

THE MYANMAR HOOLOCK GIBBON CONSERVATION STATUS REVIEW: FIRST RESULTS ON WESTERN AND EASTERN HOOLOCKS IN MYANMAR

N. Lwin¹, T. Geissmann², Fr. Momberg³, M. Grindley⁴, S.S. Aung¹, T.N. Aung¹, K.T. Khaing¹, Z.M. Aung¹, T. Htin Hla¹

¹*Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA), Yangon, Myanmar,* ²*Anthropological Institute and Museum, University of Zürich, Switzerland,* ³*Fauna and Flora International (FFI), Cambridge, UK,* ⁴*People Resources and Conservation Foundation (PRCF), Chiang Mai, Thailand*

Presenter's Email: ngwelwin@gmail.com

Globally, hoolock gibbon populations are dwindling due to forest clearance, disturbance, and hunting. Although Myanmar (Burma) still holds large intact areas of prime gibbon habitat and is believed to support the largest remaining populations of hoolock gibbons, there is no significant data on the overall conservation status of the gibbons in this country. A Hoolock Gibbon Conservation Status Review is being implemented jointly by the People Resources and Conservation Foundation (PRCF), Fauna & Flora International (FFI), and the Myanmar Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA). The initiative is assessing the conservation status of hoolock gibbons in Myanmar – national distribution, relative population sizes, habitat quality, threats and threat levels, conservation priorities – while strengthening the capacity of the national conservation movement in primate surveying, monitoring, and conservation. This comprehensive review will help identify, prioritize, and plan future conservation interventions to boost options for the long-term protection of these apes. We present results from field surveys during year one of the project, conducted between November 2008 and April 2010. These apply to the Western Hoolock (*Hoolock hoolock*) at various sites in the Rakhine state and the Magway division, western Myanmar, and the Eastern Hoolock (*H. leuconedys*) in Kachin state, northeast Myanmar. Hoolocks were encountered in every survey area, but so was habitat loss and deterioration, and hunting for both subsistence and trade. In most survey locations, gibbons are now restricted to relict forest patches, and the future of the species in these sites is seriously in doubt without immediate conservation action.

Keywords: Hoolock gibbon, Myanmar (Burma), Conservation, Threats