



Media Release
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Dublin Zoo's Gorilla Kesho to become 'King of the Swingers' in London Zoo

The news is out! Kesho, Ireland's very own young male gorilla, is going to London! The team in Dublin are thrilled and excited that Kesho has been chosen. He was one of four possible candidates from around Europe to be considered.

Dublin Zoo is part of a European Breeding Programme for the western lowland gorilla which controls the movements of all of the European representatives of the species. This is achieved with the aid of a studbook and ensures genetic variation and to prevent interbreeding. The species co-ordinator decides which animals will be paired for breeding.

The Dubliner was chosen largely because of his steady, calm nature; the fact that he is socially well adapted having witnessed the births of two of his siblings Evindi and Alfie as well as the introduction of a hand-reared female Mayani which he took in his stride.

Silverbacks are adult male gorillas, typically more than 12 years of age and named for the distinctive patch of silver hair on their backs. Typically he makes most of the decisions, mediates conflicts, determines the movements of the group and is responsible for the safety and well-being of the troop.

Kesho was born in Dublin Zoo in 1999 to Harry the silverback and his partner Lena. He was reared here with his family and has gained quite a fan base among regular zoo visitors.

Leo Oosterweghel commented, "We are delighted that Kesho has been chosen to take the reigns as the dominant silverback in London Zoo. It is a fantastic achievement for the international breeding programme at Dublin Zoo. We will miss him very much but this is a fantastic opportunity for him to reach his potential as a western lowland silverback gorilla."

Dublin Zoo is currently working on plans for a Gorilla Rainforest for its family of western lowland gorillas. The spacious naturalistic habitat of some 12,000 square metres with its dense vegetation will provide Dublin Zoo's gorillas with a more stimulating and spacious environment.

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