

The Chimpanzee Gallery



The Chimpanzee is our closest relative, sharing over 98% of DNA with humans. Kyambura Gorge is home to a small, isolated population known as the 'Lost Chimps of Kyambura Gorge'. In 1995 there were only 15 chimps surviving in the gorge, threatened by inbreeding and habitat destruction.

Since 2009, Volcanoes Safaris has worked to rebuild chimpanzee ecotourism in Kyambura Gorge, contributing to conservation and helping to protect the gorge ecosystem.

Nicole Simmons, a conservation biologist and an expert on the Kyambura chimpanzees, has been researching the Kyambura chimps since 2006, focusing on their ranging patterns and feeding ecology.

Her research has revealed that the Kyambura Gorge population suffered a substantial decline from 1995 to 2006 but has then steadily increased through natural introductions and births. By 2025 the chimp population has recovered to over 30 individuals.

In 2019 a female chimpanzee, Owoyesiga, immigrated to the gorge from a nearby forest, bringing hope for the long-term survival of chimps in the gorge.



*Protecting the Lost Chimpanzees of
Kyambura Gorge*

‘K’ FAMILY



Kaaka

Female Kaaka is estimated to be in her 50s and is the oldest chimpanzee in Kyambura Gorge, having outlived most of her children.



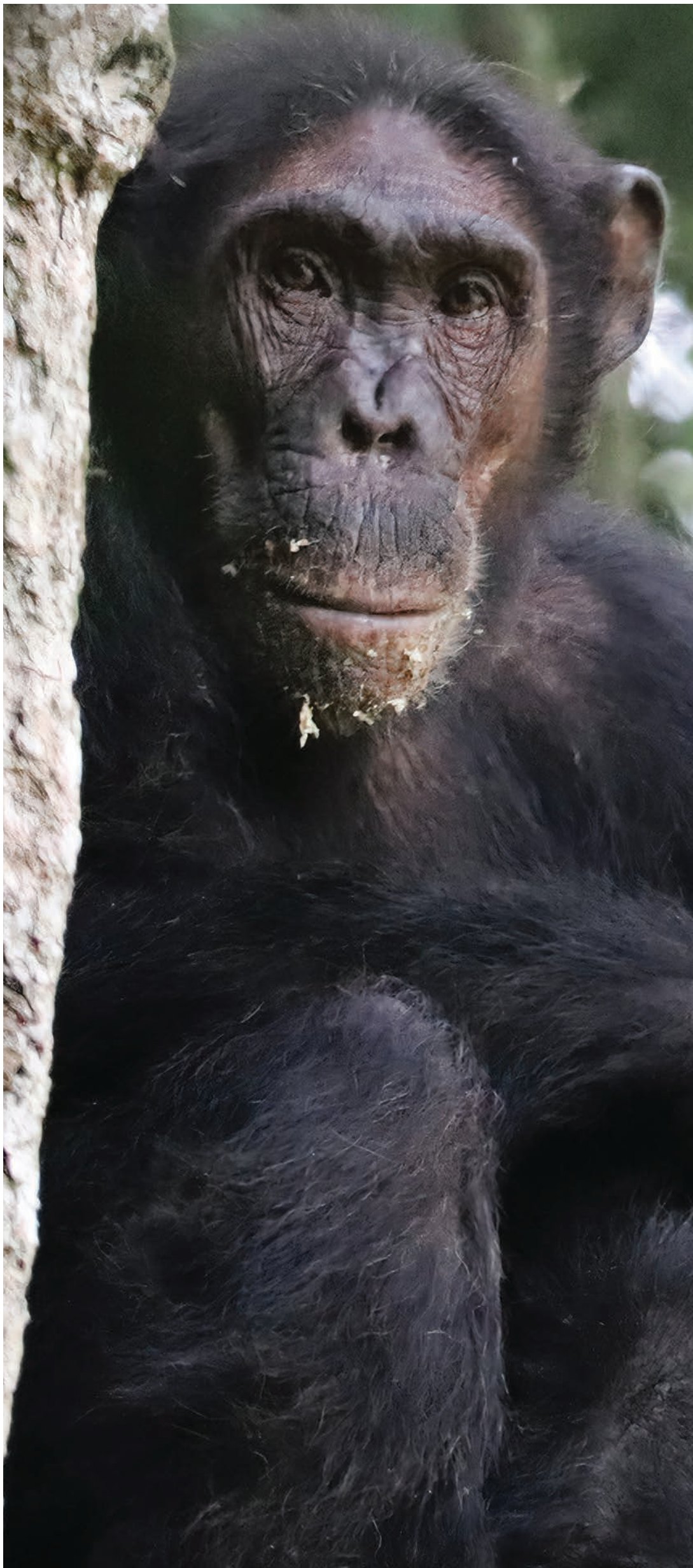
Kihango



Kazinga

Her two youngest, Kihango and Kazinga, are both in their 20s. Kihango was the Kyambura alpha male from 2017 to 2022 and his younger brother, Kazinga, born in 2006, is currently vying for the top position.

‘M’ FAMILY



Murungi



Mweya



Mulefu



Maani



Masika

The alpha male of Kyambura Gorge, Mweya, has been in power since 2022. He is one of four children to female Murungi who is known for being an attentive mother and having close bonds with her children.

Murungi has one daughter, Masika, and three sons: Mweya, Mulefu and Maani. The “M” boys look out for each other and will even babysit their younger siblings when mom needs a much-needed nap.

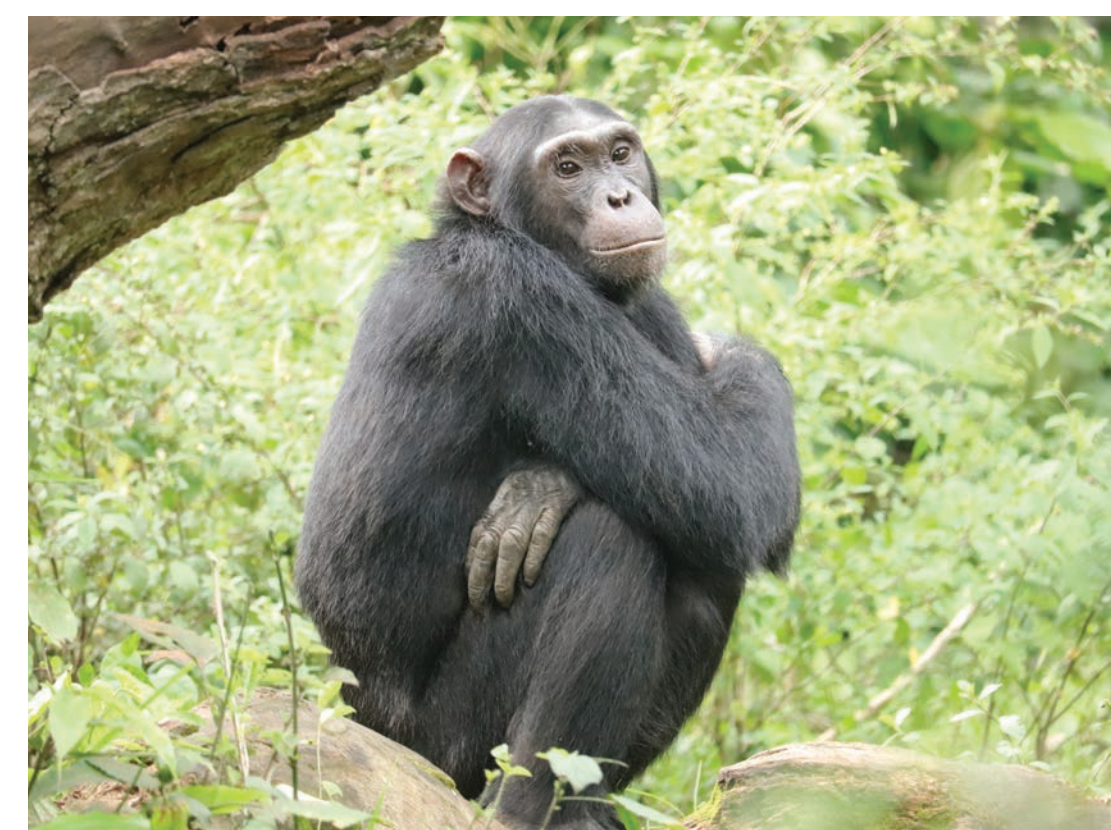
‘E’ FAMILY



Emiti



Enjojo



Ekibiira



Embogo



Enshama



Enyanja

Emiti is a high ranking female due to her fast reproductive rate, giving birth every 2 to 3 years on average. However, as female chimpanzees nurse their young for up to four years, having another baby before the first is weaned can result in infants competing for milk.

