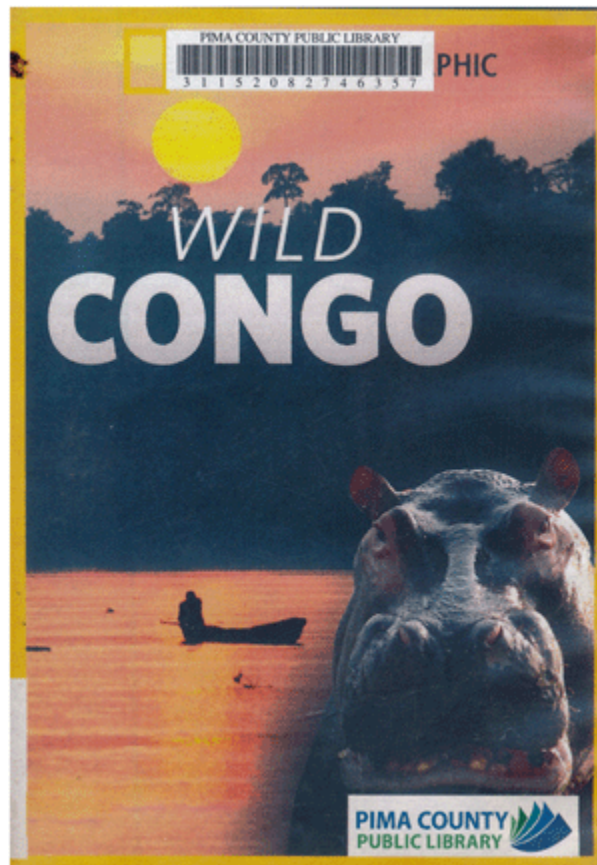


WILD CONGO: KING KONG'S LAIR – Illustrated Screenplay

by National Geographic
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KING KONG'S LAIR



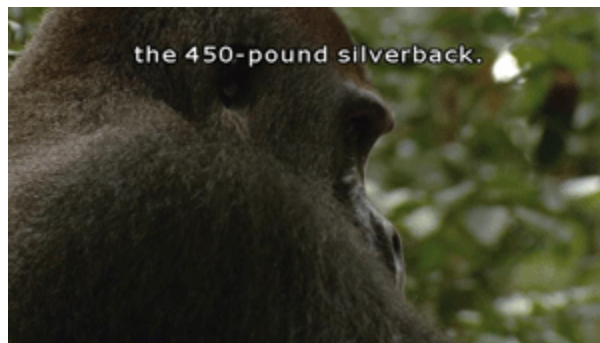
The tracks are fresh.

[Narrative] The tracks are fresh.



A leopard is close by.

A leopard is close by.
A real danger for young gorillas.
[Gorilla shrieks]
[Beating on chest]
But no leopard wants to face him,



the 450-pound silverback.

the 450-pound silverback.
[Beating on chest]

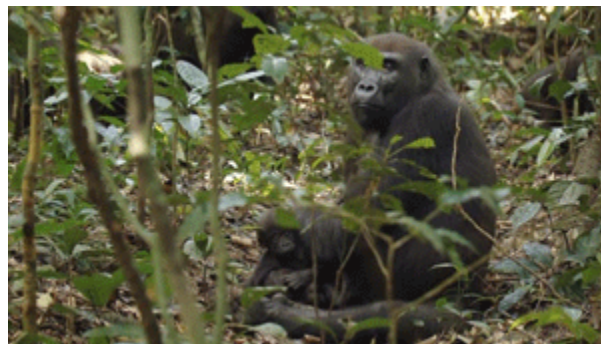


Yet this western lowland gorilla
is no thug.

Yet this western lowland gorilla is no thug.



Mukumba is a devoted family man,



doting over three adult females, five youngsters, and a baby.



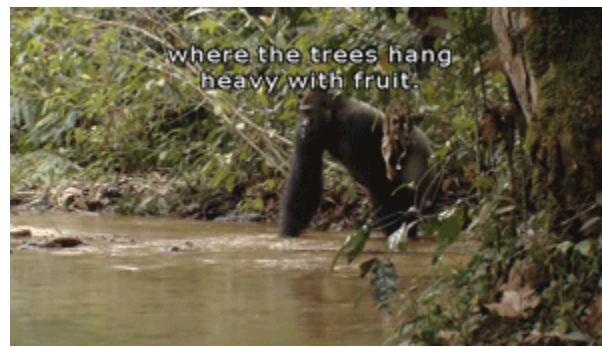
Silverback Makumba is the undisputed boss of his clan.



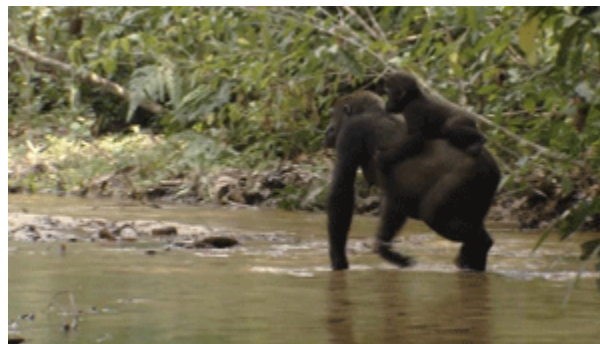
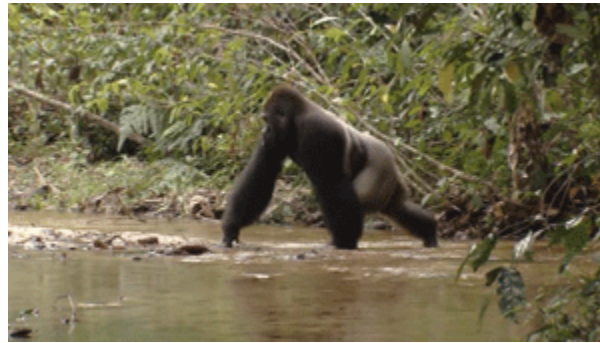
The ten of them roam a woodland region
one-third the size of Manhattan,
looking for food and finding adventure.



Today Makumba takes his family to the riverside,



where the trees hang heavy with fruit.





The baby loves to play in the water.



And that's okay,



as long as the little ones stick to the shallows.

The water's dangerous.

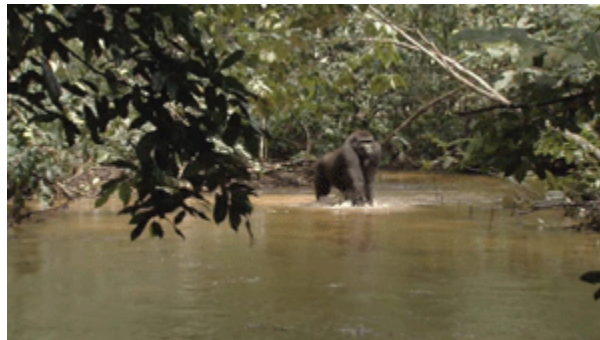
Gorillas can't swim.



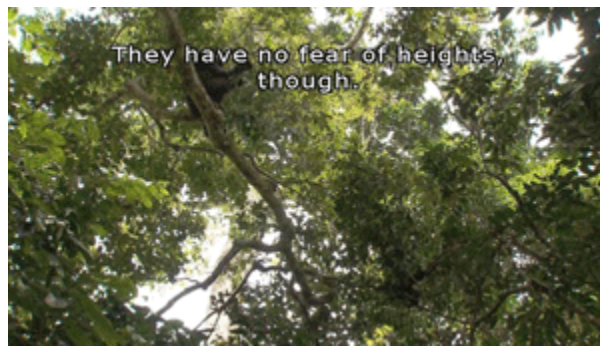
That's why western lowland gorillas live
only north of the Congo River ---



they can't make it across to the south bank.

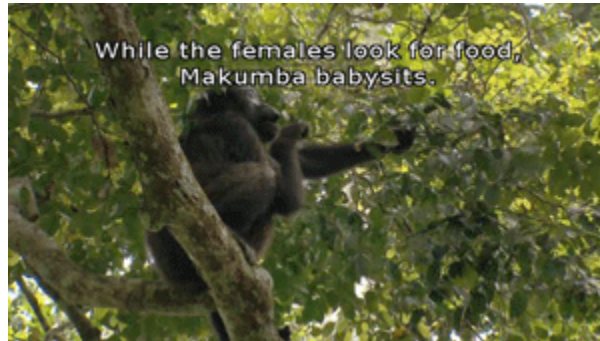


The gorillas never go in past their waist.



They have no fear of heights,
though.

They have no fear of heights, though.



While the females look for food,
Makumba babysits.

While the females look for food, Makumba babysits.

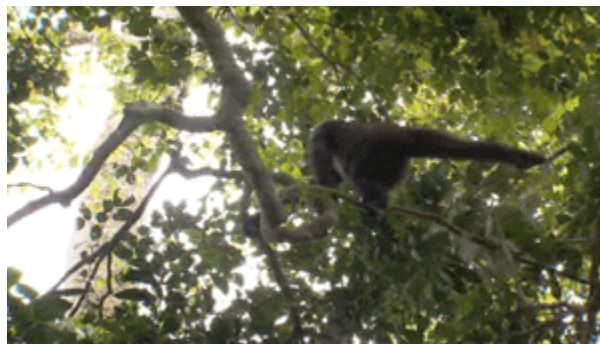


Above him, his youngest mate
finds some fruit.

