Reading: African species

The African <u>rainforests</u> cover a very large area – from the west coast of Africa to the <u>mountains</u> in the East in Kenya and Tanzania. If you look at our map, you'll see that more than 80 per cent of the rainforest is in the Congo basin. This time we're going to mention a few larger mammals living in this area and a small animal from Madagascar. Madagascar, the world's fourth largest island, lies off the southeast coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean. Some animals which live there can only be found in this part of the world.

One such animal is the lemur. There are 25 species of lemur on Madagascar and all of them are <u>endangered</u>. The lemur is a monkey-like animal with large round eyes, a pointed nose, a long tail and soft woolly <u>fur</u>. The largest lemur, the indri, is about 95 cm long, the smallest, the mouse lemur, is only 15 cm long. All lemurs are vegetarians. They like wild <u>figs</u>, bananas and other forest fruits.

The mountain gorilla lives on the slopes of volcanoes in Rwanda, Zaire and Uganda. They live in small groups led by a dominant male. They are too big and heavy to climb trees and so they wander slowly through the forest eating fruits, leaves and berries. They are the largest of the great apes and look very <u>dangerous</u>. But scientists say they are gentle, intelligent and very friendly.

The forest elephant lives in the Congo basin. It is much smaller than the African elephant, which is the biggest animal on Earth.

Nevertheless, even this "small" elephant can be up to 250 cm tall.

Its <u>ivory</u> is thinner, short and a bit <u>yellowish</u>.

The African forest is also home to different kinds of chimpanzees and baboons. Most chimpanzees use <u>twigs</u> to get tasty food from difficult places. Some can open nuts with stones and branches. Groups of about twenty chimpanzees travel together looking for fruit and leaves to eat. At night they rest in tall trees in branches.

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