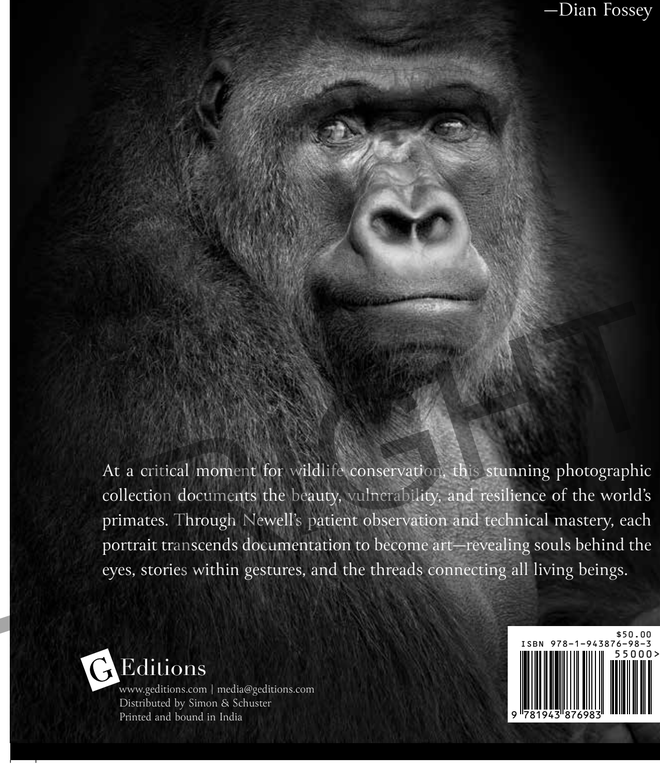
Lennette Newell was born in the high plains of Nebraska. The daughter of a large-animal veterinarian, her fascination with animal behavior sparked at a young age. Captivated not only by animals but by the entire natural world, she was always mesmerized by her environment and gravitated toward photography as a means of capturing the entrancing aspects of life.

She began her career as a commercial photographer, specializing in advertising campaigns featuring humans and animals. In parallel, she maintained a passion for personal projects, constantly photographing animals and landscapes while refining her artistic process and exploring new mediums to reveal the delightful personalities of living creatures and the beauty of their natural habitats.

Her work has been featured in exhibitions around the world, and she has received numerous international awards for her photography. By celebrating the diversity of the animal kingdom through her work, she hopes to promote the preservation and peaceful coexistence of all species. She lives with her family in Placitas, New Mexico.

Debra Curtin, the president and founder of New England Primate Conservancy, left a thirty-five-year business career to pursue her passion for animal protection. She built NEPC into a globally respected conservation education organization, developing programs and educational resources. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of CUNY's Lehman College, Debra lives in Merrimac, Massachusetts.

"When you realize the value of all life, you dwell less on what is past and concentrate more on the preservation of the future."
—Dian Fossey



At a critical moment for wildlife conservation, this stunning photographic collection documents the beauty, vulnerability, and resilience of the world's primates. Through Newell's patient observation and technical mastery, each portrait transcends documentation to become art—revealing souls behind the eyes, stories within gestures, and the threads connecting all living beings.

$50.00
ISBN 978-1-943876-98-3
55000>
9 781943 876983

G Editions
www.geditions.com | media@geditions.com
Distributed by Simon & Schuster
Printed and bound in India

Lennette Newell

PRIMATES

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PRIMATES

A Kinship with All Creatures

Lennette Newell

Foreword by Debra Curtin, New England Primate Conservancy
Essays by Gabriella Skollar and Tomoko Kanamori

In this extraordinary collection of black-and-white portraits, photographer and naturalist Lennette Newell captures the profound connection between humans and our closest living relatives. Drawing on twenty years of work across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, these intimate images reveal the individual personalities, complex emotions, and remarkable intelligence of our primate cousins.

In addition to these glorious portraits are the contributions of essays by important primate experts, including Debra Curtin, founder of the New England Primate Conservancy; Gabriella Skollar of California's Gibbon Conservation Center; and Tomoko Kanamori of Japan's Orangutan Research Center. Each offers definitive information that supports the need for critical understanding of these creatures to humans and to the world today. The book features more than 185 photographs, capturing primates at a crossroads.

More than a photography collection, this is a love letter to our evolutionary family—and a plea for their survival in an uncertain future.

PRIMATES

A Kinship with All Creatures

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A Kinship with All Creatures

Lennette Newell

With a foreword by
Debra Curtin, New England Primate Conservancy

G Editions New York

Dedication

This book is for Livia and Noemi,
and I would like to express my profound gratitude to
Zoe, Bill, Jane, Lena, Debra, Gabriella, Tomoko, and Sylviana.

First published in 2026 by

G Editions
500 Seventh Avenue
New York, New York 10018
Telephone: 929.232.2472

www.geditions.com | media@geditions.com for inquiries

First edition, 2026

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available from the Publisher.

Hardcover edition ISBN: 978-1943876-98-3
Printed and Bound in India
Distributed by Simon & Schuster

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

Foreword

Where Primates Live

Nonhuman primates live in some of the most lush and biodiverse regions of the world. Most live within tropical zones near the equator, extending across Latin America, Africa, and southern Asia. These ecosystems are characterized by consistently high temperatures, abundant rainfall, and year-round food availability, creating ideal conditions for a variety of primate populations to flourish.

Contrary to popular belief, not all primates live in jungles. With over 520 species, primates are the third most diverse order of mammals (surpassed only by rodents and bats). Evolution has equipped these many primate species with adaptations for life in an equally diverse array of habitat types found within or near equatorial zones, including grasslands, savanna woodlands, semideserts, swamplands, seasonally cold mountains, inhospitable rugged cliffs, and human settlements. The latter include agricultural lands and urban settings where they must develop the shrewdness to coexist alongside humans.

The primates of Africa and Asia are great apes, small apes, monkeys, and prosimians. While they predominantly occupy tropical and subtropical forests, some monkey species can thrive in a broader range of climates, situations, and environmental conditions than their nonhuman ape and prosimian cousins. Some are adapted to thrive in the semideserts of North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, and others are found in seasonally cold regions extending as far north as Japan, the lower altitudes of the Himalayas, and the mountains of southern China.

Latin American monkeys inhabit regions extending from southern Mexico to Central and South America.

Notably, no nonhuman apes or prosimians occupy the region; they exist exclusively in Africa and Asia. Latin America's monkeys primarily dwell in the verdant tropical forests of its equatorial zones, reaching as far south as northern Argentina. Within that range, their habitats include subtropical forests, cloud forests, montane forests, and scrub forests.

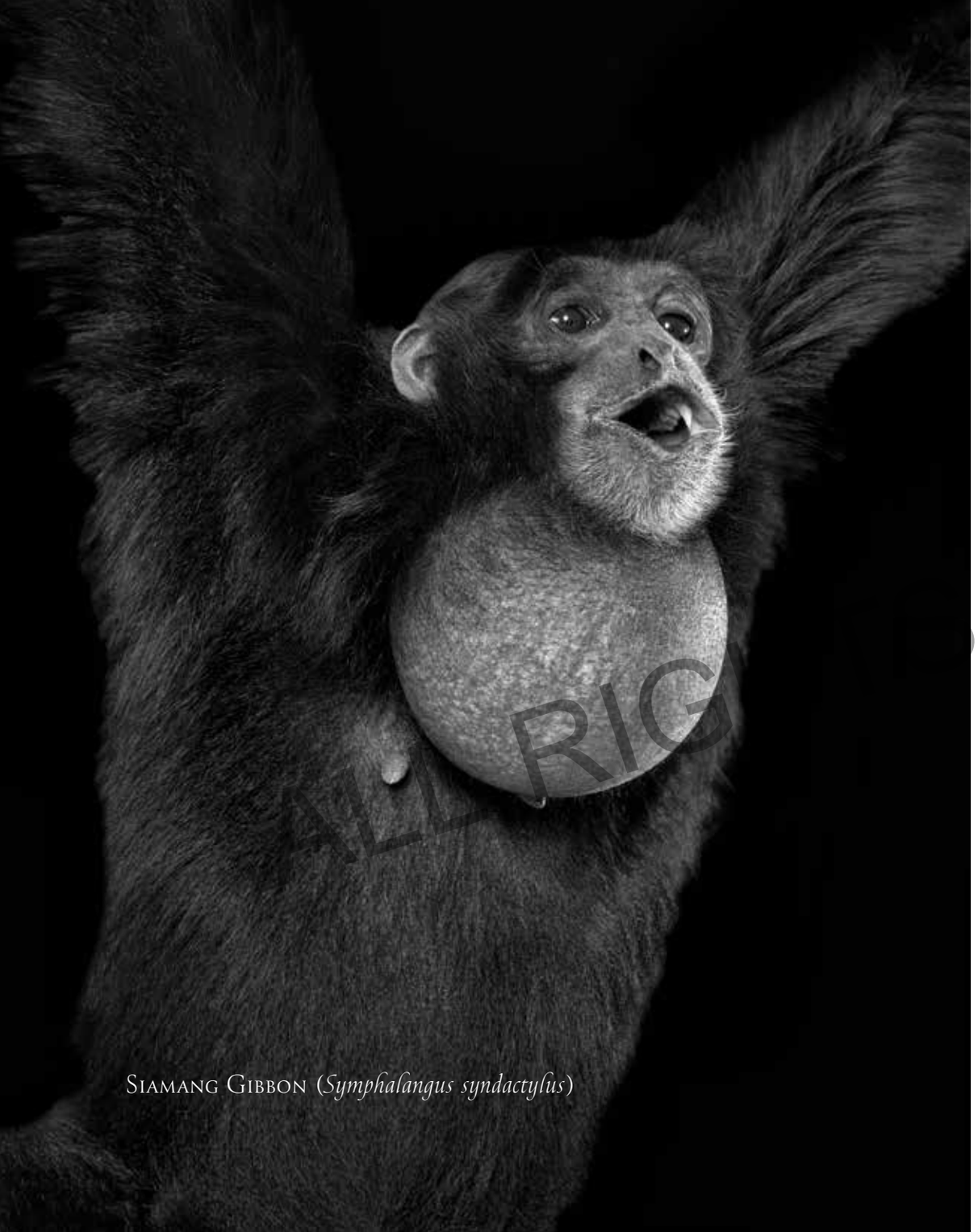
Through their daily activities, nonhuman primates not only benefit from their ecosystems but also actively nurture them. For instance, some species are seed dispersers, promoting forest regeneration, while others are pollinators—some of the largest pollinators in the world! Additionally, certain primates create openings in the canopy as they consume leaves, allowing sunlight to reach the otherwise dark forest floor, while others benefit ground-dwelling animals, such as ungulates, by sharing the fruits of the canopy when they accidentally drop or intentionally toss nutritious food items.

Introduced wild monkey populations—those that arrived by way of deliberate human activities and successfully adapted to local conditions—live in Gibraltar, several Caribbean islands, and parts of the southern United States. While captivating for tourists, introduced species can negatively affect local ecosystems by consuming resources meant for native wildlife or by inadvertently damaging flora not adapted to withstand their gregarious lifestyles.

I include the above regarding introduced species because there's always someone who asks, "What about the Barbary macaques in Gibraltar?" or "What about the rhesus macaques in South Carolina?" or "What about the vervets in Saint Kitts?" or another Caribbean island.

The world's nonhuman primates have evolved physical and behavioral adaptations that perfectly suit their respective natural ecosystems. Each species plays a vital role within its habitat, contributing to the intricate balance of nature. This is the beauty of biodiversity. It's Mother Nature's formula for success!

—Debra Curtin
Founder, New England Primate Conservancy



Siamang Gibbon (*Symphalangus syndactylus*)

Preface

The Natural Connection

I am deeply grateful for the opportunities I have been given to photograph some of our closest relatives. Each image reflects a part of myself and the primate; these precious moments embody my very being. Our connection is visceral; I intuitively understood life's interconnectivity and biodiversity as if I were born with this knowledge. This familiar perception wove a natural thread to nature, especially to the creatures of the world. These primates inspire me to observe life in an ever-changing world with compassion and imagination.

I grew up as the daughter of a large-animal veterinarian in the Nebraska Panhandle on the high plains. My introduction to animals was immediate. I lived among domestic livestock and beautiful peacocks that called out each morning. In addition to our ranch, my DVM father operated a dual large and small animal hospital on site, where I helped care for everything from calves and foals to the occasional fawn, fox, skunk, and other wild creature. I saw myself in all of them and, more importantly, shared a mutual trust that led to my close relationship with all creatures, large and small. I didn't see myself as a caretaker as much as an ally and companion; I transitioned into their world, where they taught me the value of trust and I felt their excitement, pain, and assurance more directly than I did with human beings. This sense of place sparked my creativity, leading me to perceive the animals of the world as much larger than life itself.

