

Safe at Home?

Two eyes peer through the thick leaves and branches of a tree. The eyes belong to a 400-pound lowland gorilla that lives in Africa's Congo Basin. That is home to the second-largest rain forest in the world.

The world's entire population of lowland gorillas lives in the Congo Basin. Those creatures are among many species of **endangered**¹ animals living in the rain forest.



AFP/Getty Images

The gorilla is one of the endangered animals living in the Congo Basin.

Scientists warn that more than half of the forest could disappear within 50 years. Some people illegally cut down trees and hunt wildlife to sell as meat. Many rain forest animals, like the lowland gorilla, are endangered because of illegal hunting.

Hope for the Future

¹ **endangered:** threatened to become extinct

Reading Passage

Help is on the way for the rain forest and the animals that live there. The presidents of 10 African countries recently signed a **treaty**, or agreement, to protect the rain forest.

"The treaty is important because it shows that the governments are committed to protecting the Congo Basin," World Wildlife Fund (WWF) scientist Richard Carroll told *Weekly Reader*.

The WWF is a group that protects endangered animals and habitats. The WWF is helping governments in Africa to stop illegal hunting and to set up parks and protected areas for animals. "This gives us a great opportunity to save the forest," said Carroll.

Did You Know?

Gorillas are plant eaters. They also like to eat insects, such as termites and ants. An adult male eats about 40 pounds of food each day!

Young gorillas love to play. They learn new skills by imitating adult gorillas.

Each gorilla has a unique nose print. Scientists can identify a gorilla by the shape of its nose.