

The **SILVERY GIBBON PROJECT**

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May 2011

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members and Friends

It is with a great deal of pride that we bring our 20th Anniversary newsletter to you, and acknowledge the generous support of our members and friends over two decades of Silvery Gibbon Project (SGP) activities. On a personal note, I would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of Dianne Gates, whom, along with her late husband Reg, established SGP back in 1991. Who knows if we would be here today without the dedication, compassion and generosity of spirit shown by Di, Reg and their team. As most of you are aware, Di continues to work tirelessly for her beloved Silvery Gibbons and we are all honoured to carry on this great work. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our current and past committee members who have helped to keep the organisation alive and growing over such a long period.

As one of the longest standing not for profit conservation groups in Western Australia, SGP is not only proud of what we have achieved for Silvery Gibbons but we are also proud of the fact that this group set an example which was to be followed by so many others. SGP demonstrated that if you have a passion for a particular species you really can make a difference, and it is encouraging to see so many active and effective wildlife conservation groups originating and operating in Perth.

Of course, there remains work to be done, and our support for the conservation of Critically Endangered species is now more important than ever. We hope that you will take the time to reflect on what has been achieved to date, not only for SGP but for all of the groups

working hard in their efforts to raise awareness and funds for wildlife, both internationally and here in Australia. We hope that upon reflection, our members and friends will find renewed enthusiasm and generosity to support the challenges that lie ahead of us. Together, we can all make a difference and ensure the long term survival of species and habitat.

Clare Campbell
President, Silvery Gibbon Project

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If you are not a member, please, join today,
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**REMEMBER, YOUR SUPPORT IS SAVING A
SPECIES**

**SILVERY GIBBON PROJECT IS
CONSERVATION IN ACTION**

**PS, SEND US A DONATION BEFORE
30 JUNE 2011**

**AND YOU CAN CLAIM THAT DONATION
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(REFER MEMBERSHIP FORM ON BACK PAGE)

COMMITTEE PROFILE: DIANNE GATES

Dianne and Reg Gates (late), along with six others, founded the Silvery Gibbon Project 20 years ago this month. Dianne was born in Tauranga, New Zealand, and as a young person enjoyed walks in the local bush and always had a keen interest in the country areas around her town. Travelling to Europe and meeting Reg in Greece in the early 1970s meant a big change in her life's direction. Coming back to NZ, Reg and Dianne started their Zoo Keeping training at Auckland Zoo in 1975. This period, in NZ and Australian Zoos was a time of change, with the emergence of better educated and dedicated people wanting to be involved in Zoos and improving the care of their animals. Dianne and Reg were among a newly growing movement of practical conservationists encouraging Zoos to take conservation action beyond their own councils and boundaries. After, travelling in East Africa, and managing a small zoo in Malawi for two years, their commitment to wildlife and it's urgent conservation became their main focus. Many of the East African countries are truly spectacular, but Botswana has a very special charm and is still Dianne's favourite.



Dianne enjoying her 60th
(Photo by Jenny Sumpton)

In 1985 Dianne and Reg migrated to Australia, and Reg took up a position at Perth Zoo caring for Primates. Dianne worked various keeping contracts at the zoo, and in 1989 qualified as a Docent. In 1991 they were two of the six

founding members of the Silvery Gibbon Project, where Dianne has maintained her keen interest and invested a lot of energy in promoting the plight of the species. The first initiative of SGP was to raise US\$10,000 to undertake a census of the species. It was a pivotal start, and assisted planning of all future efforts.

Dianne and Reg were among the leaders of a conservation movement, encouraging zoos to educate their visitors about "the animal, its native habitat, its dignity and its right to space on this shared earth". Leading our visitors and staff from the curiosity type displays of exotic animals to inspire them to become actively involved in environmental issues, breeding programs for endangered species, and '*in situ*' conservation programs.

Reg's passing in 1999 was a huge shock and loss, and SGP had a very quiet year. However, Dianne recovered and went on to lead the SGP through some excellent years of education, fund raising and progress In Java. These past couple of years Dianne has encouraged younger members of SGP to take a more leading role in the organisation, but she continues to work in support of the Silvery Gibbon Project. All members of the Committee are grateful for the years of dedicated work she has given the conservation movement, and wish her well in the years ahead.

