



Environment: journeys through a changing world

Criteria for Habituation

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To decide on which group of gorillas to habituate, the criteria involves looking at the group composition, looking at the group size, looking at the distance of the group from the park edge, and also looking at the animal movements, how far they move from their previous night's place of sleeping to the next one. The group size and composition matters. If a group is less than six individuals, then it's not suitable for habituation because it's small and any disease that comes about can easily wipe it out, and also its behaviour can easily change and be influenced, and when the group is bigger than twenty individuals, then it is a very big proportion of the population of the gorillas, and therefore such a group is not also suitable for habituation because if anything happens to it a very big percentage of the population is at risk. So we need to see whether it's in between six and twenty individuals, which are the more suitable ones. We also need to find out the group composition in terms of the silver backs, in terms of the adults, in terms of the middle size, and also the infants, because this is really important, that in every group the stability of the group depends on whether there's a silver back, depends on whether there are enough females and also depends on how many black backs they need, if it hasn't any black backs then it's likely to disintegrate because black backs tend to emigrate and go out to look for their own females once they become big, they don't want to start fighting with the silver backs. So for the distance from the park to the group it's very important because these groups are being habituated for tourists and we need to know how far it will take for a group to come to the park edge of tourists to get to them, otherwise if they are too far away then they would be unavailable for the tourists. Then when it comes to the distance between the previous night's beds, the forced criteria they are no range. This is very important because if the groups are moving long distances then they are most likely to be unreliable you may take visitors today and the next day find out they moved long distances and visitors may not get to them.