



Ian Gilby—researcher, teacher, scientist.

He is a post doctoral research fellow at Harvard University and a researcher at The Jane Goodall Institute's Center for Primate Studies at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. He studies chimp behavior from the past and in the present.

Biography:

Ian grew up on the shores of a lake in Foxboro, Massachusetts. As a child, he loved to be outside in nature. A favorite activity was to catch painted turtles. He would mark each one with nail polish, and keep records about their growth in a little blue notebook.

Many years later, Ian is still working with animals and keeping records. We know that Jane Goodall was the first to discover that chimps eat meat in 1960. Since that time, she and many others have recorded chimp behavior in their field notes. Ian has studied almost 50 years of their data and also observes chimps in Gombe, himself. Ian has found some patterns that make him especially curious about chimp behaviors. Why do they hunt in the dry season? And why do hunters share their meat instead of keeping it all for themselves?

Ian's favorite story about record keeping happened to a friend of his who was doing chimp research in Gombe. Researchers spend many hours watching animals quietly from a distance of about 30 feet. The job gets a little boring if the animals aren't awake. So Ian's friend fell asleep. When she heard the chimps stirring, she jumped up, and her notes fell on the ground. Before she could pick them up, a chimp picked them up and ate them. His friend had to watch helplessly as all her hard work went down the "throat," as the case may be! She could not try to take them away from the chimp because researchers are very careful not to touch chimps. They don't want to spread human diseases to the animals.

Ian is a real scientist who does what he loves, and loves what he does. He feels that the more we know about animals' behavior, the better we'll be able to save their natural habitats.

Advice to young scientists:

"Never stop asking questions!"

For more information:

Ian's Web Page

http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~gilby/IG_research.htm

The Jane Goodall Institute for Primate Studies

<http://www.discoverchimpanzees.org/home/home.php>

Videoclip of Ian From DragonFlyTV

<http://pbskids.org/dragonflytv/scientists/scientist39.html>