to heat water for use by their workers and visitors.

We loved the library, which had a lot of materials for us to read and learn more on environmental conservation. We also enjoyed watching the documentaries on young elephants who were orphaned at an early age and

how, "The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust" rescues them and nurses them and later releases them to the wild. We also had a laugh when we saw how drunk some animals could get after savoring the Amarula tree.

We later had a game drive ... we were overjoyed when we started seeing wildlife streaming from every corner ... we saw different kinds of animals like the zebras and we were astonished to learn that there are albino zebras ... we also saw a llama, a camel look-alike which is shorter than the camel and is from Chile ... others were gazelles, waterbucks, buffalo, warthog, and our favourite was the mountain Bongos ...

We were challenged on how to use other ways that help in conservation of power like using solar panels ... we also learned how to build a charcoal fridge which kept things cool and fresh using locally available, cheap materials. We could not get enough of all the new knowledge that was bestowed upon us and by the end of the tour we had acquired enough to last us a lifetime ... our attitudes have greatly changed in the way we perceive our environment and our wildlife. We hope some of us, if not all, will be the William Holden's of our generation.

The Education Center is a resource for the community, teaching ways of conserving our forests by mobilizing the people to plant trees, which they get from the Center's nursery. They challenged us to keep on planting more trees ... and we plan to mobilize the whole school to bring a seedling for the same cause.

We cannot thank you enough for making our stay a memorable one and for all the knowledge that the guides bestowed upon us and the beautiful memories that will last for a lifetime. May our good God highly bless you all."

Submitted by: Esther Wairimu Kanyi, Gitugi Girl's High School, Kangema on June 2, 2011.

... "When I visited the William Holden Wildlife Education Center with other members of the wildlife club from our school (Gitugi Girls' High School), I was personally amazed by the environment there. The compound was very clean and quiet, and I found the life that I wish to live. First, I went through an education session where I learned various methods of conserving the environment, and the importance of not destroying it and its wildlife.

What annoyed me most is the death of the white rhino (Big Mama). When I heard about the story, I almost shed tears. I felt that I lost something important in my life. I had a feeling like I lost my real mother. This is because I consider the life of an animal like that of a human being. This pain pierced my heart like a sharp object because I didn't get to see the rhino with its beautiful horns. It is so ironic that the government, which should be in the forefront of curbing poaching, is the one which is encouraging it.

How I wish that the government would unite with private ranch owners to conserve the environment! But the government of Kenya views that private ranch owners conserve the environment for their own benefit. They should understand that the environment is conserved to benefit all living organisms no matter who owns the conservation centers. Campaigns should be undertaken when the government behaves in a way that

is exploiting the majority. People should not always follow the majority and seniors, since they are not always right. I feel like I can conduct a fundraising effort to ensure that another white rhino is brought to the game ranch. I feel the loneliness that the remaining white rhino is experiencing ... can you imagine how you would feel when your family is attacked and killed, leaving only you to survive? That's how I feel when I remember the late rhino and the remaining one with bullets still in its body.

My suggestion is that the export of ivory and tusks should be banned completely in Kenya. More than that, strict measures should be taken in order to curb the great disaster that is poaching. Strict procedures should be followed when a tusk or horn is seen or found ... this will ensure that the great disaster will cease completely.

I promise to work hard to achieve my goal of becoming a wildlife manager because nothing is better than working in that position. I wish to inspire my fellow youths who are living in ignorance about the importance of wildlife conservation. I will play an important role in putting all the ideas I have learned at the Education Center into practice, since wildlife is key to the web of life. In the future, I hope to become like William Holden and save wildlife for future generations ... I know I can make it, since he himself made it!

he Global Footprint Network's preliminary 2011 calculations on climate change shows we are now using natural resources at a rate that would take between 1.3 and 1.5 planets to sustainably support. Their research shows us on track to require the resources of two Earths well before mid-century. Getting to those resources dumps more carbon into the atmosphere, the main contributor to climate change. Yet, for all the talk of government budget deficits and calls for austerity across the globe, woefully little serious attention has been paid to this potentially catastrophic ecological deficit, not to mention its attendant human and animal costs.

In spite of the debate on whether climate change is man-made or a natural cycle, the consequences are the same, and scientific calculations based on

human activity cannot be denied.

