



Dr. Jane Goodall visits with rescued chimpanzees at the Jane Goodall Institute's Tchimpounga Chimpanzee Rehabilitation Center in the Republic of Congo.

## Their Greatest Ambassador

Jane Goodall forges ahead in her 50-year fight to save chimpanzees

**A young assistant** to primatologist Louis Leakey headed into the Tanzanian forest in 1960 with little more than a pair of binoculars, a notebook for recording her observations, and a blanket and some coffee to keep her warm at night on the chilly mountaintop.

Once she gained the trust of her initially elusive subjects, Jane Goodall discovered a gold mine of evidence that chimpanzees are close kin to humans in more than an evolutionary sense: They can fashion tools to manipulate their environment; their interactions resemble a rudimentary political system; they go on long courtships and form lifelong bonds but can also wage brutal wars on their neighbors.

As Dr. Goodall revolutionized our understanding of chimpanzees, she also began to argue for their increased protection. In 1977, she founded the Jane Goodall Institute to further her ongoing research. Years later, after witnessing deforestation around her original study site during a flyover, she created the organization's TACARE (pronounced "take care") program to engage local communities in great ape conservation by helping improve their quality of life. The program teaches better farming methods, provides loans and scholarships for women and girls, and helps local coffee farmers

profit from overseas markets.

Today, fewer than 300,000 chimpanzees are estimated to remain in the 21 African nations where they roam free. While laws in all of these countries protect chimps as an endangered species, they're still vulnerable to capture for the pet trade and human encroachment. Logging operations fell the trees where the animals make their beds—and build roads that provide commercial hunters a path to their doorstep.

Fifty years have passed since Dr. Goodall made first contact with a chimp in the area now known as Gombe National Park, an elder male she named David Greybeard. With chimpanzees' future hanging in the balance, she travels the globe speaking out to save them and other species whose survival has been imperiled by human activity. She's supported initiatives to curb some of the worst factory farming practices and urged Congress to prohibit the poaching of bears for their body parts.

In this excerpted interview with managing editor Angela Moxley, Dr. Goodall reflects on her life's work, humankind's lack of understanding toward other animals—and her belief that it's not too late to right the wrongs we've inflicted.



At Gombe, the generations live on: Daughter of Melissa, one of the first chimpanzees Goodall studied, Gremlin has raised twins Golden (left) and Glitter.

**Q: The Great Ape Protection Act would phase out invasive research on chimpanzees and retire federally owned chimps to sanctuary. Why is it important to support the bill?**

**DR. GOODALL:** It's not ethical to use people in experiments like this, and it doesn't seem to me ethical to use our closest relatives either. And in point of fact, even though chimpanzees are so similar, there are differences. Chimpanzees can be infected with HIV, but they rarely come down with AIDS-like symptoms in the way that humans have, so there is that difference. And they're very expensive to maintain.

**Q: What are the worst aspects of life in a laboratory for chimpanzees?**

**DR. GOODALL:** Some of the things I've seen give me sleepless nights. For one, being in prison: They live in a tiny cage and they can be alone—these very social beings—in that cage for 30 years. And they're subjected to painful procedures again and again and again, like liver biopsies.

In a secretly filmed video that was recently taken by The HSUS, it showed male chimpanzees in these cages, which are now designed so that when you ratchet the handle, one wall of the cage slowly moves so that the chimpanzee is squeezed. And to see the absolute terror on that individual—first he jumped and pressed flat to the floor, then he leapt up to the ceiling, but wherever he went, he couldn't escape this inexorable slow moving of the back of the cage. He was then forced to be injected.

Chimpanzees can anticipate. They see a chimpanzee on one end of the room being subjected to some painful procedure, and they know it's coming to them. And so there's this terror and screaming. It's really awful.

**Q: In the wild, they have rich lives and range over wide areas.**

**DR. GOODALL:** They make decisions every day; they can choose what food to eat, what other individuals to travel with. Then you've got these long, supportive, affectionate bonds between mothers and offspring, between brothers and sisters, that can last through life. And they can live to be 50 in the wild. They can learn 250 or more signs of American Sign Language; they can do amazing tasks on computers; they can show altruism. They're just so like us.

**Q: Among all your encounters with chimpanzees, is there one that has stayed with you?**

**DR. GOODALL:** I suppose one that will always remain very vivid was when I sat near David Greybeard in the very early days and held out a fruit for him, which he didn't want, and he turned his face away. And I put my hand closer; he looked directly into my eyes, reached out, took the fruit, dropped it—but very, very gently squeezed my hand in a chimpanzee reassurance gesture. That was a perfect understanding based on a communication system that must have predated words. So you could sort of imagine you're back 6 million years ago, when there was a strange part-human, part-ape creature, and perhaps they communicated in that way.

**Q: How are the three groups of chimps you studied at Gombe doing today?**

**DR. GOODALL:** The one central group is unchanged. The group in the north is much smaller than it was. The group in the south could vanish altogether. That group used to range widely outside the park and can't anymore because there's no habitat. And that's where some refugees passed through fleeing from the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where many people still eat chimpanzees, so it was pretty obvious that some hunting was taking place.

