

The Small Apes

The small apes are the gibbons. They lack a tail, and have long arms and hook-like hands which they use to swing, hand-over-hand along branches through the forest canopy – a form of locomotion called brachiation. The 4 genera (*Hylobates*, *Hoolock*, *Nomascus* and *Symphalangus*) and 20 species occur in NE India, Bangladesh, SW China and SE Asia. The size of the smaller gibbons (all but the Siamang, *Symphalangus*) is similar: Head-body length 45–65 cm and weight 6–10 kg. The Siamang has a head-body length of 75–90 cm and weighs 10–12 kg. Males and females are similar in size and weight.

Gibbons rarely go to the forest floor, and when they do they walk bipedally with their arms raised. They typically live in small groups – a male and female and offspring. They have characteristic loud and species-specific calls. They sing in the early morning, mostly as a male-female duet but *Hylobates klossii* and *H. moloch* are unusual: the males sing before dawn and females after dawn.

Females generally give birth to singletons, and the infant is dependent for 2–3 years. They reach sexual maturity at around 6 years old. Their typical habitat is subtropical and tropical evergreen forest. They are fruit-pulp specialists but also eat young leaves, seeds, insects, small animals and birds' eggs.

All *Nomascus* species are sexually dichromatic as adults. Infants are born with a bright yellow coat, which changes to black during the first year. When females reach maturity the pelage colour changes to yellowish-brown. Males do not have a second colour change and the pelage remains black. Hoolock and Pileated gibbons are sexually dichromatic. The Lar Gibbon is dichromatic but this does not appear to be related to sex.

The gibbon species are separated by seas and rivers except for the Siamang that occurs in Peninsular Malaysia and Sumatra, and is sympatric with the Lar and Agile gibbons.

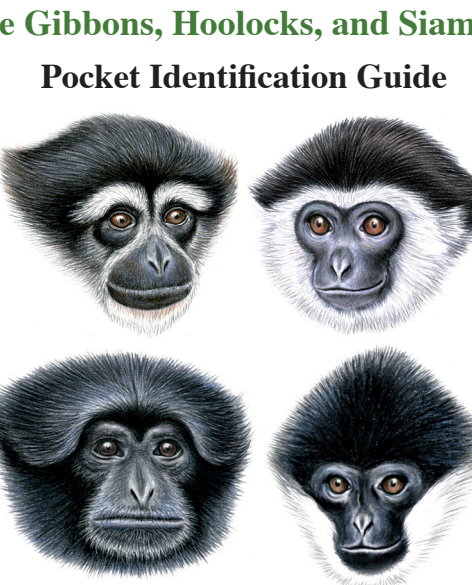


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For More Information: IUCN Red List

re:wild TROPICAL POCKET GUIDE SERIES
The Small Apes



Pocket Identification Guide to the Small Apes



Western Hoolock Gibbon
 Ulluk, Hulu, Hutu
Hoolock hoolock
 EN

Bangladesh, NE India in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura, extending into NW Myanmar. Primary evergreen, scrub and semideciduous hill forest, 500 m to 2700 m.



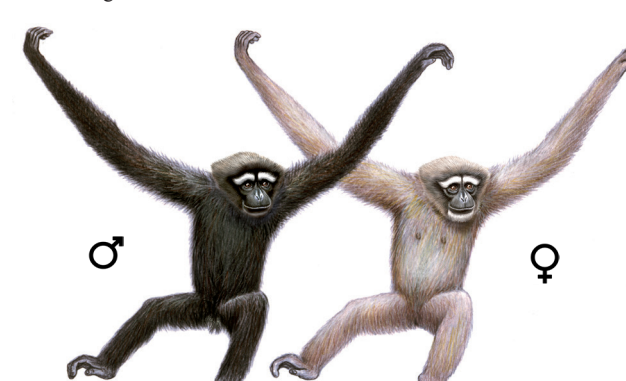
Eastern Hoolock Gibbon
 Ulluk
Hoolock leuconedys
 VU

NE India, marginally in the states of Arunachal Pradesh (Lohit and Lower Dibang Valley districts) and Assam (Tinsukia District), E Myanmar, E of the Chindwin River, and S China in W Yunnan Province. Closed-canopy, lowland, broadleaved evergreen forest, and also lowland, semi-evergreen and mixed deciduous forests and in higher altitude evergreen and semi-evergreen forests.



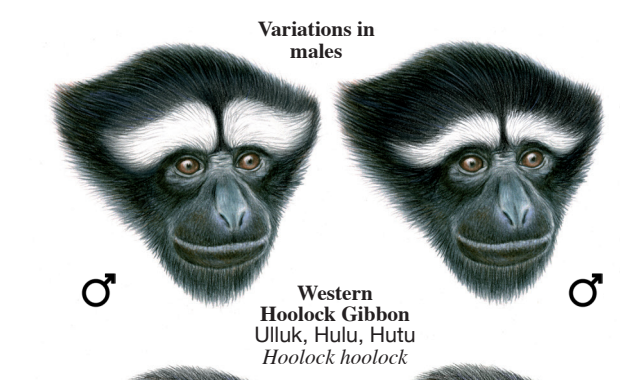
Mishmi Hills Hoolock Gibbon
 Ameapa, Amiapah
Hoolock hoolock mishmiensis
 EN

NE India in the states of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. Restricted in the S by the Lohit River, and in the N by the confluence of the Itan and Dibang Rivers.

