

**PROFILE OF A RESPIRATORY OUTBREAK IN MOUNTAIN GORILLAS**

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Respiratory disease is the most important cause of infectious morbidity and mortality in mountain gorillas (*Gorilla beringei beringei*). The outbreak described is in an habituated group for tourism, Hirwa, occurring July/August 2009. This group consisted of 11 animals: one silverback, six adult females, one juvenile male, two juvenile females, an infant male, and an infant female. The 2009 Hirwa group respiratory outbreak lasted 40 days and was monitored nearly daily by trackers, a veterinary technician, or veterinarians. The morbidity rate was 100% and the mortality rate was 8%. The data for sick individuals over time showed a pattern consistent with a disease outbreak with a short incubation period and high infectivity, followed by a protracted course of disease. The average course of clinical signs was 22 days with a range from 13 to 40. Ten of 12 animals exhibited severe clinical signs ranging from 1 to 10 days. One adult female died after exhibiting severe clinical signs for four days despite treatment. One infant, one juvenile and an additional adult female were treated with ceftriaxone. The MGVP treats mountain gorillas only for human-induced or life threatening injuries and illnesses. Most respiratory outbreaks in mountain gorillas result in a high degree of morbidity but low mortality. In this particular outbreak, MGVP veterinarians felt that treating the three animals may have prevented mortality in these animals, and that earlier treatment of the one fatal case might have prevented its death. Final postmortem reports and pathogen identification are pending.

Keywords: Mountain Gorilla, Respiratory Outbreak, Morbidity, Mortality