

TAXONOMY AND HISTORICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE CRESTED GIBBON (GENUS *NOMASCUS*)

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The crested gibbons have traditionally been regarded as a single species, *Hylobates concolor*, containing 6 subspecies (*concolor*, *hainanus*, *lu*, *leucogenys*, *siki*, *gabriellae*). More recent studies using vocal data, morphological data, and DNA sequences suggest that these gibbons should be recognized as a distinct genus (i.e. *Nomascus*) consisting of several species. These include: (1) black crested gibbon (*Nomascus concolor*) from China, Laos, and Vietnam, (2) cao-vit crested gibbon (*Nomascus nasutus*) from China and Vietnam, (3) Hainan crested gibbon (*Nomascus hainanus*) from China, (4) northern white-cheeked crested gibbon (*Nomascus leucogenys*) from China, Laos, and Vietnam, (5) southern white-cheeked crested gibbon (*Nomascus siki*) from Laos and Vietnam, and (6) yellow-cheeked crested gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*) from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Vocal data and DNA sequences produce virtually identical phylogenies suggesting that *hainanus* and *nasutus* represent the most basal clade of the genus, followed by *concolor*, then by *gabriellae*, while *siki* and *leucogenys* are the last species to diverge. Although the male phenotypes of *siki* and *leucogenys* are clearly distinct, preliminary vocal and molecular data suggest a close relationship. The identity of the crested gibbons occurring in a large area encompassing parts of central Vietnam, southern Laos and northeastern Cambodia is uncertain, as these differ in their song from both *gabriellae* and *siki*, but phenotypically resemble *gabriellae*. This may be a new subspecies of *N. gabriellae*. Habitat destruction and hunting resulted in a dramatic reduction of the distribution area of crested gibbons China, but also affect species in other countries, for instance *N. leucogenys* in Vietnam.

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