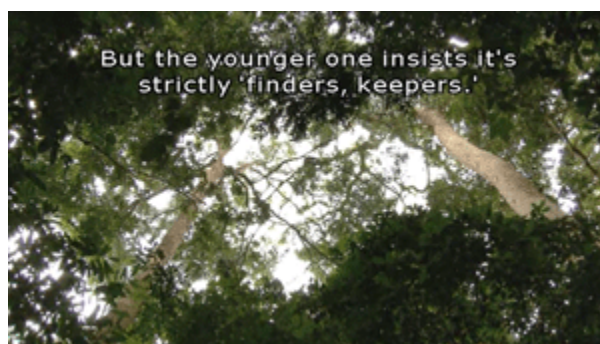
Above him, his youngest mate finds some fruit.



And the older one wants a piece of the action.



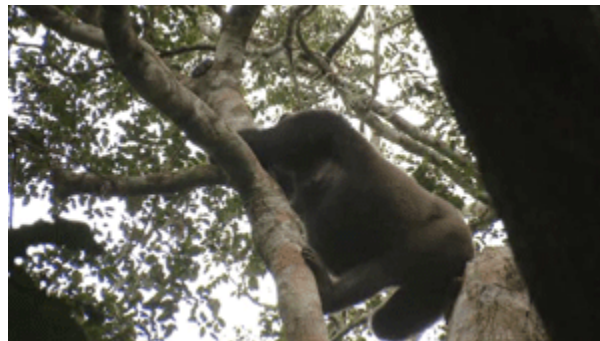
[Barking]



But the younger one insists it's strictly finders, keepers.



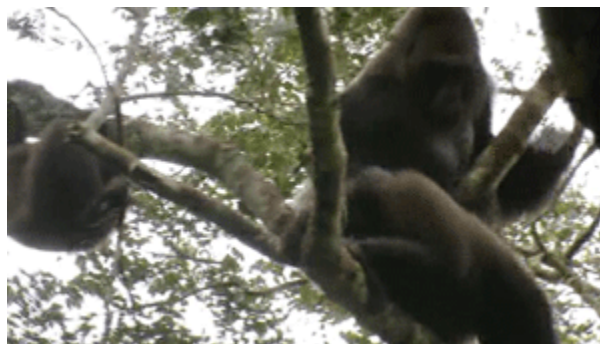
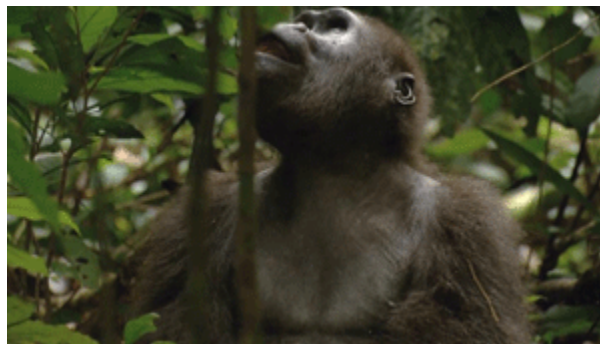
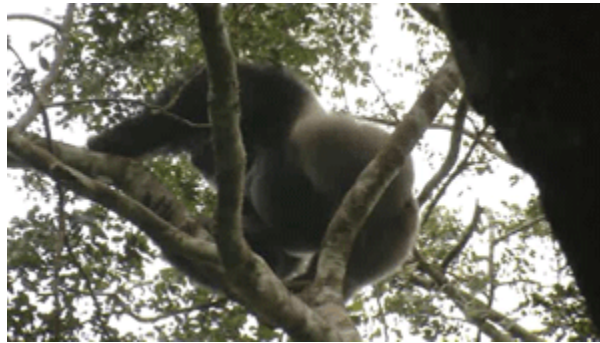
The situation starts to turn ugly.

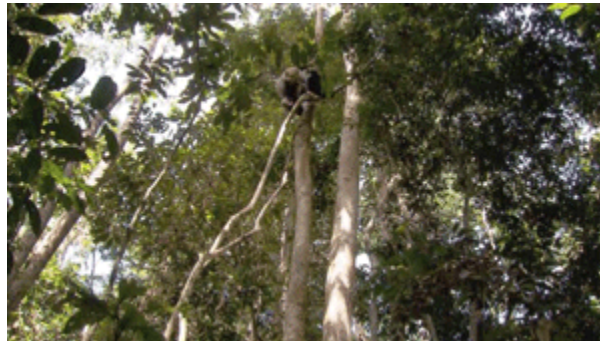


That's Makumba's cue to step in and break it up.



[Barking]





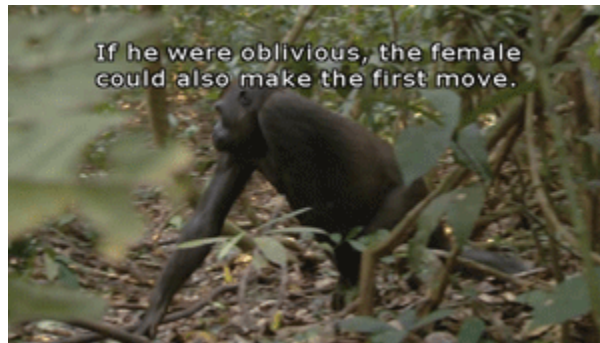
Playing referee to multiple mates can't be easy.



But the chief rules with a gentle hand,
and he knows how to treat a lady ...



... especially when he realizes she's fertile.



If he were oblivious, the female could also make the first move.

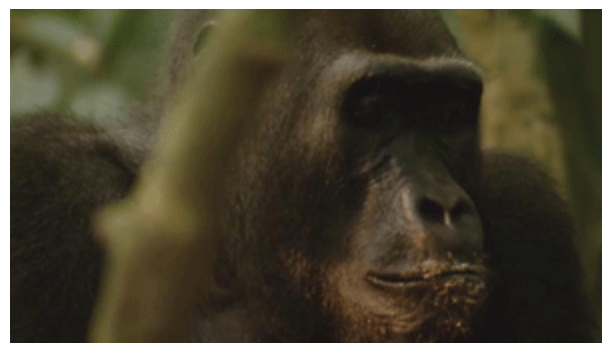
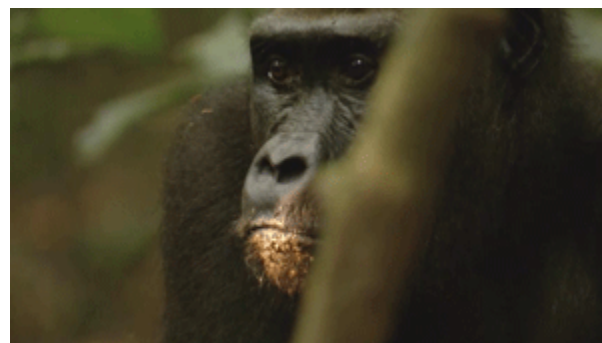
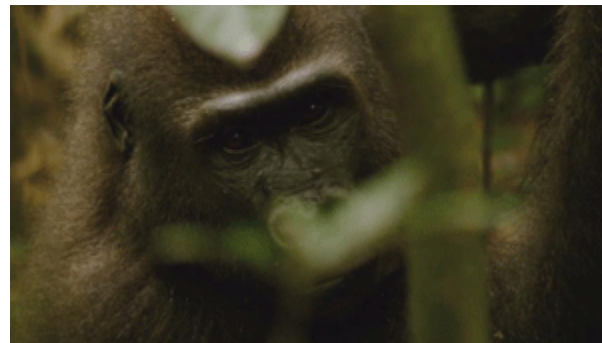


Either way, nature takes its course.





[Low grunting]





It's good to be king.



[Makumba lies down]



The Mrs., meanwhile,
has another hankering...

The Mrs., meanwhile, has another hankering ...



for termites.

for termites.





The post-coital confection really hits the spot.



Her daughter comes to see what's up.



She's never seen a snack that walks.



Now she can play with her food.
Gorillas rely on their agile fingers; they don't use tools.
And termites are about the biggest game gorillas hunt.



They mainly eat leaves, fruit and seeds.
Makumba heads out in search of his supper.



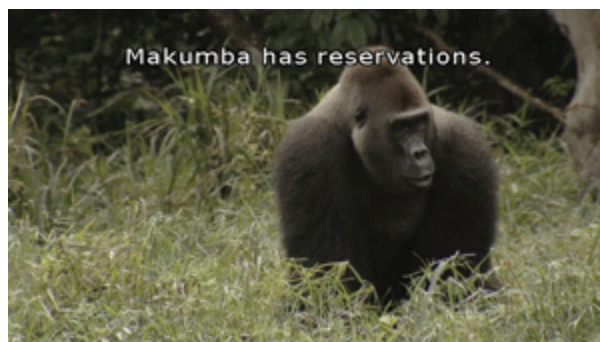
Sometimes the best dining spot lies outside the neighborhood.
Today he finds a small clearing ...



with a big obstacle ...



forest elephants.



Makumba has reservations.



