



## Lowland Gorilla

*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*

**Geographical Range:** Lowland gorillas may be found in the area of the Congo River basin in west-central Africa.

**Habitat:** These gorillas can be found in lowland rainforests.

**Exhibit Location:** The gorillas are located in the Zoo's Main Animal Building between the Education Department and the Vanishing Animals Exhibit.

**Physical Characteristics:** Gorillas are the largest members of the primate family. Height ranges from four to six feet and weight ranges from 150-450 pounds. A gorilla's arm span can reach lengths of nine feet and is greater than their standing height. Males tend to be larger and heavier than the females. Like other apes, they have no tails. Their hair is coarse and black, sometimes brown closer to the head. A saddle of gray hair develops across the lower back of mature males, hence the name silverback. Mature males also possess a pad of skin and connective tissue on their crowns which gives their head a conical shape.

**Diet:** Gorillas are herbivorous and feed on wild celery, roots, tree bark, pulp, fruit and bamboo shoots. In captivity they are fed yogurt, primate biscuits, bread, mixed fruits and vegetables, peanuts and hard-boiled eggs. Alfalfa hay and straw is provided both on and off exhibit for nest construction.

### Did you know?

- Gorillas communicate with posture, facial expressions and vocalizations. The chest-beating display of males is a ritualized sequence of nine discreet acts culminating in chest-beating with cupped hands. Its function is most likely intimidation not a threat.
- Gorillas are the rarest of man-like apes.

**Status:** They are under strict protection as their numbers are dwindling through man's destruction of its natural habitat. They are listed as endangered or threatened internationally.