I learned the body language and auditory signals of each species. The rattlesnakes sensed vibrations and gave

a rattle to let me know where they were. My dog's incredible olfactory senses were something I could not comprehend, only admire with a bit of jealousy, and I came to depend on them. The cattle's ability to use electrical currents was something out of the ordinary. I referred to this as "beastie supreme GPS," one of Mother Nature's paramount gifts, which plays an important role in many species' migration. I witnessed a cow, separated from her calf by mistake, travel many miles at night after being taken to a new pasture, only to return home before daybreak to reunite with and feed her calf. Her long journey—crossing fences, backcountry roads, and a highway—guided by natural navigation unknown to man, exemplifies motherly love at the deepest level. This miraculous and robust communication system strengthened my relationships with animals, leading to a thriving kinship.

Everything in the vast landscape was visible or hidden, but never beyond our senses, as the movements of Mother Nature were constant and never stagnant. The subtle shifts of the Earth revealed themselves to me unconsciously through my observation of the cows, horses, and other livestock. The creatures sensed climate events long before I did. They experienced spring joyously and felt the surreal clouds as I observed with blissful anticipation. These behaviors and their reactions to our environment instinctively became a part of me.

This natural connection to the animal kingdom and my environment felt like a recognized, respectful, synchronized dance. I coexisted with the natural world in an ecosystem that shaped who I am today, and I am forever grateful for my animal mentors.

It was only natural for me to investigate our ancestors and want to photograph them. I started photographing primates as long as twenty years ago. Different opportunities presented themselves after I had been in the photography business for some time. I specialized in photographing pets for advertising and packaging purposes. This led to introductions to wildlife specialists and conservancies, among other facilities. I was trusted within the larger animal community, which led to opportunities in the primate field. I later traveled to environments specific to the species featured in some of the stories that follow. Soon, these personal photographs evolved into a larger body of work. With careful consideration, they are now presented here in a timeless black-and-white aesthetic, representing a sacred portfolio and an intimate journey.

I photographed the chimpanzees, *Pan troglodytes*, in the dense forest canopy of Kibale National Park. In this wild environment, I felt entirely at one with nature. I observed the mutual respect between the guides and the chimpanzees. These intoxicating experiences deepened my understanding of our ancestors.

One early morning, as we walked through the dense forest canopy, we heard calls from a resident chimpanzee troop warning of intruding groups. This unsettling communication came from the alpha male and other high-ranking males, displaying physical aggression and a willingness to defend their territory. I perceived these primal alerts as warlike, yet I was eager to see the primates firsthand.

We followed the calls and soon assessed the threat posed by the opposing troop. They were high in the trees and on the ground. It didn't take long for the challenging troop to concede, acknowledging the strength and numbers of the resident males.

The scene quickly shifted to the hunt for a western red colobus monkey. Though chimpanzees mainly feed on fruits and plants, they sometimes hunt for meat. I could hear the colobus monkeys' alarm cries, but I couldn't see what was happening because the male chimpanzees moved in, creating a flurry of activity from my vantage point. It became clear that the chimpanzees' coordinated

effort, with multiple males working to trap the faster-moving colobus, ended when the alpha male made the capture.

The alpha female, with her baby, begged beneath a branch while the alpha male feasted on the captured red colobus and shared a few scraps with her and another high-ranking male in this male-dominated hierarchy. This kill saddened me; however, my heightened senses quickly recognized a beautifully crafted bees' nest swaying high above.

This was my first time scanning my immediate environment after the chimpanzee hunt, and I marveled at the natural design of the bees' nest. I grew concerned, however, that the juvenile chimps now in the area would knock it down. The mothers were well aware of the nest, yet all mothers know that playful young chimpanzees just want to have fun. I was relieved that the bees' home remained securely attached to the tree canopy.

The rest of the day was more harmonious, as the close-knit families enjoyed grooming, munching on plants, napping, and building nests for the evening. I felt humbled to interact with the chimpanzees' world, observing a very familiar resemblance to our own.

One of the most breathtaking views I witnessed while photographing these primates was at Simien Mountains National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This park is home to the only primate that is truly grass-grazing. The gelada baboons, also known as bleeding heart baboons, are named for the red hourglass-shaped imprint on their chests.

These terrestrial primates inhabit the vast highlands of Ethiopia beneath the endless sky above a deep gorge. The monkeys are accustomed to people and generally spend their days grazing efficiently, often scooting on their bottoms in a behavior known as shuttle feeding, while using their highly efficient thumbs to pick grass.

Active grooming and social interaction take place while the young ones showcase their cartwheels and gymnastics, sometimes losing track of their parents as they play with their siblings. Observing these families and extended communities was a delight, leaving me envious of their gelada society. I would look down from an elevation of 14,700 feet over the plateaus and gorges, watching the monkeys retreat to safety for the night on the rocky cliffs. They have one of the best views on Earth, and I am happy to know that they continue to exist as they did thousands of years ago, albeit in smaller numbers due to habitat loss, primarily caused by farming.

My recent trip to Borneo involved a face-to-face encounter with a Western tarsier, the only entirely carnivorous nocturnal primate, which preys on lizards, snakes, and insects. It was an exciting and captivating experience to find a tarsier in the forest at night. At first glance, I saw her use her elongated hind limbs to leap from one tree trunk to another in a split second. I admired her strength and speed, understanding how well equipped she was to catch any insect or lizard. The tarsier's oversized, bulging eyes add to the fascination of observing these nocturnal mammals. They remind me of slow lorises, which I saw very high up in the canopy. The slow loris is the only primate with a venom-filled bite that can rot flesh and cause anaphylactic shock in humans—a helpful defense against predators.

However, their adorable appearance has unfortunately led to illegal wildlife trade, as demand for them as pets results in their capture in the wild. This causes unimaginable suffering, especially during transport, and threatens the species with extinction. Primates are not pets, and they cannot be released back into the wild in most instances. The slow loris featured in this book was confiscated from the black market and, fortunately, found a home at a zoo as she could not be returned to the wild.

Other primates I photographed in the Borneo region

included the proboscis monkey, which had been on my primate bucket list, and seeing them was captivating. I found their gentle manners and physical features blended beautifully with the surrounding habitat. These monkeys wade upright through water, making them exceptional among primates for their bipedal abilities. While the male's long, pendulous nose is very eye-catching, I was equally intrigued by their calm demeanor and focus on family-centric daily activities as I observed them high in the canopy over the Kinabatangan River. This troop's harmony gave me a sense of stability and kinship. These endangered primates have declined sharply due to deforestation for palm oil plantations. They play an essential role in maintaining the health of mangrove ecosystems, assisting with carbon sequestration and coastal protection.

The pig-tailed macaques became another favorite of mine after I met a large troop in Borneo. They were unexpectedly entertaining, providing all the energy and fun anyone could want. Known for their distinctive dark head patch or crown, they are very attractive, accentuated by pinkish faces and striking red lines from the outer corners of their eyes, and complemented by their adorable piglike tails. These mammals are captivating, combining visual beauty with charming confidence.

I have had many opportunities to observe primates in their natural habitat and have been incredibly fortunate to photograph memorable and uniquely intimate moments in captivity. I photographed five of the gibbons at the Gibbon Conservation Center, where the gibbon choir sings in deep, throaty tones with high-pitched melodies. The photographs remind me of this unforgettable experience, which occurs only at the Gibbon Conservation Center, a facility that houses different species not typically found together in the wild. While the visual presence of these species is awe-inspiring, their singing elevated my senses to another level.

Director and primatologist Gabriella Skollar and her team helped my assistants and me set up black material as the background in each gibbon's home environment. Each gibbon species was curious and quickly examined the tie-downs to see if anything needed adjusting. In this newly decorated space, fruit was offered to encourage movement as I was welcomed and often photographed beneath them while they effortlessly swung from one end of the area to the other with their remarkably muscular, long arms. The black backgrounds needed cleaning and disinfecting every time we entered a new gibbon species' environment. The large, heavy backgrounds required an energetic team to clean, disinfect, prepare for the new site, and set up lights outside each habitat.

Gabriella insisted on the timing so we could be in the siamang gibbon's home when the afternoon song began in the early evening, allowing me to capture the throat sac inflating. While I find this visual of the throat sac to be one of nature's miracles, the resounding calls from the siamang and other gibbons at the Gibbon Conservation Center created an unforgettable ensemble experience. The gibbon choir performed energetically in brilliant tones and tempos. I often replay my memories of their exuberant melodies and beautiful features. Gabriella's passion for the gibbons and their song is devotional, and I am grateful for her commentary in this book.

Of particular interest to me as well is the sexual dimorphism of gibbons, and I was fortunate to be able to photograph both males and females—a unique opportunity and rare sight to see. They exhibit coloration differences (sexual dichromatism) between male and female, visible in the photographs of the gibbon and saki monkeys.

At my visit to the Lemur Conservation Foundation in Sarasota, Florida, which works to protect Madagascar primates, I used a similar approach to set up backgrounds and lighting. There, it was much easier to arrange smaller

sets, and I thoroughly enjoyed working with these very social primates, who consistently showcased their impressive leaping skills. The investigative, curious lemurs were eager to interact, and I found their inquisitive responses enlightening. It was as if I had them lined up for a portrait on the branch in perfect posture. Their curiosity made them natural posers—and patient ones at that.

One of the first primates that I photographed was the mandrill. He was born in America and was on exhibit at a theme park. When the park expanded with thrill rides, a roller coaster was constructed close to the mandrill's habitat, and he became anxious from the noise and the large, intimidating structure. The theme park made arrangements for the mandrill's handler to become his caretaker as he started to show more signs of distress.

The dedicated primate handler had already formed a lifelong bond with him, which eventually led to his adoption. Such an arrangement isn't easy, considering the many permits and expenses involved in keeping a primate healthy. The love story between the caretaker and the mandrill highlights the often-harsh reality of a world in which animals are used for entertainment.

I carefully prepared for the mandrill's comfort, and everyone's safety. All superfluous items were removed, the photographic gear was bolted or weighted down for safety, and the windows were covered so the mandrill would not be disturbed by passing traffic. The energy between us was intense; immediately, he needed to assert his male dominance, and as a female, I needed to accept his overpowering strength. I was acutely aware of the mandrill's large, sharp canines as I photographed him from only a few feet away. Keeping my experience with other species in mind, I proceeded as if it were just another day; however, it was clear that ultimately my well-being was in his hands. His human handler was keenly in tune with his behavior, helping me to feel secure and immerse myself in this intimate interaction. I relished their bond, knowing this was the best outcome for the mandrill.

In addition, I have photographed primates at zoos. Zoos are more crucial than ever for research, breeding, and the preservation of species. I was able to photograph the endangered bonobo at a zoo. Along with the chimpanzee, the bonobo shares approximately 98.7 percent of our DNA. Although working in zoos is a markedly different experience, it was wonderful to see relaxed bonobo groups adapted to their environment, led by gentle females and going about their day in a calm and caring society. I removed the zoo background in postproduction to maintain focus on the primates.

While I have provided some insight into certain photography sessions, other locations include Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda (mountain gorillas); Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda; Mgahinga Gorilla National Park, Uganda (golden monkeys); Serengeti National Park, Tanzania; Ubud Monkey Forest, Bali, Indonesia; the Kinabatangan River; Tabin Wildlife Reserve, which includes the Danum Valley, Malaysia; and zoos.

All primates have stories and lives that are just as unique as ours. Each session allows viewers to connect with their character and see our reflection, helping us reconnect with the natural world during these extraordinary times. As we face numerous climate challenges, it is crucial to care for our fellow primates, who are at risk of extinction due to habitat loss, climate change, wildlife trafficking, and illegal hunting.