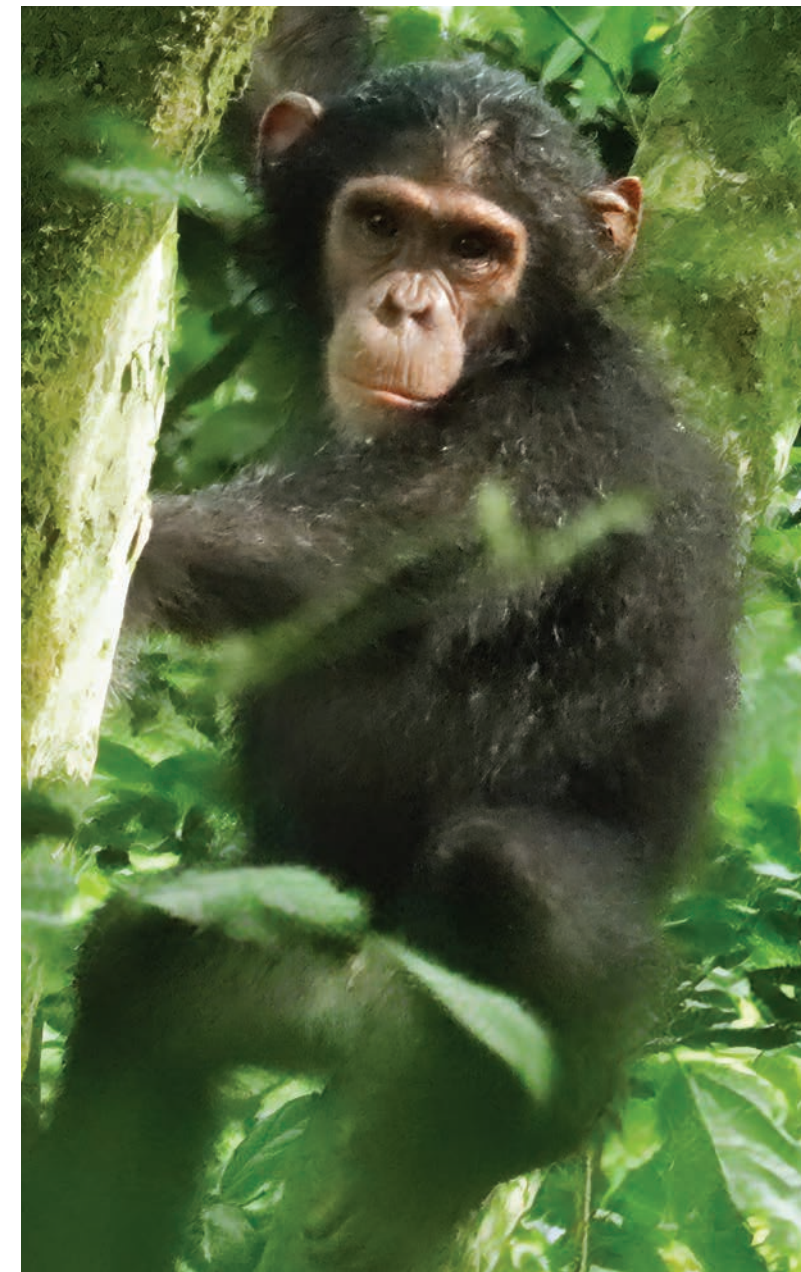
Emiti has lost two newborns because of short interbirth interval. In each case, the baby was replaced the following year.

'A' FAMILY



Asaba

Asaba is one of the shy mothers who prefers to avoid visitors trekking in the gorge. Her first baby, a girl named Asante, was born in 2003 and she has since given birth to four boys.



