



International Primate Protection League

1224 Bonita Berkeley, Cal. 94709

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## STATUS OF PILEATED GIBBON

The Pileated Gibbon has a red page in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Red Data Book, which means that it is considered to be in serious danger of extinction.

Recently, the IPPL received a letter from Pierre Hunkeler, the Assistant Executive Officer of the Survival Commission, in which the comment is made that 'its present status is under revision as more recent information seems to indicate that the Pileated Gibbon may not be as endangered as thought before.'

The IPPL does not know the source of the IUCN's information, or whether it is proposed to remove the Pileated Gibbon from the Endangered List or to change its category to Rare, Indeterminate, or Vulnerable. This animal lives in Cambodia and Thailand. It is likely that the Cambodian war, with its attendant defoliation, bombing and arming of military and civilian personnel who shoot for fun or food, has effected a serious reduction of the numbers of Pileated Gibbon in that area. Dr. Boonsong feels that the prospects for the Pileated Gibbon are extremely poor and estimates the population in Thailand as 500. Removal from the list or alteration in status would therefore appear undesirable unless a gross underestimation in numbers was involved in determining the Pileated Gibbon's original placement on the list. IUCN listing brings about a certain degree of protection for listed animals, so an error on the side of caution is preferable to omitting a rare animal from the list.

Precise numbers of the Pileated Gibbon are of course not known and attempts at a census could in any case lead to data on locations falling into hands of poachers and dealers.

The IPPL would like to hear from members and friends with information on this question. Representations will be made to the IUCN on the basis of information received.

## PATTAYA HOTEL GIBBONS

Several hotels at Pattaya use gibbons as tourist gimmicks. The IPPL disapproves of this practice for many reasons. One of the less obvious is the exposure of the animals to diseases which can be minor in humans but can kill gibbons. The hotel gibbons are embraced by many tourists each day and some, especially those from colder climates, are likely to have coughs and colds. Gibbons are highly susceptible to respiratory diseases. When SEATO laboratories in Bangkok gave Hong Kong flu to gibbons as an experiment, two died as a result. In addition, the flu bug got loose in the colony and two more gibbons died: the epidemic sprang to life again three months later and four more gibbons died.

IPPL members are urged to make any objections they may have to this use of gibbons known to the hotel managements. Among other objections are the species depletion caused by the killing of the mother gibbons in the course of capture of the infants, and the inadequate care provided by the hotels. The IPPL knows about the gibbons kept at the Orchid Lodge (once 5, down to 2), Pattaya Palace (3, privately owned) and the Nipa Lodge (one Pileated male, castrated). If you know of others or hear of hotels planning to acquire gibbons, please contact, S. McGreal, 73 Soi 12, Sukhumvit.

## PATTAYA ZOO

The IPPL deploras the existence of Pattaya Zoo and questions its moral though apparently not its leral right to keep animals in such disgraceful conditions. It applauds the Beachcomber's observations made in the June 17 Bangkok Post. The Zoo is located on the left leaving Bangkok on Sukhumvit Highway. It has 6 Pileated Gibbons, one White-Handed Gibbon, about 50 macaques, an occasional langur and two Slow Lorises identified as Pottos.

The Pileated Gibbon is on the Endangered List and there is little chance of these animals breeding, especially those caged alone! All the primates are seriously under or mis-fed. One adult Pileated male, first seen four months ago in good condition, is visibly deteriorating and acquiring brownish red patches due to protein deficiency. It appears that these gibbons will have no escape except death: several people have reported offers of the Pileated Gibbons for sale at 1000 baht each, except for the deteriorating one, who was down to 700 on a visit in March. Another was claimed to be not for sale as the departing American owner is said to have donated it on condition it never be disposed of. On a recent visit a week ago, the owner claimed that the gibbons were not for sale.

It is hoped that one day a way will be found to get all the primates at the Pattaya Zoo moved to better conditions: all are fed on bananas. The IPPL requests members and friends visiting Pattaya to take several kilos of green beans and kathin for protein and oranges for vitamin C in order to keep these primates in decent shape till better days. Encourage your friends to do the same.

## NAGOYA CONFERENCE

The International Primatological Society will be holding its Congress in Nagoya from August 20 - 24. The Society represents the research community. Mrs. McGreal will be presenting a paper on behalf of the IPPL urging eventual cessation of international movement of primates for research purposes, with colony-bred primates as the alternative. The use of wild-caught primates is economically cheaper but ecologically expensive. Thailand, for example, exported 74,000 macaques to research labs over a recent 10-year period, mainly Stumptails and Pigtaails. Dr. Boonsong has reported ominous declines in numbers of both these species in recent years. Both breed well in labs. The IPPL paper also urges better coordination of research to prevent unnecessary duplication, limitation of primate research to only that which is absolutely necessary, better housing and care of laboratory primates, and restrictions on the degree and duration of pain permitted in experiments.

