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JANE GOODALL'S LONG TERM WILD CHIMPANZEE STUDY MARKS 55TH ANNIVERSARY

*Research continues over five decades after famous primatologist first arrived in what is now
Gombe National Park.*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 13, 2015) – It was 55 years ago when Jane Goodall first walked into the forests of what was then the Gombe Stream Chimpanzee Reserve at age 26 with nothing more than a notepad, a pair of binoculars and an insatiable dream of living in Africa and observing wildlife firsthand. In time, with these early observational tools, Jane was able to gain the shy chimpanzees' trust and study them up close. Little did she know in 1960 that, 55 years later, in what is now Gombe National Park in Tanzania, the study she started would become the longest running wild chimpanzee study that now generations of new researchers are continuing, taking it even farther, into the world of wild chimpanzee conservation.

In these last 55 years, more than 165 thousand hours of data have been collected through observations of more than 320 named chimpanzees in the park. These data have yielded more than 430 academic papers and theses and supported 39 graduate students in either doctoral- or masters-level studies. And to think, it all began with Jane Goodall's first adventure into the world of Gombe's chimpanzees.

After 55 years of research with these chimpanzees, researchers have witnessed and recorded entire lifespans of individuals in Gombe. These chimpanzees have been observed from infancy to adulthood and in some cases even old age and death. These observations have shown us so much about chimpanzees' complex social lives, personalities and intelligence. From Jane Goodall's first discovery of chimpanzees using tools to "fish" for termites, to maternal care behavior, to territoriality, hunting and meat eating, the behaviors that the Gombe chimpanzees have shown researchers are diverse and have shown us how similar they are to humans. Perhaps the most important thing that these observations have taught us though is how much chimpanzees are worth protecting.

The legacy of Dr. Jane Goodall, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and UN Messenger of Peace, lives on in the forests of Gombe through JGI's ongoing support of the research there, as well as through the organization's community-centered and science-driven conservation efforts across the Congo Basin and entire chimpanzee range. Fifty five years after Jane Goodall began her research, scientists and students continue to learn and create in what has become a true living laboratory.

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Indeed, decades from now scientists might well use notes about Gombe's chimpanzees taken by a JGI researcher today. JGI's great hope is that the work at Gombe will continue to contribute both to society's understanding of these amazing beings and to the survival of wild chimpanzee populations in Africa.

To learn more about the past 55 years at Gombe, visit our new website honoring the anniversary: janegoodall.org/gombe55. For social media, see more by searching for and sharing content with the #Gombe55 hashtag.

About the Jane Goodall Institute

Founded in 1977, the Jane Goodall Institute continues Dr. Goodall's pioneering research on chimpanzee behavior — research that transformed scientific perceptions of the relationship between humans and animals. Today, the Institute is a global leader in the effort to protect chimpanzees and their habitats. It also is widely recognized for establishing innovative community-centered conservation and development programs in Africa, and Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots, the global environmental and humanitarian youth program, which has groups in more than 120 countries. For more information, please visit archive1.janegoodall.org.

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