20 YEARS OF THE SILVERY GIBBON PROJECT

This issue of the newsletter marks the 20th anniversary of Silvery Gibbon Project Incorporated; the only conservation organisation dedicated exclusively to the protection of the critically endangered Silvery Gibbon of Java, Indonesia; also commonly known as the Javan Gibbon (*Hylobates moloch*). In this 20 years the conservation status of the Javan Gibbon has been highlighted to a greater extent within the global conservation movement and the public at large. The Silvery Gibbon Project has been a leading force in this campaign, and continues to lead initiatives in '*in-situ*' conservation for this species. Below is a brief history of how the organisation got off the ground, its early activists and humble beginnings; including comments from founding member Dianne Gates.

Dianne: In the 1980s the public and conservation groups around the world became increasingly aware of the plight of Orang-utans. As deserved as this was, the plight of a fellow Indonesian primate species, Javan Gibbons, was even more dire. Yet few were aware that it faced possible extinction within a couple of decades. While orang-utans gained so much coverage, these endangered gibbons from our neighbouring country were defenceless against the onslaught of habitat destruction, but had no one to take up their cause.

At the 1990 Australian Primate Society conference in Adelaide, in-situ conservation became the major topic of discussion. Perth Zoo representatives Dr Rosemary Markham and Reg Gates, encouraged by Roland Wirth, Chairman of the Species Survival Commission, a Committee of the IUCN, agreed to pursue in-situ conservation projects. Within a few months Roland proposed to Reg and Rosemary at Perth Zoo that they undertake a 'Biological survey in Central Java with special focus on endemic primate species'. Perth Zoo was at the time, the only (ARAZPA) zoo to maintain breeding Silvery Gibbons. Many at the zoo saw the important link between captive breeding programs and in-situ conservation. In no time Perth Zoo primate keepers, Docents and other zoo staff, together with the Australian Primate Society began to raise funds for the survey, and out of this coalition of activists and carers was formed the rudimentary Silvery Gibbon Project; Reg Gates becoming its first Chairperson in June 1991.

From the beginning, enthusiasm was electric. Docents and staff at the zoo, along with anyone they could convince to support them, began giving public talks – first at the Zoo itself – holding raffles, chocolate sales, t-shirts, notepads and cards; and drawing up our first Silvery Gibbon Project logo by Martin Thompson.

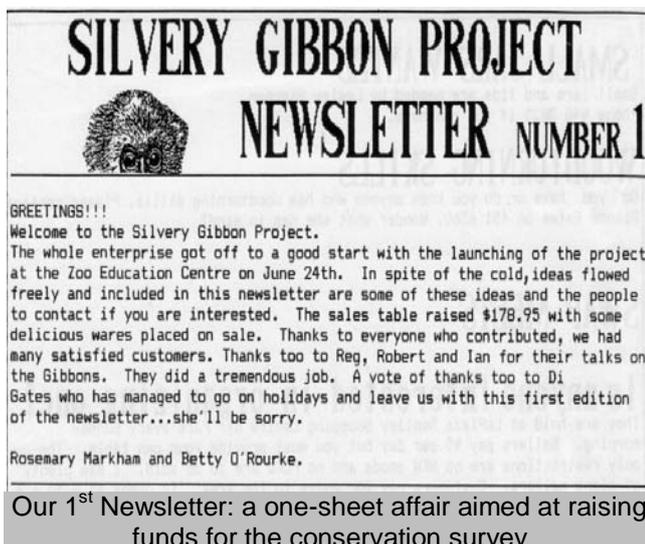


Martin Thompson's Logo

Over the next 18 months the newly formed SGP maintained a campaign of community education, combined with fund-raising, raising a total of \$27,000. The survey was fully funded and completed in 1994. The results of the survey were, however, alarming. The decimation of habitat had reduced surviving wild populations of Javan Gibbons to a patchwork of segregated communities, some of which were too low to continue breeding and being sustained in fragmented enclaves of forest.

Funds were then raised for a scientific workshop to study the viability of population and habitat for both Javan Gibbons and the Javan Langur, a tree-canopy dwelling monkey which shares much of the same forest habitat as Javan Gibbons. This workshop was part of an internationally supported PHVA project (Population and Habitat Viability Assessment), involving Indonesian scientists and researchers from the global community. It was a landmark development in international conservation efforts for an Indonesian species.

The PHVA confirmed the sad emerging scenario that populations were under enormous danger as a result of habitat loss and population fragmentation. For Javan Gibbons, the wild population was estimated to be as low as 300-400 individuals, scattered in small groups separated from each other, rendering populations vulnerable. As depressing as these findings were, it provided raw data that could be taken to the public and the international conservation community as a call for urgent action. The resolve of SGP became hardened; and its support base began to attract members of



the public who previously had no experience or first-hand knowledge of gibbons.

