

THAILAND CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Project Proposal

Title	Community-based conservation action planning and awareness for <i>Hylobates lar carpenteri</i> in northwestern Thailand	
Location	Mae Hong Son, and Chiang Mai provinces, Northwest Thailand	
Date/ duration	February 2015 to December 2015	
Submitted by	Fernando Potess and Saw Blaw Htoo	
Contact person	Fernando Potess, People Resources and Conservation Foundation (PRCF)	
Applicant organization	People Resources and Conservation Foundation, in collaboration with Karen Environmental and Social Action Network (KESAN), and WISE Foundation	
Total budget	THB 180,707.5	CHF 5,493.5

Background

As reported by Geissmann (2007) all gibbon populations are now endangered and threatened with extinction. Conservation actions are essential for the survival of this family of primates. In many cases, ongoing successful interventions have begun with conservation status assessments that have helped prioritize sub-populations and conservation work, and to raise awareness and concern (e.g., Geissmann *et al.*, 2000; Duckworth, 2008) for conservation of target sub-populations.

During the Asiatic Primate Expedition of 1937-1938, 92 specimens of *Hylobates lar* were collected at two sites in northern Thailand: Doi Chiang Dao and Doi Inthanon (Guatelli-Steinberg 2000). Groves later described the subspecies *carpenteri* – Carpenter's Lar – based on these specimens (Groves 1968). The geographical distribution of Carpenter's Lar has been defined as occurring in Eastern Burma, Western Laos, and Northern Thailand". Brandon-Jones *et al* (2004) and Brockelman & Geissmann (2008). Carpenter's Lar (Brockelman & Geissmann 2008) has as its northeastern extent the Mekong River, which is the species boundary with *Nomascus* gibbons. At the northern extent the boundary with *H. l. yunnanensis* roughly follows the China-Myanmar border, and encompasses Myanmar's Shan state east of the Salween, which is the species boundary with Hoolock gibbons (genus Hoolock). No major geographic feature marks the transition between *carpenteri* and *entelloides*, the boundaries are rather arbitrary in central Thailand.

Previous work at proposed site

Surveys into *Hylobates lar carpenteri* in the Ob Luang-Doi Suthep forest complex, west of the Ping River basin in northwest Thailand were undertaken from January to March 2013 (supported by the Gibbon Conservation Alliance), by a team of researchers from the Karen Environmental and Social Action Network (KESAN,) supported by the People Resources and Conservation Foundation (PRCF). The region had not previously been surveyed for gibbons, but previous telephone interviews with communities in the area suggested good populations. Interviews and field surveys lead to estimates of gibbon numbers and status at three study sites, near the villages of Ban Huai Som Poi, Ban Khun Tae, and Ban Kun Win (see Fig 1). The three study areas were located in the same region, with forests between them are degraded but contiguous, much of it under local community management, and direct threats to gibbons are very limited.

