



The SILVERY GIBBON PROJECT

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members and Friends

As many of you would have seen in our mailout and website report, we have recently been saddened by a tragic chain of events at the Javan Gibbon Centre (JGC) – refer page 2 for details. This was certainly a difficult time for everyone involved but in times of trouble we rally the troupes, both here and in Indonesia and there are some promising signs that things are about to improve.

Nancy and Dina, two of the female gibbons recently left alone after the death of their mates have been paired with new males. Young Saar has been paired with Dina and Nancy is very happy with her new friend, Moli! Gibbons can suffer significantly when they lose a partner and in some cases even die so it was important for these females to have a new mate as soon as possible.

Since the poaching of Jeffrey there has also been a change in management of the National Park so we are hopeful that protection in this important area will improve. The Javan Gibbon Foundation also continues to explore a new release site and associated community programs.

All of the enclosures at JGC have also now been rebuilt with more sturdy materials. A huge thank you to the donor who provided the funds to support this project.

A couple of very exciting events are scheduled for the coming months, beginning with our quiz night on Friday 14 September. This event sold out in the weeks leading up which was an outstanding response and we are sure it will turn out to be a great night.

On 27 October, Silvery Gibbon Project is honoured to be one of the beneficiaries of an

Evening for the Animals gala event. This is probably the biggest fundraising event we have been involved in and we are enormously grateful to the organisers who have already secured some outstanding sponsorship. We are really looking forward to the opportunity to raise our profile amongst the Perth community and generate some much needed funds for our projects (refer details further in this newsletter).

We will also be launching an appeal through Wildlife Asia in Sydney in October so stay tuned for this event!

It is almost that time of year again, so hopefully I will see some of you at our AGM on 21 October. For those that cannot make it, please send through your proxies and our Annual Report will be available online shortly afterwards.

Take care

Clare Campbell
President, Silvery Gibbon Project



Clare visiting Nakula at the Javan Gibbon Centre



Sad news from the field

Clare Campbell, July 2012

Wildlife conservation, in any country, is an inevitable roller coaster of small victories matched with devastating setbacks. Javan gibbon conservation at the moment is challenging, to say the least, and I hope that recent tragic events will soon be followed by some positive progress.

The sadness of losing one of our most high profile gibbons under such appalling circumstances brings me deep sadness but also strengthened resolve.

Jeffrey was the first gibbon I ever met at the Javan Gibbon Centre. He was the first of two gibbons taken into the centre in 2003 and on my very first visit he caught my attention instantly, with his ballerina jumping, a stereotypic behaviour developed from years spent in a tiny cage. Jeffrey clearly had a story to tell, his life until then, was not as a gibbons should be.

Over the last 9 years though, Jeffrey's rehabilitation surpassed our expectations and he seemed to have found his soul mate in Nancy. They were one of the few pairs who were instantly compatible.

Just over a month ago, Jeffrey and Nancy were released into Pattiwel forest, as a second trial reintroduction after the apparent success of the first pair, Echi and Septa. Jeffrey and Nancy were doing well, enjoying their freedom in the forest and learning the skills required for survival in the wild.

But those skills, sadly, would never protect them from the most predatory, destructive species on the planet. One the evening of June 8, hunters entered Pattiwel forest, presumably looking for wild pigs and other wildlife. For reasons only known to them, Jeffrey became an appealing target. A JGC staff member, hearing multiple gun shots hurriedly made his way into the forest, badly injuring his leg as he tried to chase off the hunters.

Nancy was later found, alone and frightened in the forest and has now been returned to the Javan Gibbon Centre. Observing her today was heartbreaking and it was obvious that with monogamy, comes undeniable grief when a partner is lost. I am not sure Nancy will recover.

The same can be said for Dina, the partner of Charlie, who was also this month killed when a tree fell onto their enclosure. Charlie and Dina were another perfect pair at JGC and ready for release. In this same month, a gibbon has succumbed to illness and a leopard has broken into an older enclosure killing a gibbon. Ironically in the same week that all the gibbons were begin relocated to their newer more sturdy enclosures.

These tragic events have dealt an enormous blow to staff, who have worked tirelessly for many years ensuring the wellbeing of the gibbons at JGC and carefully planning their release back into the wild.

The Javan Gibbon Foundation is now working to develop more effective protection strategies before further releases occur. These will focus on establishing community buy in, appealing to values and needs of local villages and creating valid reasons for the protection of their wildlife. They will also be working closely with National Parks to improve patrolling and protection in these areas.

In other disappointing news, the Indonesian Government has recently revealed plans to reduce Gunung Hallmun Salak National Park by half to allow for an increase in gold mining. This is one of the last strongholds for Javan gibbons. Not only would this significant loss of habitat (77,000ha) be devastating to the wild population but the impact of gold mining will extend far beyond its boundaries, effecting wildlife, forests and local communities. What happens when the gold is gone? Where to next? It seems completely preposterous that even the designated National Parks are no longer safe from development.

This proposal represents complete submission by those in power, development over conservation. It sets a frightening precedent and casts doubt over the impact of any small efforts we can make.

