

Famed gorilla dies at 35 in Congo park

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A female eastern lowland gorilla in the Kahuzi-Biega National Park. The gorillas are one of the world's most endangered species.

A veteran gorilla descended from a celebrated forebear immortalised on a banknote has been found dead near a national park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the protected reserve announced on Monday.

"The solitary gorilla Mugaruka, aged about 35, died of bloody diarrhoea" on Friday, park spokesman Hubert Mulongoy told AFP.

The body was discovered by rangers in a tea plantation close to Kahuzi-Biega.

The gorilla was the last descendant of Maheshe who was killed by poachers and remembered on a banknote under Mobutu Sese Seko's presidency.

"It's an enormous loss," Mulongoy said.

"He would come regularly to visit us in the general area of the park, to the public's delight."

Mugaruka lived alone having lost an arm in a trap at the age of three.

The 600,000 square kilometre (2,300 sq mile) reserve, lies between two extinct volcanoes near Bukavu, in one of the most troubled areas of the vast country.

Kahuzi-Biega provides a habitat for one of the last populations of eastern lowland [gorillas](#), made up of about 250 primates, according to its website.

In August, the [park](#)—close to the Rwanda border—celebrated the birth of an eastern lowland gorilla.

It is listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site in danger because of the presence of armed groups and settlers, poaching and deforestation.
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