



Building n Success



**2018
ANNUAL
REPORT**

HELPING PEOPLE. SAVING GORILLAS.

An amazing year for the future of gorillas

2018 wasn't a great year for the environment — news about global warming, record temperatures, and increased rates of extinction dominated the headlines. Yet, there were a few bright spots. And, thanks to you, mountain gorillas were one of them. **More than 50 years after Dian Fossey started her critical work, the mountain gorillas she died protecting reached a record high of 604 individuals, up from 480 just five years earlier.**

As a result of your continued commitment and support, we have now seen 30 years of continual though slow growth in the mountain gorilla population, which is nothing short of amazing, given that Fossey herself thought they would be extinct before the year 2000. As a result, **their official status changed in 2018 from critically endangered to endangered**, moving them one small step further from extinction. Their small population size combined with the many threats they face means that we must remain steadfast in our protection efforts, but this rare conservation success is one that we celebrate with you.

In nearby Democratic Republic of Congo, where we have been working for almost two decades, 2018 was a year of immense challenges. Political insecurity and Ebola both greatly affected the region where we work, which is the world's only home for Grauer's gorillas. But we know from our experience in Rwanda that times like these are when conservation efforts are needed the most. And so 2018 saw us not retreat but rather expand our work in Congo, and through your support **we increased the area of forest we protect by 30 percent**. It is now roughly 40 percent the size of Rhode Island and provides a safe haven for many families of gorillas, whose existence just a few years ago was extremely uncertain.

Our motto is "Helping People. Saving Gorillas" because we know that for gorillas to thrive, the people who live near them must thrive as well. Thus, in 2018, we continued to expand our programs with local communities, starting new initiatives around food security, livelihoods and education. **The lives of more than 15,000 people were improved** by these programs, and we look forward to continuing to invest in this critically important work in the years to come.

Finally, 2018 saw the start of a dream come true for the organization — the creation of a permanent and purpose-built home for our work. The Ellen DeGeneres Campus of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, which is scheduled to open in 2021, will be **a global example of socially and environmentally responsible design that greatly enhances our ability to ensure a future for gorillas**. It also represents decades of commitment that donors like you have made to keep our programs going day in and day out.

We know from 50 years on the ground that conservation doesn't happen overnight. It takes time and investment, and can often feel like one step forward and two steps back. But the successes of this last year show us that conservation can work if we remain committed. And we have remained committed for more than 50 years thanks to YOUR unwavering support. **The successes you will see in the following pages are your successes, and we at the Fossey Fund thank you for being our conservation heroes.**



Tara Stoinski, Ph.D.
President and CEO
Chief Scientific Officer



Judith C. Harris
Chair
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What it takes to save a species

The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund is the longest-running and largest organization dedicated entirely to gorilla conservation. We have been protecting and studying mountain gorillas for more than 50 years, ever since Dian bravely approached the elusive animals in the misty forests of Rwanda. Thanks to her early efforts, **these mountain gorillas are now the only wild ape whose numbers are increasing** and one of the world's most-renowned conservation success stories.

Our success in Rwanda led us to the next conservation frontier for gorillas: protecting the critically endangered Grauer's gorillas in Congo. Our now 18-year presence in Congo has **helped stabilize Grauer's gorilla populations** in previously unprotected forests while **developing programs to help lift local communities out of poverty**.

OUR FOUR-PART STRATEGIC PRIORITIES INCLUDE:

1. DAILY GORILLA PROTECTION IN RWANDA AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

"We are the ones who spend much time with those beautiful creatures, so we have to do our best in protecting gorillas and teaching people where we live the importance of them to their lives, country and the world as well." - Eric Kabeja, tracker

2. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON THE GORILLAS AND LARGER BIODIVERSITY OF THE REGION

"Good science is key to effective conservation strategies. Our data in Rwanda clearly showed us that direct protection was key for the increase in the mountain gorilla population. We adjusted our strategy with Grauer's gorillas in Congo and hired more gorilla protection teams to provide 365 days-per-year protection. It has worked — no gorillas have been killed in the now 1,300 square kilometer area we protect in the last seven years."
- Urbain Ngobobo, director of Congo programs

3. TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATIONISTS IN AFRICA

"Karisoke is like a school or an academy. The Fossey Fund provides opportunities that cannot be found elsewhere, such as helping students and employees achieve higher education, and bringing programs to schools and the community."
- Thadee Muhire, research assistant

4. HELPING LOCAL COMMUNITIES THRIVE, FOR EFFECTIVE, SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION

"Through the Fossey Fund, I have obtained the knowledge needed to be able to teach environmental classes in school and to share this with other teachers. I can now use examples of the different wild animals in our own Volcanoes National Park to connect students with the environment."
- Theoneste Ndegeye, Rwandan primary school teacher & 2018 Fossey Fund teacher training participant



Our Impact in 2018

THE GORILLAS

- This was a banner year for **mountain gorillas**, with good news from the latest census and an official improvement in their endangerment status.
- **Grauer's gorilla** groups where we work are finally facing fewer threats and losses.

604

Latest number of **mountain gorillas** in the Virunga mountains (up from an all-time low of 240)

Mountain gorilla status officially improved - from critically endangered to endangered, taking them one step further from extinction



0

No gorillas caught in snares in Rwanda. No evidence of gorillas harmed in the Congo forests we protect.

DAILY GORILLA PROTECTION

Direct, daily **on-the-ground protection** of gorillas is key to their conservation. And we are proud to be the longest-running and largest organization dedicated entirely to gorilla conservation.

130 

staff involved in daily gorilla protection and programs in Rwanda

56 staff involved in daily gorilla protection and programs in Congo 

Our trackers protected half of the mountain gorilla families in Rwanda



1,300 km²

The area of forest we protect in Congo (up 30%). It is home to about 200 Grauer's gorillas.

420  anti-poaching patrols held in Rwanda, to search for snares and other threats

HELPING PEOPLE

Conservation works best when communities are actively engaged in **protecting vulnerable ecosystems** and directly benefit from conservation activities. The Fossey Fund's extensive community programs underpin our ongoing and long-term successes in conservation. And they are the key to a sustainable future.

14k+ & 1.1k+
RWANDAN & CONGOLESE
people were impacted by our education, food/water security & livelihood programs

7,230+ **Rwandan & Congolese**
K-12 students benefitted from classroom programs, nature and environmental clubs, teacher training and more

25,668 
seedlings were planted in nurseries for distribution in local communities

386 patients were treated within the first 5 months of a new health clinic that we built in Congo



Our Impact in 2018

STUDYING GORILLAS AND BIODIVERSITY

No one knows gorillas like we do. With more than five generations of gorillas under our observation, most of what is scientifically known about gorillas is based on studies conducted at our Karisoke Research Center in Rwanda. Today, the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund remains **a world leader in the field of gorilla research** and conservation, and the collection of data on gorillas that Fossey started is still the largest and longest.

Worked with more than 20 collaborating institutions on five continents to produce **18** scientific publications.

Our research received **major news coverage** in multiple media outlets, including the New York Times, Newsweek, and the Atlantic

A record **11** Fossey staff attended and presented at the International Primatological Society Congress in Kenya

Scientific studies conducted at Karisoke resulted in **one** master's and **two** doctoral degrees

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATIONISTS

For conservation to be sustainable in Africa, it must be driven by African scientists and include collaboration with and investment in the local community. The Fossey Fund is dedicated to **equipping the next generation of African environmental leaders** with the skills they need to address the conservation challenges of the future.

391 Rwandan college students studied with us to work on their degrees in biology and related sciences

25%  of our African staff received support for higher education, bachelor - doctoral level

FIRST scientific publication by one of our Rwandan undergraduate students

Our new home!

We officially began work on **the new Ellen DeGeneres campus of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund**, after a lead gift from The Ellen DeGeneres Wildlife Fund (the Ellen Fund) was made in honor of Ellen's 60th birthday in January 2018.

Construction is anticipated to begin in the summer of 2019 and we hope to open in 2021. This will be the home of the future for gorilla conservation!





Mountain gorilla census showed another increase

Analysis of a complete count of the mountain gorillas living in the Virunga mountains of Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo revealed a record high of 604 individuals! These results were announced in June and reconfirmed the mountain gorilla's status as the only wild ape population whose numbers are known to be increasing. This steady increase also led to their official status improving from critically endangered to endangered later in the year, when the International Union for Conservation of Nature released its assessment update.

