



Report: Hoolock Gibbon Translocation Operation

Led by: Wildlife Trust of India & Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary

Location: Horupahar Area, Denlo Village, Arunachal Pradesh

December 1st to December 4th, 2025

Team

Member (Names mentioned at the end)	Number
Climber	06
Biologist	01
Mehao WLS Staff	35
WTI Veterinary Officials	03
Video & Photographers	02

Background

A family group of Hoolock gibbons was found in the Horupahar (Denlo) area, where habitat disturbance created a risk of human-wildlife conflict. The group included one adult male, one adult female and an infant male, who could move on his own but was not fully independent. Due to significant habitat disturbance and advancement in the agricultural land, the Forest Department, in consultation with experts, requested WTI's support. WTI was engaged to facilitate the safe translocation of the three gibbons to a suitable forest habitat.

Following instructions from the Divisional Forest Officer, Roing, a coordinated rescue and relocation operation was planned by the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department and the Wildlife Trust of India.



Image 1: The main tree of the Gibbon family, Horupahar, Denlo. Photograph of Male and female Hoolock gibbon before capture.

Pre -Operational Activities (1st December 2025)

A preparatory climbing and safety training session was conducted at the Mini Zoo, Roing, to ensure all personnel were familiar with standard gibbon capture protocols. Following this, DFO Mito Romi, RFO Magone Linggi, forest staff, and the WTI team led by Dr. Panjit Basatary, along with field biologists Dr. Subhasish Arandhara and Bhaskar Jyoti Das, inspected the gibbon site at Horupahar, Denlo, assessing canopy structure, tree height, and escape routes. It was then decided



that a field biologist and a forest guard would remain at the site overnight for continuous monitoring, while essential supplies such as rations, tarpaulins, climbing ropes, and field equipment were transported and stored in a nearby household to support the operation. Dr. Bhaskar Choudhury, WTI senior Vet also joined the team to provide guidance.

First Day of Operation (2nd December 2025)

The team commenced operations at **06:30 hrs** on December 2nd 2025 preparing the ground and canopy positions for the safe rescue of a hoolock gibbon family (3 individuals). By **10:40 hrs**, professional tree climbers had reached the canopy of approx 35-40 m and began guiding the gibbons toward a smaller tree where it is easier to capture the gibbons. This method allows for safe and minimally stressful capture.

At **12:40 hrs**, **one adult male gibbon was successfully and safely captured**. A complete physical examination was conducted at the site, and the individual was transferred into a transport crate. The remaining individuals were simultaneously being monitored for continued safe extraction. Operations were suspended at 1600 hrs. The field biologist and a forest guard remained at the site overnight to monitor the gibbons' condition and prevent further dispersal.

2nd Day of Operation (3rd December 2025)

The operation recommenced at **0600 hrs**, with climbers systematically reducing the canopy to guide the remaining two gibbons toward accessible branches. By afternoon, the infant was successfully captured, followed shortly by the adult female using the same technique. Both were examined by veterinarians Dr. Bhaskar Choudhury, Dr. Panjit Basumatary, and Dr. Mehadi Hassan and found to be in good health with no major injuries or stress-related concerns.

All three individuals were transported to the Mini Zoo at Roing and kept in an isolated room, for overnight observation and preparation for release.

Release Operation (4th December 2025)

On 4 December 2025, the family was transported to a suitable habitat near Kebali village, approximately 6 km from the Roing town. The release site was evaluated for canopy continuity, food availability, and minimal human disturbance.

The adult male was released by Mr. Mito Romi, Divisional Forest officer Roing, and the adult female and infant was released by Bhaskar Jyoti Das, field biologist, CBRC, Wildlife Trust of India. Upon opening the enclosure, the adult female and infant exited within two minutes and moved directly into the higher canopy. The adult male took slightly longer but eventually rejoined the family.

The monitoring team continued the post release monitoring after the release. The photo documentation and other information were collected accordingly.



Image 2: Preparation and Capture of the Hoolock gibbons



Image 3: Health checkup and morpho – metric records of Hoolock gibbon.



Image 4: Realtime images taken by WTI during the operation



Image 5: Team photo of all staff involved in the Gibbon capture operation.



Image 6: Release of gibbon family at Kebali Village.