In recent polls, the number of Americans who believe global warming is real and must be urgently addressed has fallen from upwards of 70% to around 52%. During the recent financial downtums, Americans have turned away from environmental concerns and out of necessity have focused more on their personal security. Washington seems to be more

concerned with politics than governing, and leadership for incentivizing green industry and private citizens initiatives has faltered. Can we afford to ignore the many changes a warming planet brings with it rather than investing in innovative, renewable fuel sources and the infrastructure to carry us into the future? Please consider the following facts as you ponder this question.

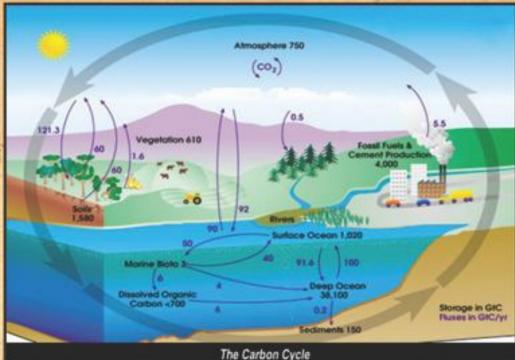
Planet Earth's climate system includes a great deal of natural variability, and fluctuations have always been part of the Earth's 4.6 billion-year history. However, over the past century changes in concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are of an unprecedented rate and magnitude. The greenhouse effect is a process by which thermal radiation from a planetary surface is absorbed by atmospheric greenhouse gases, and is then re-radiated in all directions. Since part of this re-radiation is back toward the planet, energy is transferred to the surface and the lower atmosphere, instead of into space. As a result, the temperature at the surface is higher than it would be if the only warming mechanism were direct heating by solar radiation.

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the burning of fossil fuels has added to the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from 280ppm (parts per million) to 390ppm, despite the uptake of a large portion of the emissions through various natural "sinks". Sinks consist of the systems that are involved in the carbon cycle through the circulation of carbon through the planet's oceans, troposphere, geosphere and atmosphere and reused throughout the biosphere by its organisms. Trees and other green plants convert carbon dioxide into carbohydrates during photosynthesis, releasing oxygen in the process.

In addition to what we pump into the atmosphere, carbon is released through the natural decomposition of organic material as well as through phenomena such as volcanic eruptions. Other atmospheric gases containing carbon are methane and chlorofluorocarbons (a human invention.)

As a result of the increase in greenhouse gases, the planet has warmed one degree Celsius (33.8 degrees Farenheit) since pre-industrial times. Climate scientists have placed 350ppm as the global maximum emissions target in order to avert further warming and the irreversible, devastating planetary changes their computer models indicate will accompany it. It should be noted that thus far, many of the changes now in evidence far exceed what the computer models have predicted.

While a shift of a few degrees is barely noticeable to human skin, an average increase of one degree across the entire surface of the earth can bring huge changes in climatic extremes. For every one degree C rise in temperature, the amount of moisture that the atmosphere can hold rises by 7 percent. Obviously, more moisture means the potential for more rain (or snow.) When the atmo-



sphere cools enough for vapor to condense into liquid, it rains. The energy generated through condensation can also boost a storm's strength. Because greenhouse gases disrupt the efficiency of the cooling process, scientists have found that this added moisture has increased precipitation events only 2 or 3 percent, but that more precipitation is likely to fall in these events.

Because no weather event can be attributed directly to global warming, scientists look for trends in temperature or precipitation data that provide evidence of overall changes in climate. When such changes are found, it becomes possible to calculate how much climate change has contributed to any extreme events that occur in those areas. For instance, global warming may not have caused Hurricane Katrina in 2005, but researchers have been able to assess the amount of additional rain and wind it contributed to that which pummeled the states on the Gulf of Mexico. It leads one to wonder, could that extra inch or two of rain and additional wind force have made the difference in whether the levees held in New Orleans?

A warming planet also alters the global circulation of air currents, which is one way weather systems move around the planet (along with ocean currents, the earth's rotation and magnetic field and fluctuations in air pressure).

Without the sun, the earth would have no weather at all. It causes convection in the atmosphere and ocean, producing winds and ocean currents, which, in turn, affect weather (the atmospheric conditions at a specific time and place) and climate (long-term weather patterns affecting a specific region.) The greater the pressure differences between a low-pressure area and a highpressure area, the stronger the winds.

