

REINTRODUCTION OF PILEATED GIBBONS (*Hylobates pileatus*) TO THE ANGKOR PROTECTED FOREST, SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA

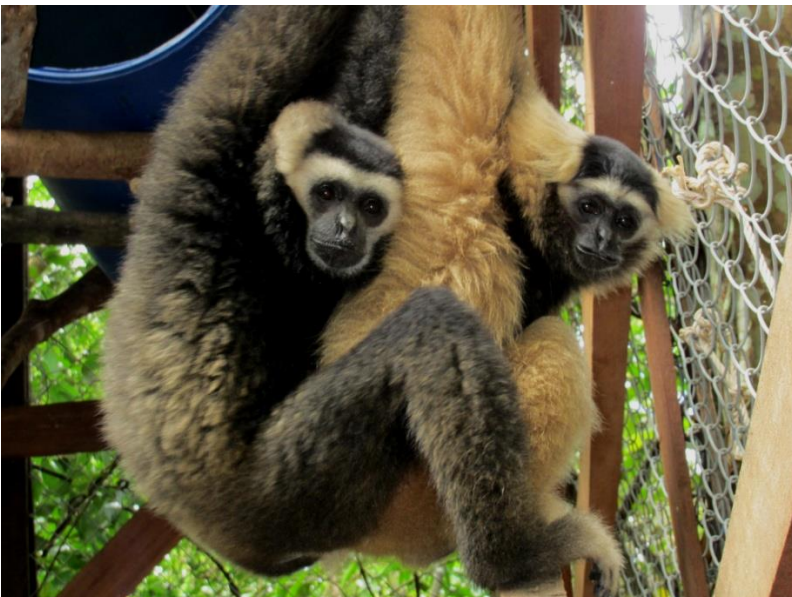
Target species	Pileated Gibbon <i>Hylobates pileatus</i>
Project location	UNESCO World Heritage Site Angkor Protected Forest Siem Reap, Cambodia
Project duration	September 2016 – September 2017
Name of organisation	Wildlife Alliance in partnership with; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority for the Protection of the Site and Management of the Region of Angkor (APSARA), the administrative body in charge of research, protection and conservation of cultural heritage • Cambodian Forestry Administration (FA), a Government body mandated to oversee Protected and State Forests in Cambodia
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Organisation mission	Direct action on the ground to protect wildlife, preserve habitats and alleviate poverty, by partnering with local communities and governments.
Organisation background	<p>Wildlife Alliance, founded in 1995 originally as the Global Survival Network, is an international 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with current in-country programs in Cambodia and completed projects in Thailand, Myanmar, India, Ecuador and Russia.</p> <p>Wildlife Alliance provides a holistic response to the illegal wildlife trafficking trades in Cambodia, through wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and release programs. The Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT) is comprised of military police and Government officials and has rescued over 63,000 live animals since 2001. Most animals are healthy and able to be immediately released into suitable protected habitats, but those that are too young, sick or injured are taken to Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre (PTWRC) where our team of animal husbandry specialists and veterinarians provide rehabilitation for later release under our monitored soft release program. Animals with permanent physical or psychological injury, or no safe release</p>