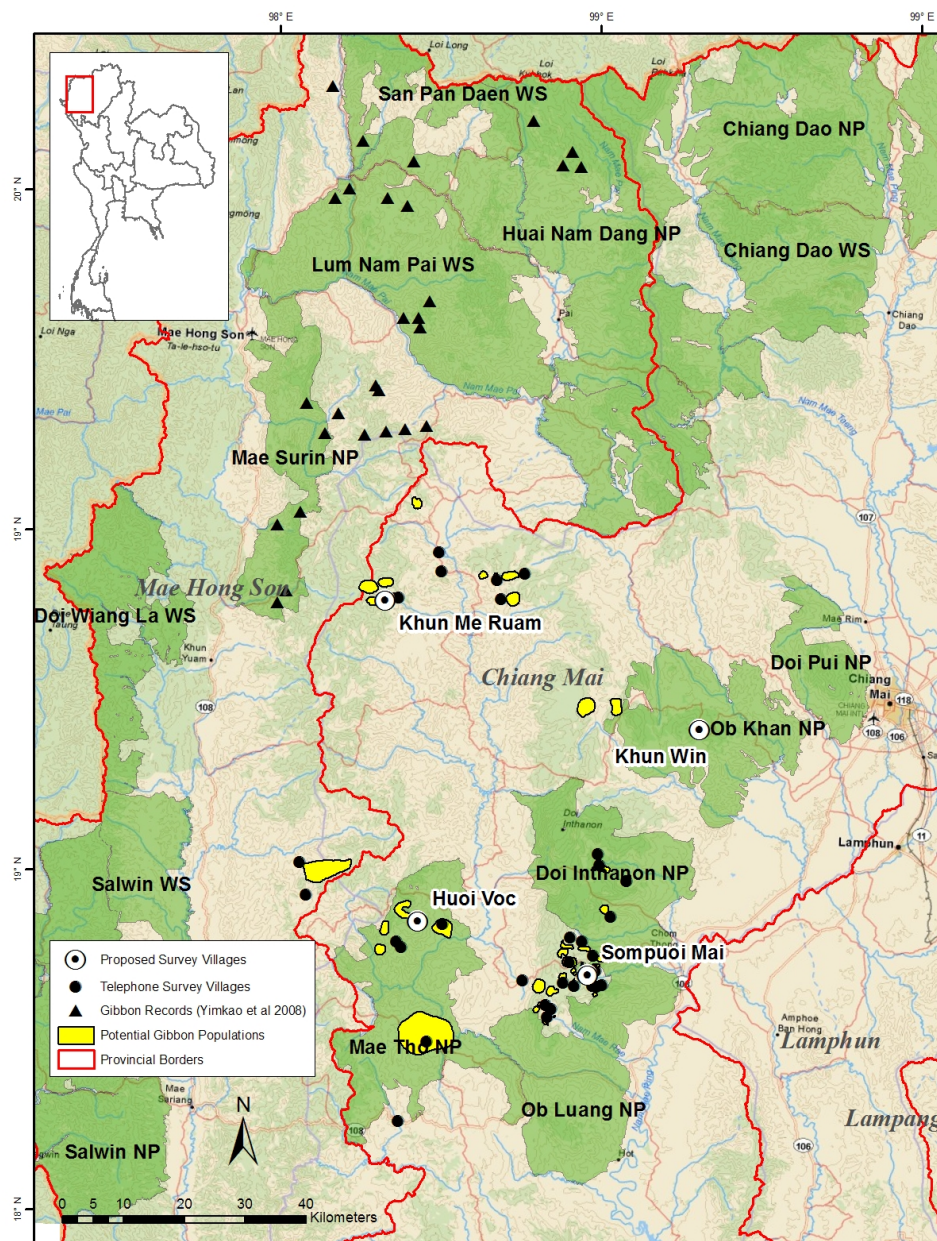


Figure 1. Project location and records of Lar Gibbon in North-western Thailand (M. Grindley/ PRCF). Note: Gibbon Records are approximate and symbols represent only general location of records, not the number of records. 'Potential Gibbon Populations' are approximate areas where telephone interviews in 2011 suggested gibbons were present.

General conclusions of 2013 work

The 2013 research included primary and secondary data collection, with secondary data collected mainly through interviews with local people, and primary data collected through the use of the auditory sampling techniques, conducted from three field sites selected on the basis of inputs by local people. Despite problems with data quality from auditory surveys, the presence of Carpenter's Lar Gibbon (*Hylobates lar carpenteri*) was confirmed at all three survey areas. Gibbons were heard from all listening posts and on almost all days, which lead to deduce that the species remains widespread in the area. Gibbons are not subject to direct persecution, and remaining habitat is not at particular risk from logging. The main threat is agricultural expansion leading to forest fragmentation, and the likely isolation of gibbon groups. Addressing this problem through improved village-level land use planning, founded on improved awareness and community engagement, were identified as priority actions, among other. Several of the identified follow-on actions are the focus of the proposal herein.