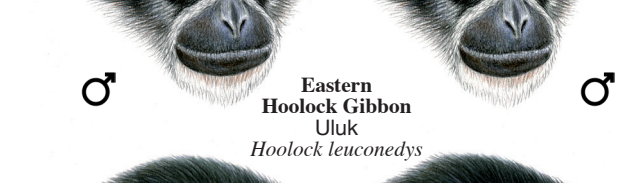


Skywalker Hoolock Gibbon
 Chang-Bi-Yuan, Hei-Hou
Hoolock tianxing
 EN

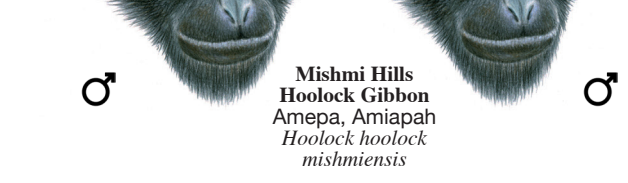
SW China and Myanmar, Mt. Gaoligong, between the Irrawaddy-Nmai Hka River and the Salween River. Subtropical forests and montane rainforest.



Variations in males
Western Hoolock Gibbon
 Ulluk, Hulu, Hutu
Hoolock hoolock



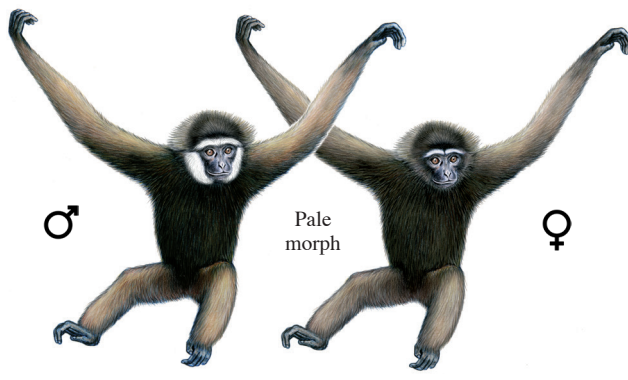
Eastern Hoolock Gibbon
 Ulluk
Hoolock leuconedys



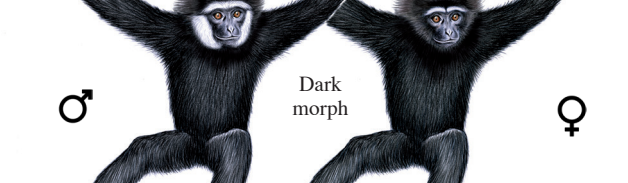
Mishmi Hills Hoolock Gibbon
 Ameapa, Amiapah
Hoolock hoolock mishmiensis



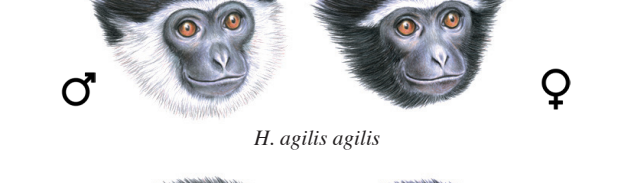
Skywalker Hoolock Gibbon
 Chang-Bi-Yuan, Hei-Hou
Hoolock tianxing



Bornean White-bearded Gibbon
 Owa-owa, Kalaweit
Hylobates albibarbis
 EN

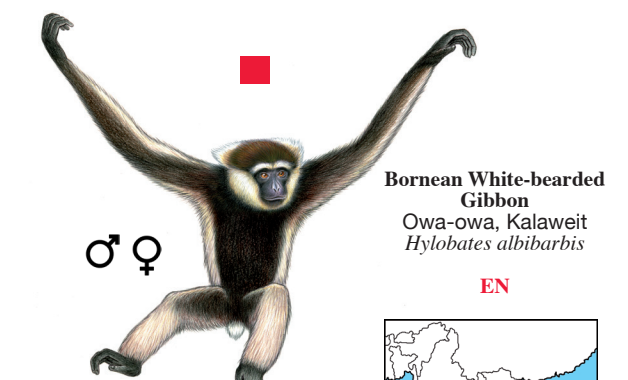


Dark morph



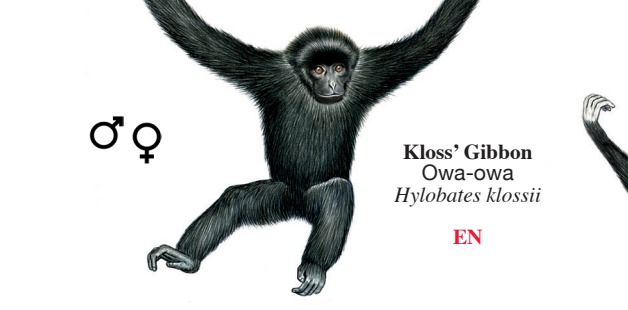
Agile Gibbon
 Owa-owa, Ungka tangan hitam
Hylobates agilis
 EN

Indonesia (Sumatra), Peninsula Malaysia, and S Thailand near the Malaysian border. Middle and upper canopy, semi-deciduous monsoon and tropical evergreen forest up to 1400 m.