	<p>habitat, are given a permanent home at the centre. No wild animal is ever turned away and most would be dead without our intervention.</p> <p>To ensure safe release sites for our animals we run complimentary forestry programs, including law enforcement for protected areas, zoning, demarcation and boundary compliance and reforestation. We work with communities living within or near those protected areas, as well as those living below the poverty line who rely on natural resources for survival. We operate youth and community education programs, and provide sustainable alternative livelihoods to logging and poaching, including Community-Based Eco-Tourism.</p> <p>These programs combine to protect Cambodia's rich biodiversity for future generations.</p>
Project Goal	<p>Increase wild populations of Endangered pileated gibbons in Cambodia through the release, monitoring and protection of a sustainable breeding population in the Angkor Protected Forest.</p>
Project Summary	<p>Cambodia is the world's stronghold for pileated gibbons, but numbers have been in decline for the past few decades due to significant habitat loss. The Angkor Release Project is an ambitious program that aims to bring expatriated wildlife back to the forest surrounding the Angkor temple complex. These are some of the oldest forests in Cambodia and while overhunting in the twentieth century decimated wildlife populations, its status as a UNESCO World Heritage site now ensures protection. Surveys in 2006 established gibbons were locally extinct in the area and were excellent candidates for the reintroduction program. Collaboration between the authorities and Wildlife Alliance began.</p> <p>Despite strong anti-trafficking laws, the illegal wildlife trades still operate in Cambodia and gibbons are rescued from the hunting or pet trades. Most are hand-raised and unafraid of people, making them unsuitable for release, however they are valuable individuals for our captive breeding program and many have been paired and mated. Second generation captive-bred, parent-reared offspring are wary of people and have proved to be good candidates for the soft release program at Angkor.</p> <p>In December 2013, a pair of unrelated captive-bred pileated gibbons were released after a 7 month acclimation period in their enclosure. They thrived in their new forest home and in October 2014, gave birth of their first baby, a triumph for this unique reintroduction program.</p> <p>In December 2014, a trio of endangered silvered langurs was successfully released in the area.</p>