Context, aim, and objectives

Context of activities

The Karen people say “Kaw yu pa thee t khu”, which means, “When one gibbon dies in the forest, seven forests become silent”. This provides an idea on the Karen peoples’ belief that gibbons go hand in hand with forests, and how they see how as large areas of forests become lonely without the sounds of the gibbon’s call. Since humans and gibbons were once able to live in harmony with each other, Karen people have a variety of beliefs and folklore involving gibbons. Killing and eating gibbons is prohibited, as it is believed that doing so will bring suffering upon the poacher, their family, and the community. Villagers are told at a young age that hunting gibbons brings discord into the community.

Karen communities in the range of the carpenteri gibbon in Thailand show a strong interest in focused gibbon conservation projects, and indeed have formed several organizations to do so. One of these is WISE Foundation, a partner into implementing the project herein, and participant in previous related activities leading towards the identification of the follow-up conservation activities proposed herein.

Project aim and immediate objectives

Aim

The project aims to improve the conservation status of *Hylobates lar carpenteri* in northwest Thailand through community-based conservation initiatives.

Immediate objectives

The project comprises has four immediate objectives, all based on survey results and consultations during 2013 work at the target site. It centers at ten target villages in four districts, the same group of villages subject to the 2013 surveys, but where more than four groups of Lar Gibbon were reported. Project immediate objectives are presented below.

Immediate Objective One

Training on conservation action planning and phonological monitoring

1.1 Training on conservation action planning, particularly for production of participatory village-based gibbon conservation action plans, to be drafted on a district basis (Mae Chaem, Chon Thon, Mae Wang, Ma La Noi, and Mae Chaem for eight corresponding villages).

1.2 Training on conduction of phenological survey and monitoring, to gain knowledge on the local distribution of gibbon food sources and their flowering, fruiting, seedling, seasons with the aim of protecting these sources and to practice enrichment planting in forest gaps at gibbon population sites.

Immediate Objective Two

Conservation action planning to safeguard the gibbon and its habitat

2.1 Facilitate production of village-based gibbon conservation action plans at eight villages (Mae Chaem x4, Chon Thon x2, Mae Wang x1, and Ma La Noi x1, with likely production of six conservation action plans, one per target district.

2.2 Dissemination of priority actions as a result of participatory action planning, via dedicated posters produced by schoolchildren, in collaboration with local schools, through an art competition with a gibbon conservation subject. Winning artwork will be circulated though a calendar distributed in the region.

Immediate Objective Three

Documentation of cultural traditions and relations with gibbon populations

3.1 Document culture and traditional values with respect to gibbons from village elders, with results collated into a in-house publication for distribution to Karen villages and schools in the region. Documentation will be presented in

local schools, as part of and, to prompt the proposed art competition on gibbon conservation theme.

**Immediate
Objective Four**

Sketch mapping locations for enrichment planting in gibbon habitat

4.1 Conduct participatory sketch mapping, as part of the gibbon conservation action planning, defining key locations for enrichment planting with multipurpose tree species and those comprising gibbon food sources. Habitat enrichment locations will be identified, and budget permitting undertaken (possibly through alternative sources of funding), through gap planting in forests close to villages.

Description

The project aims to strengthen local communities capacities and involvement of the endangered Lar Gibbon at eight villages in northwestern Thailand, where previous work on village-based gibbon surveys took place during 2013 (see Table 1, below). Local communities themselves have proposed most of the project activities on the basis of the 2013 work.