Dr. Bourne, Director of the Yerkes Primate Center in the U.S. and Dr. Trum, Director of the Southborough Harvard Primate Center, have contacted the IPPL about their probable visits to Bangkok en route to and from the Nagoya Conference. Hopefully, IPPL members will have an opportunity to meet them.

## ADOPTION

The IPPL is saddened by the continuing furtive sale of baby gibbons at the Sunday Market but acknowledges that gibbons, once taken from the wild, cannot be returned until scientific rehabilitation programs have been worked out. Based on experience so far, gibbons released in the wild are likely to be shot by humans they approach, die of starvation, attack humans, or become homeless wanderers driven out of territories by resident gibbon families. The IPPL urges members owning gibbons or knowing gibbon-owners planning to leave Bangkok under no circumstances to advertise a gibbon for sale in the newspapers.

or try to sell it. It may well finish up at a dealer's, in a research laboratory or at an institution such as the Pattaya Zoo. It is better to look for an animal-lover who will take really good care of the animal. The IPPL will try to arrange adoption where approached. People willing to provide a good home for already-captive juvenile or adult gibbons are requested to make their interest known to the IPPL which will offer help and hints on responsible care. Under no circumstances buy baby gibbons, however pathetic.

NATURE PROJECT AT KHAO CHONG

Ms. Dwaila Armstrong, of the U.S. Peace Corps, and Mr. Klaus Berkmueller, a German volunteer, are helping run a Nature Education Project at Khao Chong near Trang in Southern Thailand. The purpose is to inculcate young Thais with a love of nature and wildlife. Many parties of schoolchildren now visit the park, its trails, museum and zoo which features local animals.

The zoo has several gibbons all of which are retired family pets. Ms. Armstrong and Mr. Berkmueller are therefore anxious to extend the gibbon cage. The cost of the material for the extension would be around 2,000 to 3,000 baht and the Khao Chong staff would do the construction. Since the Project budget is meager, help is required and contributions are sought. Please call 55892, changing to 525892 on June 22, if you wish to donate to this worthy cause. All contributions will be personally acknowledged by Dwaila and Klaus. Ask your friends to contribute.

WORKING MONKEYS

Working Pigtail Monkeys can be seen picking coconuts at Koh Samui. Visitors can take the train to Surat Thani and there are three boats daily to the island, Tour Royale has a new tour to Koh Samui.

Detlef Bluemel, an IPPL member, recently saw and photographed a Capped Langur working as a goatherd in India and was told that this was quite common.

SPREADING PRIMATE CONSCIOUSNESS

Try to get an IPPL speaker on your Club's program. A roster of speakers is being assembled. If you are willing to speak on any aspect of primates to children or adults, in English or Thai, or if you want a speaker, please contact the League.

PRIORITIES

The IPPL recently received a letter from Dr. Hans Kummer, President of the International Primatological Society. He stated that 'The Primate Specialist Group... an organ of the Survival Service Commission of IUCN, under my interim chairmanship... decided to concentrate on the conservation of primate forest habitats. This decision was guided by the insight that the destruction of primate habitats, especially forests, is presently the most serious threat to the survival of Primates.'

The IPPL feels that, since much existing primate habitat is either void or depleted of primates, that problems of poaching, smuggling, dealing, transportation, use of primates in poorly-designed or unnecessarily repeated research, poor living conditions in zoos, laboratories, etc. require attention and will therefore apply itself to these issues. Unless all these problems are attacked simultaneously, primateless primate habitat may be the result.

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HELP WANTED

Volunteer typing and clerical assistance on an occasional basis

A conservation-minded student with a good voice and guitar to learn 'Where have all the primates gone' to sing at lectures.

People willing to visit the Airport, Sunday Market and Animal Dealers' compounds occasionally.

A filing cabinet.

THUNG SONG

A recent visitor to Thung Song reports seeing a tiny moribund gibbon for sale in the pet shop at the back of the market. The dealer was making no effort to save the animal, which was caged with an equally pathetic Long Tailed Macaque. The former was selling for 350 baht and the latter for 100 baht.

The dealers in the Thung Song-Nakhon Si Thammarat area serve as feeder dealers for the large animal dealers in Bangkok.

LET US ALL, IRRESPECTIVE OF NATIONALITY OR PERSONAL DIFFERENCES, WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL TO WHICH WE ARE ALL COMMITTED - THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF NONHUMAN PRIMATES.