Elephants can charge if they feel threatened,



and he takes no chances with his family.



Now the family can enjoy their salad ...



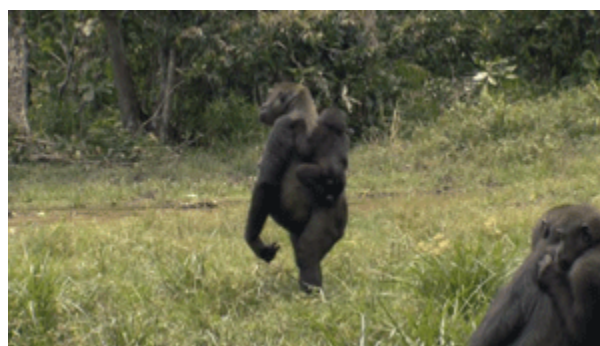
[Rustling]



... until a sudden sound disrupts the picnic.



It might be the leopard.



The little ones grab their moms.



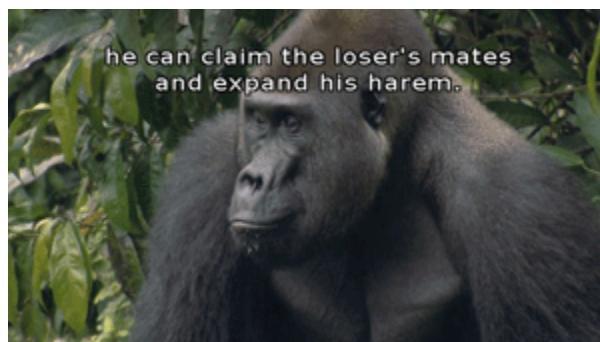
Another silverback!



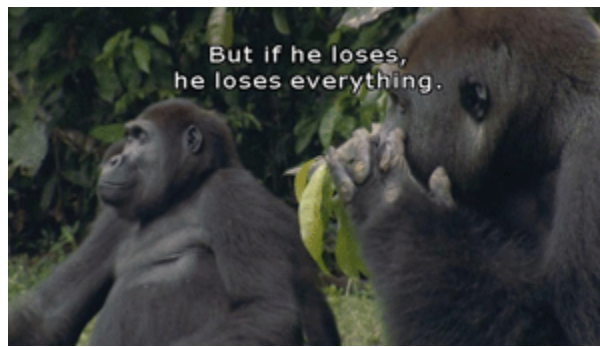
This could mean all-out war.



Makumba has to make a tough decision.
If he faces off against his opponent and wins,

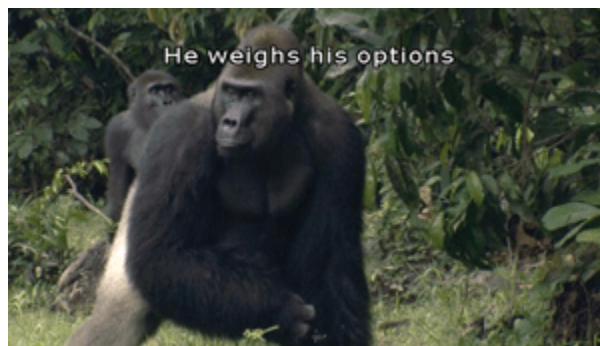


he can claim the loser's mates and expand his harem.



But if he loses,
he loses everything.

But if he loses, he loses everything.



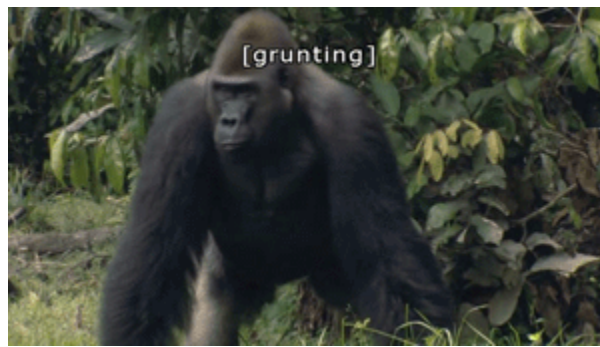
He weighs his options

He weighs his options

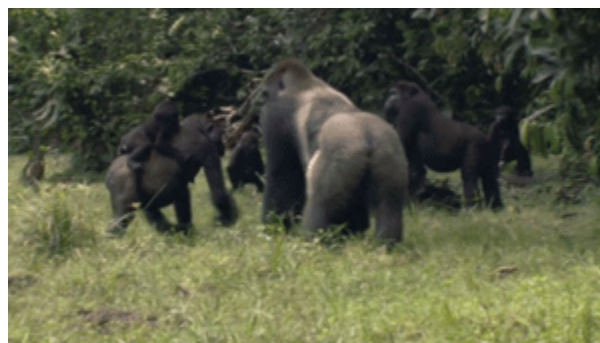


before calling his clan back.

before calling his clan back.



[Grunting]



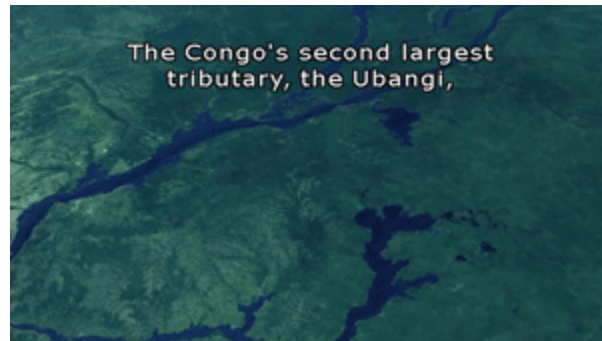
Turns out King Kong is a lover, not a fighter.



Western lowland gorillas live in the very heart of Africa,
including the Democratic Republic of Congo,|
named for the Congo River,



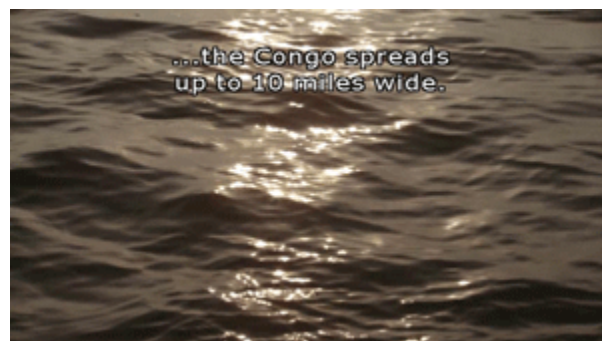
which cuts through it on its way to the Atlantic.



The Congo's second largest tributary, the Ubangi,
flows from the north,



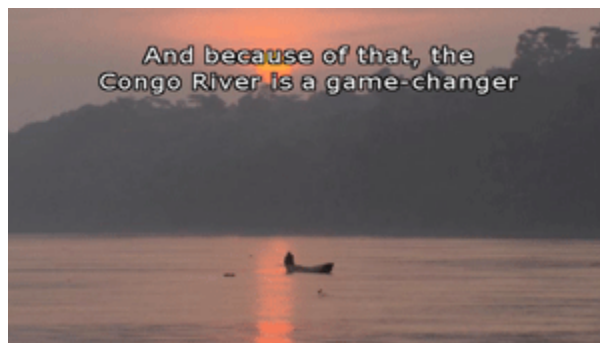
and here ...



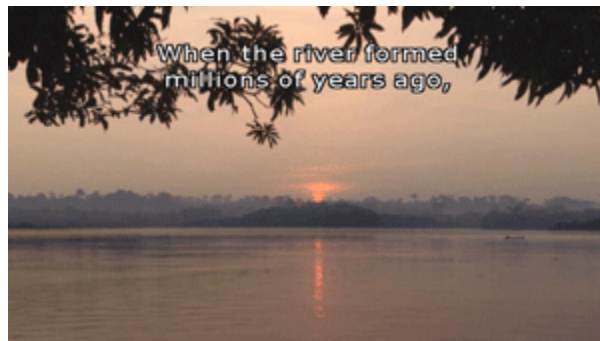
... the Congo spreads up to 10 miles wide.



It acts like a giant moat,
blocking all but the strongest fliers and swimmers
from crossing central Africa.



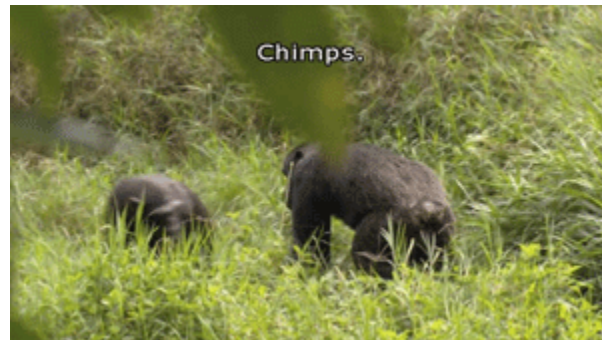
And because of that, the Congo River is a game-changer
in the evolution of the great apes.