Table 1. Villages selected for gibbon conservation action

Village	Tract	District	Province	Groups
Mae Ngan Luam	Ban Hin Phon	Mae Chaem	Chiang Mai	05
Huay Pa	Mae Na Chon	Mae Chaem	Chiang Mai	10
Khun Thet	Doi Kaew	Chon Thon	Chiang Mai	05
Huay Som Poi	Doi Kaew	Chon Thon	Chiang Mai	05
Khun Win	Mae Win	Mae Wang	Chiang Mai	04
Nong Muon/Mae Chit	Mae Na Chang	Ma La Noi	Mae Hong Son	06
Mae Kong	Mae Suk	Mae Chaem	Chiang Mai	04
Hoi Bon	Mae Suk	Mae Chaem	Chiang Mai	04

Conservation action planning

Although local communities have shown a vested interest in conservation of Lar Gibbon, there is a lack of conservation action planning and sound technical basis to prepare and to conduct objective and systematic conservation work. The project will therefore equip communities from the eight target villages, through training by doing, with knowledge on conservation action planning, helping them to identify issues relevant to Lar Gibbon, its habitat, and the natural environment in their landscape.

In a participatory manner and through meetings and workshops, Gibbon Conservation Action Plans will be produced on a district basis for the target villages. The communities themselves will define contents of the action plans, while project staff will facilitate and guide the process into successful completion, inclusive of collating all information into a document format for further guidance. The approach has been used by PRCF in Vietnam and Indonesia, equipping local people with knowledge and guidance on conservation action, which is community-led, objective, and attainable within a determined timeframe.

The conservation action plan process is undertaken through as a series of participatory workings between the project personnel, local communities, and if relevant, protected areas officials. The species conservation action process entails five steps, as shown in Table 2, below.

Table 2. Basic species conservation action plan process

Process steps	Activity/ Outputs
1. First meeting	Project with District/ Villages
2. First workshop on village participatory assessment of gibbon conservation status and needs	Definition of threats/ solutions/ activities
	Draft conservation action plan contents
	Baseline definition with stakeholders
	First draft conservation action plan document
3. Second village meeting to review of action plan and revisions of draft document	Meeting preparations
	Presentation of action plan to stakeholders for comments and review
	Review of draft conservation action plan document as per stakeholder comments and suggestions
4. Second workshop for finalization of action plan	Endorsement of final action plan prescriptions by stakeholders

The species action plan will comprise five-year conservation activities, and define stakeholders, their involvement and responsibilities, and possible funding sources, including those of local government, non-government organizations, private industry, donors, and local communities themselves. A one-year immediate term will identify priority actions that can be supported by the stakeholders without additional external funding. The additional four years in the five-year plan will include defined priority actions that may or may not need additional sources of funding.

An example of activities within a four-year frame would be the community's suggested work (resulting from 2013 work at the site) to restore forest habitat to link remnant forests in the landscape that hold isolated gibbon groups. This forest restoration activity is beyond the scope of the project herein, given the likely high costs beyond its budget, but it is nevertheless a key action to ensure the long-term viability of extant gibbon populations in the landscape; additional funding will be needed for this essential forest linkage work.

The action plan will include possible sources of funding for particular activities, and available funding pledges if applicable, particularly from local government authorities or private industry. Typical contents of a species conservation action plan are presented below, in Table 3.

Table 3. Typical contents of species conservation action plan

1. Justification for the species conservation action plan
2. Status of the species and its habitat in the site / landscape
3. Forest usage, management, conservation activities
4. Previous and present conservation action towards the species at the site/ landscape
5. Threats to the species and its habitat at the site/ landscape
6. Opportunities for improved conservation at the site/ landscape
7. Identified conservation actions and timeframe (one-year immediate and five-year mid-term)
8. Stakeholders, their roles and responsibilities (per identified actions)
9. Implementation budgets (per identified actions on one-year and five-year terms)

Phenological studies

The project will establish collaboration links with the Forest Restoration and Research Unit of Chiang Mai University Department of Biology, to support phenological studies and habitat restoration work. In first instance, several phenology teams from local villagers will be identified and trained to identify, locate, and monitor gibbon food sources. Once identified, lists of food sources will be prepared, through herbarium samples and photographs, and thereafter identified at site or through assistance by scholars from Chiang Mai University.

