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Monster
Poster Of
King Kong



Who Are The Real King Kongs?

For millions of years a giant beast, superior in strength and intelligence to others of the animal kingdom has loped through dense forests. So ferocious are his looks that man has trembled before him for thousands of years. Stories, legends and myths have been built around this animal in every part of the world. Tales of terror and destruction have chilled the spines of men who heard them, filling their

nightmares with images of a hideous faced beast who could tear him limb from limb.

An unearthly noise ringing through the forest, a gorilla standing as tall as a man beating his chest with his cupped hands, little wonder that men seeing this ritual run for their lives. As he pounds his chest, drawing great gasps of air into his lungs to produce a sound that is never forgotten, the gorilla

leader plucks leaves and plants, whirling around in what seems to be a frenzy. He means to frighten any observer, the sole purpose of his performance is to make sure that man, beast or gorilla rival understands that he is the unchallenged leader of his troop. This habit of chest-beating and roaring is unique to the gorilla, and an amazingly effective way of terrorising potential enemies.

Man has always seen the similarity between themselves and the gorilla, he looks like a huge, ugly version of man. His feet and hands are uncannily like a human's, and his neat, hairless ears could be mistaken for a man's. He is an intelligent beast and has an excellent memory. He has no natural enemies, other than man, so it is not surprising that it is man who has most to fear from a gorilla. In his natural home, deep, damp forests, other creatures leave him alone, there are very few instances of gorillas being killed by animals.

A gorilla who is the leader of his troop is usually a perfect specimen of his kind. Big, strong and healthy, his silver back, a mark of his superiority, very plain to see, he takes all the decisions for his tribe. They are completely dependent on him, young males as well as the females and young, rely on his decisions without challenge. Fully grown at about twelve years old, he can weigh as much as thirty stone and will stand between 5'5" to 5'8" tall. His massive chest may measure up to sixty inches, but gorillas are gentle with their own kind. His troop may be as few as four, or as many as twenty five, depending on how high the gorilla population is in his home territory.

Gorillas are not meat eaters, which is an obvious reason for their peaceful ways, they have no need to kill for flesh. Taking in over a hundred different kinds of vegetables and fruits they feed in the early mornings. Their teeth, the same amount as a man's, are pointed and efficient. Shredding their food they usually get enough moisture to need water only rarely. When they do drink they take liquid in a strange way. Instead of





using their big hands to cup water, they prefer to soak their wrists in water and then suck it off. Although the troop will have a certain area that they wander in, they don't have one particular territory which they guard. The day will be spent walking and resting, the young males and babies playing and having mock fights, then after another late afternoon feed, they start to make their 'nest' for the night. Gorillas make their sleeping quarters on the ground or in tree forks. The males and females sleeping separately.

So confident are the gorillas of their position in the forest, that they will take little notice of a passing leopard, preferring to concentrate on their feeding. The fully grown males who are not

leaders wander through life alone, only occasionally joining various troops for a short time. They may form an attachment to one particular troop and return to see them again every few months. Their arrival doesn't worry the leader, he tolerates their presence, knowing they haven't a chance of taking his position of supremacy in his own troop.

The female gorillas are much smaller and lighter than the males, and as their babies take quite a few months to be able to look after themselves, the females are very much in need of protection from their leader. A baby gorilla weighs only four to five pounds at birth and cannot walk on all fours, resting his weight on his knuckles as the adults do, until he is about

five months old. The females carry their young for nine months before birth, just like humans. Although the young gorillas are playful and will tease and plague their leader constantly, he is patient with them. Only the older youngsters, having reached their 'teenage' years will get a sharp cuff around the head from a mighty arm if they irritate the leader. A gorilla is fully grown at twelve and in the natural state they live to about thirty five.

On occasion a leader from a troop will challenge another leader. The chest beating will begin, the huge animals standing upright, the deafening noises echo across the forest. When faced with danger, the entire troop retreats to cover,

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leaving the leader alone to protect their safety. The display ends with a thumping on the ground with open palm, and then each leader will lope away with his own group, seldom actually attacking each other. Fights can sometimes occur if a fully grown male, and this is rare, doesn't accept his leader, this is probably what has happened to gorillas who have been seen with cuts and marks on their bodies. One gorilla leader was found with half an arm missing, but he had recovered and was still the undisputed chief of his troop.

The gorilla has set tactics for his fights, and they normally follow the same pattern. First the prolonged bout of chest beating, he then lunges forwards, not touching his opponent, and then retreats. The lunging and retreating is usually sufficient to end the fight, with no harm done to either contestant. If the enemy doesn't stand his ground, then the fierce

giant will pursue his quarry and attack.

Native tribes in Africa who hunt gorilla for food, also in revenge for the crops and produce that the gorillas have cheekily taken from their cultivated clearings, know the fighting tactics of their prey. If they stand their ground they have the opportunity to kill, but should their nerve break and they run, then they will be savaged. Using teeth and claws, and with enormous weight and strength behind them, they will charge. In defence of his troop the leader will risk his own life, prepared to die as is his duty as undisputed chief.

Gorillas normally spend most of their time on the ground, their great size and weight makes swinging around in trees a sport that only the young, light gorillas can manage. They live in forests and can happily survive at high altitudes, living in forested areas around volcanoes. The mountain

gorillas have longer, thicker fur, to protect them from the low temperatures at night. As Gorillas are only found in certain areas of Africa, it is thought that as they can't cross water, and in fact most gorillas are scared of rivers, they can only stay in the thick forests of their birth. Although the free wandering males have been found a hundred miles away from their original territory, they wouldn't be able to cross plains and rivers to find new forests.