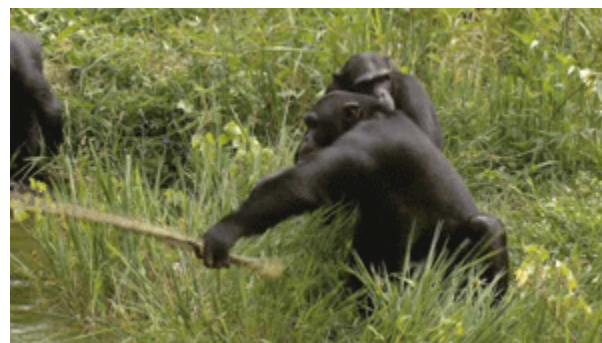
When the river formed millions of years ago,
it pushed our closest living relatives to the north side.

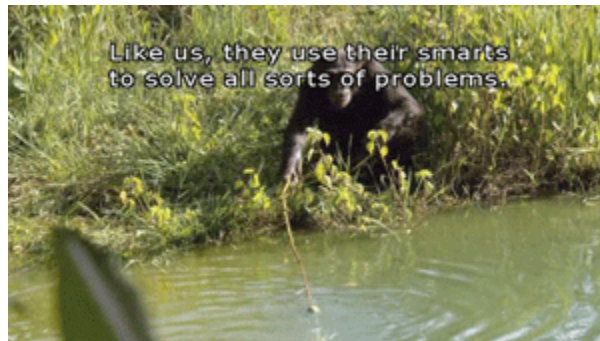


[Distant howling]
[Shrieking]



Chimps.

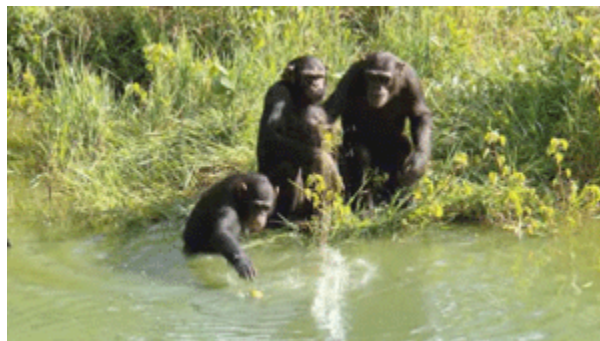




Like us, they use their smarts to solve all sorts of problems.



Chimps also use tools.



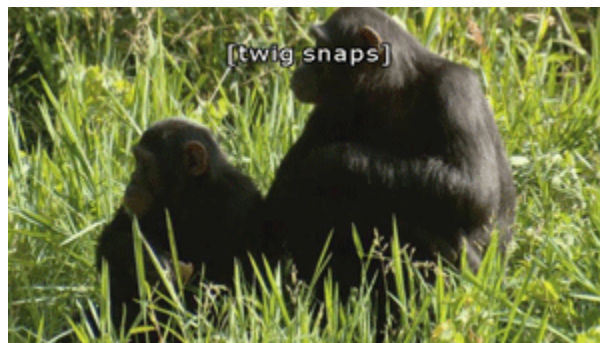
A little ingenuity gives them access



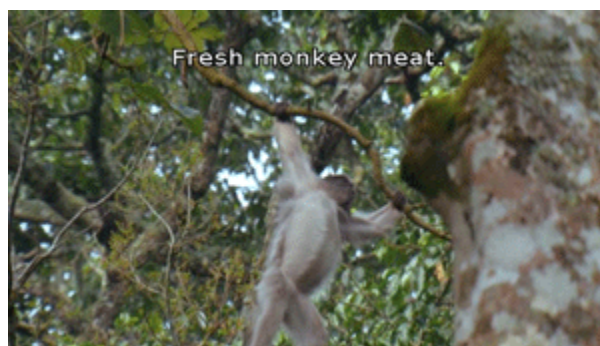
to almost any food source.



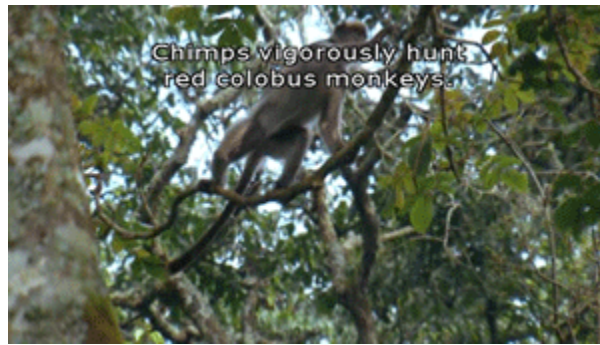
But there's one food they go bananas for ...



[Twig snaps]



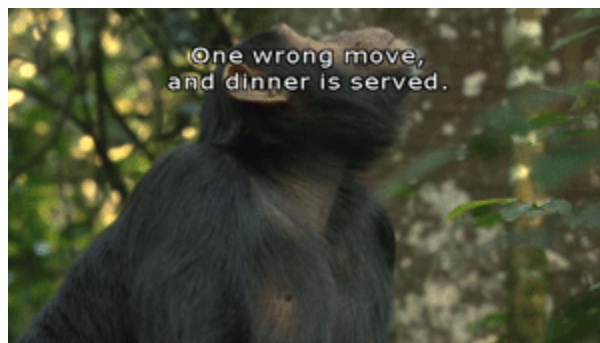
Fresh monkey meat.



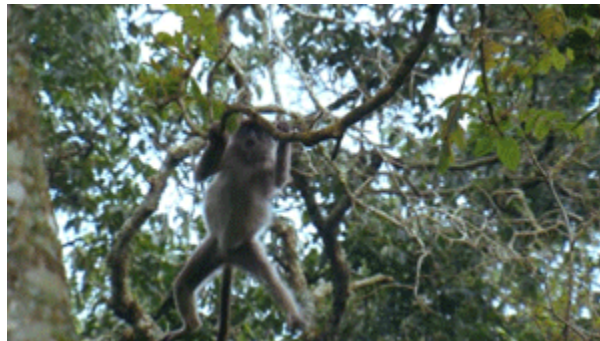
Chimps vigorously hunt red colobus monkeys.



They monitor every monkey jump – a highwire act without a net.



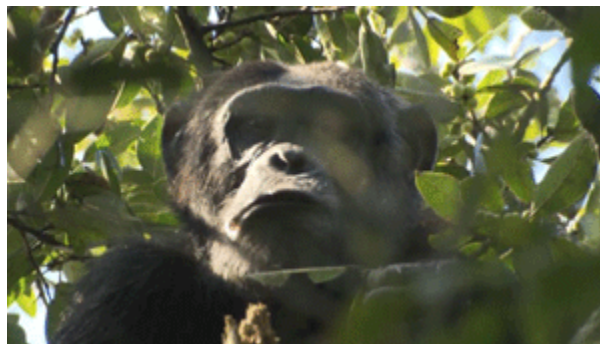
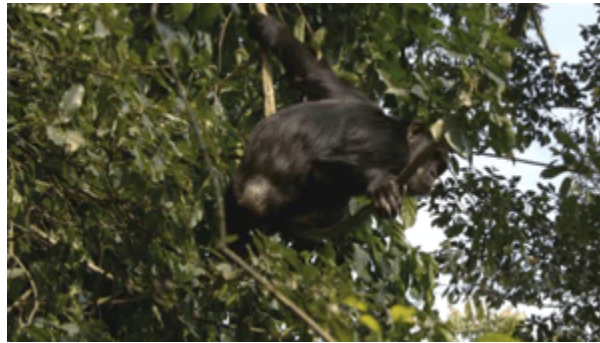
One wrong move, and dinner is served.



Chimps live by a strict code, an organized jungle-land gang,
smarter and often meaner than anyone else around.



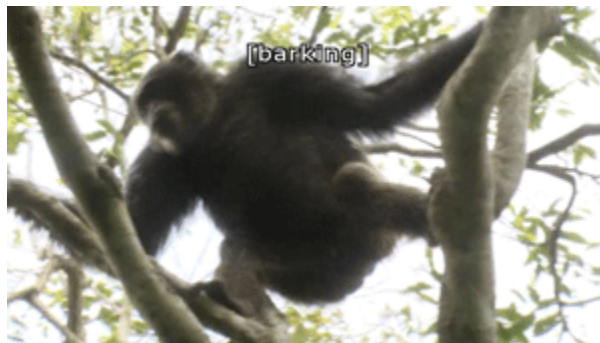
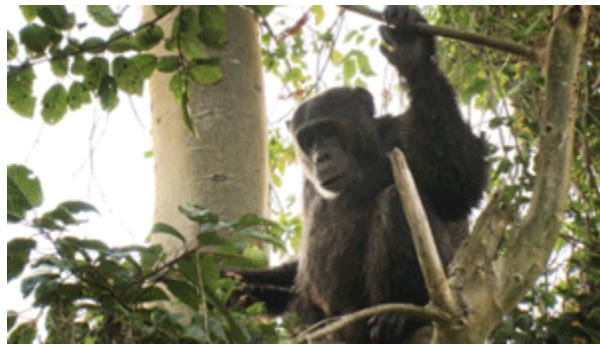
Lanjo, the dominant male, gets to eat first.