Along with members of the public, artists and academics gave freely of their time to support new campaigns by SGP.



Dianne Gates at Gunung Halimun National Park

SGP also resolved to continue raising funds, 100% of which would be put towards conservation, with priority given to in-situ projects. This included forming cooperative relationships with Indonesian based conservation organisations and relevant government authorities. Notably, the Silvery Gibbon Project would support Gunung Halimun National Park and the Indonesian Park authorities in conservation efforts to protect Javan Gibbons and their natural forest habitat.

The SGP has always been a small organisation, but its support base continued to grow. The SGP had started as a zoo based conservation organisation, but one clearly based on the principles of in-situ conservation. Dianne Gates says of the early days, "The buzz around the zoo was incredible". Docents got behind the project, and other keepers saw the potential to form similar in-situ conservation based organisations. "The Australian Orang-utan Project followed in our footsteps", says Dianne, "and so did others soon after". SGP lead the way in those early days.

In 2002, after some period of planning, the Javan Gibbon Centre was established in West Java, specifically to cater for captive gibbons to be rehabilitated back into the wild, or if individual animals were unfit to be released, to provide a high standard of care and nurturing for them.



A family of Silvery (Javan) Gibbons

This Indonesian initiative was, from the beginning, primarily supported by Silvery Gibbon Project. Raising funds for the Centre and providing professional veterinary, husbandry and other animal welfare and conservation skills was the key component of our activities. The centre has been, and remains one of the major focuses of our organisation – an on-the-ground facility dedicated solely to in-situ conservation of Javan Gibbons. Starting with just six gibbons, the centre has grown in size and expertise, and has become a significant flagship conservation centre in Indonesia. Last year the Centre successfully released its first pair of gibbons back into the wild; and had their first infant born to an established pair, both great achievements by the Centre in its collaborative efforts with SGP.

Over a 20 year period the SGP has given public talks, visited schools, held stalls, film nights and art auctions, raised funds and generally kept up the message that we can make a difference. Conservation matters, and it is not impossible. In the past year or so the SGP has been reaching out to other conservation projects based in Indonesia and elsewhere, drawing on links to improve international cooperation on gibbon conservation. There is no end in sight to this; indeed it's as if things are just beginning to move.



Mulya (JGC) and Karen (SGP) outside the Javan Gibbon Centre



First baby gibbon at the Centre

And what does Dianne say after 20 years in the organisation.

A lot of awareness has been raised about the status of Javan Gibbons, and about their habitat; but the same problems are still there. Habitat destruction. There are more people in Indonesia who are aware, too, but there's a continuing problem with what priorities they give conservation, and how they perceive it in relation to other important issues, such as the economy. But I know the conservation message is slowly getting through. We have seen the collaboration of Indonesian scientists with researchers from elsewhere, and we have inspired other organisations to take up the banner of in-situ conservation. There is room for optimism. I think we have achieved some milestones, but there's more to be done.

We end this article with a statement by Dianne:

“FROM LITTLE THINGS, BIG THINGS GROW”

To quote the wonderful song by Paul Kelly, the role of the SGP has been to grow the Species so that it survives into the future. It is with great pride that I see the Silvery Gibbon Project, after such small beginnings, grow to become the confident, successful and energetic project that I have encouraged and supported over these 20 years. So many people had confidence in us from the start, and without that, we would not be the SGP of today. I can still remember my excitement and thrill when the first \$5 note was sent to the PO Box at Como, it came from an anonymous donor, and I shared the news with Reg. That special person, become one of many, to share their hard earned money to help SGP

realise their dreams and their goals. And they trusted us to do it!!

I wish to say here in this special issue of the SGP newsletter that I am so proud of Clare Campbell, Silvery Gibbons' leader of today. She has been leading SGP with intelligence, compassion and clear direction for the last five years. Her love of all gibbons and especially Silveries is strong, and I have great confidence that SGP will continue its success, growth and well researched initiatives into the future.

As always, I sign off with 'THANKS' to you all for your support, assistance, money, encouragement and wonderful friendship through the years.

With pride, Dianne Gates

REVIEW OF SILVERY GIBBON PROJECT CONSTITUTION

As this issue of the newsletter goes to print, the SGP Committee is currently reviewing our Constitution. It has served us well for 20 years, however the Committee have decided that it was time for a revamp.

