

KEEPING OUR COUSINS SAFE

TOURISTS have been banned from seeing gorillas in the African country of Gabon, in case they pass on the coronavirus to them.

Gorillas are one of our closest relatives and can suffer from the same diseases as humans. There are concerns that the coronavirus could spread to gorillas and the other great apes.

To protect the gorillas, Gabon has banned people from visiting its parks. It has reason to be cautious. In 1995, a virus called Ebola spread from humans to gorillas and killed 90% of the gorillas in one area of the country.

An expert from the park said: "Viruses that affect humans are easily transmitted [given] to great apes because the two species are so closely related."

It's a difficult decision because the country relies on money from tourists to pay for the rangers and other park staff that protect the gorillas. There are also fears that with fewer people around, poaching may increase.

The great apes

There are five kinds of great apes: gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobo, orangutans and humans.



Questions on: 'Keeping our cousins safe'

1) This report has news from which African country?

- Ghana
- The Gambia
- Gabon

2) Find the names of two viruses mentioned in the news story.

- 1:
- 2:

3) Why have tourists been banned from going to see gorillas in this country?

4) What happened in Gabon in 1995?

5) Match the word used in the story to the correct definition.

Cautious

To pass something on

Transmit

A particular kind of plant or animal

Species

Not allowed

Banned

To be careful and avoid risk

6) Why is it easy for gorillas to catch human diseases?

7) Which group of animals do humans and gorillas belong to?

8) Why would it be terrible news if the coronavirus spread to other great apes? Use your own knowledge of these animals.