Now more than ever, natural habitats are a mere sliver of what they once were. National parks invite guests to see these remarkable creatures for themselves, often carefully monitoring tourist numbers to minimize environmental impact while also depending on tourist support to protect their habitat. Conservation centers,

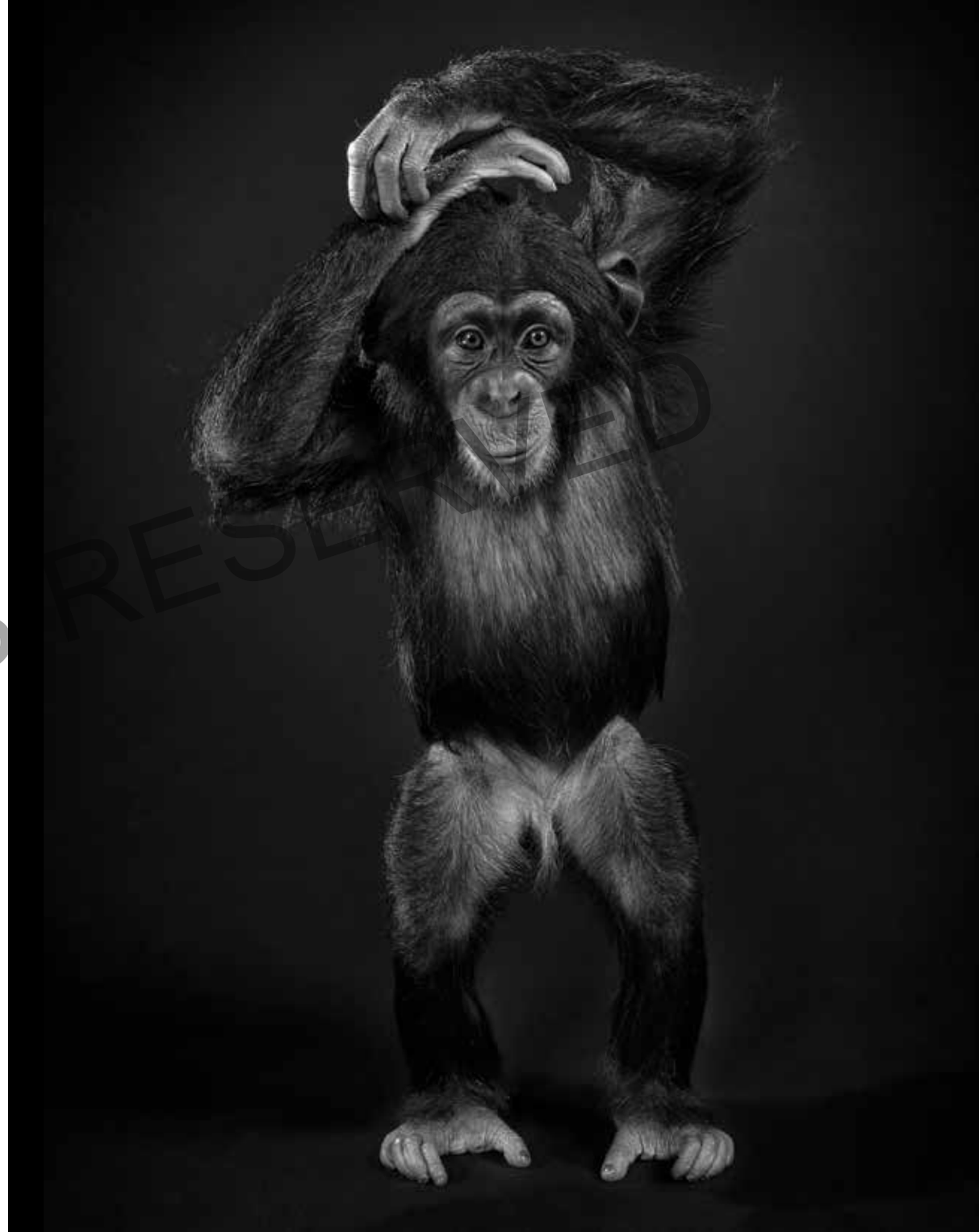
sanctuaries, and zoos invite onlookers to observe often endangered animals in a home away from home, as their wild habitats are dwindling. This is a testament to the current state of the natural world, far removed from a time when these great animals roamed freely, untethered from human control. At the Borneo Rainforest Lodge, I witnessed firsthand a special collaboration between the surrounding primates and the Japan Orangutan Research Center. Their story, described herein, involves a careful balance of tourist support and endemic wildlife preservation, providing a sustainable solution that weaves humans and primates together.

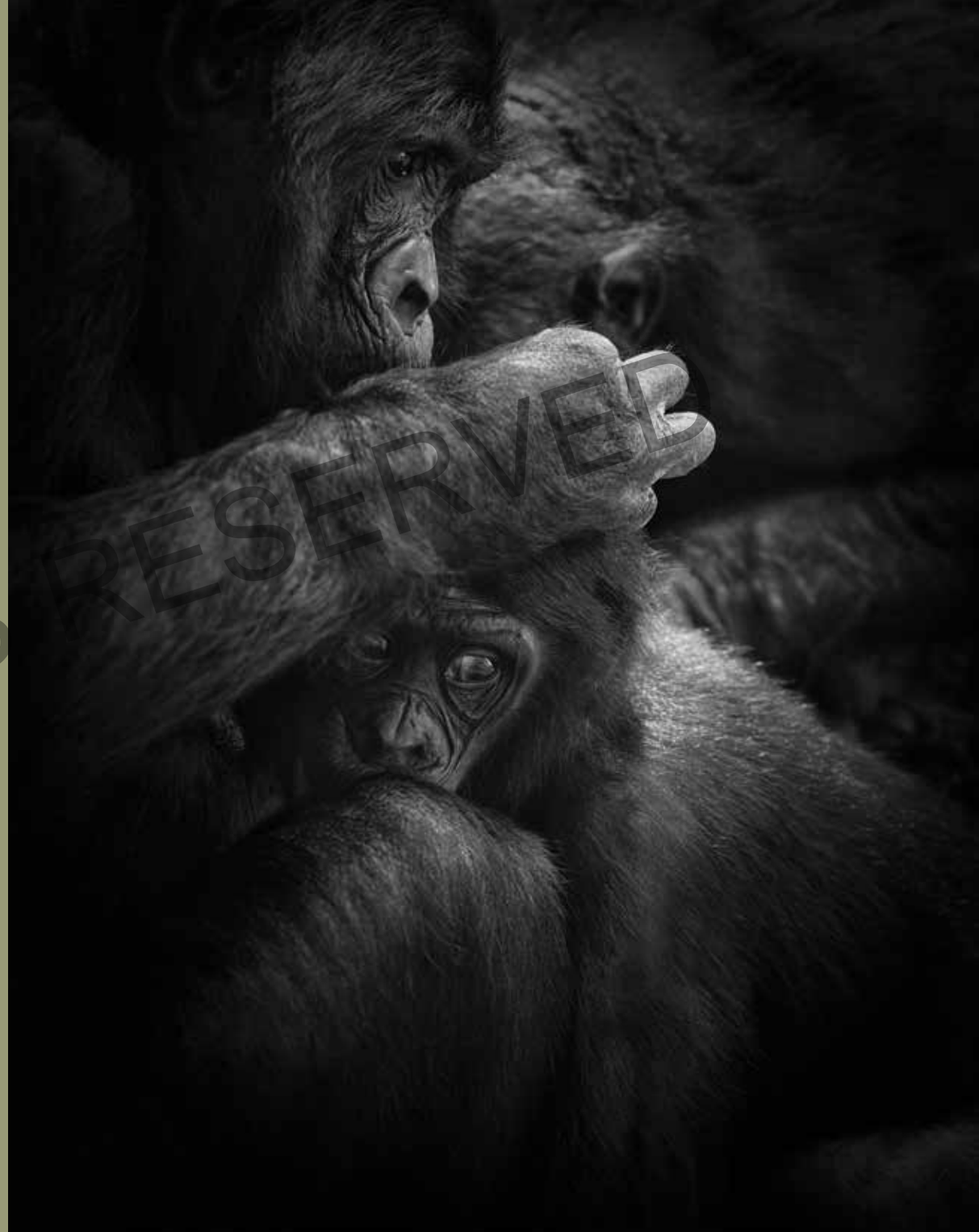
Mother Nature has provided us with a world that depends on all the aspects of biodiversity she has set forth. Primates share a special closeness with us, and they are indeed divine. I hope you, too, see yourself in these photographs.

Primates Portfolio

Africa

Juvenile Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*)

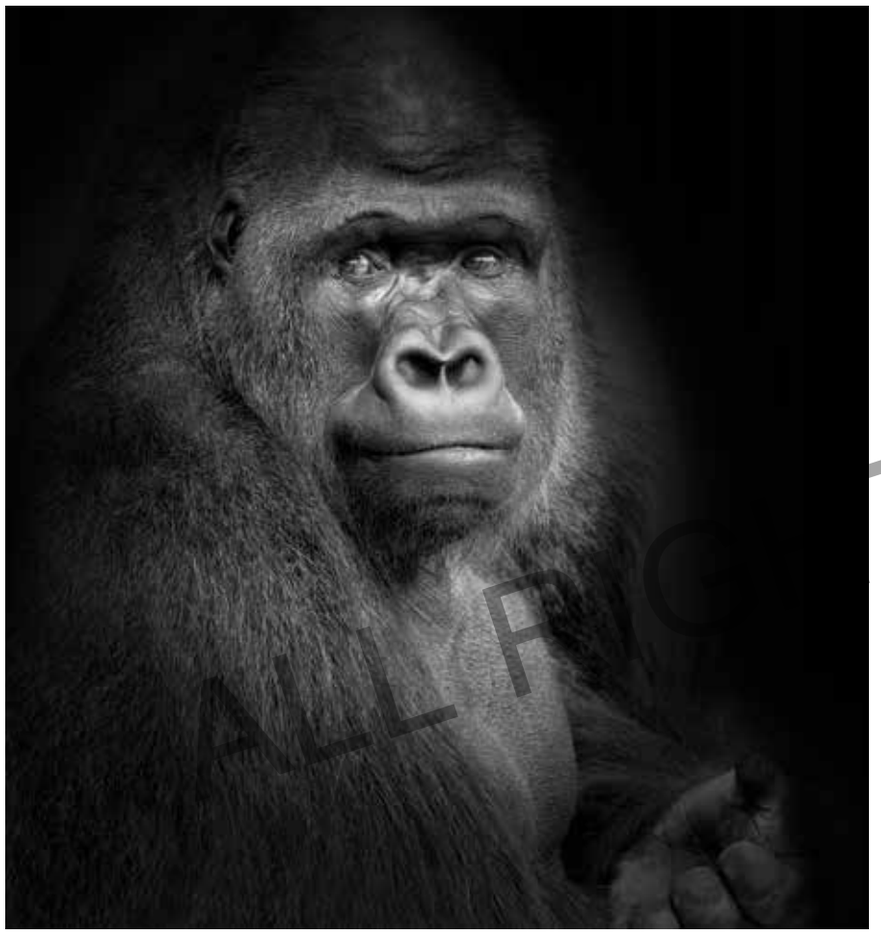


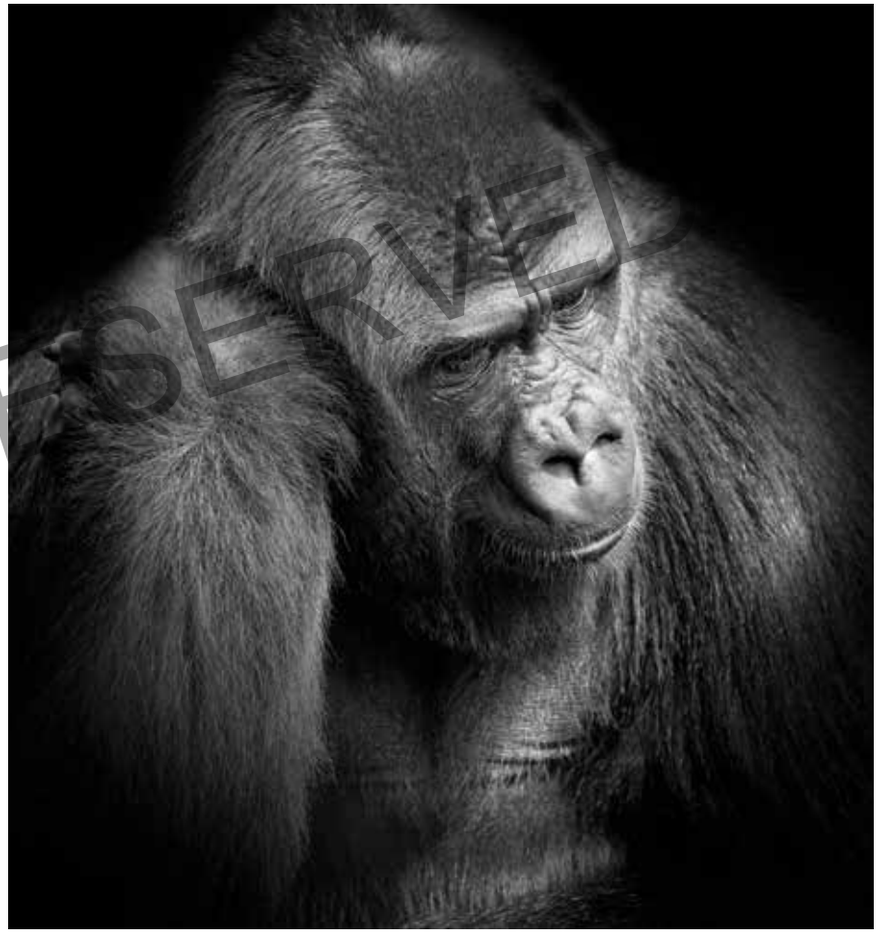


Bonobo (*Pan paniscus*)

Mountain Gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*)

Western Lowland Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*)