This latest census represented the ninth population count of the Virunga mountain gorilla population since the early 1970s. After more than a decade of documented declines, the Virunga mountain gorilla population reached a low of 240 individuals in 1981, causing Dian Fossey to predict their extinction before the year 2000.

"The success that we see in gorilla conservation is in large part due to the high level of collaboration among the different stakeholders," says Felix Ndagijimana, the Fossey Fund's director of Rwanda programs and Karisoke Research Center. "We are so pleased to have played a part in the census, which was led by the governments of Rwanda, Uganda and DR Congo, and involved many conservation partners like the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund."

Emmanuel Munyembabazi was one of the Fossey Fund trackers who worked in the census. "The census work is a tough job – physically demanding, with 12 hours each day of walking through the forest, crossing big ravines and climbing mountains," he says. "But in addition to the conservation importance, it allowed the team members to increase their technical skills, such as collecting samples and using GPS, as well as to share and learn from staff from the three different countries and backgrounds. It was truly a collaborative effort!"

Fifty-two years after Dian founded Karisoke - thanks to support from friends like you - we have successfully built upon her intensive conservation techniques and, so far, prevented extinction of the mountain gorilla.



Learning more about Grauer's gorillas in Congo

Grauer's gorillas are found only in the Democratic Republic of Congo and most of them live outside of formally protected areas. The Fossey Fund now protects about 1,300 square kilometers of forest in the Congo, an increase of almost 30% since just last year. Since Grauer's gorillas have faced decades of steep declines, primarily from poaching, the protection we have started there is critical to their survival. By working with traditional landowners and by training local community members as trackers, we provide protection for Grauer's gorilla families that otherwise would have none.

Unlike our work in Rwanda, where the gorillas are habituated to the presence of humans, our trackers in Congo follow these gorillas by keeping one day behind, using evidence of each group's movements to track them. This includes finding night nests, dung and hair samples, and vegetation they have trampled or eaten. By following the gorillas out of sight in this way, it takes us more time to learn about the details of each group and the individuals in it.

In 2018, one of the large Grauer's groups we track was heard several times from a distance, and our team even saw one of the silverbacks and another gorilla in a tree. It was exciting for our trackers to get a glimpse of these gorillas, after spending so many years protecting them out of sight. The only groups of Grauer's gorillas that are habituated to the presence of humans live in Kahuzi-Biega National Park (*photo on right*).

"Local people here are feeling hopeful again that the forests, and their own communities, can thrive, through converting to conservation activities and sustainable livelihoods," says Urbain Ngobobo, the Fossey Fund's Congo director.

We've accomplished so much together, and we'll keep working every day to ensure a bright future for gorillas, their habitat, and the human communities who surround them!



2018 Financials

The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund has a long-standing reputation for meeting the highest standards of financial excellence and nonprofit management. We are rated as a four-star organization, the highest rating by Charity Navigator, the principal nonprofit watchdog and largest independent charity evaluator.

Taking the same care and precaution to protect our financial resources that we do with our natural resources in the field, **we work hard to ensure that every single dollar we receive is used to its full potential.** Once again, we wish to express our appreciation for the generosity of many loyal and generous donors on whom we rely to carry out the vital mission of protecting wild gorillas and their habitats in Africa.

FY2018 REVENUE

Individuals	1,817,744
Foundations	1,192,641
Organizations	1,237,017
Corporations	334,315
Government	186,214
Memorials & Bequests	284,771
In-Kind Contributions	446,997
Reimbursed Expense Income	36,834
Other	35,113

TOTAL REVENUES: 5,571,838

* Capital Campaign Contributions 8,139,466

FY2018 EXPENSES

Rwanda Program	1,549,078
Congo Program	659,600
Education and Science	1,083,390
Total Program Services	3,292,068
Management and General	181,184
Fundraising	317,374
Total Administrative	498,558

