

EASTERN HOOLOCK GIBBON CONSERVATION IN CHINA

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The Eastern hoolock gibbon (*Hoolock leuconedys*) historically distributed in nine counties in the west bank of Salween River in western Yunnan, China. We conducted an intensive survey of the species covered all known hoolock gibbon populations in China from 2008 to 2009. We heard 40-43 groups, with a mean group size of 3.9 individuals, and five solitary individuals. Therefore, we estimated the total population to be less than 200 individuals. The population was severely fragmented in 17 locations in three counties, with the biggest subpopulation containing only five family groups. Compared with the population in 1985 and 1994, five subpopulations have declined and gibbons have been extirpated from nine other localities. We discovered two new subpopulations during this survey. Commercial logging, illegal hunting, agricultural encroachment and population fragmentation pose serious threats to the future of *H. leuconedys* in China. An integrative conservation plan including nature reserve establishment/expansion, enforcement of existing laws, conservation education, wild-to-wild translocation, and conservation oriented research are urgently needed to ensure the survival of *H. leuconedys* in China. Gaoligongshan Nature Reserve (GNR) will play a very important role in the conservation of this species. It holds half of the populations of *H. leuconedys* in China, and the forest inside GNR appears adequate to support a large number of gibbons. It may be possible to translocate isolated gibbons into the reserve in the future.

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