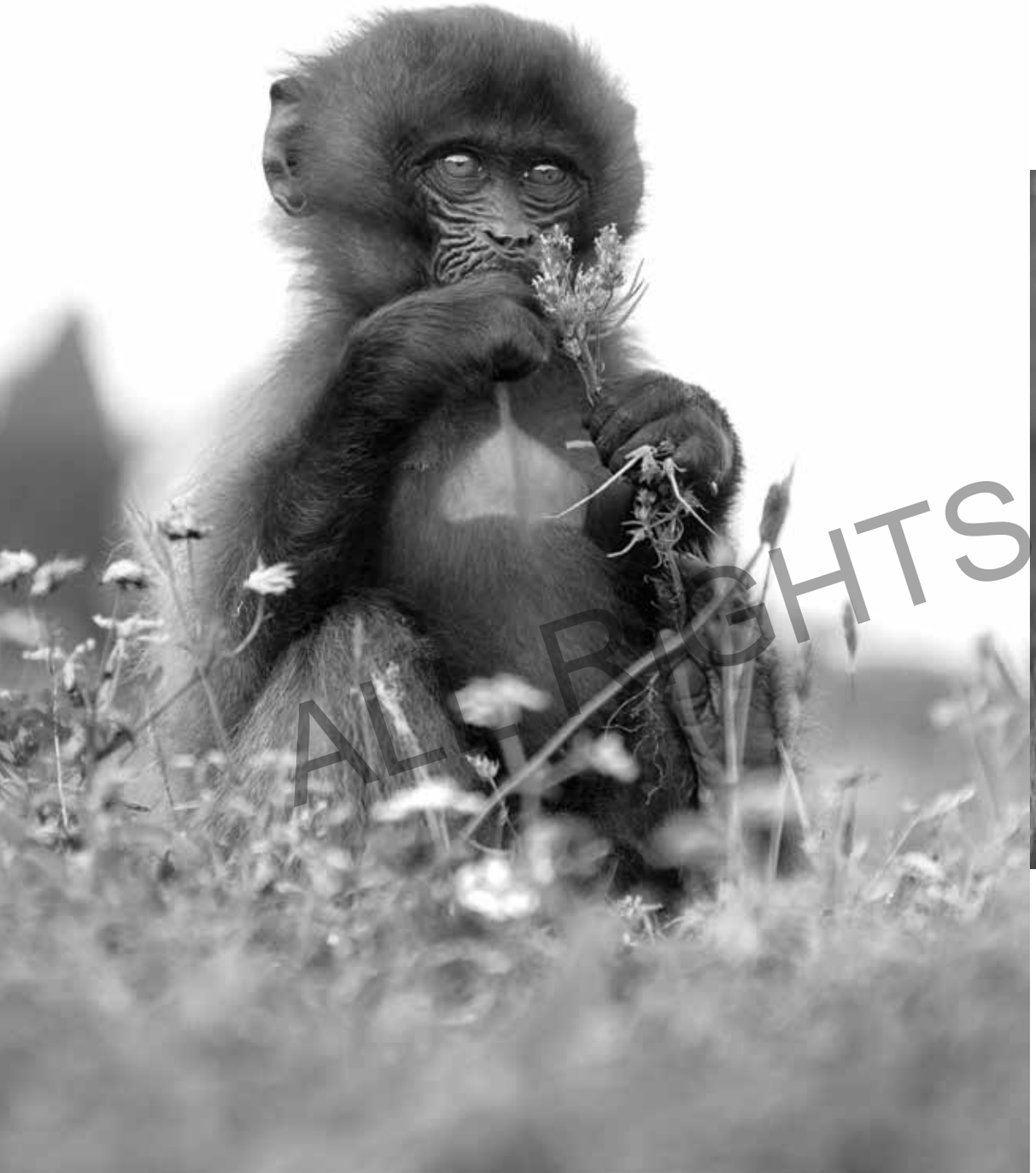


Olive Baboon
aka Anubis Baboon
(*Papio anubis*)

Yellow Baboon (*Papio cynocephalus*)

Mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*)

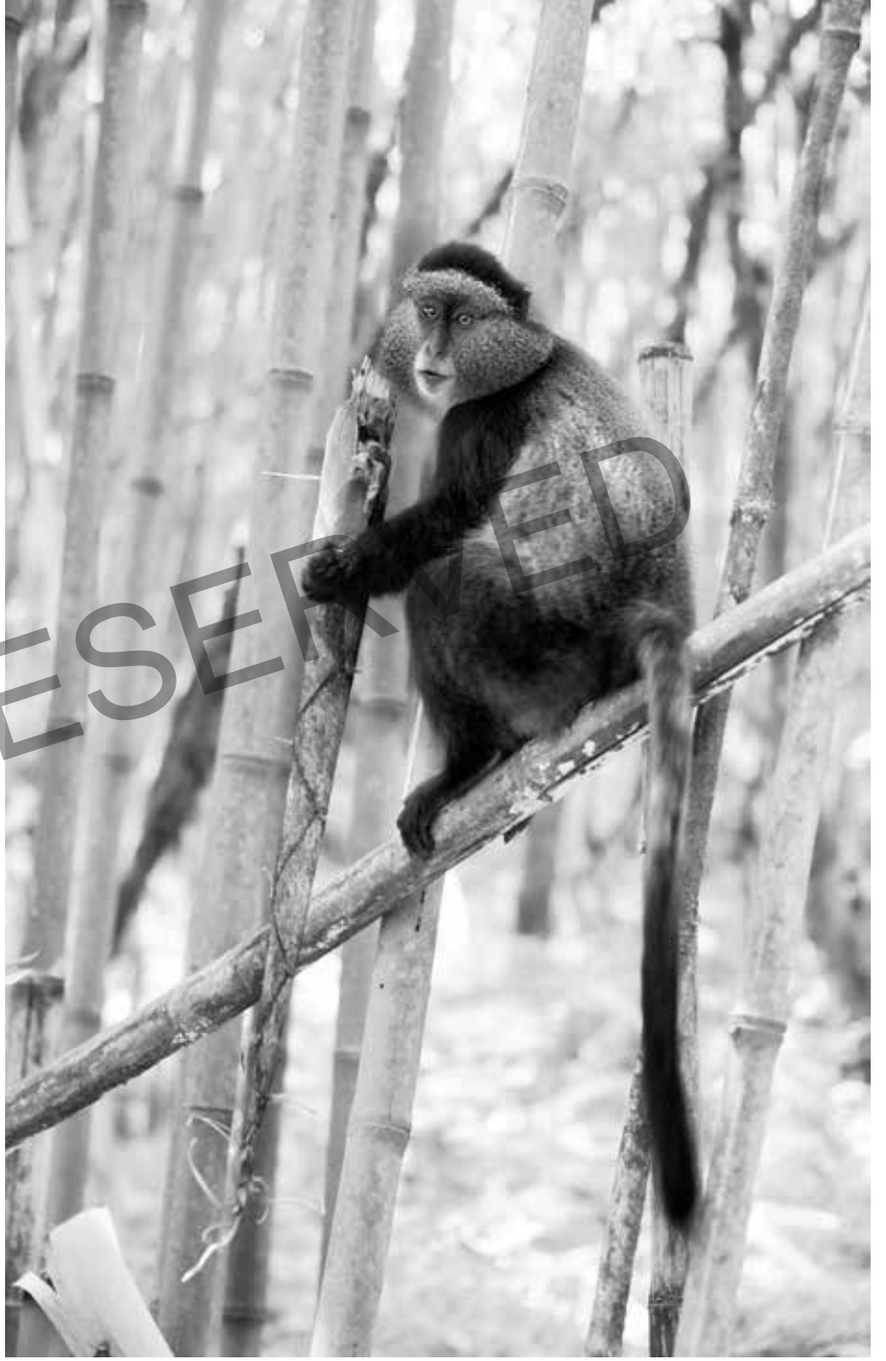
Gelada aka Bleeding Heart Monkey (*Theropithecus gelada*)



Mantled Guereza
(*Colobus guereza*)

Ugandan Red Colobus (*Piliocolobus tephrosceles*)

Golden Monkey aka Virunga Golden Monkey
(*Cercopithecus mitis kandti*)



Patas Monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*)

Wolf's Guenon aka Wolf's Mona Monkey (*Cercopithecus wolfi*)

Allen's Swamp Monkey (*Allenopithecus nigroviridis*)

ALL

Red-Tailed Monkey
aka Schmidt's Guenon
(*Cercopithecus ascanius*)

Black-and-White Ruffed Lemur (*Varecia variegata*)

Red Ruffed Lemur (*Varecia rubra*)

Ring-Tailed Lemur (*Lemur catta*)

Coquerel's Sifaka Lemur (*Propithecus coquereli*)

Mongoose Lemur (*Eulemur mongoz*)

Collared Brown Lemur (*Eulemur collaris*)

Brown Lemur (*Eulemur fulvus*)

Bush Baby (*Galago senegalensis*)

Silvery Gibbon aka Javan Gibbon (*Hylobates moloch*)

Asia

Sumatran Orangutan (*Pongo abelii*)

Bornean Orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*)

Rhesus Macaque (*Macaca mulatta*)

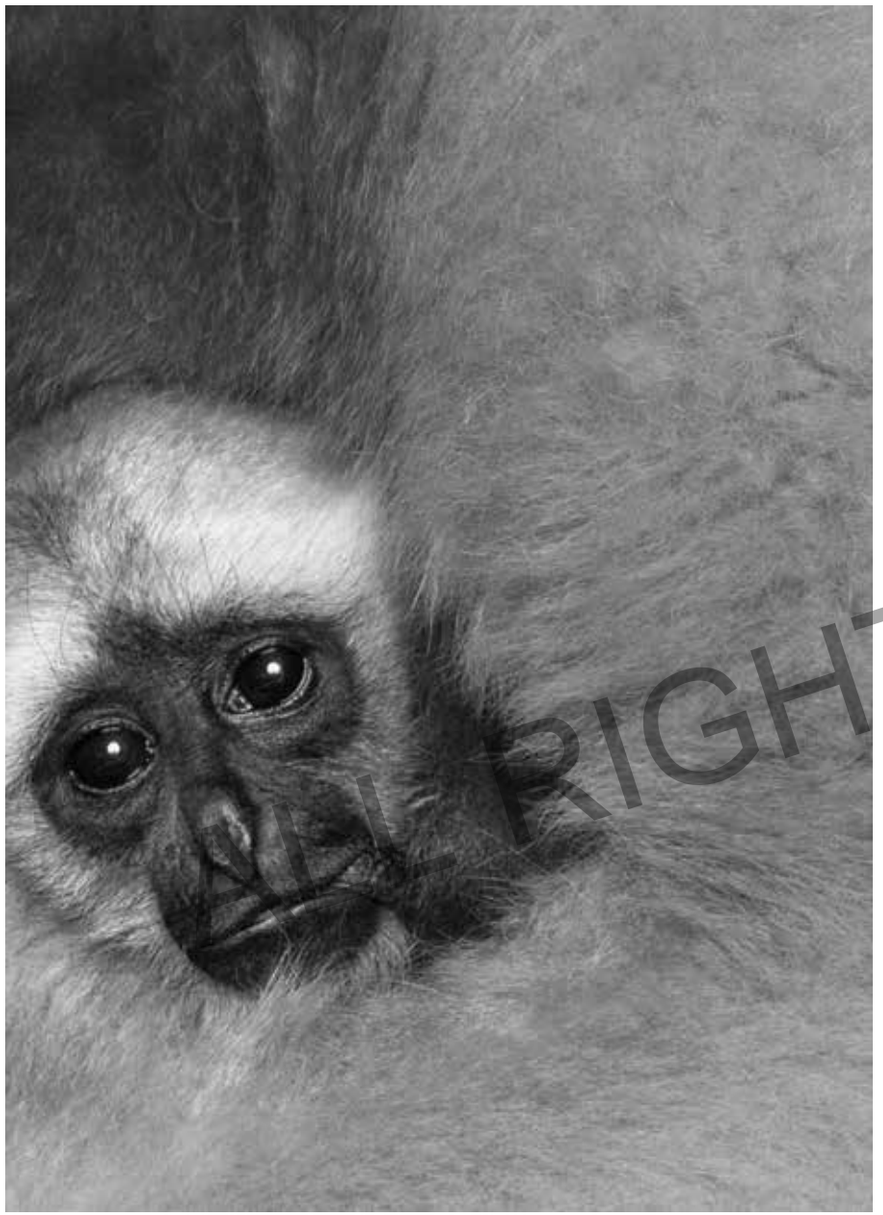
Japanese Macaque aka Snow Monkey
(*Macaca fuscata*)

