

Cousins in the wild

Primate studies

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Publications and Promotions

Primates make for fascinating study material. The on-going debate about evolution and where humans fit in on planet earth and its evolutionary history stimulates curiosity about primates such as baboons, chimpanzees and gorillas.

Studies of their habits, behaviour, relations within their community and family life reveal interesting social patterns which in some cases closely resemble human behaviour and group dynamics. Another aspect of studying these animals is the threat humans pose to the survival of these species and the efforts

of dedicated conservationists to save them from extinction, sometimes putting their own lives at risk.

The Library Service has a comprehensive and interesting collection featuring many different studies and observations of primates, for use by its patrons who might not be aware of its availability. The information in this list could be copied and brought to the attention of borrowers as handouts, part of a display, or pasted on a notice board.

Baboons

Baboons - against the odds / producers, Des and Jen Bartlett.

Des and Jen Bartlett are amongst the most famous producers of wildlife documentaries in the world and for the last few years they have been filming in Namibia. This programme focuses on a troop of baboons that survives in the dry riverbed of the Kuiseb, an incredibly harsh environment where the search for water - or, at times, just moisture - is an ongoing battle. Besides this problem, additional suffering is caused by tick infestation, all of which leads to an occasional breakdown in the group's social structure. The animals are seen through the eyes of Ginger Mauney and Conrad Brain of the Desert Ecological Research Unit of Namibia, who have been studying this particular group for many years. Having survived for 116 days without water, relief for the baboons finally comes when it rains some 200 miles away and the water eventually makes it way down the riverbed. The quality of the photography is very good, though some of the recorded suffering is not that easy to watch.

***The last baboons of Good Hope** / director, Paul Morkel.

Though baboons were among the Cape Peninsula's original inhabitants, today only some 360 individuals survive in the area covered by the Cape Peninsula National Park. The reserve provides enough space and adequate food for the approximately ten troupes, but many of them have found easy pickings in the dust bins of their human neighbours and some have taken to invading private homes. This programme focuses on the efforts of the Kommetjie Environmental Awareness Group to discourage these raiding parties without harming either the baboons or their unwilling hosts. To this end they have appointed a team of monitors, whose task it is to locate the baboons and steer them away from inhabited areas. It includes footage of numerous encounters between baboons and people, most of them the result of the animals associating humans with the ready availability of food. It also incorporates information on the baboons' lifestyle and depicts the attempts of environmentalists to strike a balance between their requirements and those of the encroaching housing projects. It is amazing that, despite many warnings, some people still persist in feeding these animals, usually with dire consequences for the baboons. Other sequences were filmed near Cape Point, Scarborough, Da Gama Park, Tokai and in the De Hoop Nature Reserve. Very interesting and well worth viewing.

Other titles

***Ape about baboons**

Baboons rule OK

Big Ears: the story of a young baboon

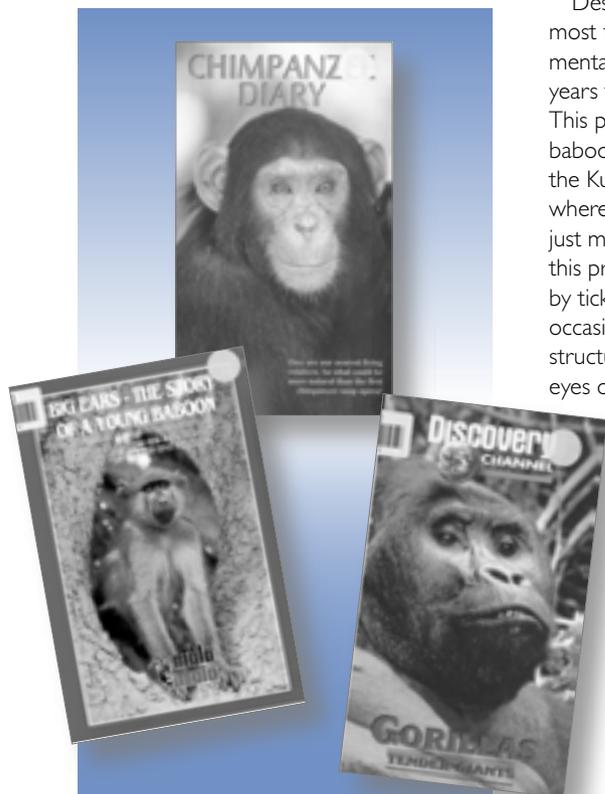
Die bobbejane

Cousins.