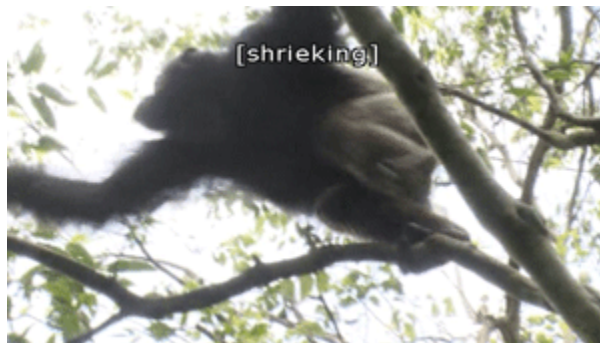
As long as everyone keeps to his or her place, life is grand.
But this mother chimp dares to scoop the rest of her clan



on these fresh blossoms.



[Barking]
Lanjo is one peeved primate.



[Shrieking]



He won't tolerate
such disobedience,

He won't tolerate such disobedience,



especially from a female.

especially from a female.



She forgot her place in the
rigid chimp family hierarchy,

She forgot her place in the rigid chimp family hierarchy,



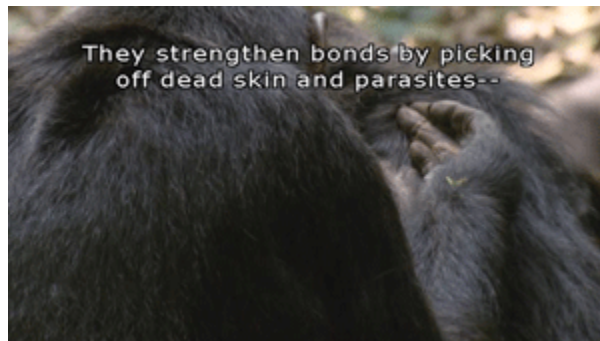
which is run like an old boys' club.



The head of the clan leads a troop of lower adult males.
Females of any age and males younger than 15
rank lowest of all.



Among the males, politics rules the day.
They form alliances with one another to stay in favor,
rise in the ranks, or even grab control of the clan.



They strengthen bonds by picking off dead skin and parasites –



the chimp version of golf.



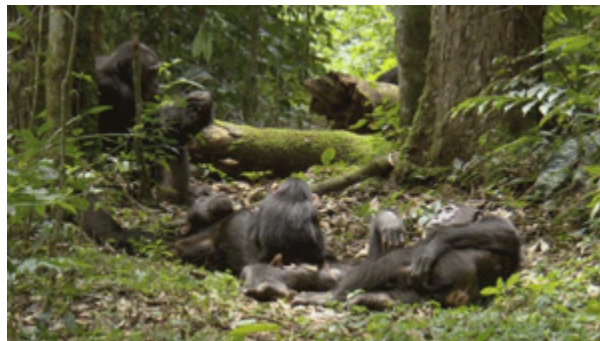
Someday, when the alpha male grows too old and weak to lead,
one of these males will leverage his alliances to take his place.



These two, left out of the group,



have no future in chimp politics.



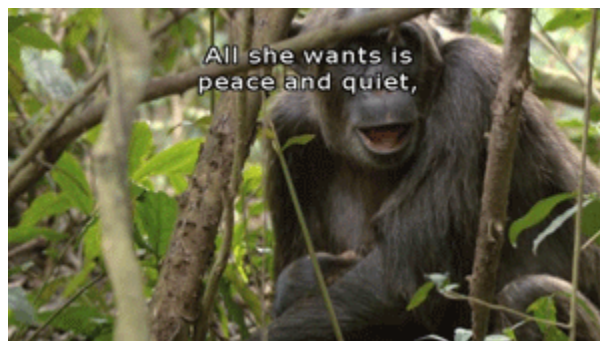
Still, they have it better than the females.
For them, it's every girl for herself
against the aggressive males.



This mother hides in the forest with her baby



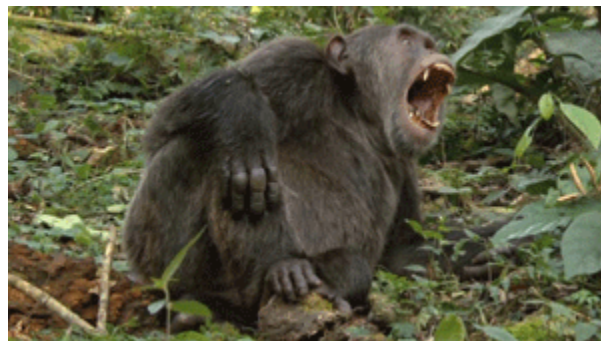
to avoid them hassling her.



All she wants is peace and quiet,
though here's the dilemma ...



Her absence might anger Lanjo.





But it's too late.
The leader, secure in his alliances,



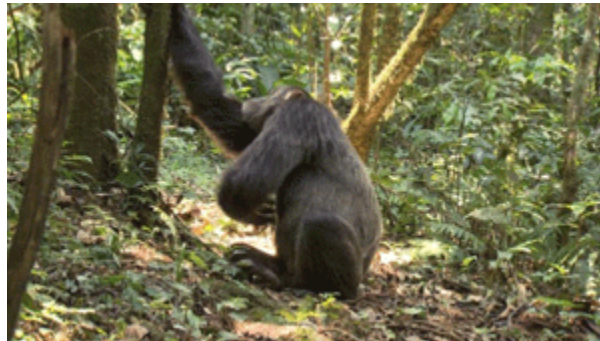
is itching to dominate the wandering female.



His male subordinates' grooming session
gets interrupted by a subtle noise.



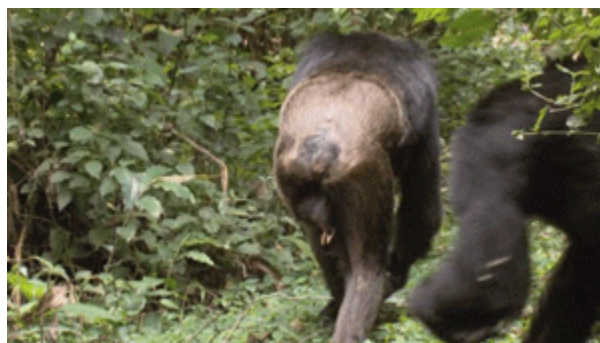
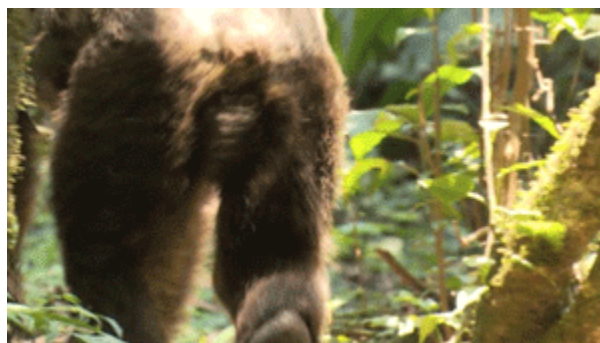
[Scratching]



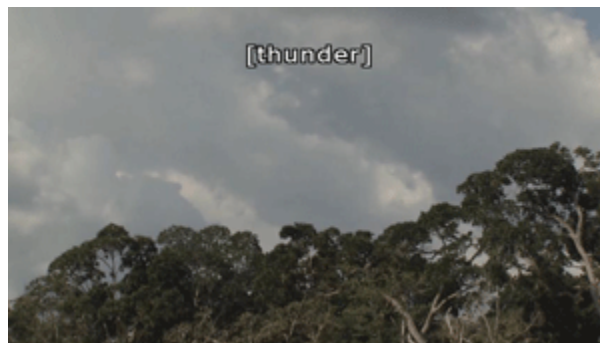
Scratching is their secret signal.



Lanjo calls his posse.



The search is on.



[Thunder]



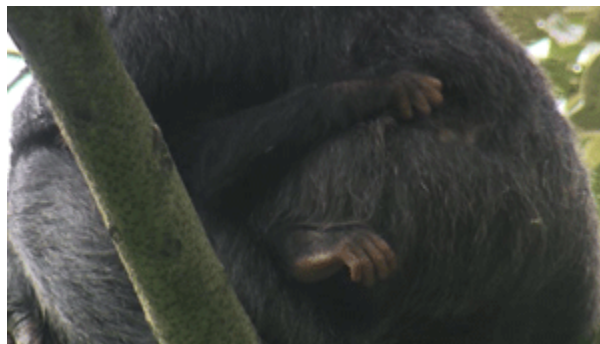
A storm blows in, complicating the patrol by masking the sound



of anything moving through the forest.



The female hunkers down,



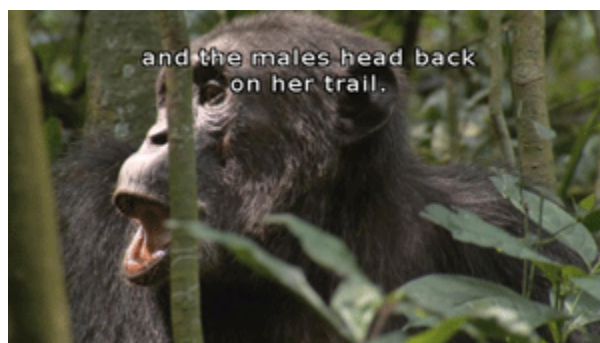
shielding her baby with her body.