It is intended that a new draft of the Constitution will be easier to read and be understood by the membership. When the draft is complete, a Special General Meeting of the membership will be held to discuss and approve – or otherwise amend – a new Constitution. If you would like to see our existing Constitution please contact us at SGP@silvery.org.au and we'll email a copy.



WALKATHON FOR ENDANGERED ANIMALS

On the 6th of March the Silvery Gibbon Project again joined forces with the Australian Orangutan Project and Asian Rhino Project in their annual walkathon. This has become an annual event, aimed at raising funds and awareness for conservation projects for endangered animals in Indonesia.



The scenic walk around Lake Monger attracted many supporters and has been a fun way of involving children and adults in a conservation event. With face painting, coffee van, sausage sizzle, merchandise to buy and a jumpy castle for the kids, the day was a great success.



We would like to thank our supporters once again for making the day a success and especially to Rachael at Cheeky Monkey Entertainment, Suzi for her face painting skills and each and every one of our volunteers and supporters. And of course thanks to Bill and Sophie for making it all possible!

Holly Thompson

VISIT TO PERTH BY JAVAN GIBBON CENTRE STAFF

In March this year, two valued members of the Javan Gibbon Centre in Indonesia, travelled to Perth to undertake two weeks training at Perth Zoo. Their trip was sponsored by SGP. Mulya Hermansyah and lip Latipah Syaepullah had never travelled overseas before, but were welcomed guests of Perth Zoo, where they were introduced to a multiplicity of training tasks; not just in primate care but in other matters of species conservation.

lip Latipah Syaepullah has been involved in primate conservation for ten years in Java. She was always interested in the research potential of Javan (Silvery) Gibbons, and in 2002 had the chance to work at the newly established Javan Gibbon Centre in West Java. At first she undertook an administrative role, but later assisted in veterinary clinic procedures. There are now 30 gibbons at the centre and some are being prepared for release into the wild later this year or next. Two others have already been released and monitoring shows that they are doing very well in their natural environment. lip says, "It's important. In Java they are endangered; there are not many left". lip works along side her colleague Mulya.



lip and Mulya visiting Scarborough Beach

Mulya Hermansyah also joined the staff at the newly established Javan Gibbon Centre. When asked why, his reply was, "I love gibbons". Mulya is a skilled keeper responsible for the daily care of several gibbons. He was keen to visit Perth Zoo to gain "new experiences, which I can take back to the Javan Gibbon Centre, and which we can use there". Both Mulya and lip stated that it was rewarding for them to be introduced to keeper programs of other animals, including Australian animals. It gave them many insights into the wider field of conservation. lip stated, "I love it here", and Mulya said with a smile, "All the keepers were very friendly, very good".

OUR TRIP TO HELP PHNOM TAMAO'S GIBBONS – CAMBODIA

A REPORT BY BELLE PICCHIO
18 MARCH TO 3 APRIL 2011

In 2010 fellow SGP Committee member Kate O'Connell and I travelled to Cambodia for a holiday; we visited the Phnom Tamao Wildlife



Centre to work with the Free The Bears Fund (FtB's). While we were there we visited the rest of the park (funded by Wildlife Alliance), and

were impressed with the standard of many of the enclosures, and could see the potential of the keepers.

Kate and I, with the help of Emma Gatehouse (FtB's volunteer co-ordinator) and Matt Hunt (FtB's CEO), organised with Wildlife Alliance's Director Nick Marx, to return to Phnom Tamao in March 2011. The plan was to work to enrich some of the enclosures at the park. Due to our gibbon experience at Perth Zoo, Nick was particularly relying on the two of us developing and enriching the pileated gibbon enclosures. These are the animals that are being held off display in preparation for release back to the wild in the future.

We spent the year in between fundraising, selling ice-creams and cool drinks over the summer months, and organising a raffle with prizes donated to us. First prize was won by Luke Newing (a lucky SGP committee member!) who went home with an amazing Tiger picture donated by Kate O'Connell, and second prize was won by Pam Byatt (Perth Zoo employee) who took home 12 bottles of mixed "Beachhead" wines kindly donated by Credaro Family Estate. In total, we raised nearly \$1500, all of which went to helping the animals (and Kate and I funded ourselves). So a BIG thank you to all who supported us!

On the first day we visited each enclosure and wrote down what each needed so we could plan our budget and trip to the market. We were given the help of Siteng – Nick's right-hand man and elephant keeper – and his men. He took us to a local market, where he helped us buy

essentials such as wood, nails, bamboo, rope, wire, tyres, hammocks, etc. For many of the locals we were quite the entertainment, as foreign women are a rare sight at the local market. We packed everything into the back of the truck and headed back ready to start work the next day.