But I do believe that in times of turmoil we must fight harder for the gibbons. In Jeffrey's memory we can fight for the protected freedom of all the gibbons in our care. We must work harder to protect what little remains of their wild habitat. We must work harder to establish suitable and safe reintroduction areas. We must educate, co-operate, stand up and give it everything we've got.

The call of the Javan gibbon is fading. Please help us if you can.

Online donations can be made at
<http://www.givenow.com.au/silverygibbonproject>

Your donation will help us to improve care for the gibbons at JGC, establish adequate protection in proposed release sites and campaign the Indonesian Government to protect the gibbon's natural areas.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE

It's that time of year again when we call for nominations for Silvery Gibbon Project Committee positions. If you are interested in joining the Committee then please contact us via email silverygibbon@live.com.au or phone 0438992325. You don't necessarily have to join the committee to come along. All members and friends are welcome to attend. Our AGM will be held:

Date: Sunday 21 October 2012
Time: 2pm
Venue: Perth Zoo Theatre
Labouchere Road
South Perth

Meet the keepers and have a chat with Silvery Gibbon friends over afternoon tea.



COMING EVENTS

Dear Members and Friends

To those of you who were in Perth on Friday 14 September, but unable to come along, you missed a great night for the gibbons at the Silvery Gibbon Quiz Night Fundraiser.

THE SILVERY GIBBON PROJECT

Quiz Night Fundraiser

Friday 14th September 2012
Collins Street Centre, South Perth
6:30pm for a 7pm start
\$15 per person Tables of 8
Drinks and nibbles for sale at the bar (BYO food only)
Fantastic prizes & Auction

For tickets please contact Katie at thegibbonproject@gmail.com

Help us to help them!

Wildlife Asia

<http://www.silvery.org.au/wp-content/gallery/x01.jpg>

David Smith

Silvery Gibbon project

We are also very excited to announce the following event, of which Silvery Gibbon Project will be a beneficiary. This is sure to be an outstanding evening which we hope will not only generate much needed funds but also raise our profile in the Perth community. Tickets are now available and please feel free to pass on to anyone you think may be interested. Please visit www.aneveningfortheanimals.org for more information.

AN EVENING FOR THE ANIMALS TO PROTECT ENDANGERED SPECIES

Featuring a five course degustation menu by celebrity chef Herb Faust and exclusive live auction in an opulent marquee
Special guest: Sorrel Wilby, Chairman, Australian Geographic Society

**7pm on 27 October 2012
Supreme Court Gardens**

Dress: Creative Black Tie | Tickets \$350 | Tables of 8 available

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY VILLA KULA

www.aneveningfortheanimals.org
100% of profits go to direct protection of wildlife

IN SUPPORT OF

If you had seen my past you would want to protect my future.

FOR THE animals

GIBBON SOPRANOS ON HELIUM IMPRESS SCIENTISTS

A recent study with Lar gibbons at Japan's Fukuchiyama City Zoo indicates that the evolution of the human language is not so different from the development of gibbon songs that ring out through the tropical forests of east and southeast Asia. The *Journal of American Physical Anthropology* published a recent study by Japanese researchers at the Primate Research Institute, Kyoto University, recording and analysing gibbon vocalisations after they had inhaled helium gas. As in humans, the vocal pitch increases without affecting the sound source. Head researcher, associate professor Takeshi Nishimura said:

'Our speech was thought to have evolved through specific modifications in our vocal anatomy. However, we've shown how the gibbons' distinctive song uses the same vocal mechanics as soprano singers, revealing a fundamental similarity with humans.'

Nishimura's team analysed the melodious, loud calls of a young female Lar gibbon (or white-handed gibbon -*Hylobates lar*) in normal atmosphere, and then calls in an environment infused with 50% helium. Helium shifts gibbon sounds to a resonance that is easier to assess with acoustic equipment. It is a technique used in other branches of animal vocalization research.



Lar gibbon. Photo by Joe Petersburger, National Geographic

Vocal sound originates from an individual's vocal folds as a mixture of different harmonics, which are multiples of the frequency at which the vocal folds vibrate. The resonant frequencies of the vocal tract then determine which of these harmonics are projected. Humans make different sounds by altering the position of the mouth, lips and teeth. By recording the gibbon vocalisations in a helium-rich atmosphere, the scientists were able to separate the different contributions that the vocal folds and vocal tract made to its calls. Helium does not alter how the vocal folds vibrate but does shift the vocal tract's resonant frequencies. Like humans, the origin of the sound of a gibbon's call, which occurs in the larynx, is separate from the vocal tools used to modify it, the research showed. The study concluded that gibbons use the same vocal techniques as professional opera singers when calling out to other animals.

'This is the first evidence that gibbons always sing using soprano techniques, a difficult [vocalization] ability for humans which is only mastered by professional opera singers,' Nishimura said. 'This gives us a new appreciation of the evolution of speech in gibbons while revealing that the physiological foundation in human speech is not so unique.'

