



# Project Chimps

---

**Activity Name:** Chimpanzee Conservation

**Learning Objectives:** SKL1, SKL2, SSKG2, S1L1, S2L1, S5L1, L6-8WHST1, S7L1, S7L4, SB5.d

**Grade/Age Level:** All

**Estimated Time:** 3-4 hours onsite w/ tour, 60-90 min. in classroom/ virtual

**Materials:** posterboard, markers, crayons, colored pencils, pencils, and paper

**Methods:** explore, create, write, think, process

---

**Goal:** Have students recognize the major threats wild chimpanzees are facing in Africa, learn about the history of chimpanzee conservation programs and current efforts, and explain to students how they can help by being youth conservationists.

## **Background:**

- Wild chimpanzees were listed as endangered species in 1990 through the Endangered Species Act. Threats to chimpanzees leading to this protection include habitat loss, illegal pet trade, poaching, and disease, which have greatly expanded in the past 30 years. A growing human population has led to an increased demand for resources that negatively affect wild chimpanzees' habitats and recovery for chimpanzee populations is difficult due to the slow reproduction rates of the species. It is estimated that there are between 175,000 and 300,000 chimpanzees left in the wild today. In the early 1900s, there were thought to be over one million. Chimpanzees have the largest geographic range among all great apes, and they are found throughout the African equatorial countries from Senegal to Tanzania.
- Although chimpanzees are listed as endangered species and are awarded the highest of protections, they still face serious threats in the wild.
  - **Habitat loss-** Deforestation is one of the largest threats wild chimpanzees have been facing in Africa for many decades. Agriculture, logging, and mining have resulted in shrinking the sizes of chimpanzee habitats. As population growth of humans increases, so does the demand for food and more land for agriculture. Fires are used to clear land for agricultural plots, a method known as "slash and burn." Workers clear plots in forests and then burn the sections of land in order to plant agriculture. The Gombe National Park in Tanzania used to be an abundant forest until the 1990s when small scale agriculture took over much of the land. As a result, the Gombe chimpanzees became isolated from neighboring populations leaving them vulnerable to inbreeding and overcrowding.



## Project Chimps

---

- **Logging-** Chimpanzees are dependent on large, mature trees for food, climbing, and nesting. Logging leads to the creation of new roads, which disrupts and divides habitats. Palm oil farming in Asia has been driving Sumatran orangutans almost to extinction. Palm oil plantations have been moving to Africa, and this impacts chimpanzee habitats greatly. To help stop this process, look for foods that do not contain palm oil as an ingredient.
- **Mining-** The demand for precious metals and gems is significantly growing in Africa. A common component in smartphones, Coltan, is typically mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a location where many chimpanzees are found. The mining industry has deadly impacts on wildlife as large parts of forests are cleared, roads are constructed, and great numbers of people come through the area. The mining industry also results in pollution of the air and soil. Those individuals working in the area need resources such as food, water, and firewood to survive.
- **Bushmeat-** Although chimpanzees are an endangered species and killing or removing them from the wild is illegal, the regulations are often difficult to enforce throughout the areas chimpanzees are found. Poaching and illegal hunting of chimpanzees make up a large portion of the threats they face in the wild. Chimpanzees are sometimes killed for food for those who live or work in the surrounding areas of the forest. Workers often depend on bushmeat, which can range from meat from antelopes to monkeys. The meat is also sometimes sold at market for a source of income. Chimpanzees can be accidentally caught in snares hunters place in the forest to trap smaller animals, or they can be targeted by hunters because they are larger than other primates and easier to see.
- **Illegal pet trade-** If hunters kill an infant chimpanzee's mother, the infant will be captured and sold into the illegal pet trade. The orphans may end up in private homes as pets or as forms of entertainment in roadside attractions or tourist photo opportunities. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), requires that anyone exporting chimpanzees or moving them between countries must obtain a special permit, which justifiably can be difficult to obtain. This is to help ensure that chimpanzees are not being removed from the wild. Only those bred in captivity, such as in zoos, can legally be moved from one location to the next. Recent investigations have found that individuals often fake the permits to export endangered animals. While many individuals who illegally purchase baby chimpanzees as pets are drawn to the cute and cuddly appearance, adolescent chimpanzees become strong and intelligent animals that need an environment to live naturally. Taking an infant chimpanzee out of the wild is not only dangerous, but it is also unethical. Chimpanzees need to be brought up with their chimpanzee families to



# Project Chimps

---

live a healthy and happy life, not orphaned and stolen from their natural families to live with humans.

- **Disease-** Ebola viruses affect ape populations, and the effects can be deadly on chimpanzee populations. Just like in humans, the disease can spread very quickly among chimpanzee populations in Africa. It is estimated that more than 75% of chimpanzees infected with Ebola will die from the disease. Scientists from the Jane Goodall Institute estimated that since the 1990s, about one third of all chimpanzees and gorillas have been killed by Ebola viruses. In 1997, chimpanzees at Gombe developed Sarcoptic mange, a skin disease caused by parasitic mites that burrow into the skin, which causes hair loss and an itchy and scabby allergic reaction. It is also highly contagious because the mites can spread during the process of grooming. Chimpanzees can also develop respiratory illnesses similarly to humans. Many of these respiratory infections are passed from humans to the animals. These respiratory diseases are quite serious to the chimpanzee communities and can result in many deaths among the population.

