

EAZA Bushmeat Campaign

2000-2001



EAZA Conservation Campaigns

Over the last ten years Europe's leading zoos and aquariums have worked together in addressing a variety of issues affecting a range of species and habitats. EAZA's annual conservation campaigns have raised funds and promoted awareness amongst millions of zoo visitors each year, as well as providing the impetus for key regulatory change.

INTRODUCTION

The first of EAZA's annual conservation campaigns addressed the issue of the unsustainable and illegal hunting and trade of threatened wildlife, in particular the great apes. Bushmeat is a term commonly used to describe the hunting and trade of wild meat. For the Bushmeat Campaign EAZA collaborated with the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) as an official partner in order to enhance the chances of a successful campaign. The Bushmeat Campaign can be regarded as the 'template campaign' for the EAZA conservation campaigns that followed over the subsequent ten years.

CAMPAIGN AIMS

Through launching the Bushmeat Campaign EAZA hoped to make a meaningful contribution to the conservation of great apes in the wild, particularly in Africa, over the next 20 to 50 years. The bushmeat trade was (and still is) a serious threat to the survival of apes in the wild. Habitat loss and deforestation have historically been the major causal factors for declining populations of great apes, but experts now agree that the illegal commercial bushmeat trade has surpassed habitat loss as the primary threat to ape populations. The slow reproductive rate of these species means that the impact of hunting can be devastating for the long term survival of populations. Therefore the Bushmeat Campaign had three main aims:

- To raise awareness of the devastating impact that the hunting of wild meat has on great apes in Africa;
- To gather signatures for a petition urging leaders both in Europe and in Africa to address the crisis; and
- To raise funds to support great ape conservation projects.

CAMPAIGN ACHIEVEMENTS

170 institutions participated in the campaign, of which the vast majority were EAZA members. It resulted in one of the largest petitions ever submitted to the European Parliament, with 1.9 million signatures gathered – almost doubling the initial target of a million. As a result of this petition and the debates it initiated, in 2004 the Parliament adopted a report that recognised the issue of bushmeat as important in relation to wildlife conservation, human food security and livelihoods, and human health. The impact of bushmeat has now been included as one of the factors to be considered in assessing applications for EU funding. Considerable support in achieving this result came from campaign partner, IFAW.

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Campaign committee chair, Bryan Carroll, presents the EAZA Bushmeat Campaign petition to the EU Council of Development Ministers, 8 November 2001

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Campaign partners have also worked with African governments, for example in Cameroon and Ghana, to help them secure EU funding to address the bushmeat crisis in their countries.

With regard to fundraising, which was not the primary aim of the campaign, an impressive result for EAZA's first conservation campaign was nonetheless achieved. Through the immense support of the EAZA community a total of €100,000 was raised to support *in situ* conservation projects.

| PROJECTS SUPPORTED |

With the €100,000 raised, three *in situ* conservation projects were supported with grants*. These figures might seem low in comparison to later campaigns, both in terms of the amount raised and the number of projects, but it was a great achievement for the first EAZA conservation campaign. The selected projects were:

- Pan African Sanctuary Alliance – a network of primate sanctuaries that operate on low incomes, in countries that are often politically unstable, and with damaged animals that other institutions won't or can't work with. PASA provides a network through which African sanctuaries can join forces to lobby, fundraise, exchange information and promote their work.
- Research into chimpanzees and gorillas in the Dja Faunal Reserve in Cameroon – a project that took an inclusive, multi-disciplinary approach, working with, for example, local people, logging companies, research institutes and zoos.
- Berggorilla & Regenwald Direkthilfe – dedicated to the conservation of gorillas, especially the mountain gorillas, and their habitats. The focus of their work is based on the eastern gorilla conservation projects. This NGO also supports the research activities of predominantly local scientists.

*The actual amounts granted to each project will be published in a later revision of this fact sheet.

| WHERE ARE WE NOW? |

EAZA conservation campaigns don't ever really come to a close – as long as the problems they address remain problems, the campaigns must continue their work. For the Bushmeat Campaign this means continued lobbying in Brussels both of the Parliament and the Commission, continued engagement with African governments to address the issue of bushmeat trade, and also lobbying of national government development aid bodies. The continued commitment of EAZA members is also required – the problem of bushmeat has not disappeared and we should ensure that European zoo visitors are aware of this and supportive of finding solutions.

| LINKS |

- www.eaza.net – website of EAZA, the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria.
- www.ifaw.org – the website of IFAW, the International Fund for Animal Welfare
- www.unep.org/grasp - the website of UN-GRASP, the Great Ape Survival Project
- www.bushmeat.org – the website of the Bushmeat Crisis Task Force
- www.pasaprimates.org – the website of the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (one of the supported conservation projects)
- www.berggorilla.de – the website of the Berggorilla & Regenwald Direkthilfe (one of the supported conservation projects)