

## Final Report

From September 2000 to October 2001 we surveyed the abundance and distribution of the Cross River gorilla in the Southwest province of Cameroon. The survey confirmed the continued presence of gorillas within the Takamanda forest Reserve and also confirmed their presence in the adjacent Mone Forest Reserve and the Mbulu Forest, close to the Northwest Province boundary. As in a previous survey gorillas were found only to exist within higher altitude, difficult to access areas where hunting pressure was found to be less intensive compared to lowland areas which may be a factor in the gorillas' preference to these less accessible areas.

Results from this survey showed that the distribution of the Cross River gorilla within Cameroon ranges between the Obonyi I hills within the Takamanda Forest Reserve along the international border with Nigeria, eastwards through Mbulu to the boundary of Cameroon's Northwest Province. The most southerly population located to date is within the Tafu region of the Mone Forest Reserve. However interviews with local people have indicated that their range may be even more widespread and further surveys are recommended in order to clarify their total distribution.

Gorilla density estimates within Takamanda indicated that between 90 to 100 individuals were still surviving within the Takamanda area.

Gorillas are still being hunted outside the Takamanda Forest Reserve but in view of the fact that other conservation projects are now active in the Akwaya region, gorilla conservation is looking more hopeful than five years ago. However the major threat, which is more likely to have a long term negative impact on the gorillas than any other, is the construction of the Mamfe to Akwaya road, which has already cut between Takamanda and Mone and if continued will cut between Takamanda and Mbulu. As the construction of this road continues, it is almost certain that any current gorilla movements with the two areas will cease. Taking into consideration the tenuous future survival that these unique apes already face, further fragmentation of groups will only serve to place these animals under even more threat of extinction than they already are.