**Q: How is the bushmeat trade tied to the capture of infant chimpanzees?**

**DR. GOODALL:** The bushmeat trade is different from the subsistence hunting that's been carrying on for hundreds of years, in which the local people lived in harmony with the forest and just hunted what they needed to eat. Whereas the bushmeat trade now is commercial hunting. And whereas in the old days no decent hunter would kill a mother with a baby, today anything is meat. The mothers are shot, and their infants—well, if you've seen the baby chimps, there's not much meat on them, so there's not much point serving an infant chimp for meat. So sometimes the hunters will try to get a few more dollars by selling them in tourist markets or by the side of the road. People buy them as pets, buy them to attract visitors into a hotel or bar.

**Q: At Gombe, how have local people helped by the TACARE program become involved in protecting the chimps?**

**DR. GOODALL:** All the different villages around Gombe have arranged their conservation areas in such a way that it's a buffer around Gombe and forms a corridor of leafy trees to link Gombe chimps with other remnant groups outside. That was a big fear about the Gombe chimps, that they were absolutely isolated and surrounded by farmland. So this is very encouraging. I've seen the trees; some of them are about 30 foot high already.

This is the hope for the future. It's taken a long time. You can't jump in with a conservation plan because the people, that's not what their first priority is; it's education, health, and food. So we helped them with these concerns, so they could focus on conservation. Now we're ready to replicate this program in other parts of Africa, around other wilderness areas.

**Q: Hope was the theme of your recent book profiling conservationists working to save endangered species. Which one has impacted you the most?**

**DR. GOODALL:** The story I love the best is the story of Don Merton and the black robin because it was the most improbable success. Those New Zealand birds have no evolutionary enemy, so they don't run away from anybody. The biologists got permission to capture and take them to an off-shore island away from the cats and the rats. There were only nine left. When they went back in the late summer, there were only seven, and of those seven there were only two females. And of those two, only one was fertile, and she had an infertile mate. And they mate usually for life, but this female—who became known as Old Blue, from her blue leg band—she ditched her longtime mate, chose a younger one, and they successfully laid eggs.

They only lay two at a time. And Don Merton risked a procedure that he knew worked with some captive birds but had never ever been tried in the wild. He took those two precious eggs away and destroyed their nests, and put the eggs with some other kind of bird on the island. The same thing when she laid her next two eggs—he took those. And then he left her to hatch a third lot of two eggs. And then he brought back to her the babies that hatched with the other birds. And he said, "She looked up at me as if to say, 'What next?'" And he said, "It's all right, love; we're going to help you."

Old Blue's now considerably unusually enlarged brood numbers about 200 on two different islands. And so to me it's the epitome of a story which teaches the message we must never give up. While there's life, there's hope. And also I think very important is the information about the restoration of very, very damaged ecosystems.

**Q: The idea that we can reverse the harm that we've caused.**

**DR. GOODALL:** It takes political will; it takes money and time and effort. And this is why our Roots & Shoots program, I believe, is so terribly, terribly important. It's now in more than 120 countries. It's involving young people from preschool to university, and every group chooses three kinds of hands-on projects to make the world better: one to help animals, one to help people, one to help the environment.

There are many projects where the young people go and remove invasive species from, say, a wetland or the prairies. Or they spend several years cleaning up a stream, learning how to interview or write letters to the people who are polluting the water, writing letters to legislators. And in three different continents, I've been there when the first fish were reintroduced back after about 50 years. To encourage the youth today and to give them hope, I think, is terribly important because if our young people don't have hope, then we'll all give up.

**Q: It's easy to feel powerless. What can the average person do?**

**DR. GOODALL:** The simple answer is for every single person to spend a little bit of time each day thinking about the consequences of the choices that we make, the small choices. What do we eat, where does it come from, how many miles does it travel? Was it organic, did it involve suffering animals, or did it involve slave labor if it's our clothing?

If several million people save a bit of water, it's a lot. And the same with electricity, and the same with the use of the car. All of these things seem tiny, tiny steps, but millions and then billions of tiny steps are going to lead to a big difference.

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## Rallying to save chimps from a bleak future



**They languished** at a laboratory with one of the nation's worst animal care records, in some cases for decades. Nine years ago, they got a reprieve from invasive research along with at least some social contact and outdoor access.

But the lives of 202 chimpanzees could take a major step backward if the National Center for Research Resources permanently transfers them from the Alamogordo Primate Facility in New Mexico to a San Antonio laboratory for possible use in harmful studies. At the Southwest National Primate Research Center, animals in active protocols would likely be housed alone and could be sub-

jected to invasive procedures as often as once a day—while other chimps would be forced to witness their suffering, says Kathleen Conlee, HSUS director of program management for animal research issues. Any efforts to ease the doldrums of their



cages would be minimal.

The HSUS has joined other animal protection groups and the Jane Goodall Institute in urging the federal government to allow a sanctuary to care for the chimps in New Mexico. Momentum is leaning the animals' way, with support from VIPs such as Gov. Bill Richardson and actor Gene Hackman, as well as a bill before Congress that would retire all federally owned chimpanzees to sanctuary. "There's a lot of force behind stopping this move," says Conlee.

▲ READ MORE about The HSUS's work for chimps and take action at [humanesociety.org/magazine](http://humanesociety.org/magazine).