

IMPACTS OF LONG-TERM RESEARCH ON CONSERVATION

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Although primates were relatively abundant when primatology began, nowadays the study of wild primate species cannot normally be separated from problems of conservation. Given that many field scientists are de facto also conservationists, here we consider some practical issues of how research is integrated with conservation efforts. We take our studies of chimpanzees in Kibale National Park as an example, focusing on conservation outreach, eco-tourism, and the control of hunting. Kibale National Park is home to the largest population of chimpanzees in Uganda, as well as an exceptionally high density of diverse primates. Considerable effort is necessary to initiate and expand conservation programs, and the quality of immediate results varies. However data on conservation education, benefits of eco-tourism and trends in the rate of snaring suggests that the effort is effective. The more we can do to make such benefits explicit, the stronger will be the case for establishing long-term research for its multiple benefits. Both primatology and tropical habitat conservation would benefit from an increased global investment in field research stations.

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