Reference: Koda, H. et al. American Journal of Physical Anthropology (24 August 2012)

A TRIP TO MADAGASCAR IN SEARCH OF LEMURS

By Belle Picchio

May 2012 saw my partner Jason and I travel to Madagascar in search of lemurs! All species of lemur derive from Madagascar, a large tropical island off the east coast of Africa. Our 3 week adventure took us all over the island, from Fort Dauphin in the south, all the way to the isolated Masoala Penninsula in the north-east. Not only were we fortunate enough to see many species of lemur and other endemic wildlife, but we also became immersed in the different culture and traditions of each of the 9 tribes of Madagascar.

We arrived in Antanannarivo late at night and were met by our driver Unis. The next day we set off early on route to our first destination, Mantadia National Park – Andisibe. Here, we saw the amazing Indri-indri, Diademed sifaka, Black and white ruffed lemur, and the rarely seen Common brown lemur.



We then travelled down south to Berenty Reserve, a very bumpy 3 hour drive. This is an amazing private reserve and the warm/dry weather was a welcomed change from the muddy downpour we endured in Andasibe. Moments after driving down the long driveway we were greeted by the beautiful Verreaux's sifaka. Seeing the sifaka dance across the red dirt was one of the highlights of our trip. Amongst the dancing sifakas were the Ringtail lemurs, Red fronted brown lemurs, Hook billed vanga and Crested coua. A night walk through the spiny forests revealed the White-footed sportive lemur and the tiny Grey-brown mouse lemur, along with other interesting species.



These latter included the Spider tortoise, Hissing cockroach, Scops owl and even the shy Civet. We also witnessed the incredible nightly migration of the Flying foxes. On our last day in the area we visited the remote Antandroy tribe, where we were privileged to visit the monthly market gathering and to meet some of the local children.

We then flew to Montsesetra, on route to the Masoala Penninsula – the only place where the elusive Red ruffed lemur can be found. An eventful 3 hour dingy ride across open ocean during a monsoonal front definitely had me questioning my holiday choice!

Cold, soaked and slightly shaken, we arrived on a secluded beach where we trekked inland to our accommodation. We were then asked possibly the most ironic question from our tour guide - "Would you like the cabin with hot water or just the cold?" The old donkey water heating system gave Jason quite the chuckle! After 9 hours trekking in heavy rain, we finally found a small group of Red-ruffed lemurs basking in the 10 minutes of sunshine the Masolala had given us over the 3 day visit! We were fortunate enough to also find the critically endangered Tomato frog when we returned to Montsesetra.



At Ranomafana, east Madagascar, we were fortunate to spot the Grey bamboo lemur, Greater bamboo lemur, Red-bellied brown lemur, Milen's edwards sifaka and the White-faced brown lemur. During this 6 hour trek we also observed a leaf-tailed gecko, and briefly sneaked a peak at one of the lemurs' predators, the fossa.



Last but not least we visited the islands of Nosy Komba and Nosy Tanikely in Madagascar's north, to see the endemic Black lemurs. Snorkelling off the islands we were privileged to swim with Green turtles and numerous species of fish.

Apart from gibbons, I have always loved lemurs, and have been intrigued by their strange looks and beautiful nature. Visiting their home has been a dream come true and definitely been able to tick another one off the bucket list.



INFANT LANGURS IN THE NEWS

This little baby monkey was not very camera shy when amateur photographer SotskovNikolay approached. The tiny grey langur (*Semnopithecus* sp.) was with other monkeys, outside a temple in the city of Bhubaneshvar, India.



The species live in the forest and even open woodlands of the Indian sub-continent, from the Himalayas to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and possibly Afghanistan. Some have adapted to live in proximity to humans in large towns and cities. There are seven species of grey langur, all of the genus *Semnopithecus*.

*The infant grey langur outside a temple at Bhubaneshvar, India.
Photos by SotskovNikolay*

ADELAIDE ZOO CELEBRATES NEW ADDITION TO THEIR LANGUR FAMILY

Two weeks ago Adelaide zookeepers discovered an orange baby monkey clinging tightly to her mother Flier. The infant, who has not yet been names, is a Dusky Langur or leaf monkey (*Trachypithecus obscurus*) whose natural habitat is the upper canopy of karsts forests of Thailand, Malaysia and southeast Myanmar. There are at least seven identified sub-species. Concealed in the foliage of the upper forest canopy, these langurs graze on leaves for long periods. They are most regularly spotted by humans when leaping extraordinary distances from tree to tree and are distinguished by soft, dusky-grey fur and a tail longer than the body. They have striking white rings around the eyes and cream-coloured upper and lower lip area. Like gibbons, langurs fear water and will not cross rivers and major streams. Their habitats then are very defined by natural geography. Born orange at birth, the tangerine-coloured infants fade to grey at approximately six months.



Adelaide Zoo's new baby Dusky Langur holds tight to her mother. Photo by Chris Mangan: AdelaideNow

Zookeeper Mandy Smith said that mum and bub were doing well, but older sister Nakal was adjusting to sharing her mum's attention. The sex of the new arrival would not be known for at least a month.

Reference: Heather Kennett: AdelaideNow