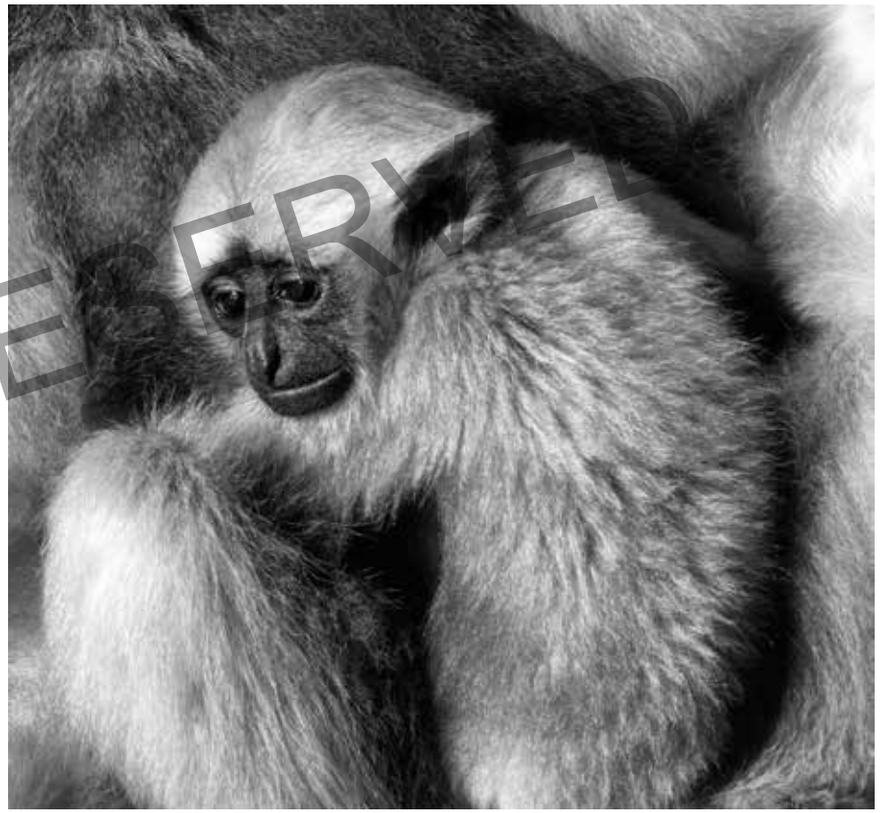
Siamang Gibbon
(*Symphalangus syndactylus*)

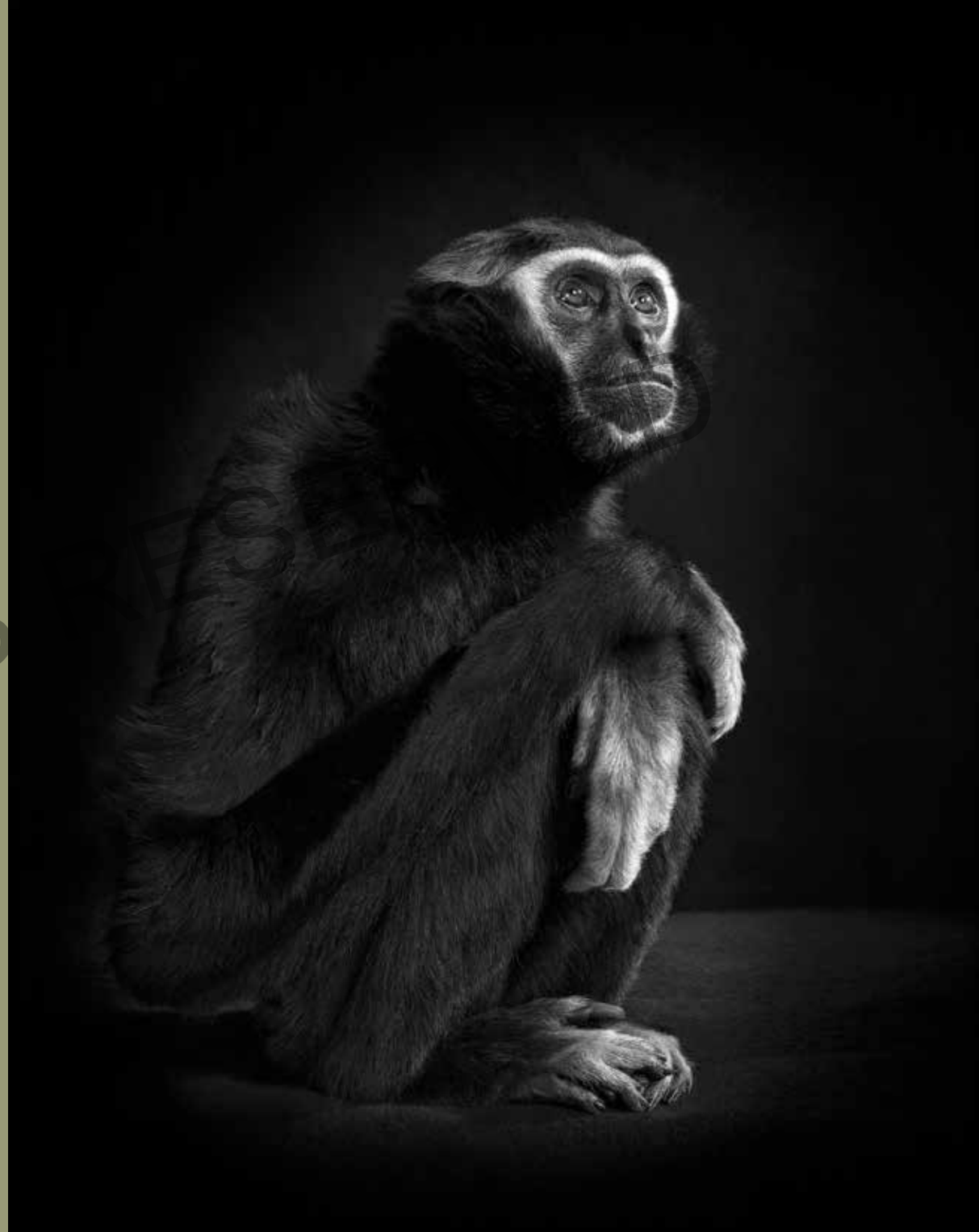
Northern White-Cheeked Gibbon (*Nomascus leucogenys*)

White-Handed Gibbon aka Lar Gibbon (*Hylobates lar*)

Eastern Hoolock Gibbon (*Hoolock leuconedys*)



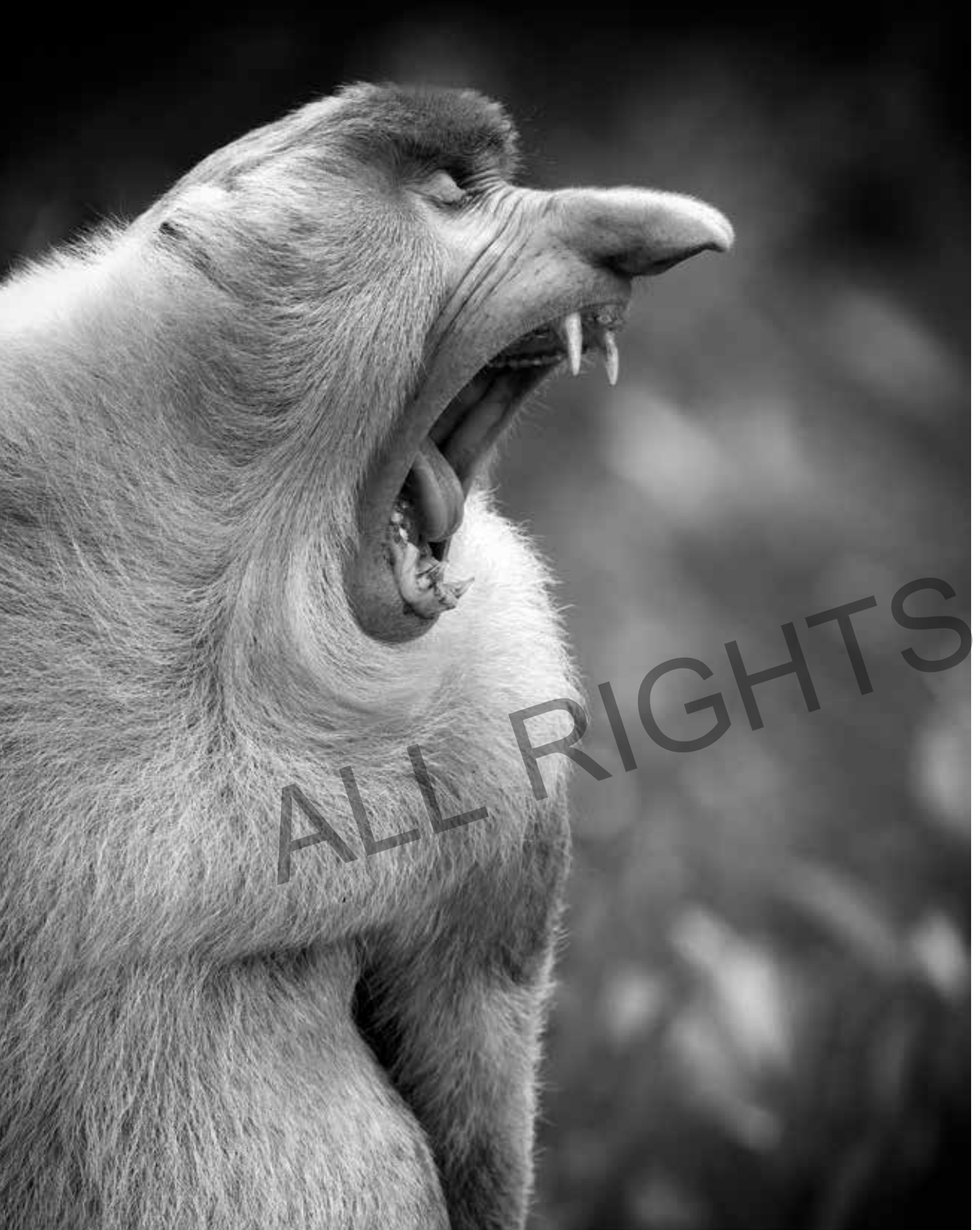




Pileated Gibbon (*Hylobates pileatus*) male & female

Slow Loris (*Nycticebus*)

Proboscis Monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*)



Maroon Leaf Monkey aka Red Leaf Monkey (*Presbytis rubicunda*)

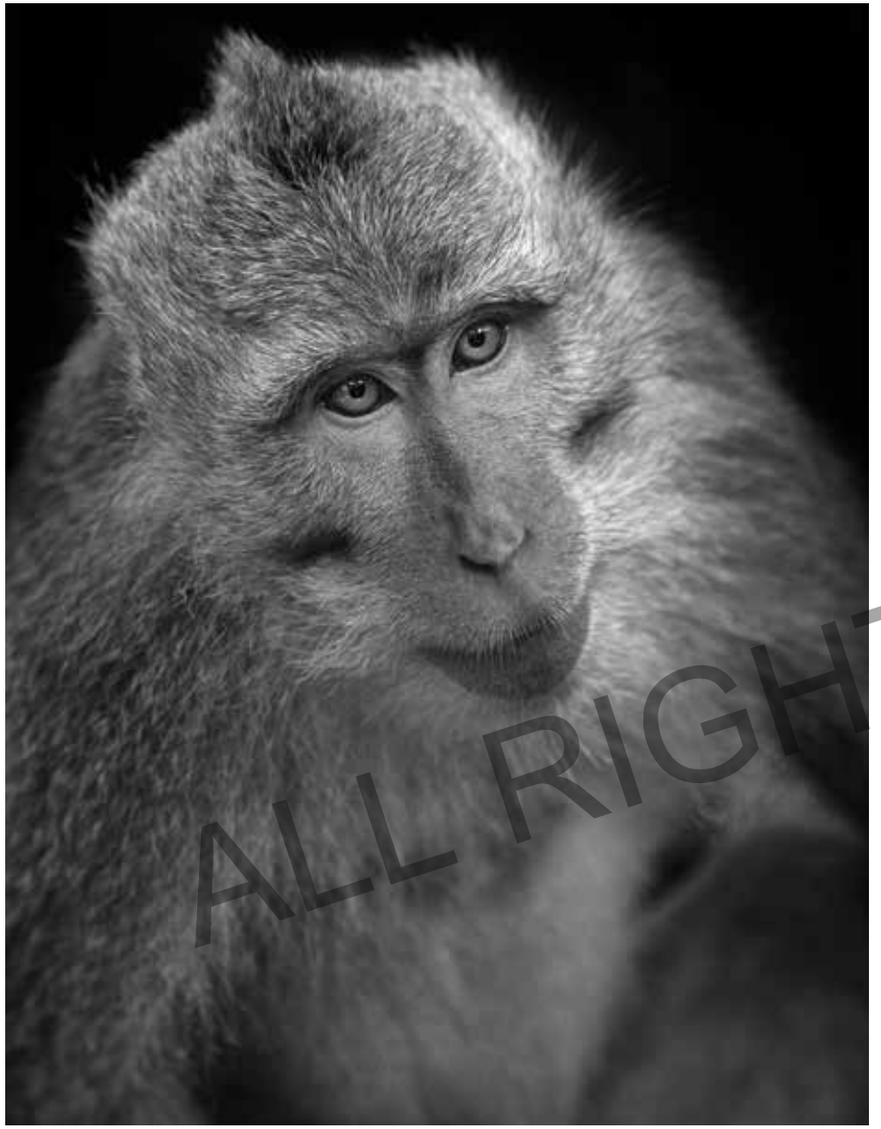
Silvery Lutung,
aka Silvered Leaf Monkey
(*Trachypithecus cristatus*)