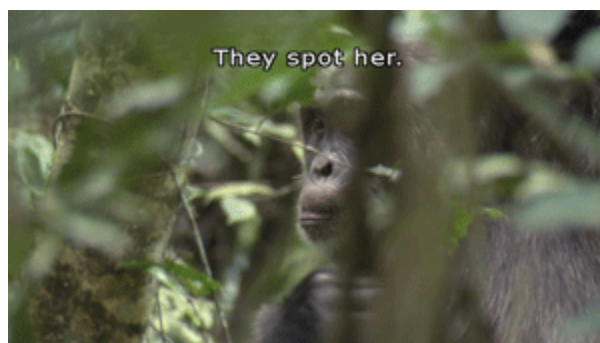
[Thunder]



Hours later the storm has passed



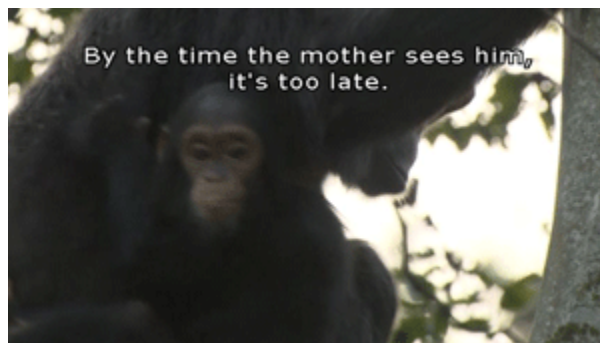
and the males head back on her trail.



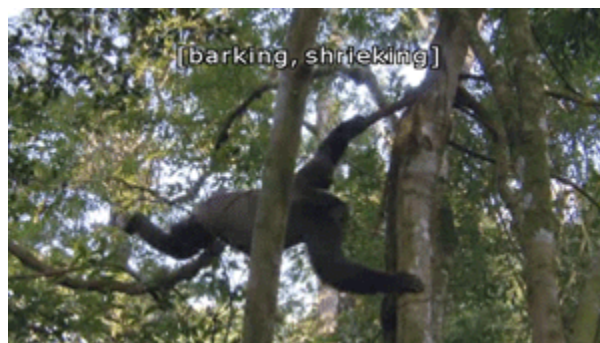
They spot her.



A henchman sneaks up under the watchful eye of the leader.



By the time the mother sees him, it's too late.



[Barking, shrieking]



The baby is lost, but it can save itself.



Lanjo goes after the female.



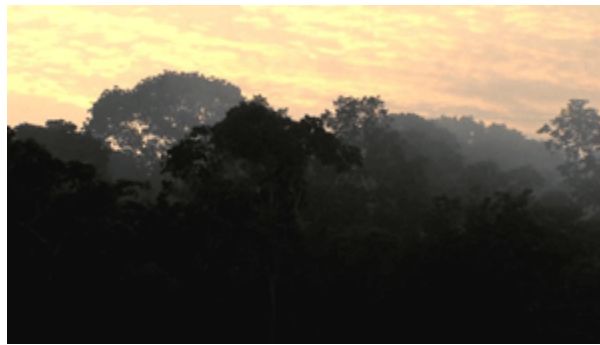
She'll get her punishment.

Male chimpanzees can be highly aggressive toward female group members, even using branches as clubs to beat them.

-- Chimps hold clues to roots of domestic violence, by Roger Highfield

The battle of the sexes is supercharged in the chimpanzee world. Males charge at females, rip out their hair and kick, slap or beat them.

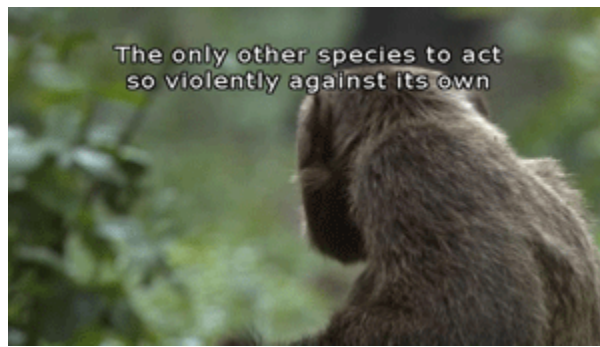
-- Male Sexual Aggression: What Chimps Can Reveal About People, by Tia Ghose



When a male chimp is about 15 years old,



he'll start a lifetime of bossing and brutalizing females.



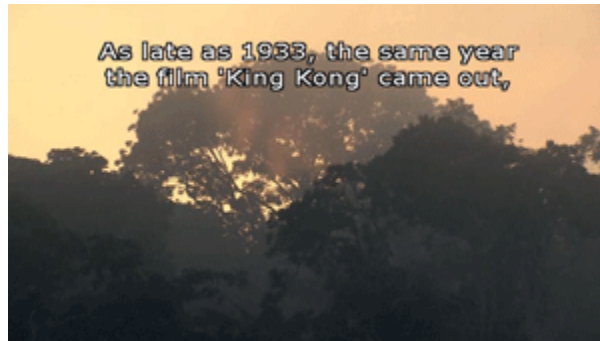
The only other species to act
so violently against its own

The only other species to act so violently against its own



is humans.

is humans.



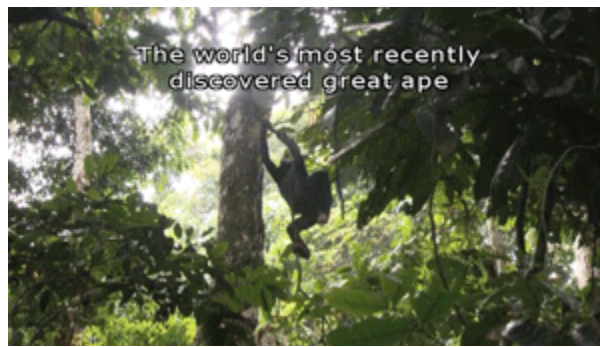
As late as 1933, the same year
the film 'King Kong' came out,

As late as 1933, the same year the film “King Kong” came out,
scientists named a new and distinct species
of great ape here.

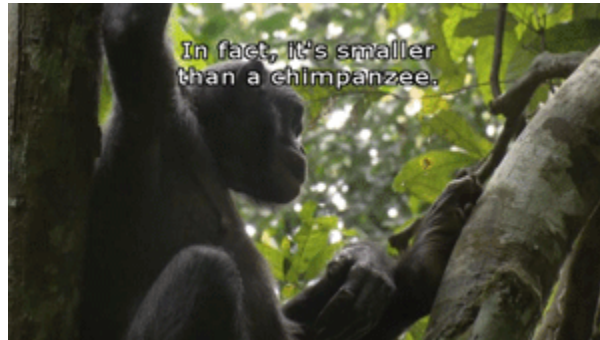


But most of us have still
never heard of it.

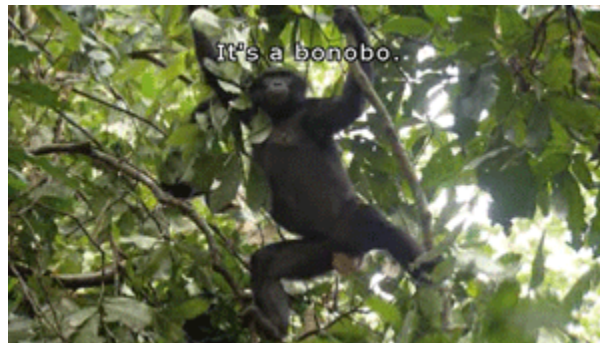
But most of us have still never heard of it.



The world's most recently discovered great ape
is no King Kong.



In fact, it's smaller than a chimpanzee.

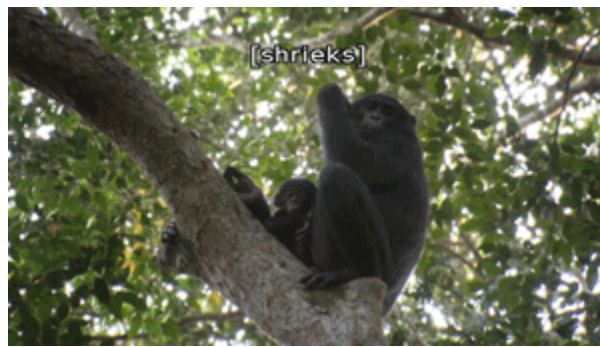


It's a bonobo.

While chimps hang out strictly north of the Congo River,
bonobos only swing in the south.



And they couldn't be more different.



[Shrieks]



Bonobos take orders from a loose sisterhood.



Girl power!



The alpha female looks after her five-year-old son,



her young prince.
He's mostly independent,
which is good, because he's about to be displaced.

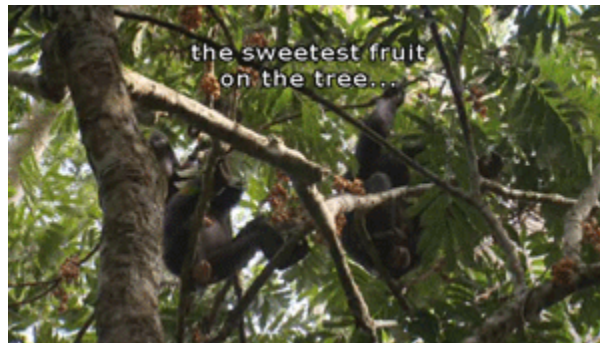


His newborn little sister will win most of mom's attention.