Phenology monitoring routes will be defined in the forest, and maps of gibbon food species will be drafted for ease of periodical monitoring sessions. Phenology pro-forma will be produced to facilitate data collection in terms of species types, location, source gibbon of food material, and flowering, fruiting, seeding, and wildlings production. Training to villager phenology groups will be provided on an on-hands basis, and by a scholar or research student from Chiang Mai University. Proposed aspects of collaboration with the university include a master's student conducting research on phenology or associated aspects at the project sites.

The above phenology studies will help to protect species that are sources of gibbon food, by making people aware of their value to the primate. They will also identify types and possible sources of seeds and wildling material that could be used in nurseries for forest enrichment planting and assisted natural forest regeneration, or for reforestation in target forest gaps in the landscape. Although the latter will take place through other than the project herein, these activities are the foundation of needed forest restoration work.

Sketch mapping of target enrichment planting locations

As part of the gibbon conservation action planning purpose, the project will facilitate the process of sketch-mapping key gibbon location sites and needed forest connectivity in the landscape. Crucial aspects of sketch maps will be to identify remnant forest blocks holding the largest number of gibbon groups, and correlate this with distances between forest blocks to assess the feasibility of forest restoration initiatives. Sketch maps will be collated using geographical information systems to identify distances between forest blocks, geographical and vegetation gaps, and to define priority areas for forest restoration work.

Results of the above assessments will be included within the gibbon conservation action plans, for prioritization of implementation needs within the next five years. Sketch mapping activities, together with results of phenology studies, are linked to future conservation interventions at the site, as likely prescribed in the gibbon conservation action plans, given previously voiced concerns by the community.

Documentation of cultural traditions

Given the important function that cultural tradition plays in how people interact with their natural environment, including forest resources and their values, at request of local communities the project holds a component to document cultural traditions and relationships between Karen people and the environment. During implementation of gibbon survey work in 2013, local stakeholder communities complained about how cultural tradition, knowledge, and values concerning gibbon and human interaction was increasingly fading.

In response to the above, and acknowledging the value that such information could bring to gibbon and habitat conservation work in the region, The project will document oral history from local Karen elders pertaining to their values regarding natural resources, forests, biodiversity, and gibbons. Results from documentation will be collated into an in-house publication, to be distributed to local Karen villages and

schools. Assay competitions will be organized with local schoolteachers as a result of the document on cultural conservation traditions, and an artwork competition will be organized to disseminate children's interpretations regarding conservation of the Lar Gibbon and its habitat in the region, including cultural aspects imbedded in gibbon conservation.

Table 2. Indicative schedule of project activities

Activity	Timeframe											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Training												
Training on gibbon conservation action planning												
Training on phenological survey/ monitoring												
Conservation planning												
Village gibbon conservation action plans												
Phenological survey and monitoring												
Dissemination of action plans and planting sketch maps												
Documentation												
Collection of conservation-related cultural traditions												
Collation of cultural data and in-house publication												
Mapping												
Sketch mapping of gibbon locations												
Sketch mapping of key enrichment planting locations												
Awareness												
Schoolchildren art competition on gibbon conservation												
Collation of artwork and production of 2106 calendar												

Project outputs

Each project activity is programmed to deliver tangible outputs, which will be used during the course of the project and some of them in subsequent conservation management action at the site. Project outcomes include the following:

- Training materials/ guidance for conservation action planning (village conservation action plans)
- Training and survey materials for phenology studies and monitoring (guide and monitoring sheets)
- Five gibbon conservation action plans (one per district, some including two villages)
- List of priority actions shared amongst villages and collated into individual and a single volume
- Schoolchildren posters on priority gibbon conservation actions
- 2016 calendar on gibbon conservation priority actions
- In-house publication on collated cultural traditional values in relation to Lar Gibbon
- Sketch maps on key sites for enrichment planting/ habitat enrichment with gibbon food species

Partners and staff

Overall project technical direction and monitoring will be provided by Dr Fernando Potess, who has over 25 years of experience in the design, management, and implementation of conservation and development projects, and presently oversees and provides overall technical direction for biodiversity conservation programs of PRCF in five countries of Southeast Asia. Dr. Potess holds a PhD in Natural Resources Management, a Master of Science degree in Conservation Biology, and a Masters Degree in Wildlife Management.

