Chimpanzees 1

Chimpanzees fascinate through their similarities with humans. In the wild, they have been studied scientifically for 60 years. They show, like us humans, an enormous variety of behaviour, which can be interpreted as different cultures (e.g. use of tools) in different populations.

Distribution of Chimpanzees in Africa.

The distribution of chimpanzees stretches from Senegal in West Africa through Central Africa (north of the river Congo) to Tanzania in East Africa. Chimpanzees inhabit a variety of different habitats, which include rain forests but also woody and dry savannahs. At the beginning of the last century numbers of chimpanzees were in the 2 millions, in 1960 numbers had halved and today there are only 150,000 - 200,000 left.

Gabon and the DR Congo still have probably some large populations of 65,000-80,000 animals left, in the other 20 countries numbers are estimated to be only a few thousand if even a hundred. **The West African chimpanzees are the most endangered ones.** Estimates put them at 12,000 individuals - the trend is downwards.

Chimpanzees live in **social communities** of 10 to over 100 individuals of different ages. Their members usually roam in small groups through the woods of their communal territory of 10 to 30 sqkm.

While the males stay in their natal groups, the females often move to neighbouring communities before the birth of their first child between the age of 10 and 18 years. The time between births is between 4 and 8 years.

Chimpanzees feed mainly on plant material (e.g. fruits, leaves, and fungi) but they also eat ants, termites, birds, small hoofed mammals and monkeys.

Chimpanzees:
- **use tools and produce them**
- **co-operate during the hunt**
- **plan their actions in advance**
- **show joy and fear, grief and compassion**
- **adopt orphans**
- **have self consciousness**
- **use symbolic language**
- **show cultural behaviour**

Tool production: Vanille has removed bark from a twig to use it to fish for termites.

Tool use: Eat them before they eat you - Cacao fishing for termites.

Tool use by Perla: The hard Panda nuts can only be opened with a stone.