

Concept Note

**Hoolock Gibbon Families Translocation**

**Abstract:** Requesting support to rescue and translocate 10 stranded Hoolock Gibbons near Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh—isolated by agrarian expansion to the nearest protected area to ensure their long-term survival.



**Image1.1:** Gibbon\_Garo Hills, Image by Divya Vasudev

**About:** The Hoolock Gibbon is the **only ape found in India**, confined to the seven states of northeast India. As a species, they are closer to chimpanzees and gorillas than langurs and macaques. Completely arboreal, (lives in forest canopies) these gibbons use their long forelimbs to hang and jump between branches . Locally, they are famous for their loud holou calls (inspiring their name “Hoolock”), which is culturally revered by several indigenous communities. The hoolock gibbon is however categorized as **‘Endangered’** under the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** Red List, due to a declining population, primarily by habitat loss.

**Location:** While hoolock gibbons are distributed in the evergreen forests of north-east India, the Brahmapura River forms a natural boundary restricting their presence to the southern banks of the river. The gibbons in the **agricultural lands of Horu Pahar, Denlo, and Ita Pukhuri** area adjacent to Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh.



**Image1.2:** Map showing the Denlo area

**Objective:** The primary objective is to urgently initiate a conservation intervention to rescue three isolated **Hoolock Gibbon groups** stranded in severely fragmented forest patches near Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary—specifically in fragmented forest patches adjoining **Horu Pahar, Denlo, and Ita Pukhuri**.

**Problem Statement:** Agricultural expansion around Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary—especially near Horu Pahar, Denlo, and Ita Pukhuri—has fragmented the forest, leaving 10 gibbons stranded in small, unviable patches with limited canopy and resources.

**Challenges in translocation:** For the rescue operations, each site presents unique challenges. At Horu Pahar, the high 35–40 m canopy requires skilled climbers to



carefully lop branches and reduce crown height, creating a lower, safer capture zone. Height management is the top safety priority. At Denlo, dense bamboo thickets provide easy escape routes, so all connecting branches must be cropped

and ground vegetation cleared to ensure physical containment. At Ita Pukhuri, the community forests have high social value and local protection currently prevents any branch lopping or habitat manipulation that is essential for safe capture. This makes rescue unfeasible until the community consents.

**Solution:** Given the extreme isolation and the non viability of these three groups, translocation stands as the only viable long-term solution to ensure their safety and survival. The release will be done to the nearest protected area (PA).

**Recommended capture strategy:** The rescue process follows a two-phase capture method: Phase 1: Arboreal Restriction and Phase 2: Ground Control through scientific methods and required measures as performed previously for various translocations and conservation.

**Request for support:** Wildlife Trust of India seeks funding of INR 2 lakhs to secure emergency funds to be allocated for the translocation and conservation intervention of these Hoolock Gibbon groups.

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