Conclusion

The translocation operation was successfully completed due to effective coordination between the Forest Department and WTI. All safety guidelines were adhered to, ensuring a humane capture, thorough health assessment, and successful release of the gibbon family.

Hoolock Gibbon Team - First Site

1. Shri Mito Rumi, DFO
2. Shri Magone Linggi, RFO
3. Shri Rai Mimi, Fr.
4. Shri Budhi Menjo, Fr.
5. Shri Romen Umpo, Fr.
6. Shri Tilling Chobing, Fr.
7. 7. Miss Walina Pasing, Fr.
8. Shri Bullo Tari, Fr.
9. Shri Irak Ete, Fr.
10. Smti Kayang Jopir, Fr.
11. Shri Jhony Pertin, Fr.
12. Shri Keming Pertin, Fgd.
13. Shri Monli Meto, Fgd.
14. Smti Anna Lego, A/A
15. Shri Taba Nira, Dvr.
16. Miss Hachu Lombo (Mountaineering Experts/Instructors)
17. Shri Maro Meto (Mountaineering Experts/Instructors)
18. Shri Deben Sharma
19. Shri Bikash Patro
20. Shri Milik Perying
21. Shri Langsom Chillum
22. Shri Chipra Mekola
23. Shri Darin Ngupok
24. Shri Dango Lego
25. Shri Puna Patro
26. Shri Tufan Gamang



27. Shri Teye Linggi
28. Shri Gabriel Gogoi
29. Shri Gindo Mena
30. Smti Nila Mihi
31. Smti Gegul Lego
32. Miss Tulsi Meto
33. Smti Muni Umpo
34. Smti. Dipika Paul Bose
35. Shri Bablu Patro
36. Shri Marshal Bhengra
37. Shri Bomken Chisi

Wildlife Trust of India sincerely appreciates and is grateful for the contribution and valuable support from all the donors and the Maheo Forest department who led the operation successfully complete.

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Wildlife Trust of India

Press Release


GOVERNMENT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH
OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER
MEHAO WILDLIFE SANCTUARY DIVISION
ROING

PRESS RELEASE

Stranded Families of Hoolock gibbon Rescued from Agriculture Fields and Released into Mehao WLS

5th December, 2025, Roing

A stranded family of Hoolock gibbons comprising an adult male, an adult female, and a juvenile—was successfully rescued from the agricultural fields of Horu Pahar Village, a fringe settlement near Roing, after a challenging 04-days operation. The rescue was carried out by a joint team of Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) officials and the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI).

The gibbon family had been confined to a single 45-metre-high ficus tree within a severely fragmented habitat caused by agricultural expansion. On veterinary examination, the animals were found to be undernourished and underweight. Due to the lack of continuous canopy, the arboreal apes were being forced to descend to the ground, making them vulnerable to attacks by domestic dogs and increasing the risk of genetic depression in the isolated population.

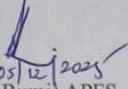
The 30-member forest officials rescue team from Mehao WLS were led by DFO Mito Rumi and RFO Magone Linggi. The WTI veterinary team comprising Dr. Bhaskar Choudhury, Dr. Panjit Basumatary, and Dr. Mehedi Hasan operated under the leadership of Shri Sunil Kyarong, Director, WTI.

The Forest Dept also expressed gratitude to mountaineering volunteers Shri Amaro Meo and Miss Hachu Lombo for training the Forest Officials' Tree Climbing Team in modern rope-climbing techniques, which were crucial for the safe extraction of the animals.

All three rescued gibbons are currently under an intensive post-release monitoring protocol. As of the morning of 5 December 2025, they were sighted in good condition near the release site within Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary.

Several more stranded gibbon families have been identified in agricultural landscapes of the Denlo Village. Given the challenging high heights of trees and conditions, rescue operations are expected to continue for at least the next three months in staggered batches.

The Hoolock gibbon, listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, is India's only ape species and faces severe threats from habitat fragmentation and population decline. The Forest Department with strong support of the local communities reaffirms its commitment to protecting this endangered species, the State Animal of Arunachal Pradesh.


05/12/2025
(Mito Rumi) APFS
Divisional Forest Officer
Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary Division
Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary Division
Roing