

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release | October 17, 2017  
Media contact: Gigi Allanic, Alissa Wolken  
206.548.2550 | [woodlandparkzoo@zoo.org](mailto:woodlandparkzoo@zoo.org)

Editor note: Visit the zoo's blog at <http://blog.zoo.org/2017/10/uw-husky-football-physician-helps-zoo.html> for more photos.

### **Zoo brings in UW Medicine/Husky football physician to help injured gorilla** ***Local medical specialists team up with zoo***

SEATTLE—Concussions, ACL tears, and knee cartilage damage are among the common injuries the UW Medicine sports medicine and head physician of University of Washington's football team diagnoses and treats. Over the weekend, Dr. Kimberly Harmon brought her sports medicine expertise to help diagnose an injured gorilla at Woodland Park Zoo.

The zoo called in Harmon and other human and animal medical specialists for a diagnostic examination on Jumoke (juh-MOH-kee), a 32-year-old, female gorilla who was born and raised at the zoo. The 275-pound western lowland gorilla sustained leg wounds during a scuffle off exhibit in the sleeping dens with a young female gorilla in her group named Uzumma.

Martin Ramirez, Woodland Park Zoo's mammal curator, said gorillas are generally calm animals, but scuffles are not uncommon, especially younger gorillas challenging older gorillas. "Uzumma, who turns 10 years old this week, initiated the interaction with Jumoke. It was a display of natural adolescent behavior like a human teenager acting out," said Ramirez.

While Jumoke has been going outdoors daily in the public exhibit, the gorilla keepers had observed progressive mobility issues. "Jumoke was having difficulty bearing weight on her right leg. Since animal patients can't talk and tell their veterinarians where it hurts or describe the severity of the pain, we needed to intervene on her behalf by calling in a team of specialists to examine her for a bone or soft-tissue injury," said Dr. Darin Collins, Woodland Park Zoo's director of animal health. "Who better to call than the head physician of one of the nation's top ranked football programs? We were very fortunate she used her expertise for Jumoke's welfare."

Jumoke was examined at the zoo's veterinary hospital. Radiographs diagnosed a fracture of the tibia, one of two bones in the lower leg. Harmon was joined by Dr. Albert Gee, a sports orthopedic surgeon at UW Medicine, and Dr. Alex Aguila from the Animal Surgical Clinic of Seattle. The bone fracture is already showing signs of healing; no surgical fracture repair will be attempted at this time. The patient will receive antibiotic and pain medications, and have limited activity. "This type of fracture in a human is typical of a blunt force impact and should heal if a bone infection does not complicate the healing," said Dr. Kimberly Harmon.

The gorilla also will undergo physical rehabilitation therapy to help her fully recover from her injury. Non-weight bearing exercises that maintain the normal range of motion of the leg joints will return the gorilla to normal function.

As a part of the zoo's animal health program, physical rehab is used to alleviate pain from an injury or surgery; to improve circulation or range of motion and coordination; and to enhance an animal's quality of life, explained Collins. "The techniques of physical rehabilitation are non-invasive. Used in conjunction with traditional veterinary medicine, physical rehab provides additional medical care options to improve the recovery of patients with both chronic and acute conditions," said Collins.

Harmon is a UW Medicine physician specializing in sports medicine, family medicine and orthopedic health. Also joining Harmon and the zoo's veterinary team for the exam was Dr.



Leslie Eide with Animal Surgical Clinic of Seattle, who is certified in canine rehabilitation with a focus in sports medicine.

"We take care of more than 1,000 animals at the zoo. To ensure we provide top-notch care to each animal, we consult with experts throughout the country when it's necessary. Locally, we rely on a network of volunteer medical specialists to consult and perform exams, procedures and surgeries. We are so grateful to this network and especially to Harmon, Eide and the other specialists who donated their time and expertise to help our injured gorilla," said Collins.

Jumoke is the grandmother of baby Yola, a female who turns 2 years old next month. Jumoke currently lives with her male companion, 38-year-old Vip and Uzumma. Two other separate gorilla groups live at the zoo: 49-year-old Pete and 47-year-old Amanda; and 21-year-old female Nadiri, 39-year-old male Leonel, and Vip's daughters, 16-year-old female Akenji and Yola.

The [western lowland gorilla](#) lives in seven countries across west equatorial Africa: southeast Nigeria, Gabon, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Angola and Equatorial Guinea. All gorillas are endangered; the western lowland gorilla is critically endangered. The estimated population of western lowland gorillas in the wild is about 100,000. There are four primary reasons gorillas are endangered. One is habitat destruction caused by logging, mining, and slash and burn agriculture. Poaching for the bushmeat trade, facilitated by logging, has become an immediate threat to the western lowland gorilla population, particularly in Cameroon. Additionally, infectious diseases such as the Ebola virus have recently become a great threat, killing many gorillas; and climate change is causing the drying of the region, creating negative impacts on forest ecology and species.

Woodland Park Zoo supports conservation efforts for the western lowland gorilla through the [Mbeli Bai Gorilla Study](#). To help support this important project, used handheld electronics (cell phones, MP3 players, handheld games, e-readers, digital still and video cameras, laptops, GPS, portable hard drives, etc.) can be dropped off at the zoo. The handheld electronics are turned over to ECO-CELL, which operates a strict NO LANDFILL program and reimburses organizations. ECO-CELL reuses mineral ore from these devices to reduce the demand for unsustainable coltan mining in the Congo that destroys habitat for critically endangered gorillas. The zoo directs funds from ECO-CELL toward the Mbeli Bai Gorilla Study and other African conservation projects. Learn more about the zoo's wildlife work in Africa and beyond at [www.zoo.org/conservation](http://www.zoo.org/conservation).

Fall and winter zoo hours: 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. For more information or to become a zoo member, visit [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org) or call 206.548.2500.

Woodland Park Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums and certified by the rigorous American Humane Conservation program. The Humane Certified™ seal of approval is another important validation of the zoo's long-standing tradition of meeting the highest standards in animal welfare. Woodland Park Zoo is helping to save animals and their habitats through more than 35 field projects in the Pacific Northwest and around the world. By inspiring people to care and act, Woodland Park Zoo is making a difference in our planet's future ecological health and sustainability. Visit [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org) and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

###