

Talking to the Animals

At age 7, Jane Goodall read *Dr. Doolittle*, a book about a doctor who could talk to animals. She wanted to be able to talk to animals, too. Her favorite animal was the chimpanzee. When she grew up, she went to Gombe National Park, in Africa. Many chimps lived in the dense forests there. Jane heard their noisy “hoots.” She heard them drumming on trees with their feet. This was her first introduction to chimp talk.

Jane watched the chimps day after day. In time, she learned their language. She learned that they had a special bark to let others know they had found food. She learned which calls meant fear, pain, or pleasure. She learned that an uneasy hoot meant alarm.

Chimp talk also included body language. They said “hello” with hugs and kisses. Male chimps stomped or beat on trees to show they were in charge. Mother chimps sometimes tickled their babies to keep them from getting into trouble.

For over 30 years, Jane has been learning the language of chimps. Now, she speaks for them to groups around the world. She hopes that what she has to say will convince others to protect chimps from harm.



Jane Goodall is helping to save the chimpanzees.