Ahmir



Baby A



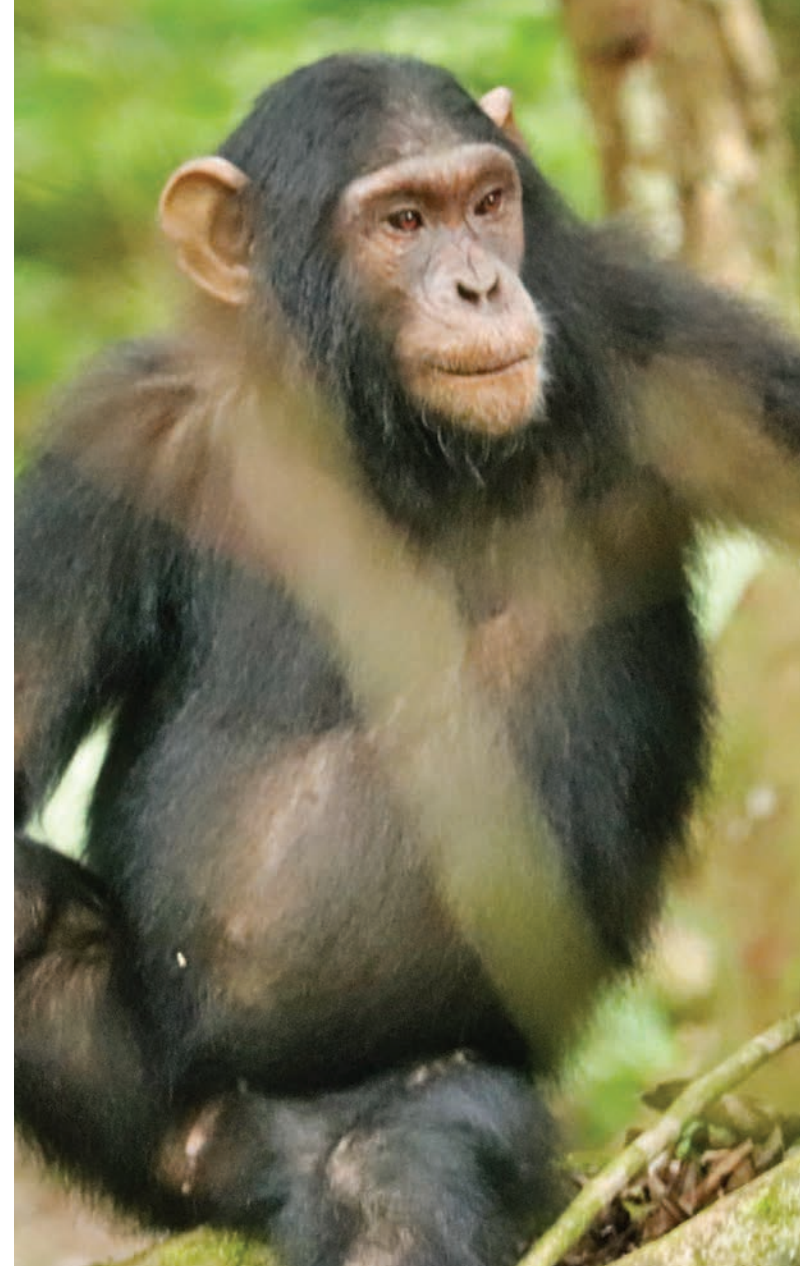
Agaba

Asante disappeared in 2012 and likely immigrated to a new community outside of the gorge. Asaba's oldest son, Asiimwe, born in 2008, also disappeared around 2018 and is believed to have died. Her younger sons all appear to be thriving and Asaba is expecting a new baby sometime in 2025.

‘N’ FAMILY



Namanya



Natkunda



Nagazi



Njuuko

Njuuko joined the Kyambura community in late 2005 when she was around 12 years old. Young females go through a period of “adolescent sterility” which can last a couple of years and allows them time to settle into a community before they conceive.

In January 2009, she gave birth to her first baby, a boy named Namanya. She now has three sons, Namanya, Natkunda, Baby Boy N and one daughter, Nagazi.