Chimpanzees

Chimpanzee diary / series producer, Robin Hillier:

The Kasakela community of chimpanzees in Tanzania's Gombe National Park must be the most filmed representatives of their species on earth. Though researcher Charlotte Uhlenbroek and filmmaker Bill Wallauer practically sit and walk amongst them, they are paid no more attention than if they were invisible. They take great care never to intervene in the various upheavals that take



place, though when a virulent form of mange threatens the survival of the troupe, medically-treated bananas are handed out. This is the troupe that was studied by Jane Goodall from 1960 onwards and some of the individual members have been around for a long time. Many of them are identified by name and eventually the viewer also begins to recognise individuals. The series on which this video is based was filmed over a period of a year and the film crew has tackled it by means of a fly-on-the-wall technique, with Uhlenbroek and Wallauer rushing about as events take place in one area or another. Much of it focuses on the struggle for dominance between two brothers. As the story develops, the complex structure of such a community becomes clear and the relationships between individuals are stressed. The visuals range from enchanting and amusing to quite grim and some of them must be unique. It's a wonderfully detailed study. Ms Uhlenbroek also featured in **The new chimpanzees** from the National Geographic Society.

Chimps on the edge / producer, David Hamlin.

It is hard to believe, but Jane Goodall has been involved with chimpanzees for more than forty years and during this time she has changed the way we look at these animals. At 67, she is something of a legend and though these days she leaves the field research to younger primatologists, she is as committed as ever, travelling the world to raise people's awareness of the dangers chimpanzees face from poaching, civil wars and the destruction of the environment. This programme accompanies her on a return visit to Tanzania's Gombe National Park and then goes with her colleague, Jim Moore, as he embarks upon a new survey of the country's chimpanzee population. During the second half she and Mike Fay trek to the unspoiled forests of the Goulougo Triangle in the Congo basin to join two young researchers involved in studying chimpanzees that have lived there undisturbed by humans for many generations. The young scientists are clearly thrilled to have Jane Goodall with them and she is equally pleased to see how enthusiastic and committed they are. The film touches upon a number of issues and is also a tribute to this remarkable woman.

Other titles

Africa's new refugees
Among the wild chimpanzees
The new chimpanzees.

Gorillas

Gorillas: tender giants / producers, Gary A Dash and Bridget Wedderburn.

Far from being the ferocious, chest-thumping monsters of jungle legend, gorillas are amongst the most gentle, intelligent and family-oriented animals on earth. This programme from the Discovery Channel was filmed in the Congo basin of Central Africa. It focuses primarily on a family of Eastern Lowland gorillas in Zaire's Kahuzi-Biega National Park, depicting various aspects of their social behaviour and way of life, but there is also a lengthy sequence on the Western Lowland gorilla of the Likouala Swamp, in the Congo's Ndoki Forest, who seem to be quite happy splashing about in the dirty water. It is a leisurely film, very much in keeping with the relaxed lifestyle of its subject.

Mountain gorillas: the lost film of Dian Fossey / producer, Lori Butterfield.

Dian Fossey spent some 18 years in the remote rain forest of the Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda, researching the behaviour of the endangered mountain gorilla. In 1968, the National Geographic Society sent cinematographer Robert Campbell out to film her and for the next three years he attempted to create a visual record of her observations. In this programme, a now 72-year-old Campbell recalls his often frustrating experiences trying to film the sometimes elusive gorillas, as well as his relationship with the not always easy Fossey. The material is presented under various headings - the beginning, the orphans, the romance, the poachers, the downfall, et cetera - and incorporates Campbell's own footage, much of which had never been seen and was recently recovered from the vaults of the National Geographic Society. The result is one of the organisation's better films, partly because of the original footage, but also because of the likeable Campbell's remarkable frankness. Additional comments come from Jane Goodall, Richard Leakey, Campbell's wife, Heather and others. Fittingly, it is narrated by actress Sigourney Weaver, who played Fossey in the film **Gorillas in the mist**. A very worthwhile programme.

Other titles

***Gorillas in the midst of man**
Gorillas in the mist
***Gorilla.**

Though the content of some of these videos are serious, other scenes portraying the antics of baboons, chimpanzees and gorillas might be found quite humorous, which would make it excellent viewing material for young borrowers. Promote these videos with books on primates and the work of conservationists to create conservation awareness and stimulate interest in wildlife.

* Titles marked with an asterisk not available from the Central Film Library, but Library Service stock and could be requested via inter-library loan.

Note: Reviews by Freddy Ogterop, Film/Video/DVD Selector of the Western Cape Provincial Library Service.

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