Some members of the group enjoy

Some members of the group enjoy

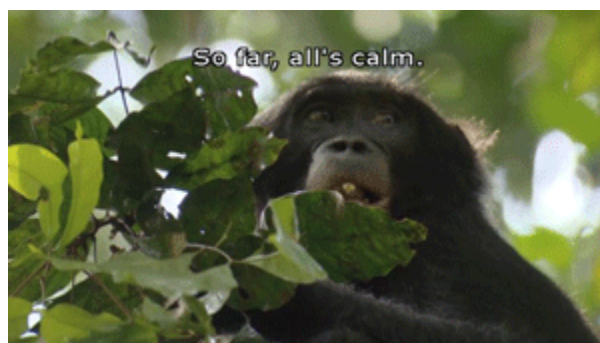


the sweetest fruit
on the tree...

the sweetest fruit on the tree ...



... putting the others in a sour mood.



So far, all's calm.

So far, all's calm.



[Shrieks]

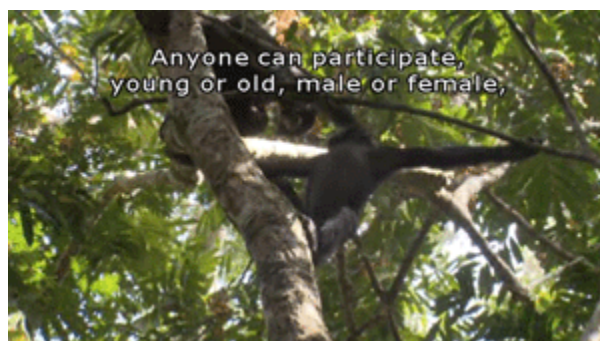
Until another hungry group of bonobos approaches.
If this were the chimp side of the river, that would mean war.



But bonobos don't settle differences by fighting.



The way to make peace is simple – make love.
Bonobos are one of the few animals who use sex
for more than baby-making.
Right now it's soothing social conflicts.

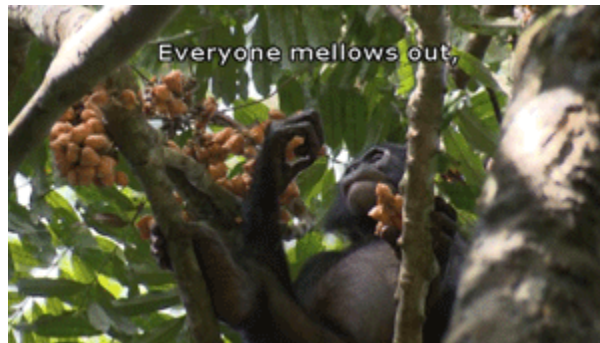


Anyone can participate, young or old, male or female,
in almost every combination.



Jungle love does the trick.

Jungle love does the trick.



Everyone mellows out,

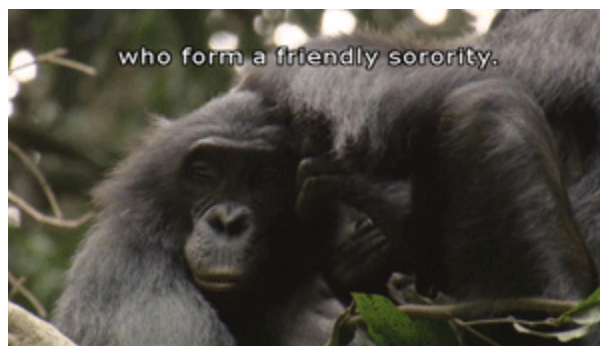
Everyone mellows out,



and even the newcomers
get to enjoy some fruit.

and even the newcomers get to enjoy some fruit.

Bonobos rarely resort to violence,
but the males have a shorter fuse than the females,



who form a friendly sorority.

who form a friendly sorority.



The females use sex not only to keep the peace,



but also to win popularity contests among the other girls.



The prince will come to realize he doesn't have much of a say
in this girls' world.

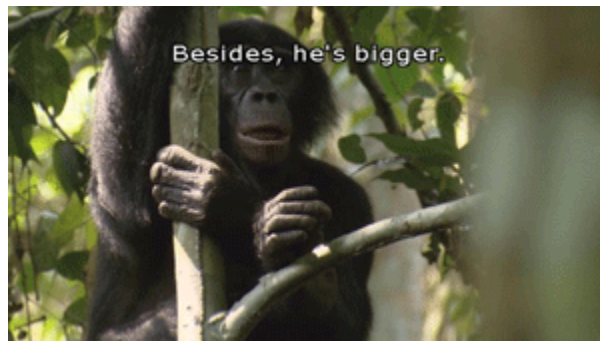


This assertive male already
understands he has no status.

This assertive male already understands he has no status.



The young prince outranks him.
But the older fellow has ambition.

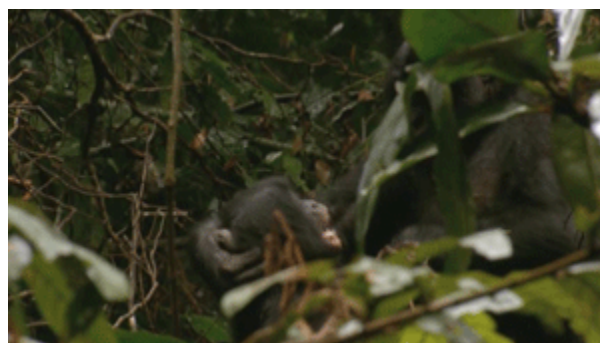
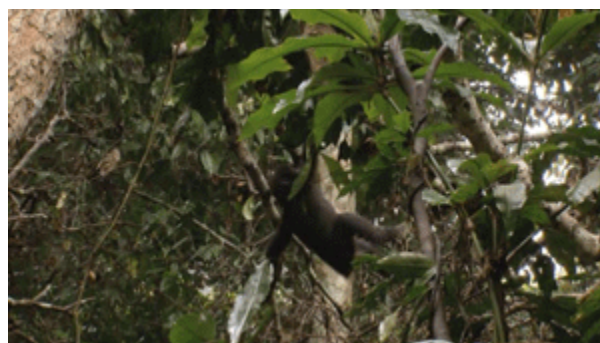
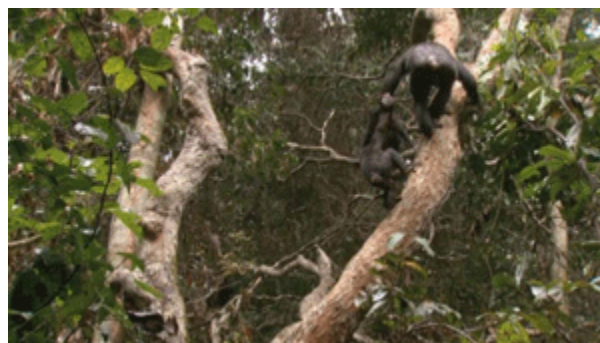
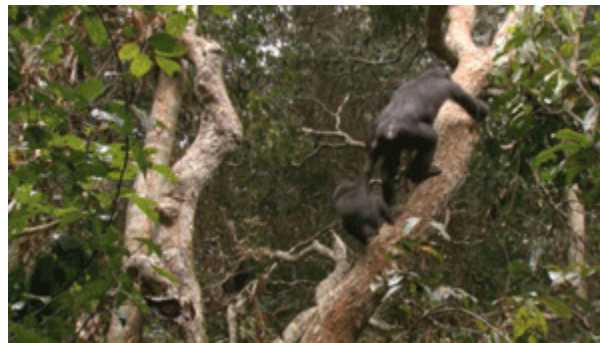


Besides, he's bigger.

Besides, he's bigger.
Refusing to settle, sensing an opportunity,
he makes a bold grab for power.



[Shrieking]



The uppity ape won't stop bullying the young prince.



The leader frowns on
the power play,

The leader frowns on the power play,



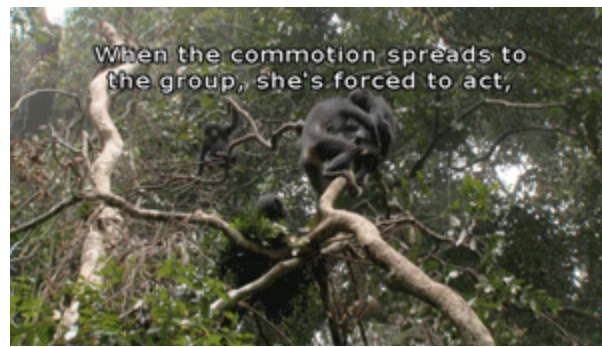
but chooses to wait and see.

but chooses to wait and see.

