



WILDERNESS

RWANDA WILDLIFE & ECOLOGY

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Lying in the centre of the Albertine Rift in the western section of Africa's Rift Valley means that the country supports amazing diversity and endemism, from scenery and habitats to fauna and flora, conserved by several national parks. Aside from over a thousand plant species, 700 bird species and myriad reptiles and amphibians, Rwanda boasts some 151 mammal species, amongst which 15 are primates.

Rwanda is an incredibly rewarding destination for mammal viewing. The dramatic variety of habitats in the country allows a wide array of mammal species to thrive. In the east, Akagera National Park's big game savannahs are home to all of Africa's charismatic plains species such as elephant, buffalo, hippo, giraffe, zebra, many antelope species and even black rhino, lion, leopard and spotted hyaena. The montane rainforest of Nyungwe in the south is an important conservation area for chimpanzees and a host of other primates, from the endemic Rwenzori colobus to Dent's mona monkey and grey-cheeked mangabey. Gishwati-Mukura National Park holds the world's only population of golden monkeys outside the Virunga Massif.

WILDLIFE



700 bird species



82 fish species and
294 reptile/amphibian
species



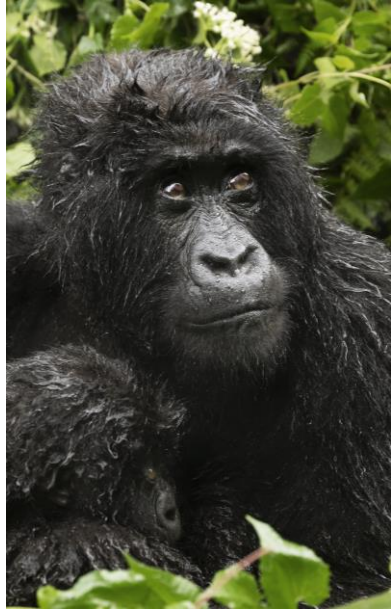
151 larger mammal
species



15 primate species

SEVEN DISTINCT ECO-ZONES

- Albertine Rift Montane Forests
- Lake Victoria Basin
- Ruwenzori-Virunga Montane Moorlands
- Victoria Basin Forest-Savanna Mosaic



Rwanda is a top locale in Africa for birding too, with a country list of approximately 700 species, of which 491 are resident, the remainder being seasonal migrants. Of these, 37 species are classified as Albertine Rift endemics and include handsome francolin, Rwenzori turaco, Archer's ground robin, Kivu ground-thrush, Rwenzori apalis, mountain masked apalis, red-faced woodland warbler, Rwenzori batis, stripe-breasted tit, Rwenzori double-collared sunbird, strange weaver, dusky crimsonwing and regal sunbird.

The Gorillas of Rwanda

There are two species of gorilla found in Africa: the western gorilla *Gorilla gorilla* and the eastern gorilla *Gorilla beringei*. The eastern gorilla consists of two subspecies, the well-known mountain gorilla *G. b. beringei* of Uganda and Rwanda, and the Grauer's gorilla *G. b. Graueri* of the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Both of these subspecies are considered Endangered. The western gorilla also consists of two subspecies, the western lowland gorilla *G. g. gorilla* principally of Congo (Brazzaville) and Gabon, and the little known Cross River gorilla *G. g. diehli* of the border region between Cameroon and Nigeria.

The mountain gorilla is the best known of all the subspecies as a result of the work of Dian Fossey and others, but just over 1000 animals remain, isolated in the remaining natural islands of the Virunga Massif and Uganda's Bwindi Forest. Here they exist in family groups overseen by massive silverbacks and roaming their home ranges in search of favoured vegetation.