- It is important to realize that humans living near chimpanzee communities have needs that must be met for survival. These industries provide important economic opportunities and development, and a balance must be created to ensure that ethical practices are established to protect the surrounding wildlife in the process of economic growth. Human welfare must be protected but also improved through conservation efforts that focus on the livelihoods of chimpanzees. By combining conservation efforts with local industries among individuals who live in the surrounding areas of chimpanzee habitats, their economies are improved as well as the lives of chimpanzees.
- There are numerous programs around the globe dedicated to helping chimpanzees and other endangered great ape species from these threats and the risk of extinction. Dr. Jane Goodall led the way for many of these conservation programs, and they share one goal - empowering people to be a voice for chimpanzees.
  - **Dr. Jane Goodall:**
    - **About:** As a 26-year-old from England, Jane traveled with her mother, in the 1960s, to what is now Tanzania to dive into the world of chimpanzee research. Jane focused on protecting chimpanzees from extinction, and she established species conservation programs that include the needs of local people as well as the importance of protecting the environment. Today, at 86, Dr. Goodall still travels across the world, speaking about her work and how we can all take action on behalf of the planet.
    - **Jane Goodall Institute:** A global community conservation organization founded by Dr. Goodall in 1977. The institute focuses on community-centered



# Project Chimps

---

conservation efforts combined with the use of advancing science and technology. The mission of the program is to support wildlife research, educational programs, and conservation. By protecting chimpanzees and inspiring action to conserve the natural world, lives of animals, people, and the environment are helped.

- **Roots & Shoots youth program:** A youth-led community action program established in over 100 countries by the Jane Goodall Institute where students passionate about making a difference in the world of conservation can come together to become active and empowered conservationists. The program partners with schools, educators, and youth organizations to inspire and educate younger generations.
- **Ecotourism programs:**
  - Ecotourism is a fantastic way to connect passionate conservationists who wish to help endangered species with local economic growth. By booking through ecotourism companies that have good reputations, guests can be involved in hands on activities and efforts to conserve or preserve the environment. Many programs have chimpanzee-based experiences where guests can learn more about the population and how to help.
- **African Conservation Foundation (ACF):**
  - Created projects establishing tree nurseries and a community-based reforestation programs in Nigeria and Cameroon. By encouraging local people to grow trees, it will benefit the local economy and ecosystem. The project also focuses on training local people to grow their own food to limit food scarcity or running out of food that would result in bushmeat hunting.
- **Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS):**
  - Uses science to discover and understand the natural world, and knowledge learned will help engage and inspire decision-makers across the world. WCS has worked on establishing a conservation presence to ensure community action. WCS hopes to work with protected area authorities and their game guards to protect chimpanzees. To combat habitat loss, they work with national governments and with logging companies to improve land use planning. WCS has set up labs where samples can be taken from chimpanzee urine and feces to test for infectious disease spread among the populations.

## Procedures:

1. **Discuss.** Have a discussion on:
  - a) The different threats wild chimpanzees are currently facing in Africa



## Project Chimps

---

- b) The history of chimpanzee conservation programs and current efforts in the world of chimpanzee conservation
- c) How students can help by being youth conservationists
2. **Tour.** If onsite - take your tour!
3. **Activities.** Complete 1 or more of the activities below. All lesson plans can be shared to complete more activities in the classroom post field trip.

### Activities:

1. **Create.** (all) Create a conservation pledge action board. On your board explain why conserving wildlife is important and give examples of some methods you can engage in to become a conservationist (e.g., planting trees or pollinator flowers, pick up trash, recycle electronics, keep a journal of wildlife you find in your community, support ecotourism.)
2. **Help.** (all) Brainstorm different ways YOU can help the chimps! [How Can I Help?](#)
3. **Write.** (all) Write a poem or short story about threats chimpanzees face in the wild.
4. **Learn.** (all) Learn about some important conservation terms as you search for them in this [Conservation Word Search](#).
5. **Enrichment.** (k-6) Think about different types of enrichment for the chimps as your students explore this fun Roots and Shoots [Conservation Craft](#) activity!
6. **Art.** (k-6) Look at the threats facing chimpanzees and draw a chimpanzee habitat. [Threats to Chimpanzees](#)
7. **Think.** (k-6) Unscramble the letters to make words from the lesson and match them to the appropriate pictures. [Conservation Unscramble](#)
8. **Math.** (6-12) Read the passage and complete math problems based on population numbers and percentages. [Chimpanzees and Disease Activity](#)

### Assessment:

1. What are some of the most detrimental issues facing chimpanzees and their habitat?
2. Why it is important to help local economies in Africa while also helping the conservation of chimpanzees?
3. Give examples of ways you can be a conservationist and help to protect chimpanzee habitats?

### How you can help!

- a. Learn about the many different conservation programs that strive to help chimpanzees. Share your knowledge with others and encourage them to research the programs. Support programs around the world by donating money, volunteering, or sharing updates with friends or on social media platforms about the work of chimpanzee conservation programs.
- b. Start your own Roots & Shoots Program at your school!



# Project Chimps

---

## **Conclusion:**

Chimpanzees have faced in the past and continue to face many different issues that affect their health and overall populations. With education and positive influence, we can help the surrounding communities around chimpanzee populations make good decisions that help to contribute to the health of the environment and ecosystems around them. No one has done more for chimpanzee conservation than Jane Goodall! She continues to travel and educate people to help the chimps! Together we can all play a role in helping the chimps!

## **Notes to Instructor:**

- [Chimpanzee Conservation Assessment Questions](#)
- Thank you for being a part of our community!
- Please use your judgement to adapt this lesson to different age groups.