The sun heats the moist air at the equator, and as the hot air rises, it releases most of the moisture in the form of tropical rain. The dry air is then pushed toward the poles, until it descends again in the subtropic areas. In the northern hemisphere, it descends on the Baja, California peninsula. This circulatory pattern is called a Hadley cell, and it impacts trade winds, the jet stream, and desertification.

As the planet warms, this dry air stays aloft farther north before making its descent, moving storms with it. This "future" expansion of the Hadley cell predicted by computer models is happening now, at levels that surpass the forecasts. This means even drier conditions for the southwestern U.S. and the Mediterranean region, and wetter conditions further north. This expansion may also explain 2011's record-breaking snowfalls in areas of the U.K. and the U.S. unaccustomed to such events, and the state of Minnesota becoming #1 in tornado formation over the states historically known to occupy "tomado alley."

streme U.S. Weather, and African Drought

While climate change may not create the extreme weather events the planet experiences, research suggests it exacerbates them, both in terms of intensity and frequency. As one scientist for the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) put it, "weather throws the punches, but climate trains the boxer."

Those punches have been most acutely felt in the Horn of Africa and, in particular, by the pastoral peoples of Kenya, exacerbating tribal rivalries over diminishing natural resources and paving the way for the imminent demise of their centuries-old way of life.

Floods and droughts in East Africa are often unleashed by far-away events in the tropical Pacific ocean – the warm El Niño (which brings frequent rain but marginal winds) or cool La Niña (which brings marginal rainfall and stronger winds) phases of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO). Surface ocean temperatures play an important role in driving hydro-climate change in this vulnerable region. A catastrophic drought is currently wreaking havoc in wide regions of Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia, affecting food security and putting millions of people in urgent need of assistance. Scientists have attributed the severe drying to La Niña conditions that prevailed from June 2010 to May 2011 in the Pacific.

Turkana and Pokot semi-nomadic pastoralists are intimately familiar with these recurring patterns in Kenya, which manifests in a situational know-ledge of where to move for specific needs, such as where to graze herds, collect medicinal plants or to take refuge from rustlers and bandits. Moves are planned according to the availability of pasture, water and trees, areas of insecurity, and market opportunities.

When herds die and crops fail, pastoralists have nothing to sell to buy food and people starve. Turkana pastoralists are now destitute and heavily dependent on food aid. The elderly are hardest hit by the drought. The strong men and youth have migrated into neighboring countries in search of pasture and water for their remaining livestock. Conflicts over what little fertile land remains have also resulted in the deaths of women and children. Recent flash floods in northwest Kenya are hampering the delivery of emergency relief aid to thousands of pastoralist families.

East Pokot, with a population of over 300,000 people who rely on relief food, is the most affected. Almost all of the roads to where the relief food is stored are unnavigable. Bridges have been swept away, preventing the distribution of food to remote parts of East Pokot.

Flash floods in Turkana further north have made transporting aid supplies very difficult and expensive. Turkana has recorded high malnutrition rates. Water levels have dropped, but large trucks with heavy goods cannot access the roads in affected areas. Aid agencies have been forced to use vehicles which can only carry small loads of food, increasing delivery costs. The prognosis for the 2011 long rains is not promising – belownormal rains are anticipated in drought-affected pastoral lowlands. Food insecurity is anticipated to substantially rise due to the impacts of the poor long rains. The United Nations predicts that heightened food prices, rapidly-depleting grazing resources, an expected increase in human conflicts, and likely upticks in livestock and water-borne diseases could severely accentuate food insecurity for pastoral and marginal agricultural households.

When major drought affected the Horn of Africa about once a decade, the pastoralists knew to store up enough food and grain during the lush years to get them through the lean ones. In the recent past, such periods of drought increased in frequency to every five years, and more recently to every two years.

This gives pastoralists precious little time to recover from one disaster before another ensues. While non-governmental organizations are working to broker a peace agreement between the Turkot and Potok (who've fought for generations over the area's resources), the even greater conflict on Kenya's eastern border with Somalia has created a humanitarian crisis of biblical proportion. As we've previously reported in these pages, the three refugee camps in Dabaad, Kenya, built to house a maximum of 90,000 people, are now attempting to

accommodate almost 400,000, mostly living in makeshift tents. It has become the third largest settlement in Kenya, after the capital Nairobi and the port city of Mombasa. The Kenyan government is opening a fourth camp at the site in an attempt to deal with the daily onrush of nearly 2,000 additional refugees fleeing the famine and the violence of civil war in Somalia. Though many governmental aid agencies and NGOs are working furiously to provide the food and medical aid such a mass exodus requires, they barely make a dent in the need, considering that over 10 million people are at risk of starvation on the continent.

