

CONSERVING THE GREATER GOMBE ECOSYSTEM

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Gombe long term research has provided valuable scientific results that enhanced our understanding of chimpanzee behavior and conservation needs. Remote sensing and GIS analyses revealed an increase in habitat loss outside the Park and an increase in human population that influenced changes in land use and affected the well-being of both chimpanzee and people in western Tanzania. Because most of the land outside Gombe National Park is village land, JGI focused its conservation efforts through Community Centered Conservation approach by working closely with 35 villages. The Institute initiated conservation activities that have lasted for 15 years contributing to the conservation of about 124 chimpanzees in and around the Park. Currently JGI is also engaged south of Gombe in the conservation of the Masito-Ugalla Ecosystem and home to more than 600 chimpanzees. Major strategies include: Conservation Action Planning (CAP) and facilitation of Participatory Village Land-use Plans (PVLUP) where conservation of natural resources are part of the landscape design. Other strategies include micro credit schemes for community groups, education for underprivileged girls, introduction of fuel efficient stoves, environmental education in primary and secondary schools, family planning, water services, and HIV mitigation measures. Success in conservation depends largely on how local people's needs got addressed, collaboration with the local government officials and community's willingness.

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