

Project 1

Pan African Sanctuary Alliance



Why fund sanctuaries and why fund this organisation?

Bushmeat 'orphans' are a by-product of the bushmeat trade. When the adult animals are killed for food, hunters can make extra profit if they keep the baby animals alive and sell them as pets. There are many bushmeat orphans across Africa – gorillas, chimpanzees and monkeys whose families have been killed for meat. In Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon, for instance, there are around 100 – 200 orphaned chimps that are kept as pets, often in appalling conditions, and new babies arrive in the city frequently

Many of the animals are physically damaged. Also, with the great apes particularly, there is often clear psychological damage, due to the conditions they have been kept in and/or because they witnessed the slaughter of their families.

Sanctuaries across Africa are rescue centres for these bushmeat orphans. The only alternatives routes to sanctuary care for these animals are return to the wild or euthanasia. Euthanasia is a drastic option, especially when endangered species are involved. Return to the wild is often unfeasible, at least before the animals have the relevant veterinary care they may require, are rehabilitated and suitable habitat is identified for their release. When a new animal is delivered to a sanctuary, international protocols (IUCN guidelines) are followed to determine which route is best for that individual animal.

PASA represents twelve sanctuaries (the majority of African sanctuaries) and its membership is likely to grow further. Members include:

- Chimpanzee Conservation Centre, Guinea
- David Graybeard, South Africa
- HELP International, Congo
- Kitwe Point, Tanzania
- Limbe Wildlife Centre, Cameroon
- Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary, Uganda
- Pandrillus, Nigeria
- Sanaga-Yong Chimpanzee Rescue Centre, Cameroon
- Sweetwaters, Kenya
- Tacaguma, Sierra Leone
- Yaounde Zoo, Mefou National Park, Cameroon

These sanctuaries operate on low incomes, in countries that are often politically instable and with damaged animals that other institutions won't or can't work with.

PASA provides a network through which African sanctuaries can join forces to lobby, fundraise, exchange information and promote their work.

The alliance also provides the means through which international standards can be formulated, such as veterinary and housing protocols, to ensure as high as possible a standard of work is achieved by all sanctuaries.

How are funds spent at the sanctuaries?

Money is needed for food, housing, staff and veterinary care. It costs about Euro 300 to feed one chimp for one year, and as chimps are long-lived it is essential that long-term funding is provided.

The basic care of the animals is an enormous cost in itself, but many sanctuaries take an holistic approach and are involved in other areas of work, for example:

- Education work both to visitors and local communities
- Research into the bushmeat trade and species affected by the trade
- Setting up protected areas for the animals' release

This highly important work requires funding too.

How was PASA formed?

At a Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) workshop in May 2000, 12 African sanctuaries decided to form an alliance. Norman Rosen (CBSG) and Michael Wamithi (IFAW) were elected as co-chairpersons.

What has PASA achieved during its first year?

- The production of an action plan;
- Formation of fundraising and lobbying committees;
- A website has been produced.

What immediate plans are there for the organisation?

PASA will reconvene in May 2001 to address a number of important issues that include:

- Habitat protection
- Financial and political support
- Education to local communities and governments
- Financial support for all sanctuaries
- Site and release issues

In addition to the twelve founding members there will be five newly attending sanctuaries.