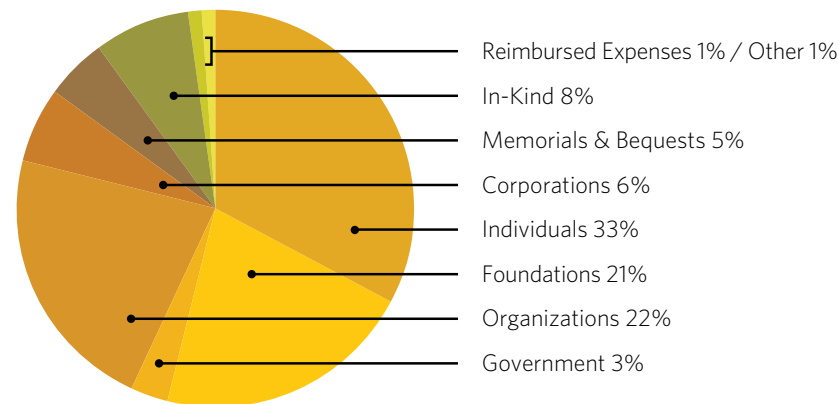
TOTAL EXPENSES: 3,790,626

* Capital Campaign Expenses 79,902

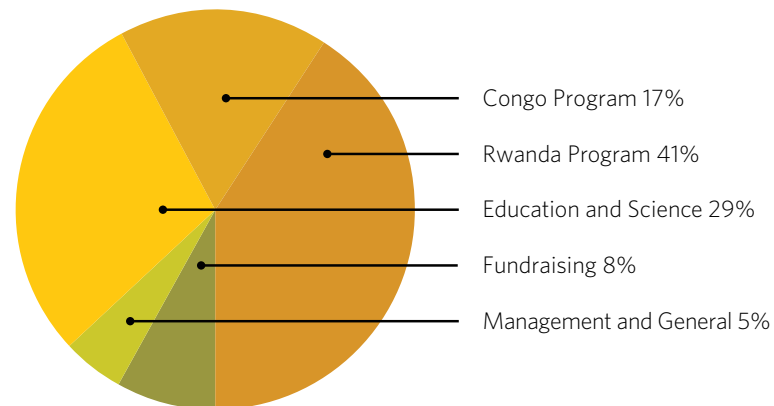
Change in Net Assets	9,840,776
Net Assets Beginning of Year	4,458,597

NET ASSETS END OF YEAR: 14,299,373

FY2018 REVENUE



FY2018 EXPENSES



* In 2018 the Fossey Fund launched a capital campaign to create a purpose-built, permanent campus for its activities. Capital campaign contributions reflect donations and future pledges restricted for the design and build of this campus, estimated to be completed in early 2021.



Donors are the heart of gorilla conservation

Our generous supporters ensure that we have boots on the ground 365 days per year! This critical work would not be possible without our global network of caring conservationists.

Every supporter and friend who gives to the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund makes our mission possible. Our donors remind us daily of the power of one person's actions to literally change the world - just as Dian Fossey did so many years ago. We hope that you know that **EVERY GIFT - no matter the size - has an immediate and lasting impact** on these magnificent creatures and the human communities that surround their habitat.

Simply put, YOU make helping people and saving gorillas possible every single day. **Thank you** for investing in this important work and thank you for being a champion for conservation.

On the following pages is a list of donors whose contributions helped make a lasting impact in 2018.



***Thank you
for your
unwavering
commitment
to gorillas.***

Our Donors: INDIVIDUALS

We are pleased to recognize here an exceptional group of leadership givers whose annual support totals \$1,000 or more. With more than 10,000 supporters overall, we are unable to list everyone in this report, but gratefully acknowledge each and every one. Every gift has a direct and meaningful impact and we thank all of you for your important investment in gorilla conservation.

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JOIN US IN BUILDING A FUTURE FOR CONSERVATION

The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International is the largest and longest-running nonprofit organization dedicated entirely to gorilla conservation. No one knows gorillas like we do. Every day, we protect gorilla families, study how they live, and teach future scientists and local communities to do the same. We are proud of our staying power as a global leader in gorilla conservation.

There are so many ways you can become involved in saving gorillas, and we are always available to talk to about your passion for conservation and ways to share your legacy.

Visit gorillafund.org/get-involved to learn more.

* Collaborating Funders

Collaborating funders make significant investment in the Fossey Fund's programs, often providing support over multiple years, creating the foundation for achieving our mutual conservation goals.

Please accept our apologies if you discover an error in this listing. We would like to be made aware of the mistake, so please contact our office at info@gorillafund.org.



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