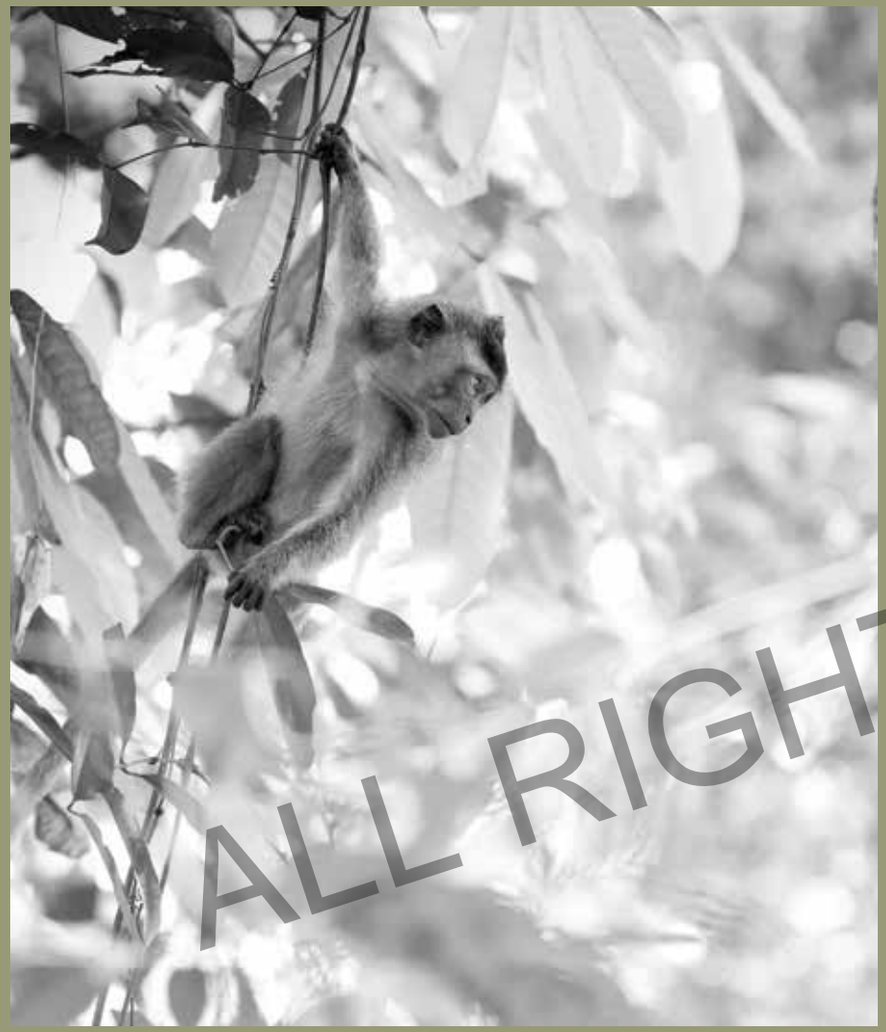
Southern Pig-Tailed Macaque, aka Beruk (*Macaca nemestrina*)

Bornean Gibbon, aka Müller's Gibbon (*Hylobates muelleri*)

Horsfield's Tarsier aka Western Tarsier (*Cephalopachus bancanus*)

Balinese Long-Tail Monkey (*Macaca fascicularis*)





Long-Tailed Macaque aka Crab-Eating macaque
(*Macaca fascicularis*)

Latin America

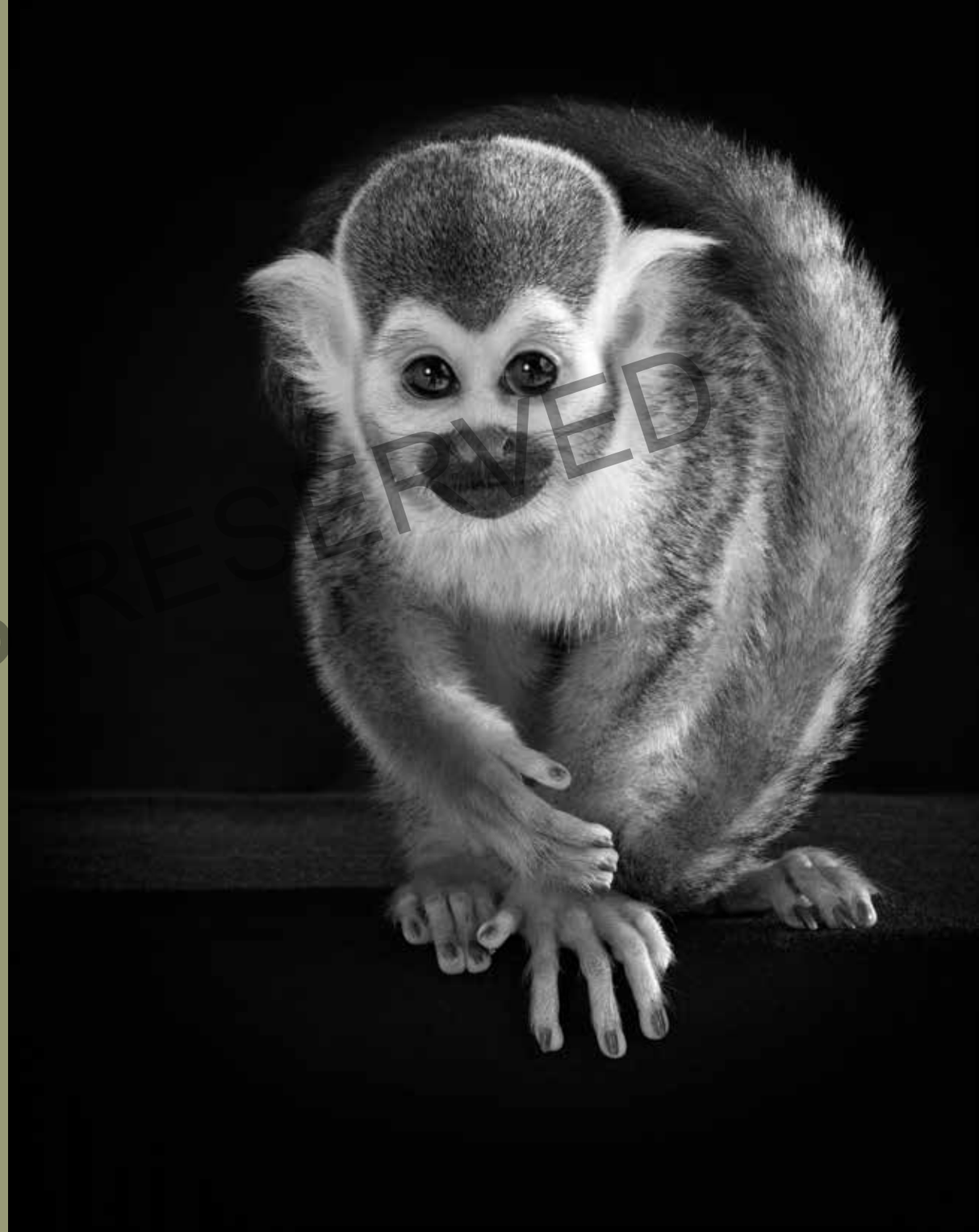
Brown Weeper Capuchin (*Cebus brunneus*)

Panamanian White-Faced Capuchin aka Panamanian White-Throated Capuchin (*Cebus imitator*)

Geoffroy's Spider Monkey aka Black-Handed Spider Monkey
(*Ateles geoffroyi*)

Black Howler Monkey aka Black-and-Gold Howler Monkey
(*Alouatta caraya*)

White-Faced Saki Monkey (*Pithecia pithecia*)



Squirrel Monkey (*Saimiri sciureus*) adolescent

Golden Lion Tamarin (*Leontopithecus rosalia*)

Cotton-Top Tamarin
(*Saguinus oedipus*)

Appendices

Essay

On Gibbons and the Gibbon Conservation Center

Gabriella Skollar

My interest in animals, which began during my childhood in Hungary, has led to my permanent career among the gibbons.

In high school, I became interested in philosophy. I had lots of questions, and I looked to biology—the study of the basis of life—for answers. It was natural for me to apply to university to study biology. I also studied philosophy and ethics there, because I wanted to understand the differences and similarities between humans and animals, as well as how our cognitive traits, such as language and moral reasoning, evolved.

Every summer during my university studies, I worked at the Budapest Zoo, where I cared for different kinds of birds, reptiles, and mammals and learned to rear young ones. While working there, I observed Dr. Maria Ujhelyi, a primatologist who was studying gibbon self-recognition. Her calm and respectful attitude toward the animals, visitors, and staff made a big impression on me, and I approached her to be my mentor.

She asked me to record a gibbon singing in the Szeged Zoo, inciting my passion to wake up at dawn to hear and record gibbons singing. At that time, a gibbon named Kaszat was undergoing vocal development. Young gibbons typically sing along with their mothers until they are around six and a half years old. Then, just as humans pass through puberty, gibbons experience hormonal changes that affect their vocalizations. At this stage, males stop singing the female song and gradually develop the adult male song.

In the spring of 2002, we began studying gibbons' capacity for object permanence, testing whether they knew objects or individuals existed even when they were out of sight. While working on this project, we also observed intricate social relationships among the gibbons. We studied a pair of females, one of whom was highly dominant over the other. To prevent the dominant female from taking away the subordinate's food, the subordinate female used deception. Although their

interactions were interesting from a scientific point of view, they also exhibited a tragic interplay, opening my eyes to the importance of animal welfare.

Our studies spanned two years across various Hungarian zoos. With a group of other students, we formed a team that carried out research, discussed papers late into the night, and explored Dr. Ujhelyi's gibbon recordings. My work with her taught me how to conduct research that respected the gibbons as living beings with unique personalities and characteristics, and I gained insight into the complexity of gibbon behavior, cognition, and vocalization. In 2004, however, Maria suffered a stroke and suddenly passed away. Maria's death was unsettling, but working together with the other students in Maria's small team, we helped each other finish our research.

Later that year, I presented our research on object permanence at a primatology conference in Turin. The experience strengthened my resolution to learn more about the gibbons, particularly their social life. I also wanted to learn English to better communicate with other primatologists. I began to search for zoos and sanctuaries that housed the largest number of gibbons in an English-speaking country. Eventually, I set my sights on the Gibbon Conservation Center in California and wrote to its founder, Alan Mootnick, asking if I could volunteer at the center for six months while on a tourist visa. He agreed. With $200 in my pocket and imperfect English, I left for California.

I arrived in 2005, amid a winter storm that had washed roads away and sequestered the staff at the center for days. Somehow Alan still managed to drive his Land Cruiser over the flooded creek to pick me up, and the next morning, I awoke to singing gibbons. It was beyond anything I had ever imagined, with over forty gibbons singing at once. Even after living here for twenty years, I am never bored by their singing.

Primates communicate using a variety of methods, including vocalizations, facial expressions, body postures, gestures, and scents. Vocalizations play a crucial role, helping to maintain relationships within the group, especially in environments with low visibility, and serving to alert members to potential dangers. Gibbons in particular live in dense rainforest habitats, where they rely more on vocalizations than on visual signals to maintain family bonds and to advertise their territory boundaries. All species of gibbons produce elaborate, species-specific vocalizations, often referred to as songs. Typically, mating partners combine sex-specific phrases in a relatively rigid pattern to create coordinated duet songs with the collaboration of young gibbons.

Singing serves important purposes: It helps gibbons defend their territory and demonstrate their ability to protect their families and their resources. In species that sing relatively more complex songs, duetting requires learning how to coordinate with each other in time by paying attention to subtle cues.

What is unique about the gibbons' singing at the center is that more than forty of them sing together, coordinating songs with one another. The song begins with a "lead singer," and soon others join in. While it follows a specific routine, each performance is still unique. Sometimes the song builds up slowly; other times, it bursts forth suddenly from everyone. This creates a concert experience that cannot be heard anywhere else.

The performance is incredibly powerful and evokes strong emotions in the listeners. For the gibbons, it seems to release joy and strengthen their connection to their community.

Upon arriving at the center, I was immediately involved in caring for the gibbons as well. I assisted with daily feedings, food preparation, and maintaining their yards. While I cared for them, I quietly observed their behavior and the complex communication among family members. Each morning, I woke up with them at dawn, listened to their songs, and later, at the end of the day, I watched their nighttime routine as they settled in for the night.

Couples often slept holding each other, while mothers carried their babies to bed, and little ones tried to crawl away. Fathers stayed awake the longest but eventually went to bed with their older offspring. I remember Medina, a four-year-old at the time, often crying and tugging at his father's arm, wanting him to go to bed. Their behavior felt very familiar, as if I were watching a human family at bedtime. They were affectionate, holding hands and hugging, but they could also become angry and jealous at times.