‘P’ FAMILY



Pamba

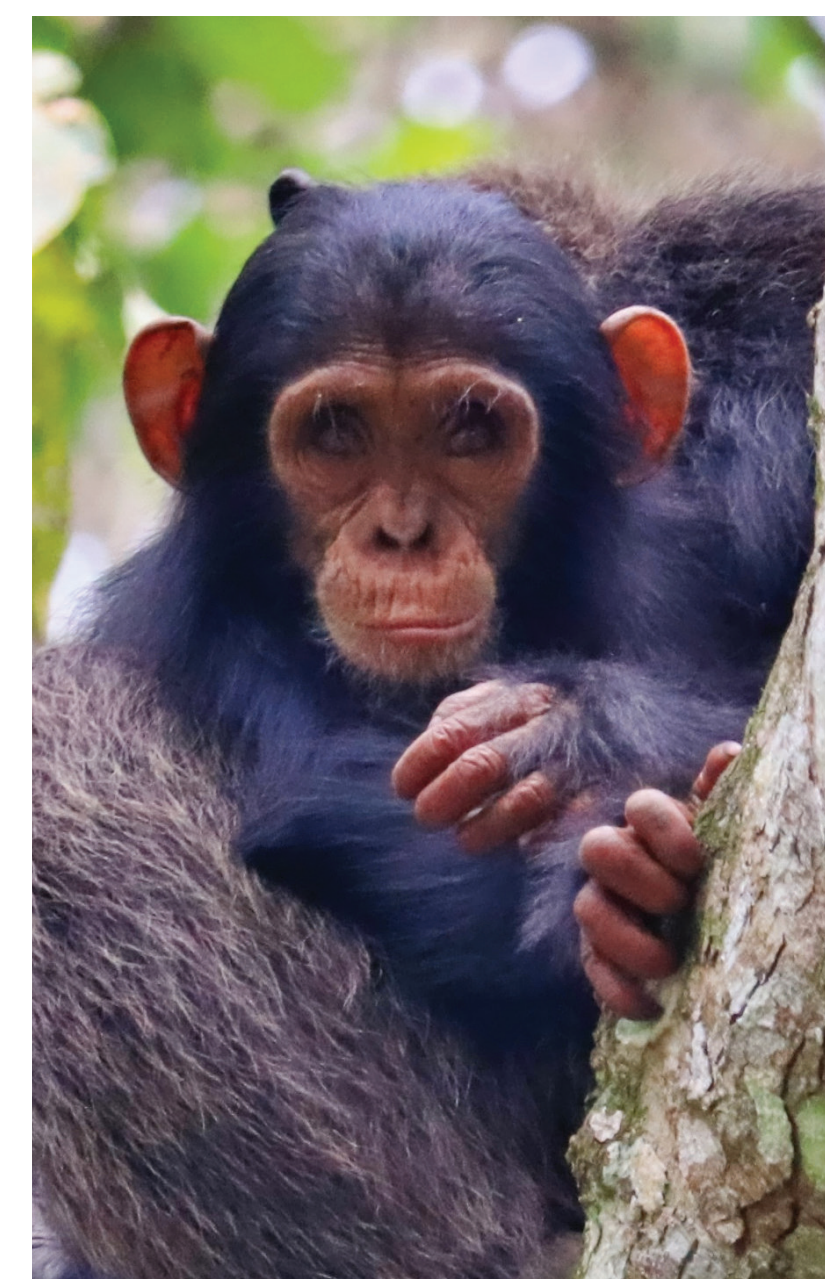
Pamba was born in Kyambura Gorge and unlike most female chimpanzees who leave their home upon sexual maturity, she chose not to emigrate. She gave birth to her first son in 2012 and now has three boys, each born four years apart.



Pesa



Pili



Baby P

She is expected to have a new baby in early 2025. Remaining in her natal group means her offspring are most certainly the result of inbreeding.

‘O’ FAMILY



Owoyesiga

Owoyesiga joined the Kyambura chimpanzee community in 2019. Females typically leave their natal group upon reaching sexual maturity to ensure the genetic flow between chimpanzee communities and their long-term survival. Owoyesiga was the first immigrant to the gorge since 2005 and her arrival was a tremendous blessing, bringing hope for the long-term survival of chimpanzee population in Kyambura Gorge.



Omugabe

Owoyesiga had her first baby in 2022, a boy named Omugabe, and likely gave birth to a new baby sometime between May and August 2024.