Local markets and how we transferred our materials

The next day, we began work with the help from the 3 gibbon keepers and the centres local vet Chenda. We lost track of the amount of bamboo and wood we hand-sawed to size to make the structures, but we definitely learnt the "Cambodian" way of



getting things done – slow and steady! The boys thought us "girls" looked pretty funny at first sawing and nailing each item together, however by the end of it they were impressed with our effort! It took us a total of 7 days to make all the structures and fit them into the enclosures when the gibbons allowed us to.



Nest box, wooden fixed platforms, and tyre and bamboo swings

We had mixed reactions from the animals when they entered back into their new homes, but all of them positive and very enriching! Some of them cautiously approached the new items, while others jumped right in and were straight away swinging on the ropes and enjoying the hammocks and platforms.

Sixteen days passed quickly, and Kate and I (and all the keepers) were happy with what we had achieved. On the last day we put on

afternoon nibbles and drinks for all the guys who helped us (Cambodians conduct most of their business over a beer!). In total, we added ropes, branches, bamboo and behavioural enrichment structures to 12 pileated gibbon enclosures, 1 large langur enclosure and 1 giant squirrel enclosure. We left excess rope to be used in another langur exhibit and display gibbon enclosures, and we are sure, with their enthusiasm after seeing how the animals enjoyed the structures, they will use it!



We have kept in contact with Nick and the guys from Wildlife Alliance, and hope to visit there again sometime in the future! On behalf of myself and Kate, and all the rehab gibbons at Phnom Tamao Wildlife Centre, a HUGE THANK YOU to all who supported and donated to our mission!



Since its inception in 1994 as the Global Survival Network, the organization now known as Wildlife Alliance has worked with local governments, communities and other like-minded non-governmental organizations to implement cutting edge programs in Southeast Asia, Russia, South America, and the

Western Pacific. These programs aim to conserve the environment and stop the illegal wildlife trade by directly protecting wildlife in the field, reducing consumer demand for wildlife, and providing alternative livelihoods for local communities (www.wildlifealliance.org). Phnom Tamao Wildlife Centre holds many different species of animals mostly confiscated from the local villages around the provinces, and attempts to rehabilitate and release back into the wild.



ROOTS AND SHOOTS AT TRANBY COLLEGE: THE CONSERVATION MESSAGE FOR CHILDREN

On the 28 March, SGP Committee member Holly Thompson joined Bill Waterer (Australian Orangutan Project) and Sophie Dentrinos (Asian Rhino Project) at Tranby College to talk about the plight of endangered species in Southeast Asia. Sophie discussed Asian Rhinos with children from years 2 to 6 and Holly spoke after her about the plight of Silvery Gibbons. The kids had a lot of questions at the end of the discussion and took part in a quiz, which demonstrated that they had a lot more knowledge about these animals than many adults! Bill spoke to the year ones about Orangutans and Holly and Sophie were also introduced to them. Two days later, on the 30 March, Tranby held their annual Asian Market Day and invited the Silvery Gibbon Project to attend. Dianne Gates set up a great merchandise stall, and the kids loved the Moli toys and other merchandise for sale.



This was an initiative of the Roots and Shoots Project (www.rootsandshoots.org), established by eminent primatologist Jane Goodall, and aimed at involving children and young adults in conservation. In Western Australia the program

is facilitated by Bill Waterer. A big thank you to Bill for inviting us once again, and to Brooke and the kids at Tranby College.



With Thanks
Holly Thompson

SUPPORTED BY:
PERTH ZOO
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Silvery Gibbon
Wall Info Photos Notes

This is your Publisher. Use it to post content, like photos or links to your wall.

What's on your mind?

Attach: Share Options

Silvery Gibbon <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZURydImqkA>
Wild Things 7/8/09: Silvery Gibbon Project
www.youtube.com
Marnie Giroud speaks to Claire Campbell from the Silvery Gibbon Project. You can find them at <http://silvery.org.au/>

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Information
Current City:
Perth, Australia



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*Members joining after the end of March will receive 15 months for the price of 12 months
Annual Fees are: \$30 for Australian Members
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 - \$80 for 3 years
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- I would like to make a donation of \$ _____ to assist the Silvery Gibbon Project in their cause.**
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Card Number: _____ | _____ | _____ | _____
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