I learned more about gibbons every day, but I struggled to communicate in English. I clicked with Alan, however, and we could understand each other without much talking. We worked long hours, often after all the gibbons had settled down to sleep. Alan was quirky and patient, helping me with English by steadily increasing the number of papers he gave me to read on gibbons and by involving me in his own research on gibbon taxonomy and behavior. Eventually, he asked me to lead tours for school groups.

After my visa expired, I returned to Hungary, but I was determined to come back and continue working at the center. Six months later, I secured a scholarship that provided me with the funds to purchase a computer and a camcorder. I arrived back in California equipped with the tools I needed

to study gibbons. Over the next twenty years, I compiled my own collection of recordings that explored the vocal repertoire of gibbons and documented their social behavior. Since I was one of their primary caretakers, the gibbons felt comfortable around me. Without disturbing them, I could record their behavior and vocalizations up close, enabling me to capture intimate moments, such as the nurturing vocalizations and facial expressions between mothers and their infants.

Unfortunately, in 2011, Alan passed away suddenly, and my focus shifted from data collection and research to maintaining the center. The next years were rocky, but with the help of a dedicated staff, board of directors, and volunteers, the center expanded, and our work progressed. We opened our doors to the general public and began hosting more schools. One of the unique aspects of our center is that our staff leads the tours. While we do have docents available to answer visitors' questions and welcome them at the gate, we believe that the staff, who know the gibbons best, should guide the groups. This approach creates a very special experience for visitors.

Visitors not only learn about the gibbons' natural history, behaviors, and conservation efforts but also gain insight into the unique personalities and life histories of our gibbons. This personal connection is what they take home along with their newfound knowledge about gibbons, their rarity, and what actions they can take to help preserve them. As a result, they are more likely to make personal changes, such as reducing their use of palm oil products, which contributes to the deforestation of gibbon habitats. This connection to our gibbons and staff fosters a deeper commitment to conservation.

As director of the Gibbon Conservation Center, I continued to advocate for gibbon welfare and became a gibbon husbandry adviser. I strengthened our partnership with gibbon conservation organizations worldwide, visiting field sites and gibbon sanctuaries in Asia. In 2023, I decided to return to graduate school, and I am now a third-year PhD student in UCLA's Department of Communication. Using my archival recordings from the past twenty years, along with new recordings, we analyze the acoustic and behavioral features of gibbon vocalizations.

Such research is essential for understanding a species' behavior, providing insight into their cognitive processes and addressing questions about the evolutionary relationships between species, the development of specific vocalizations, and the evolution of certain traits. Additionally, this knowledge offers valuable information about human evolution and the development of our own communication skills. Vocal repertoire studies also have practical applications in conservation efforts and help improve the welfare of animals in zoological facilities and sanctuaries.

As a child, I often felt that people frequently talked over one another, whereas more progress could be made if they simply listened to each other. When I advise individuals on gibbon care, I emphasize the importance of listening and paying attention to the gibbons. I refer to this practice as "tuning in to gibbons" to enhance their care. I also apply this concept in my interactions with people. Ultimately, this approach reflects how we care for the gibbons at the center and how I try to use their example to guide my own life.

Essay

On Orangutans and the Japan Orangutan Research Center

Tomoko Kanamori

Since I was a child, I have always loved watching TV programs about the lives of wild animals in Japan and around the world. This early interest eventually led me to study wild Japanese macaques on Kinkazan Island in Miyagi Prefecture during my master's program. I focused particularly on solitary males who had left their groups, and I spent two years conducting field research on their behavior.

At the time, few researchers focused on solitary males, and the field itself was underdeveloped. One reason was the practical difficulty of locating and tracking these individuals. In my own fieldwork, I often struggled to find them, and there were many days when I couldn't collect the data I had hoped for. Still, as I wandered through the forest in search of macaques, I gradually became captivated by the beauty of Japan's forests through the changing seasons and by the resilience of the macaques who thrived in that environment.

In particular, I realized that the solitary males were not simply following what others were doing, as group-dwelling macaques often do—they were constantly making their own decisions to survive. I sensed a strong individuality and intelligence in their behavior, which I found deeply compelling. Through these experiences, I developed a keen interest in the relationship between animals and their habitats, and in the unique strength of individuals who live outside the safety of a group.

I began working closely with orangutans when I entered my doctoral program. I had the opportunity to accompany my senior colleague, Dr. Noko Kuze, who was conducting fieldwork at the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in Sabah, Malaysia. That was my first real encounter with orangutans, and I soon developed a strong desire to study them myself.

Later, together with Noko, I began

exploring potential sites in Sabah to launch a new project focused on wild orangutans. As part of that process, we visited the Borneo Rainforest Lodge (BRL) as tourists.

I still vividly remember my first visit to the lodge. As we traveled from the gate to the lodge, I was deeply moved by the overwhelming richness and vastness of the forest. Then, guided by one of BRL's ecotour guides, we ventured deep into the forest and encountered a solitary orangutan moving quietly through the trees. Seeing that figure made me wonder, How do they live in such a vast forest?

The image of the orangutan overlapped with my memories of the solitary male macaques I had previously studied. I became increasingly intrigued by the intelligence and survival strategies of these individuals. That moment solidified my decision to conduct my research on wild orangutans at BRL.

Two accommodation facilities within the Danum Valley Conservation Area are available to foreign researchers. One is the BRL, which caters to tourists. The other is the Danum Valley Study Centre (formerly the Danum Valley Field Centre), which is intended for researchers. To conduct research in Malaysia, foreign researchers must obtain official permits from the Malaysian government and from Danum Valley conservation authorities, and must comply with all regulations. In principle, research activities in Danum Valley are expected to be conducted from the Study Centre, and we initially visited the area with this understanding.

Although BRL and the Study Centre are located about fifteen kilometers apart, the vegetation and density of orangutan populations were nearly identical. Nevertheless, after surveying both locations in the field, we concluded that we needed to select BRL as our study site. This was because orangutans are solitary by nature and extremely difficult to locate. During seasons when fruit is abundant, sightings may occur daily. But during lean periods, we might see only one individual every few days—or sometimes none at all. As doctoral students with the task of completing our theses, we had limited time, personnel, and funding, and we needed to gather as much data as possible under those constraints. This meant that, in addition to our own searches, we had to make full use of local knowledge networks to locate orangutans.

At BRL, experienced ecotour guides patrol the forest daily in search of orangutans to show to tourists, and they regularly share sighting information among themselves. In other words, a sort of "orangutan detection network" was already in place at BRL. We believed that this network, originally developed for ecotourism, could also be a major advantage for our research. On the other hand, while the Study Centre had excellent staff and well-equipped research facilities, researchers there tended to focus on their own areas of specialization—plants, insects, and so on—making it difficult to expect the same level of cooperation in locating orangutans.

Given this situation, I traveled back to the city in Sabah to meet directly with the representative of BRL, as well as with officials from the conservation authority, explaining why we hoped to conduct our study at BRL. They understood our intentions and granted us special permission to conduct research while staying at BRL. Thus, in 2004, our orangutan study at BRL formally began.

At the time, Mr. George Hong, who was the director of Borneo Nature Tours and BRL, understood the significance of our research and supported us with a long-term perspective. Due to limited funding, we stayed not in guest rooms but in staff dormitories, cooked our own meals, and lived alongside the lodge staff while conducting our fieldwork. We were also given special rates for transportation and utilities, among many other thoughtful arrangements.

In the early days of our research, we lacked sufficient knowledge about the local orangutans. The experienced guides at BRL taught us a great deal about how to search for orangutans and recognize individual characteristics. We always took care to ensure our research did not interfere with tourism and respected BRL's policy of prioritizing guest experiences. In return, the BRL staff also made thoughtful accommodations to ensure our research could proceed smoothly.

As our field experience grew, we were able to contribute more valuable information to BRL. During our extended stays as graduate students, we gave talks to tourists about orangutans. Today, we researchers are all employed in Japan, which makes it difficult for us to stay for long periods. However, we still make several short visits each year to conduct fieldwork, and we continue to share our research findings and the latest information on individual orangutans through our website, exhibitions, and social media.

In addition, our research assistants have developed skills in locating orangutans and now exchange information daily with the guides to track the animals' whereabouts as accurately as possible. This close cooperation has made it possible to successfully balance tourism and research.

As professionals in tourism and research, respectively, Borneo Nature Tours and our team have built a meaningful partnership by respecting and

complementing each other's areas of expertise. Thanks to this foundation of trust and cooperation, we have been able to continue long-term research based at BRL for nearly twenty years. As a result of this collaboration, BRL has come to be recognized as one of the best places to observe orangutans in the wild.

In 2011, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between our institution, Kyoto University, and the Danum Valley Conservation Area. This agreement allowed us to build a research hut for orangutan studies within BRL grounds. With this, a full-fledged research framework was established, and since then, we have continued to study wild orangutans in the same area. To date, seven researchers have authored ten papers on orangutans, and in collaboration with studies on mammals and plants, we have coauthored a total of thirteen academic publications. We are still in the process of collecting data for future research.

That said, even twenty years of research represents only about one-third of an orangutan's lifespan, which can reach fifty to sixty years. So far, we have identified eighty-one individual orangutans. Some have died or moved to other areas and have not been seen again. On the other hand, we have been able to document the full life histories of some individuals—from infancy to adolescence, to leaving their mothers, and eventually becoming parents themselves. Such continuous records are valuable outcomes that can only be obtained through long-term study.

Field research is neither ideal nor romantic. The hot and humid environment brings challenges such as leeches and mosquitoes, equipment failures, and physical illness. In addition, daily tasks include operating on a limited budget, hiring and training assistants, coordinating with partner organizations, conducting negotiations, and raising funds—challenges that extend far beyond data collection.

Still, it is the chance moments in the forest that make all those difficulties worthwhile. Witnessing a quiet exchange between a mother and her infant high in the trees, locking eyes with a magnificent flanged male as he gazes down at me, or unexpectedly observing a behavior that reveals the orangutan's remarkable intelligence—each moment in the field offers immense encouragement and inspiration.

Our work does not yield immediate, visible results. But we continue our research with the hope that the orangutans living in this forest today will be able to survive and thrive for generations to come. We aim to steadily accumulate knowledge that will contribute to their conservation, and we remain committed to continuing our efforts in the field.

The Japan Orangutan Research Center (JORC) was established in 2019, based on the long-term fieldwork we had accumulated over many years. Our aim is to record the ecology of wild orangutans living in Sabah over the long term, and to contribute to society through both conservation and human resource development informed by our research findings.

Currently, JORC has three main areas of activity. The first is long-term research on wild orangutans. We collect data using various noninvasive methods, including behavioral observations based on individual identification, nest counts to estimate population size, documentation of relationships with plants, hormone analysis from feces and urine, DNA analysis to determine individual identity and kinship, and stable isotope analysis to understand dietary patterns.

The second is human resource development. Through collaborative research and technical training with local assistants, we are gradually expanding opportunities for young Malaysians to engage in field research and develop an interest in orangutans and forests. In particular, we focus on nurturing future Malaysian orangutan researchers and continue to support this goal through partnerships with local universities.

The third is public education and outreach. In Japan, we hold public lectures, write books, create exhibitions, and disseminate information through our website and social media. Our next goal is to expand these educational activities to Malaysia, and we hope that the young Malaysians we have helped train will eventually take the lead in this effort. Ultimately, our vision is for Malaysia to take full responsibility for the conservation of its natural environment through the leadership of its own people. These efforts are grounded in steady research and the gradual building of trust, all carried out with limited funding and personnel.

Fieldwork in primatology is not just about chasing animals in the forest. It is deeply intertwined with the history, culture, social systems, and international regulations of the area. That is why we believe that fieldwork requires not only scientific perspective, but also imagination and empathy.

We are still only halfway along our path. Yet the aspirations we had when we began—"to learn more" and "to protect"—remain unchanged. We will continue to face the questions surrounding orangutans and their forests, and to take one step at a time toward what we can accomplish.