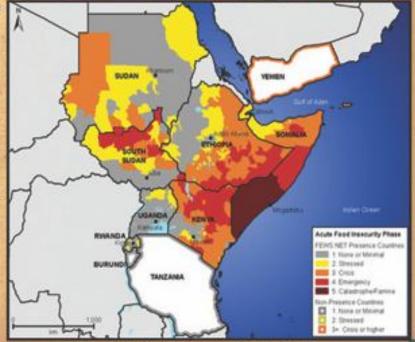
It will only get worse, near-term, because the climate is becoming a mistress harsher than what we alive today can conceive. Mitigating the effects, much less reversing them, will take not only the political will but money, and lots of it. The irony lies in the fact that we are in this crisis because of the centuries humans have pursued wealth by any means necessary, believing that the world's natural resources are something to be exploited rather than nurtured and protected.

Over 98% of climate scientists are in agreement that if we don't take bold action, and soon, we may well succeed in rendering the planet uninhabitable within a generation or two.

Just how bad will it get? Scientists predict that if the earth warms two degrees Centigrade, we can probably say goodbye to the Greenland ice sheet, which also means New York's Manhattan Island, Miami, and New Orleans will be inundated. The Arctic, already warming at twice the rate of other places on the earth, will be ice-free in summers. Without the ice to reflect solar radiation back into space, the planet will warm further, releasing even more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Worse still, the frozen arctic tundra's permafrost will melt, releasing stores of methane safely locked away for millions of years. Methane is about 20 times more of a warming agent than carbon dioxide, and it's flammable, as has been proven by residents, in areas of heavy use of the hydraulic fracturing method of natural gas mining, who can light their well water with a match. Glaciers, the fresh water source for billions of people, will melt as well, setting off fresh water wars between nations and individuals.

Are you willing to become an engaged citizen and demand that your government take appropriate measures to address these problems?

The population of the world is 7 billion, and estimated to raise to 9 billion in 20 years. How long can we fail to recognize that our planet, as Buckminster Fuller reminded us, is our spaceship, and our spaceship planet earth needs our attention ... if not us, then who?



angari Muta Maathai, a Kenyan environmental and political activist, lost a courageous battle with cancer on September 25, 2011 at the age of 71. In the 1970s, Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement, an environmental non-governmental organization focused on the planting of trees, natural resource conservation, and women's rights. in the approximation and the second contract the

In 2004, she became the first African woman and the first environmentalist to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for "her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace." The Nobel committee's announcement of the prize read, in part: "Maathai stood up courageously against the former oppressive regime in Kenya. Her unique forms of action have contri-

buted to drawing attention to political oppression- nationally and internationally. She has served as an inspiration for many in the fight for democratic rights and has especially encouraged women to better their situation."

Born into poverty on April 1, 1940, she received her early schooling from the Kenya public schools until she was 11 years old, when she attended St. Cecilia's Intermediate Primary School, a Catholic boarding school in Nyeri, where she became fluent in English and converted to Catholicism. In 1959, she graduated first in her class from Loreto-Limuru, Kenya's only Catholic high school for girls. Though she had planned to attend the University of East Africa in Kampala, Uganda, the end of the colonial period in East Africa was fast approaching, and Kenyan politicians were proposing ways to make education in Western nations available to promising Kenyan students.

In September of 1960, Maathai became one of approximately three hundred Kenyans to study at American universities. She received her Bachelor of Science in biology from Mt. Scholastica College (now Benedictine College) in Atchison, Kansas in 1964, and was admitted to the University of Pittsburgh for graduate work in biology, completing those studies in January 1966 with a Master of Science degree in Biological Sciences. She was then appointed as a research assistant to a professor of zoology at University College of Nairobi. However, when she arrived for her new job, she was told that her position had been given to someone else. She attributed this to gender and tribal bias.

Professor Reinhold Hofmann, from the University of Giessen in Germany, offered her a job as a research assistant at the School of Veterinary Medicine at University College of Nairobi. In 1967, at the urging of Professor Hofmann, she traveled to the University of Giessen in pursuit of a doctorate. She studied both at Giessen and the University of Munich. In the spring of 1969, she returned to Nairobi to continue her studies at the University College of Nairobi as an assistant lecturer. She also married and became pregnant with the first of her three children later that year. In 1971 she became the first Eastern African woman to receive a Ph.D., when she was granted a Doctorate of Anatomy from the University College of Nairobi.

