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STATUS REVIEW AND CONSERVATION ACTION PLANNING FOR HOOLOCK GIBBON

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Although collectively hoolock gibbons (both western *Hoolock hoolock* and eastern *Hoolock leuconedys*) were amongst the least threatened gibbon species, intense pressure in recent decades is likely to have affected this status. Currently they are found in the forested areas of eastern India and Bangladesh to Myanmar and southern China, but from an original ranging habitat of about 168,000 km², it is estimated that by 1987 there was no more than 56,378 km² remaining, representing a 67% decrease. As a result hoolock gibbons have experienced a dramatic population decline. In the early 1970s, a census determined that the population of the species was between 78,000 and 80,000 individuals in Assam, but recent surveys estimate that the present population of hoolock gibbons does not exceed 5,000 individuals. Estimates for other countries within the hoolock gibbon range are, for Bangladesh, less than 200 individuals and in China 100 to 200 individuals. Following the Hoolock Symposium at this Congress, which will provide an update on status in a formal way, this workshop will provide an opportunity for researchers and conservation practitioners working on hoolock to come together to review their status and clearly outline steps for preparing an action plan for the genus. The workshop panel will facilitate a discussion to further update knowledge on status, threats, areas of further work and priorities. This information will form the initial basis of preparing an action plan.

Keywords: hoolock gibbon, conservation, status review, action planning