

World ape population dwindles at fast rate

1 September 2005

A United Nations publication calls for greater protection of the dwindling number of apes around the world.

The World Atlas of Great Apes and their Conservation is a collection of data about the apes detailing fears total ape populations could be extinct within one to three generations.

The BBC reports only 350,000 apes from six species are left in the world.

The Cross River gorilla in Cameroon and Nigeria is the rarest with between 250 and 280 animals left.

The ape population is being decimated by a number of factors, including human expansion, especially logging and mining, and disease.

In the Indonesian province of Aceh, decades of civil war and the deadly tsunami in December further threatened the Sumatran orangutan.

Only 700 mountain gorillas remain in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the site of next week's first meeting of a U.N.-founded group, the Great Ape Survival Project, whose goal is to restore the ape populations in Africa and Asia.

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