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REVIEW OF HOOLOCK GIBBON CONSERVATION

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Although collectively hoolock gibbons (both western *Hoolock hoolock* and eastern *Hoolock leuconedys*) were among 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. At present, Myanmar still has large intact areas of habitat suitable for hoolock gibbons with potentially the largest remaining population for the species. Ongoing surveys being undertaken by *People, Resources and Conservation Foundation* with *Fauna & Flora International* and partners will give us an updated assessment of the species abundance, building a foundation for hoolock gibbon conservation in that country. This symposium will provide an opportunity for researchers and conservation practitioners working on hoolock to share experience and knowledge on ongoing hoolock gibbon conservation activities.

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