With his high intelligence, great strength and courage, the gorilla is a natural survivor, except when he encounters man. He has no need to fight in his own surroundings, but when man hunts him down for food or to take him into captivity, it is not surprising that he then becomes the awe inspiring beast of legend.



King Kong-Man or Beast?

Gorillas are more like people than you would imagine from the fearsome way they look. They may look just a huge great beast, ready to tear a man to shreds, but in fact they have minds and feelings not that different from our own.

Gorillas have been kept as pets and studied closely in zoos, which is where most of our knowledge of their behaviour comes from. Young gorillas like to wrestle and fight with their friends, hate to be alone, and form close friendships, just like we do. Those gorillas that

have been born and raised in captivity are quite happy to accept humans instead of gorillas as their parents and friends. Baby gorillas who cannot be raised properly by their own mothers adapt well to being brought up by a human. In fact, they then get to love the person who acts as their mother and suffer deeply when it is time for them to be returned to the normal life at the zoo.

A London woman, rich enough to have a large house and huge gardens, kept a gorilla as a pet. He was highly intelligent, and loved company, but had to have bars in his room to confine him as he was too full of energy to be left

roaming around all the time. He hated to sleep alone, but would settle happily if he could look through his bars and see his owner's nephew sleeping in the next room. So attached was he to his owner that when she finally had to part with him because he was just too big and strong for living with humans any more, she knew he would suffer from the loss of his "family." In fact, he didn't even survive long enough to live in the zoo he was being transported to. He pined for his owner, and died of a broken heart.

Another gorilla, while he was still small enough to be safely let loose, would be taken into the



gardens of the zoo where he lived and play football with his keepers. In fact, using his natural intelligence, he learnt to play a good game! He too had eventually to be confined behind bars, because as always, once he began to reach his full weight and height, he was too powerful to be treated like a human.

One keeper, who had become attached to his gorilla charge, went on going into his cage and playing with him way past the time when he should have been wary of his amazingly strong friend. In fact during a game, the gorilla pinned him down and he was only rescued in the nick of time. Guy, the famous gorilla of London zoo, was also very playful and friendly with his keepers. He soon learnt that while his keeper was sweeping out and cleaning his cage he must leave him alone, but when the tasks were over it was playtime. Eventually he would start to play as soon as the broom was laid down, difficult for his keeper should he have felt like a moment's rest.

It is well known amongst animal experts that if you are raising a gorilla in place of its natural mother, you must make sure that it is returned to live with its own kind while still very young, that way he will form friendships and eventually settle down with a mate. Too long with a human to love, and he will not be able to accept his own kind, still yearning for the person he first became attached to.

Of course there is always danger when playing with a tame gorilla, as there is no way the animal can realise that humans cannot match him for size and weight, so when he gives what to him is a playful pat, there is chance that a human could be knocked unconscious or badly clawed.

Being intelligent animals, gorillas have good memories. They will greet someone who they liked when young enthusiastically. They also have strong dislikes and will make it clear if a human appears that they don't like the look of. One gorilla would throw things at people he disliked, with a very accurate aim! It's also believed that in their natural state gorillas have strong likes and dislikes for members of their troop.



Like human parents, gorilla leaders in the wild, try and be very patient with the young. The leader will accept that the babies and toddlers amongst his troop need to play rather than work. Like humans he has a deep attachment to his mate, and will attack any keeper in a zoo who he thinks is trying to take his mate away, another difficulty arising because he can't understand that the human is not the same as a gorilla. To him his mate is as attractive to his keeper as she is to him!

Young male gorillas, long before they are grown up, copy their elders. Walking in a swaggering manner and generally showing off trying to be as masculine as their

leader. One observer of gorillas in the wild said they looked very like human teenagers, especially as they often stage mock fights with their own age group.

Anyone who dismisses the idea of a gorilla feeling a strong liking for a human being doesn't know much about gorillas as they really are.

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What's Ferocious, Weighs Thirty Stone and is Afraid of Water?



1. The gorilla has no tail.
2. His strange domed head is due to the massive size of his jaw muscles causing a distorted shape to the skull.
3. White haired gorillas are very rare, they have blue eyes and fair skin. They are not a breed of their own, but blonde members of their own kind, just as some humans can be very fair.
4. Gorillas dislike snakes.
5. A gorilla has thirty two teeth, the same as a man.
6. The first baby gorillas were bred successfully in captivity, in 1956 in America.
7. The largest species of gorilla, and the most similar to man, is the Mountain Gorilla.
8. Gorillas suffer from the same diseases as man, including rheumatism, toothache and coughs and colds. They are often treated with the same antibiotics and medicines as humans.
9. The tallest gorilla on record was 6'2"
10. The heaviest was around 47 stone.
11. The oldest gorilla in captivity is 46 years old and lives in Philadelphia zoo.
12. Female gorillas, like human females, normally only have one baby, twins are unusual.
13. The chest beating, the ritual used by adult gorilla leaders to frighten their foe, is seen in baby gorillas around five months old.

How well do you know King Kong?

Test your knowledge and see how many right answers you can get.

1. How many teeth does an adult gorilla have?
2. At what age is a gorilla fully grown?
3. What country are gorillas found in?
4. Gorillas spend most of their time in trees — true or false?
5. Can you name two things that gorillas are afraid of?
6. How do gorillas drink?
7. What do gorillas eat?
8. Have gorillas any natural enemies apart from man?



- Quiz Answers:
1. 32.
 2. 12.
 3. Africa.
 4. False.
 5. Rivers and snakes.
 6. They dip their wrists in water and then suck off the moisture.
 7. Fruit and vegetation.
 8. No.



