

HEALTH MONITORING OF THE HABITUATED AFRICAN GREAT APES

S. Fujita

Yamaguchi University, Yamaguchi, Yamaguchi, Japan

Presenter's Email: fujita@yamaguchi-u.ac.jp

Ecotourism is widely conducted in the habitat countries of great apes in Africa. Ecotourism can promote conservation since it is one of the means to provide positive economic effects to the local people and encourages them to understand the importance of both animals and their habitats. Meanwhile, frequent and intensive contact between human and great apes in such human activities can have a negative impact on great ape health: Travelers potentially bring infectious pathogens of which humans are hosts to habitats of great apes; also habituation can impose stress to the naive animals. Practically, there have been many reports on outbreaks of diseases, which are sometimes fatal, in the habituated populations of African great apes. Therefore, in the wild populations of great apes under the influence of human activities, it is necessary to monitor their health status and develop methods for managing their health risks. In this symposium, I will provide some topics in our field sites, in which monitoring for health status and stress levels in the great apes has been conducted. Applying these methods, we may devise appropriate measure to minimize human impact on great ape health in ecotourism. This study was financed by Global Environment Research Fund (F-061) from Ministry of the Environment, Japan, and the fund for Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development from Japan Science and Technology Agency / Japan International Cooperation Agency.

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