A mobile application to curb the growing demand for unsustainable palm, sensors that detect poacher movements, and a tracking device that warns when logging trucks veer into protected areas are just some of the ideas proposed by the five finalists in the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) blog competition that posed the question, “How Can Technology Save Great Apes?” On-line voting will proceed through 11:59pm (GMT) September 31. The winner – based on the total number of votes cast through the GRASP website at www.council.un-grasp.org/blog-competition – will receive an all-expenses paid trip to present the winning blog at the 2nd GRASP Council, which will be held November 6-8 in Paris.

The GRASP Blog competition is sponsored by GRASP, in association with Brussels Airlines.

GRASP Photo Exhibit Captures Closeness

Great apes are mankind’s closest relatives, but the struggle to successfully co-exist is a challenge on display in “Their Fates i Ours; The Humanity of Great Apes,” a photo exhibition presented by the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) from October 3-21 at the Alliance Francaise in Nairobi.

The exhibition features intimate portraits of gorillas, chimpanzees and gorillas shot by GRASP manager Dr. Johannes Refisch, during his travels through Africa and Asia.

“Their Fate is Ours” The Humanity of Great Apes” is presented in association with Volcanoes Safaris.

Great apes exist in 23 countries – many of which are Francophone - but face severe extinction threats from human encroachment, habitat destruction, illegal hunting, and disease.

Refisch's images include gorillas in Congo and Rwanda, chimpanzees in Tanzania and DR Congo, and orangutans in Indonesia and Malaysia, and exhibit both the sheer power and the delicate grace of the great apes. He also captures the close inter-play between apes and humans, which often comes at a terrible cost.

"In some areas, the great apes find themselves literally living side-by-side with humans," Refisch said. "In Rwanda, the communities farm right up to the edge of the national parks, and interaction between gorillas and local populations is becoming common. There is no longer any distance between them."

All species of great apes are classified as "endangered" and some -- such as Cross River gorillas in West Africa and Sumatran orangutans – are considered "critical."

Over 60 photos comprise the exhibit, which will later visit other sites in East Africa and Europe.

Refisch is a trained ecologist who has worked as a research scientist and conservationist for more than 20 years. His photography has been supported financially and technically by the Foto Wolff company in Germany since 1997.

The Alliance Française was founded in 1883 in Paris by renowned humanists such as Louis Pasteur and Jules Verne with the objective of promoting French culture around the world. An international network of bureaus developed, and the Alliance Francaise de Nairobi opened in 1949. Currently, 4,000 students receive French lessons through the center. For more information, visit www.afkenya.or.ke .

Volcanoes Safaris is an ecotourism business specializing in mountain gorilla safaris to Uganda and Rwanda that was created in 1997. Over the last 15 years, Volcanoes Safaris has taken over 10,000

clients on gorilla treks, and employs over 100 people globally. For more information, visit www.volcanoessafaris.com
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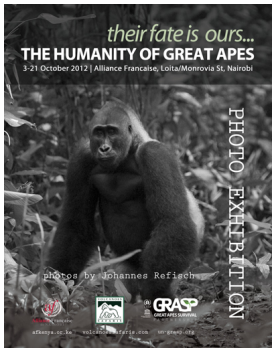
GRASP is a unique alliance comprised of partner nations, United Nations agencies, conservation organizations, and private supporters working to conserve great apes and their habitat in Africa and Asia.



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