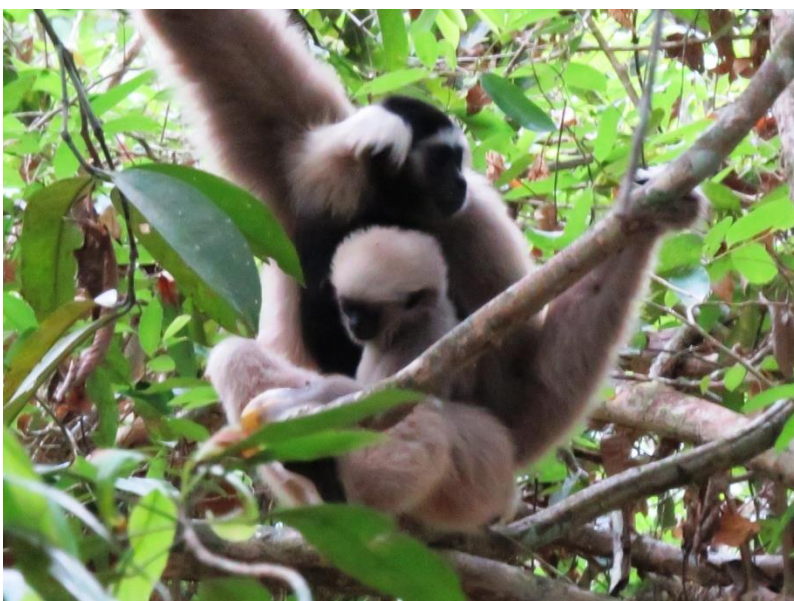
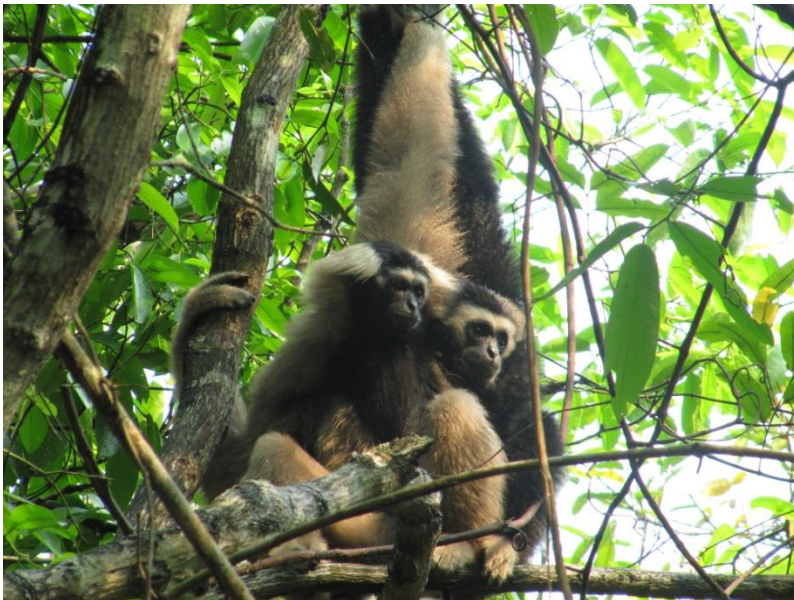
	<p>In June 2015, a second pair of pileated gibbons were successfully released. The female was captive-bred while the male arrived at the rescue center as a wild adult. They spent 11 months in their release enclosure to ensure they were closely bonded and fully acclimated to their new surroundings before release.</p> <p>Due to the strong working relationship Wildlife Alliance has established with the two oversight bodies FA and APSARA, and the care that has been taken to implement all relevant release protocols, the project has progressed well and we are confident of its continued success.</p>
Project Method	<p>Most gibbon conservation work deals with the preservation and protection of gibbon habitats. Other pilot projects carrying out the rehabilitation and release of different species of gibbons in Thailand (Phuket) and Indonesia (Kalimantan, Java and Sumatra) have had mixed results. Problems have occurred either due to released gibbons becoming accustomed to humans and attacking people who entered their area, or release sites being too close to the territories of wild gibbons. This project builds on lessons learned from these pilots.</p> <p>Pileated gibbons are monogamous and territorial, each pair requiring around 30 hectares, which they defend against intrusion by other gibbons. For successful releases, bonded pairs of gibbons with appropriate behaviours must be introduced into forested areas vacant of gibbons.</p> <p>WA staff conducted surveys of Cambodian forests west of the River Mekong to find suitable release sites for gibbons. Surveys indicated the only area safe enough that did not already contain this species was the Angkor Temple Forest Complex. The total forest area is 3,780 hectares of evergreen forest, with another 500 hectares of semi-evergreen forest, much of this ideal gibbon habitat. Areas that are frequented by tourists, such as Angkor Wat, are avoided in the release process.</p> <p>Suitable pairs of captive-bred, parent-reared gibbons are brought from PTWRC. Our pre-release rehabilitation enclosures are closed to the public to minimise human contact. They are 1 hectare forested areas which encourage brachiating and other natural behaviours. Appropriate gibbons will then be transported to a release enclosure constructed within the Angkor Protected Forest, where they will acclimatise for an appropriate length of time. Following this, a release door in the top of the enclosure will be opened, providing the gibbons access to the forest.</p> <p>The released gibbons will be provided with supplementary food for as long as necessary and will be monitored using visual observation as the primary means of monitoring. The first two pairs of gibbons were released using these protocols and are thriving.</p>

Funding request	<p>\$4000 – release enclosure construction, including materials and labour</p> <p>\$300 – transport of gibbons from PTWRC to Siem Reap</p> <p>\$1800 – food during the six month acclimation period</p> <p>\$500 – health checks and medicines from veterinarian for 1 year</p> <p>\$2400 – additional keeper salary for 1 year</p> <p>TOTAL \$9000</p>
Alternate funding sources	To ensure the success of this crucial project, we have considered alternative funding sources. We have access to unrestricted funding from donors and while it is allocated to other projects for the year, funding could be redirected with donor agreement.
Continuation of project post GCA funding	This project is vital for the survival of pileated gibbons and other species within Cambodia. Approval for release of further gibbon pairs, silvered langurs, deer species and small carnivores has been granted by the relevant authorities to continue this groundbreaking project.

2013 – FIRST GIBBON PAIR ACCLIMATING IN RELEASE ENCLOSURE



2014 – FIRST GIBBON PAIR POST RELEASE IN FOREST AND WITH BABY



2015 - SECOND GIBBON PAIR ACCLIMATING AND POST RELEASE

