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OVER 7000 LIBERIAN CHIMPANZEES CAN NOW BE PROTECTED

May 1, 2014 · by Jonathan Silver · in community centred conservation, Endangered Chimpanzees

A [new study](#) (which I've referenced throughout this post) found that Liberia is home to over 7000 chimpanzees, making this the second largest population in West Africa. But with the majority of Liberia's forests unprotected, and its government's plans to fuel the country's born-again economy with natural resource extraction, chimps could lose their home (pg. 1-6).



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It might come as a surprise that researchers have only recently discovered how many Liberian chimps there are, but ongoing civil wars between 1989-1997 and 2002-2003 have made it difficult to conduct proper surveys (pg.2).

During these wars, I suspect, chimpanzees were continually in grave danger due to unregulated hunting, logging, and mining.

Now that the war is over, researchers have found out roughly how many chimps there are and where they are concentrated. Unfortunately, the chimps may be no better off now than they were before, because the Liberian government wants to grow its economy using their abundant natural resources (pg. 6). Liberia, of course, needs to harvest and extract its natural resources like any other country; my hope is that they will use data collected by researchers and good strategies to manage their resources in a way that protects chimpanzees.

One good strategy for the government suggested by [the study](#) is that "inspecting [...] roadside sale posts and vehicles should help to reduce the trade of illegally hunted bushmeat species. This should be relatively easy to apply because administrative and Forestry Development Authority control posts already exist along all of the major transport routes". I especially like this strategy because it embodies [Aikido](#), that is, it acknowledges and works with already-present infrastructure towards finding a solution instead of ignoring already-present infrastructure and trying to come up with a solution from scratch.

Since the 1990s, Liberia has lost about 4% of its forest suitable for chimpanzees, which isn't much compared to Côte d'Ivoire which lost about 18% (and Ghana, which lost about 16%) (pg. 1). Let's keep Liberia from becoming the next Côte d'Ivoire. Actually, let's keep all forests containing chimps free from deforestation. Check out [this link](#) to learn more and see how you can help.

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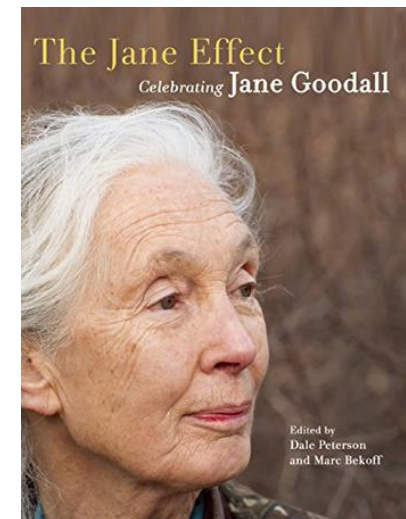
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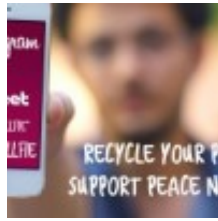
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