

Human activity hampers conservation in forest reserves

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Decline in animals in Ugandan forest reserves compared to better-protected adjacent Kibale National Park

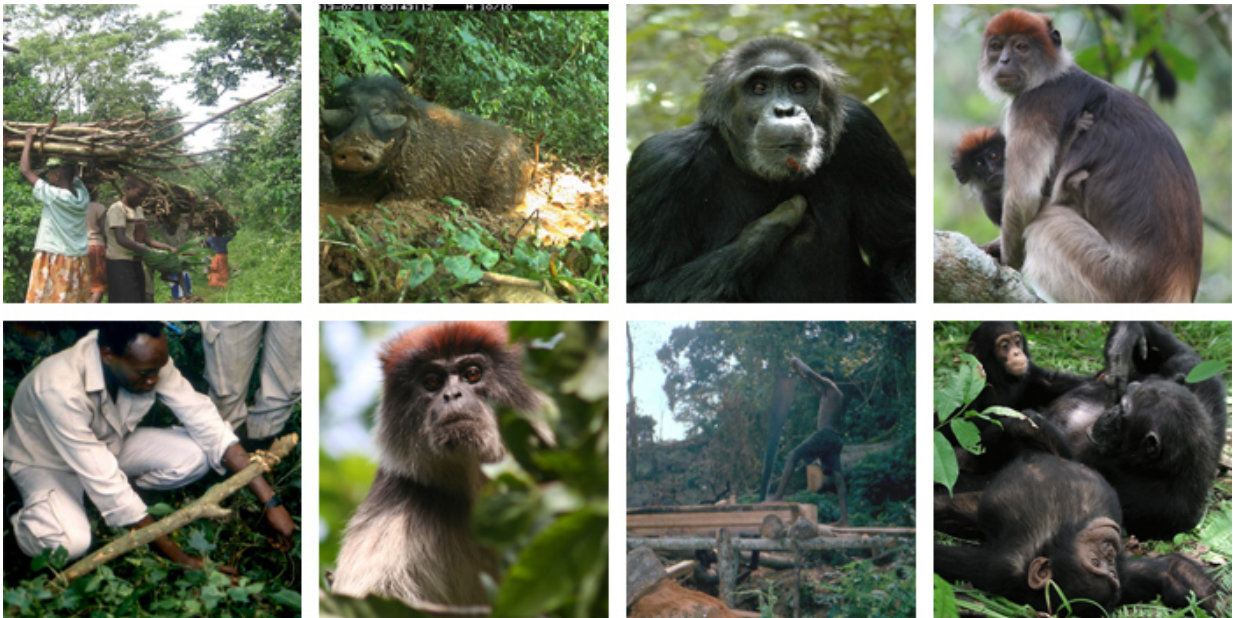
Tropical forests are among the most beautiful and biologically rich environments in the world. While forest reserves are considered safer for wildlife than unprotected areas, they provide far less conservation value than national parks – largely because of human activities in the reserves.

Colin Chapman, a professor of Anthropology at McGill University has worked in the tropics for over 35 years documenting the devastation that is occurring in these important areas. Recently, Chapman investigated

the relationship between human activities and the declining number of animals such as chimpanzees, elephants, and giant forest hogs within four forest reserves in Uganda. These Ugandan reserves allow firewood collection, timber cutting, gardening, and pole cutting. Illegal hunting also takes place.

Chapman found a significant decline in animals in the reserves compared to the better protected adjacent Kibale National Park.

"This decline is very likely due to a combination of the forest degradation and hunting that is occurring in the forest reserves, but not in the national park," says Chapman. "However, signs of aardvarks, bushbucks, bush pigs, duikers (blue and red), giant pangolin, giant forest hogs, porcupines, and jackals are still present in some of these reserves, this is a promising sign for their potential to recover and become viable conservation areas, if they receive protection."



More information: Sam Mugume et al. How do human activities influence the status and distribution of terrestrial mammals in forest reserves?, *Journal of Mammalogy* (2015). [DOI: 10.1093/jmammal/gyv104](https://doi.org/10.1093/jmammal/gyv104)

Provided by McGill University

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