

Gorilla Day -- A Preview

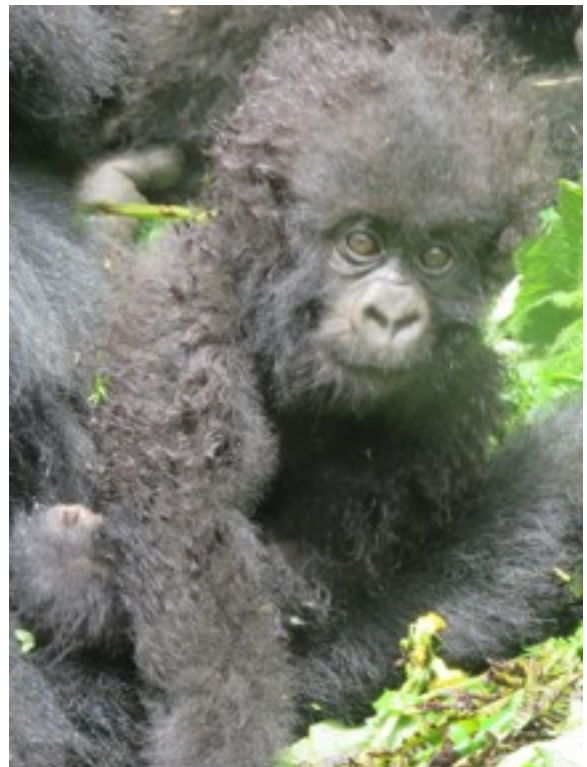
Today was our day to trek to see the Mountain Gorillas of Rwanda. I just want to send you a quick preview of some of my photos to whet your appetite as I'd like to tell you more about the day later. It was truly a privilege to spend time with these magnificent animals. Fidele, our guide (and who guided us yesterday to see the rare Golden Monkeys) was with us again today. This man fully prepared us for what we were going to see and how we should act. Lucky him -- he gets to visit the gorillas every day!



Our group of eight persons was assigned the Kwitonda Group - a family of 22 gorillas. We spent time with 12 of them.

The Great Silverback is the alpha male of the group. He kept an eye on all the females and babies, and on us.

There were several babies, ranging from just a few months to a few years. They were always surrounded by the older animals, almost encircled.





These younger ones were inquisitive, I could tell they noticed us, but did not move toward us.

We watched them eat shoots and leaves, as well as bamboo, then it was naptime and they all laid down. They liked it when the sun came out and almost all of them turned their faces to the warmth.



This female watched us intensely. The rangers kept making throat-ty sounds, which are comforting to them.

This one kept a watchful eye on two of the babies. We spent the entire hour within 6-feet of the animals. They noticed us, but didn't pay attention to us at all.



I have so much to tell you about Rwanda -- I think each of us in our group of 12 have now become ambassadors for this wonderful country. First, its people are the friendliest on earth - kind, considerate and very gentle. The scenery is stunning -- the entire country is mountainous so in the countryside we traveled on good roads with views of terraces, lakes, hills, mountains, small villages, and farms. Trust me when I say that Rwanda is more than gorillas. Vignettes to follow.