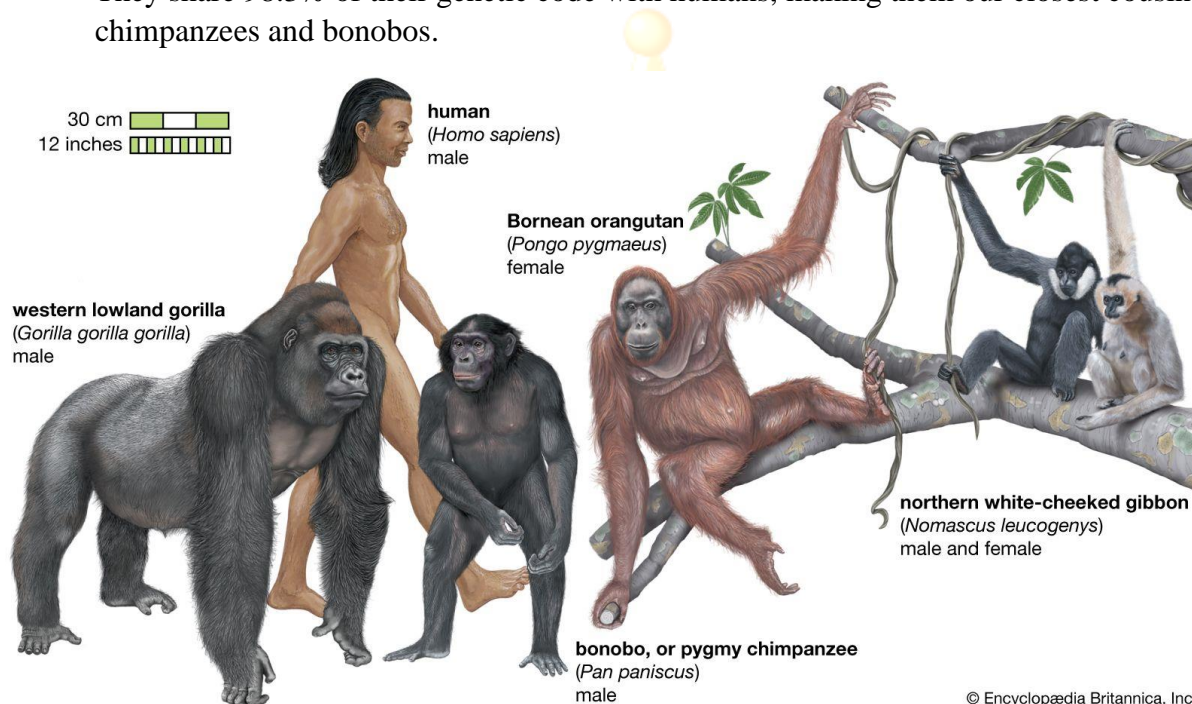


## GORILLAS: SPECIES OF THE DAY

A study published in the journal *PLOS ONE* suggests that gorillas could offer insights into future drug discoveries through their self-medicating behaviour.

- They are the largest of the great apes.
- Five species of great apes are gorilla, orangutan, chimpanzee, bonobo, and human.
- They share 98.3% of their genetic code with humans, making them our closest cousins after chimpanzees and bonobos.



ASPECTS	DETAILS
<b>Species</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gorillas have two species: the eastern gorilla and the western gorilla.</li> <li>• The mountain gorillas are subspecies of the eastern gorilla.</li> </ul>
<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Gorilla gorilla and Gorilla beringei</b>
<b>Diet</b>	Vegetarian (Frugivorous)
<b>Distribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gorillas are only found in tropical forests of the equatorial region in Africa.</li> <li>• Eastern gorillas are found only in three countries- The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Uganda, and Rwanda.</li> <li>• Western gorillas are found in many countries including Nigeria, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Republic of Congo, Angola, and the DRC.</li> </ul>
<b>Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are stocky animals with broad chests and shoulders, large, human-like hands, and small eyes set into hairless faces.</li> <li>• Males are about twice as heavy as females.</li> </ul>



<b>Locomotion</b>	<p>They walk about on all four limbs with part of their weight supported on the knuckles of their hands.</p> <p>This mode of locomotion is called knuckle-walking, and it is shared with chimpanzees.</p>
<b>Social Behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gorillas are gentle giants and display many human-like behaviours and emotions, such as laughter and sadness.</li><li>• Gorillas live in family groups of usually five to 10, but sometimes two to more than 50, led by a dominant adult male—or silverback—who holds his position for years.</li></ul> <p>Note: Males acquire silver-grey saddles across their backs and upper thighs at sexual maturity due to which they are named silverback.</p> <p>The groups are polygamous.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The bond between the silverback and his females forms the basis of gorilla social life.</li><li>• They are diurnal i.e. active during the day and primarily terrestrial.</li></ul>
<b>Reproduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Females become sexually mature around seven or eight years old but don't begin to breed until a couple of years later.</li><li>• Males mature at an even greater age.</li><li>• Once a female begins to breed, she'll likely give birth to only one baby every four to six years and only three or four over her entire lifetime.</li><li>• This low rate of reproduction makes it difficult for gorillas to recover from population declines.</li></ul>
<b>Conservation Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Due to an increase in its population in recent years, IUCN changed its conservation status from Critically Endangered to Endangered in November 2018.</li></ul>