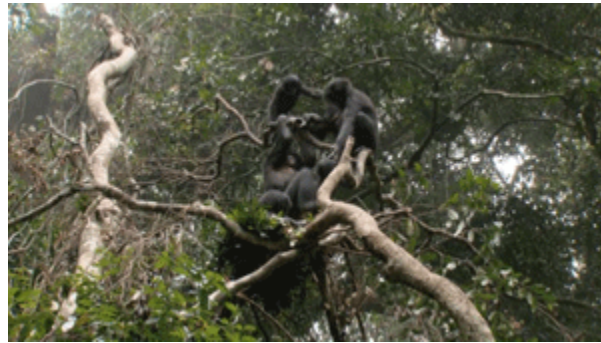


[shrieking]

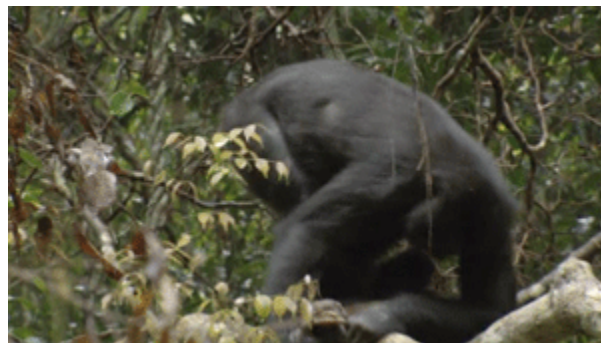
[Shrieking]



When the commotion spreads to the group, she's forced to act,

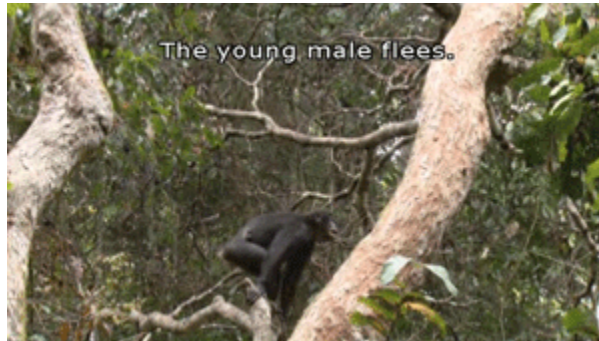


calming the younger ones, bonobo style.





But it doesn't work.



The young male flees.

The young male flees.



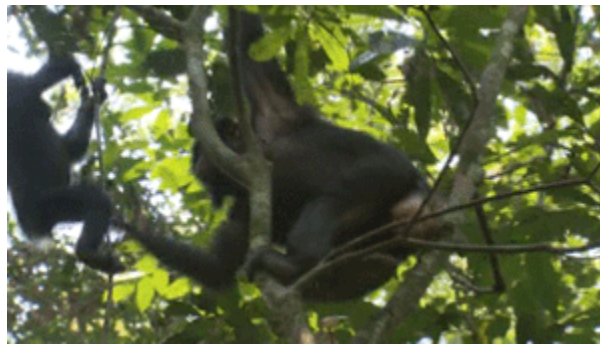
The leader pursues-

The leader pursues ...
not to punish him, but to settle the dispute
the only way she knows how.

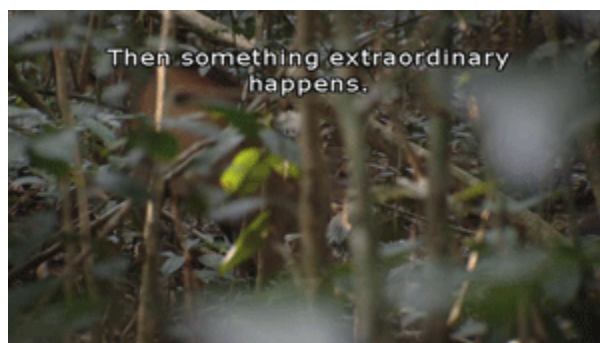


Her gentle dedication
to keeping order

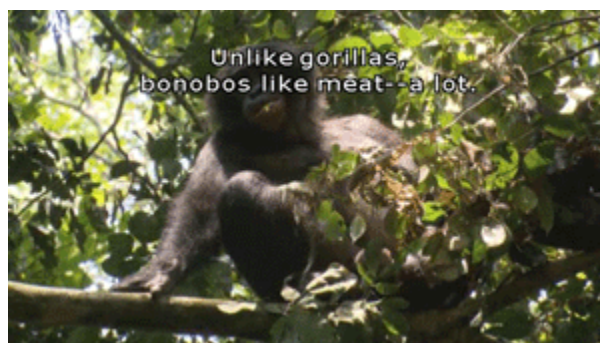
Her gentle dedication to keeping order
is the secret to her success.



And it rubs off on the rest of her group.



Then something extraordinary happens.



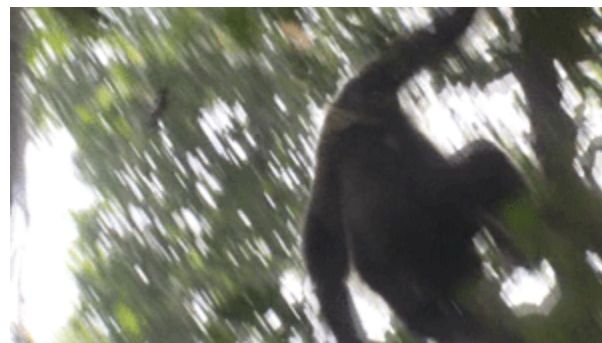
Unlike gorillas, bonobos like meat – a lot.
A rabbit-sized antelope would hit the spot.



A female sneaks up on it.



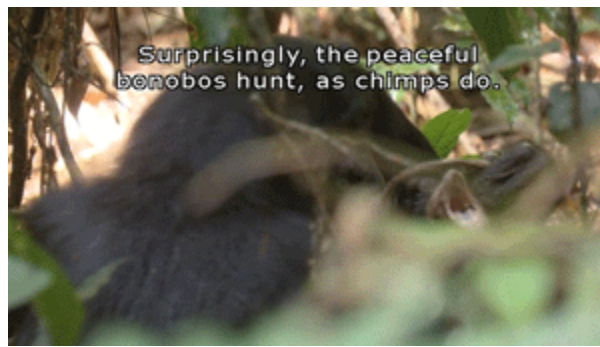
[Shrieking]



[antelope wails]



[Antelope wails]



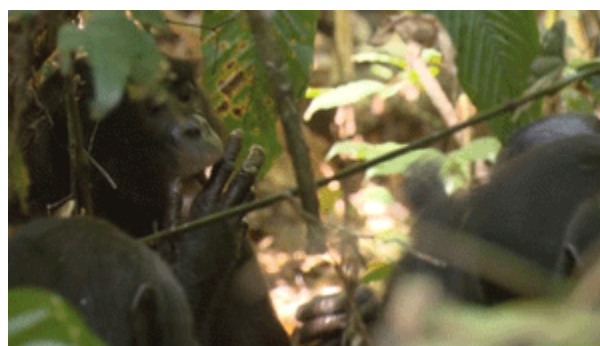
Surprisingly, the peaceful bonobos hunt, as chimps do.



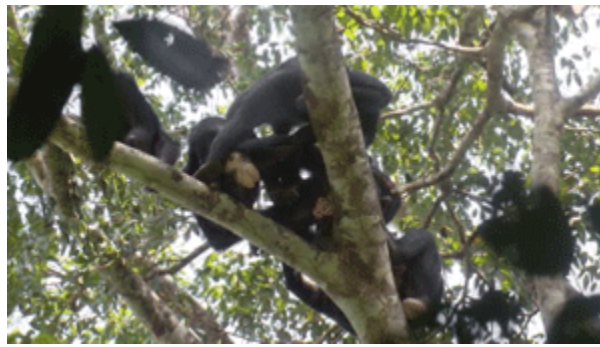
Hardly anyone's filmed it before.



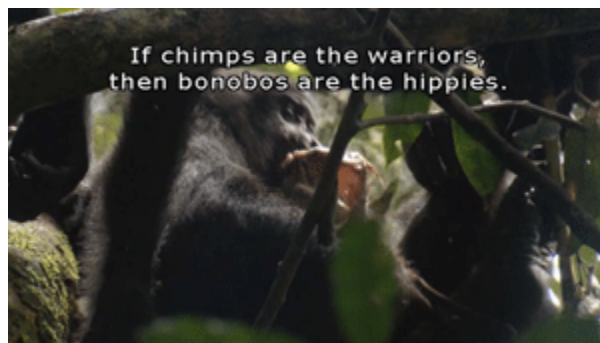
Bonobos divvy up their kill.



No one goes hungry or has to fight for a share.



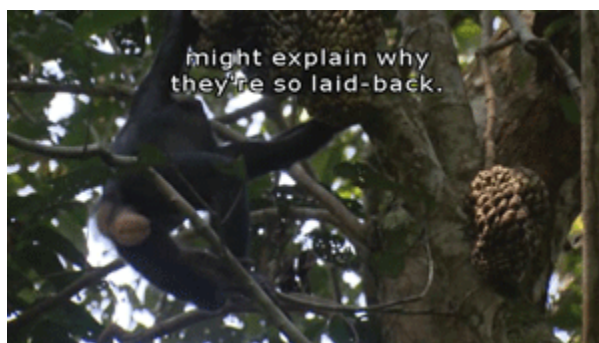
Bonobo females rely on cooperation, not competition, to keep the family fit and healthy.



If chimps are the warriors, then bonobos are the hippies.



Their location along the Congo over the last million years



might explain why they're so laid-back



The rain forest south of the Congo provides bonobos



with all the food they could want
and no gorillas to share it with.
When the pickings are easy, there's no need to compete.

THE END