

STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE NORTHERN WHITE-CHEEKED CRESTED GIBBON (*NOMASCUS LEUCOGENYS*) IN VIETNAM

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The Critically Endangered northern white-cheeked crested gibbon (*Nomascus leucogenys*) has a historical distribution of occurrence in China, Lao PDR and Vietnam. In Vietnam, limited survey effort in recent years has returned very few records of the species from areas previously thought to be population strongholds. Conservation International conducted nine comprehensive auditory surveys to assess the distribution and status of *N. leucogenys* in three of these strongholds; Pu Huong and Pu Hoat Nature Reserves in Nghe An Province and Xuan Lien Nature Reserve in Thanh Hoa Province. *Nomascus leucogenys* was recorded in only Pu Hoat and Pu Huong Nature Reserves, both with critically low population numbers. Nine gibbon groups were recorded in Pu Hoat Nature Reserve, however, many were located long distances from other groups and did not form part of a larger population. Pu Huong Nature Reserve still possesses a population of at least 7 – 8 groups of the species concentrated in the central area of the reserve. These groups appear to have contiguous territories suggesting that this area is one of the most important locations for the long-term conservation of this species in Vietnam. Current threats to *N. leucogenys* and other wildlife in both nature reserves are hunting, timber logging, gold mining and shifting cultivation. It is necessary to carry out further survey and conservation activities including patrolling, population monitoring, controlling local activities within the nature reserves and long-term study of behavioral ecology of this threatened species. This work was supported by USFWS GACF and Sprague-Nowak SEABI.

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