She continued to teach at the university, becoming a senior lecturer in Anatomy in 1974, chair of the Department 6 of Veterinary Anatomy in 1976 and associate professor in



1977. She was the first womanappointed to any of these positions in Nairobi.

She also became involved in many civic volunteer organizations, such as the Kenya Association of University Women and the National Council of Kenyan Women (NCKW), and it was through her involvement with these organizations and the United Nations Environment Programme that she realized that at the heart of most of Kenya's problems lies environmental degradation. In 1974, Maathai used her husband's successful run for Parliament to showcase her ideas of environmental restoration to provide jobs. This led to the founding of Envirocare Ltd., a business that promoted the planting of trees to conserve the environment, involving ordinary people in the process. It was then she planted her first tree nursery. Funding problems sank the effort, but Maathai kept trying.

When her husband initiated a messy divorce, she fought back by running against him for his seat in the Parliament. Though she lost the race, she'd found her calling as a fiercely outspoken activist. On World Environment Day in 1977, the Maathai and the NCWK planted seven trees in honor of historical community leaders. This was the first "Green Belt" planted by what became the Green Belt Movement, an environmental group that restores indigenous forests and assists rural women by paying them to plant trees in their communities. It has since planted over 30 million trees in Kenya, provided work for tens of thousands of women, and been replicated in dozens of other African countries.

In January 2002, Maathai returned to teaching at Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Upon her return to Kenya six months later, Maathai ran for a seat in Parliament, winning with over 98% of the votes, and served as Assistant Minister for Environment and Natural Resources in the government of President Mwai Kibaki from Jan. 2003 to Nov. 2005.

Maathai was one of the founders of The Nobel Women's Initiative along with sister Nobel laureates representing North and South America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Kenya and the world have lost a tireless advocate for economic justice, environmental preservation, and women's rights.

Bonobos Be The Next To Go? (continued from page 1)

brothers in ages past. In spite of the folk lore, Bonobos are hunted as bush meat. The illegal bush meat trade acts in concert with deforestation, both of which are rampant in the DRC. If not for their isolation by the Congo River the last remaining population of Bonobo would not exist.

Poachers find Bonobos easy to catch once they become intoxicated by the lure of beer and palm wine. Once inebriated, the dazed Bonobos are stuffed into bags and taken to market, which they fetch roughly \$200 per animal and are destined to be served as meals at high-end restaurants in the city.

What was in 1984 a population of over 100,000 Bonobos, has dwindled to less than 5,000 according to Ino Guabini, a

World Wildlife Fund primatologist. That's over 4,000 per year!



If humans allow our closest relatives to go extinct, we have failed as a species. The main problem with saving the Bonobo is that, unlike the common chimp and the mountain gorilla, there are no big, wellfunded efforts to save them. Little of their territory is protected and no big names, like Dian Fossey or Jane Goodall, have ever worked to save them. So although they still have a larger population than the critically endangered mountain gorilla, little is being done to protect them, so their population is declining far faster than anyone previously imagined.

The world's only sanctuary for orphaned Bonobos, Lola ya Bonobo, was founded in 1994 by Claudine Andre. Since 2002, the sanctuary has been located at Les Petites Chutes de la Lukaya, just outside of Kinshasa in the DRC. Lola ya Bonobo means 'paradise for Bonobos' in Lingala, the main language of Kinshasa, and it is "home" to nearly 60 Bonobos who live in 30 hectares (approx. 75 acres) of forest.

The sanctuary plays a critical role by providing a living example of the level of humane treatment and environment that captive apes deserve. The sanctuary also protects wild Bonobos because it provides a place for wildlife and law enforcement officials to surrender animals seized during the enforcement of domestic and international conservation laws aimed at preventing the trade in live Bonobos. It also acts as a mouthpiece for conservation efforts in DRC by educating thousands of Congolese visitors each year about the value of Congo's natural history, and, in particular, the Bonobo, a unique Congolese treasure.

We urge you to discover more information on the wonderful world of Bonobos by going to

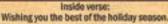
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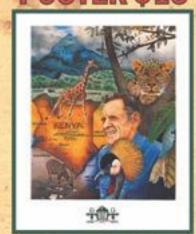








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