IUCN Status and Designations by Species and Region

The International Union for Conservation of Nature is the authority on conservation statuses and current designations of species and subspecies. The ICUN Red List of Threatened Species serves as a barometer of life and can be found at https://www.iucnredlist.org/. The designations are as follows:

LC = Least Concern
NT = Near Threatened
VU = Vulnerable
EN = Endangered
CR = Critically Endangered

Africa/26 Species

Critically Endangered = CR (5)

Western Lowland Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*): Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon

Black-and-White Ruffed Lemur (*Varecia variegata*): Madagascar

Red Ruffed Lemur (*Varecia rubra*): Northeast Madagascar

Coquerel's Sifaka (*Propithecus coquereli*): Northwest Madagascar

Mongoose Lemur (*Eulemur mongoz*): Northwest Madagascar

Endangered = EN (7)

Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*): Central and West Africa

Bonobo (*Pan paniscus*): Democratic Republic of the Congo Basin

Mountain Gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*): Central and East Africa

Ashy Red Colobus, a.k.a. Ugandan Red Colobus (*Piliocolobus tephrosceles*): Uganda and Western Tanzania

Golden Monkey, a.k.a. Virunga Golden Monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis kandti*): Rwanda and Uganda

Ring-Tailed Lemur (*Lemur catta*): Southeastern Madagascar

Collared Brown Lemur (*Eulemur collaris*): Southeastern Madagascar

Vulnerable = VU (3)

Mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*): Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon

Brown Lemur (*Eulemur fulvus*): Northwest and Montane Forest in Eastern Madagascar

Black Crested Mangabey (*Lophocebus aterrimus*): Democratic Republic of the Congo

Near Threatened = NT (3)

Patas Monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*): Central, East, and West Africa

Guinea Baboon, a.k.a. Red Baboon (*Papio papio*): Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal

Wolf's Guenon, a.k.a. Wolf's Mona Monkey (*Cercopithecus wolfi*): Democratic Republic of the Congo

Least Concern = LC (8)

Olive Baboon, a.k.a. Anubis Baboon (*Papio anubis*): 26 African countries

Yellow Baboon (*Papio cynocephalus*): Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Somalia, Tanzania, and Zambia

Gelada, a.k.a. Bleeding Heart Monkey (*Theropithecus gelada*): Ethiopia

Guereza Colobus (*Colobus guereza*): 13 Central African countries

Red-Tailed Monkey (*Cercopithecus ascanius*): Central and East Africa

Thick-Tailed Greater Galago, a.k.a. Bushbaby or Brown Greater Galago (*Otolemur crassicaudatus*): Central and sub-Saharan Africa,

Blue Monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis*): Central and East Africa

Allen's Swamp Monkey (*Allenopithecus nigroviridis*): Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of the Congo

Asia/19 Species

Critically Endangered = CR (3)

Sumatran Orangutan (*Pongo abelii*): Sumatra

Bornean Orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*): Borneo

Northern White-Cheeked Gibbon (*Nomascus leucogenys*): Forests of northern Laos and northwestern Vietnam

Endangered = EN (10)

Siamang (*Symphalangus syndactylus*): Indonesia, Malaysia, and small region of Thailand

Silvery Gibbon, a.k.a. Javan Gibbon (*Hylobates moloch*): Java in Indonesia

Pileated Gibbon (*Hylobates pileatus*): Southeastern Thailand, southwestern Laos, western Cambodia

White-Handed Gibbon, a.k.a. Lar Gibbon (*Hylobates lar*): Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Thailand

Bornean Gibbon, a.k.a. Müller's Gibbon (*Hylobates muelleri*): Borneo

Long-Tailed Macaque, a.k.a. Crab-Eating Macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*): South Asia

Sunda Slow Loris (*Nycticebus coucang*): Native to Sunda Islands in Malaysia; endemic to parts of Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand

Proboscis Monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*): Borneo, Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia

Lion-Tailed Macaque (*Macaca silenus*): India

Southern Pig-Tailed Macaque, a.k.a. Beruk (*Macaca nemestrina*): Malay Peninsula south to Borneo and western Indonesia

Vulnerable = VU (4)

Eastern Hoolock Gibbon (*Hoolock leuconedys*): Myanmar

Maroon Leaf Monkey, a.k.a. Maroon Langur or Red Leaf Monkey (*Presbytis rubicunda*): Borneo and nearby island Karimata

Silvery Lutung, a.k.a. Silvered Leaf Monkey (*Trachypithecus cristatus*): Borneo, Indonesia, and Malaysia

Horsfield's Tarsier, a.k.a. Western Tarsier (*Cephalopachus bancanus*): Borneo, Indonesia, and Malaysia

Near Threatened = NT (0)

Least Concern = LC (2)

Rhesus Macaque (*Macaca mulatta*): 11 Asian countries

Japanese Macaque, a.k.a. Snow Monkey (*Macaca fuscata*): Japan

Latin America/8 Species

Critically Endangered = CR (1)

Cotton-Top Tamarin, a.k.a. Cotton-Headed Tamarin (*Saguinus oedipus*): Northwest Colombia

Endangered = EN (3)

Geoffroy's Spider Monkey, a.k.a. Black-Handed Spider Monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*): Central America and Southern Mexico

Venezuelan Brown Capuchin (*Cebus brunneus*): Venezuela's northern coastal states

Golden Lion Tamarin (*Leontopithecus rosalia*): Brazil's Atlantic Coast

Vulnerable = VU (1)

Panamanian White-Faced Capuchin, a.k.a. Panamanian White-Throated Capuchin (*Cebus imitator*): Central America, from Honduras to Panama

Near Threatened = NT (1)

Black and Gold Howler (*Alouatta caraya*): Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Paraguay

Least Concern = LC (2)

White-Faced Saki (*Pithecia pithecia*): Northern Brazil, French Guyana, Guyana, Suriname, and Venezuela

Collins' Squirrel Monkey (*Saimiri collinsi*): Eastern Amazonia Brazil

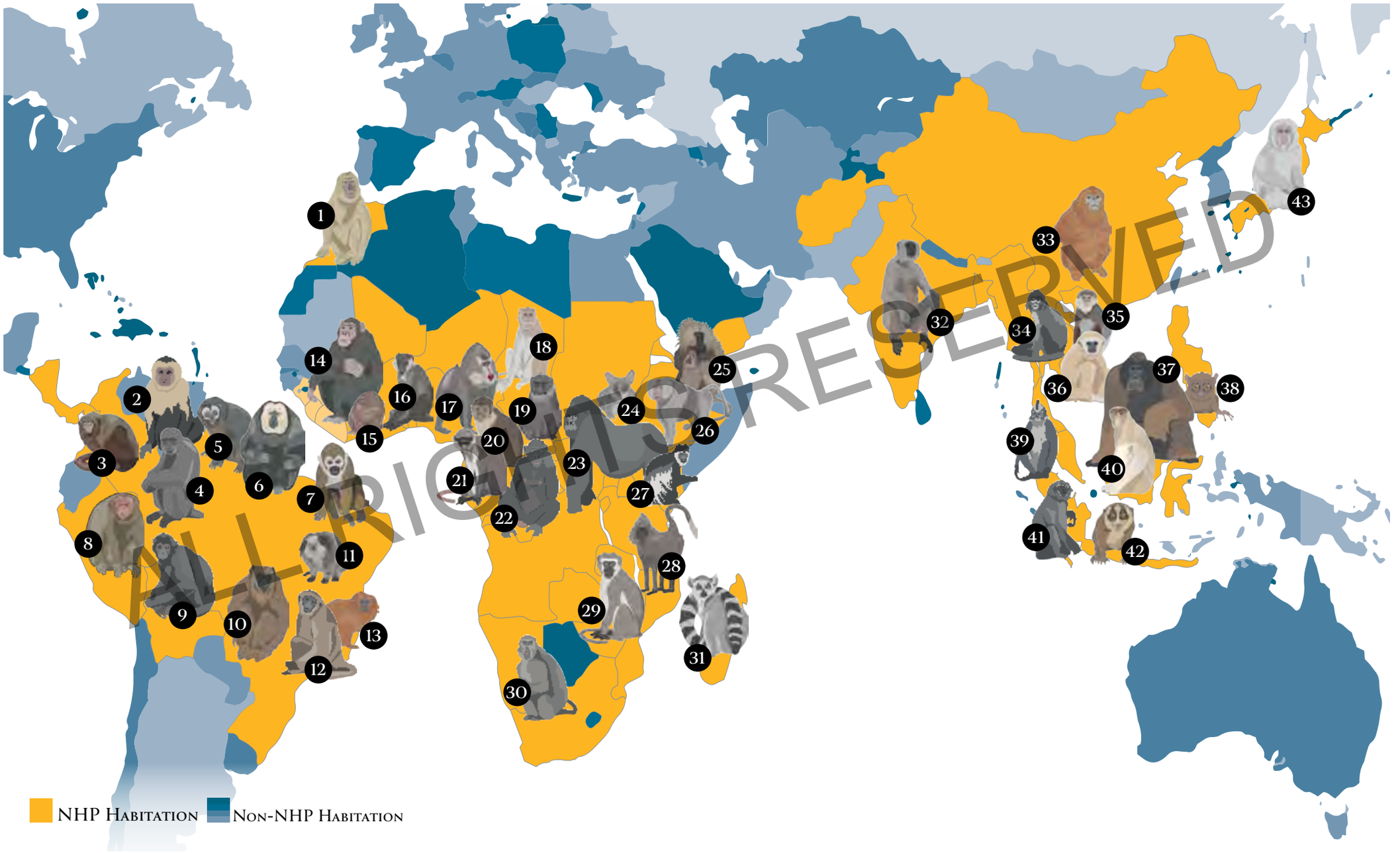
Primate World Distribution

Non-Human Primate Housing Consortium Vision Statement:
Excellence in nonhuman primate housing designs that affords superior animal care, veterinary care, research operations and promotes animal welfare.

Key to Map on Following Page:

NHP Habitation (yellow)
Non-NHP Habitation (blue)

1. Barbary Macaque
2. Capuchin
3. Titi
4. Wolly Monkey
5. Night Monkey
6. Saki Monkey
7. Squirrel Monkey
8. Uakari
9. Spider Monkey
10. Howler Monkey
11. Marmoset
12. Muriqui
13. Tamarin
14. Chimpanzee
15. Potto
16. Mangabey
17. Mandrills
18. Patas Monkey
19. Swamp Monkey
20. Talapoin
21. Guenon
22. Bonobo
23. Gorilla
24. Bush Baby
25. Galadas
26. Hamadryas Baboon
27. Colobus Monkey
28. Kipunji
29. Vevert
30. Chacma Baboon
31. Lemur
32. Black-Footed-Gray Langur
33. Snub-Nosed Monkey
34. Phayre's Leaf Monkey
35. Douc Langur
36. Gibbon
37. Orangutan
38. Tarsier
39. Thomas Leaf Monkey
40. Proboscis Monkey
41. Pig-Tailed Snub-Nosed Langur
42. Loris
43. Japanese Macaque (Asia)



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About the Author

LENNETTE NEWELL was born in the high plains of Nebraska. The daughter of a large-animal veterinarian, her fascination with animal behavior sparked at a young age. Captivated not only by animals but by the entire natural world, she was always mesmerized by her environment and gravitated toward photography as a means of capturing the entrancing aspects of life.

She began her career as a commercial photographer, specializing in advertising campaigns featuring humans and animals. In parallel, she maintained a passion for personal projects, constantly photographing animals and landscapes while refining her artistic process and exploring new mediums to reveal the delightful personalities of living creatures and the beauty of their natural habitats.

Her work has been featured in exhibitions around the world, and she has received numerous international awards for her photography. By celebrating the diversity of the animal kingdom through her work, she hopes to promote the preservation and peaceful coexistence of all species. She lives with her family in Placitas, New Mexico.

About the Foreword Writer

DEBRA CURTIN is president and founder of New England Primate Conservancy. In 2002, Debra left behind her thirty-five-year career in business management, organizational and program development, training, sales, and marketing, which spanned multiple industries, to take a life-changing plunge into the nonprofit sector. Her passion for animal protection called her to apply her well-honed organizational development and leadership skills to build New England Primate Conservancy into a globally respected conservation education and animal protection organization.

In addition to leading the organization, Debra designed the NEPC website, develops education programs, produces educational videos, designs educational activities, and leads the talented and diverse Education Team that carries out the conservancy's mission: to leave a legacy of hope and tools to build a better tomorrow for all Earth's citizens, because education is the heart of animal protection.

Debra earned a bachelor of arts degree, Phi Beta Kappa, in ancient Greek from Herbert H. Lehman College of the City University of New York. She lives in Merrimac, Massachusetts.

About the Essayists

Gabriella Skollar has dedicated her career to the study and conservation of gibbons. Since 2005, she has worked at the Gibbon Conservation Center (GCC) in Santa Clarita, California, whose mission is to promote the conservation, study, and care of gibbons through education and habitat preservation. The GCC houses forty gibbons from five of the world's twenty species.

Gabriella earned her master's degree in biology from the University of Szeged, Hungary, in 2004. In 2005, she moved to the United States as a volunteer caregiver and researcher at the GCC. She became a full-time caregiver and research assistant in 2007, and after the passing of founder Alan Mootnick in 2011, she assumed responsibility for the daily care of the gibbons. In 2014, she became director of the GCC.

Gabriella is a member of the IUCN Primate Specialist Group on the Section of Small Apes and serves on the Gibbon SSP as a husbandry adviser. She is currently pursuing her PhD at UCLA, focusing on the vocal communication of gibbons. She lives in Santa Clarita, California.

Tomoko Kanamori was born in Toyama Prefecture, Japan. She obtained her PhD in science from the Tokyo Institute of Technology's School of Bioscience and Biotechnology. She worked as a part-time researcher in the Department of Ecology and Conservation at Kyoto University's Primate Research Institute from the time she received her degree until 2021.

In 2004, she began research on wild orangutans at the Danum Valley Conservation Area in Malaysia, work she continues to this day. She lives in Kyoto, Japan.