Technical coordination will be provided by Mr Saw Blaw Htoo (KESAN), who has considerable experience in gibbon conservation, currently coordinates implementation of two PRCF-KESAN projects in Karen State (Myanmar), and previously carried out two projects 2010 and 2013 funded by the Gibbon Conservation Alliance for gibbon conservation in Karen state. Mr. Htoo will also be responsible for overseeing data analysis, mapping, and field reporting. Mr Htoo holds a Master of Science degree on environmental conservation from Kasertat University.

Field activities will be supervised by Mr Waiying Thongbue, who has 20 years of experience working with the Karen Network for Culture and Environment (KNCE) in 15 provinces in Thailand. He is member of the Board advisor for WISE Foundation, and was the researcher who compiled the database of gibbon records from 35 villages, from which target villages for his project are drawn. Mr. Thongbue has a master's degree in sustainable land use management and planning from Chiang Mai University, and has a strong interest in promoting sustainable resource management in Thai Karen areas based on indigenous knowledge, through community empowerment, cultural preservation, and research.

In the field, one field assistant from WISE Foundation will help facilitate activities, with identified local community leaders in each of the project target villages facilitating participatory action planning. Following training, the field researcher will lead on certain fieldwork aspects with supervision from Mr. Thongbue.

Budget (THB)

Item Description	Unit	Units	Unit Cost (TBH)	Total Cost (TBH)	GCA Grant (CHF)
A Project Personnel					
1.1 Project Direction and Monitoring (FP/PRCF)	Per-Day	12	16,000.0	PRCF In-kind	PRCF In-kind
1.2 Project Technical Coordination/ training (BH/ KESAN)	Per-Day	10	350.0	3,500.0	105.4
1.3 Field implementation (WT/WISE)	Per-Day	200	300.0	60,000.0	1,806.0
1.4 Field implementation Assistant (WISE)	Per-Day	40	250.0	10,000.0	301.0
1.5 Field implementation Villages (6 days/village x 8)	Per-Day	48	200.0	9,600.0	289.0
Sub-total A:				83,100.0	2,501.3
B Field Implementation					
2 Transportation					
2.1 Public transportation	LumpSum	1	3,500.0	3,500.0	105.4
2.2 Field motorbike petrol	Vehic-Day	200	50.0	10,000.0	301.0
3 Perdiems and accommodation					
3.1 Field accommodation	LumpSum	1	2,000.0	2,000.0	60.2
3.2 Telecommunications	LumpSum	1	1,500.0	1,500.0	45.2
3.3 Consumables	LumpSum	1	5,000.0	5,000.0	150.5
4 Logistics					
4.1 Village meeting costs	Meeting	8	500.0	4,000.0	120.4
4.2 Gibbon action plan workshops (3 per district)	Workshop	12	2,000.0	24,000.0	722.4
Sub-total C:				50,000.0	1,505.0
C Materials					
5.1 Training materials	LumpSum	1	3,000.0	3,000.0	90.3
5.2 Awareness materials printing	LumpSum	1	5,000.0	5,000.0	150.5
5.3 Art competition utensils	LumpSum	1	5,000.0	5,000.0	150.5
5.4 Calendar printing	LumpSum	1	6,000.0	6,000.0	180.6
5.5 Sketch mapping materials	Village	8	500.0	4,000.0	120.4
Sub-total C:				23,000.0	692.3
D Other Costs					
6.1 Office rent	LumpSum	1			
6.2 Project accounting	Per-Day	6	2,000.0	12,000.0	361.2
6.3 Administration overheads (7.5%)				12,607.5	379.5
Sub-total D:				24,607.5	740.7
Grand Total:	(THB)			180,707.5	
	(CHF)	0.0301			5,439.3
	(USD)	0.0304			5,493.5

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