

Mountain gorillas in danger in the Congo

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Conservationists in the Democratic Republic of the Congo believe the charcoal trade is killing mountain gorillas at the Virunga National park.

"The gorillas have become a hindrance for the charcoal trade," Emmanuel de Merode, director of Wildlife Direct, told National Geographic News.

Wildlife Direct is a conservation group based in the Congo and Kenya that supports the park rangers working in Virunga, the Rwanda News Agency reported Monday.

"There's a very strong incentive for these people to kill the gorillas," De Merode said.

The park is estimated to be home to 370 of the world's 700 mountain gorillas. In the past year at least seven gorillas have been killed in separate incidents.

The charcoal trade is rapidly taking the mountain gorillas' habitat away as trees are cut down to satisfy the demand for charcoal, which is used for cooking and heating in the Congo.

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