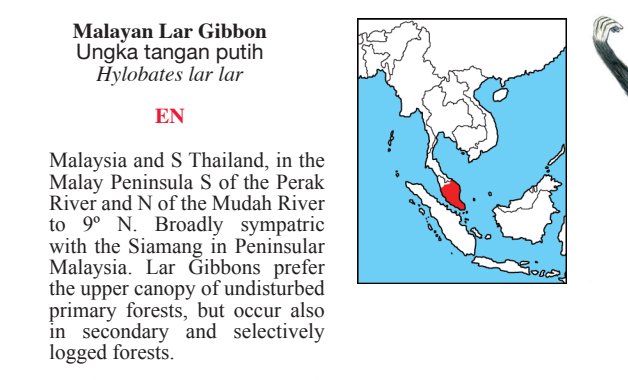
Kloss' Gibbon
 Owa-owa
Hylobates klossii
 EN

Indonesia, West Sumatra, South Pagai Island. Prefers primary semi-deciduous monsoon and tropical evergreen forest, and is generally seen in the upper canopy. They have also been observed in swamp forest.



Carpenter's Lar Gibbon
 Ungka tangan putih
Hylobates lar carpenteri
 EN

NW Laos, E Myanmar, and NW Thailand, from about 16° N to Chiang Dao, Thailand, at 19° 22' N.



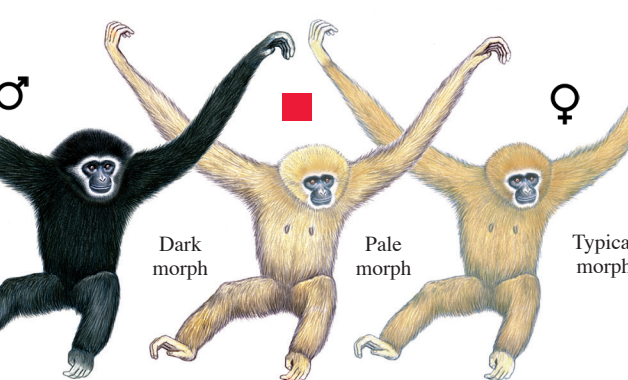
Central Lar Gibbon
 Ungka tangan putih
Hylobates lar entelloides
 VU

S Myanmar and S Thailand, from 10° N to around 15° N.



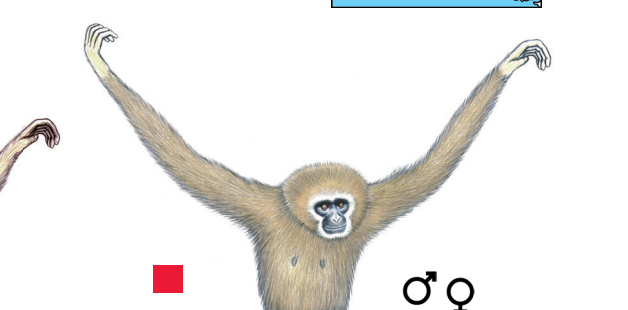
Sumatran Lar Gibbon
 Owa tangan putih
Hylobates lar vestitus
 EN

W Indonesia (Sumatra), in N Sumatra, NW of Lake Toba and the Singkil River.



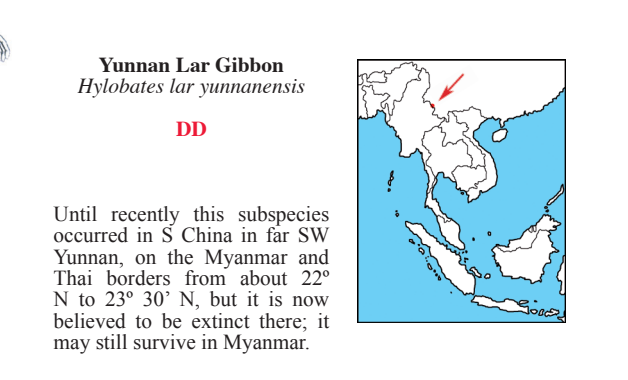
Yunnan Lar Gibbon
Hylobates lar yunnanensis
 DD

Until recently this subspecies occurred in S China in far SW Yunnan, on the Myanmar and Thai borders from about 22° N to 23° 30' N, but it is now believed to be extinct there; it may still survive in Myanmar.



Moloch Gibbon
 Owa-owa
Hylobates moloch
 EN

Confined mainly to the island of Java, Indonesia, in its western provinces (Banten and West Java), with an additional population in a small area in the center of the island as far E as the Dieng Mountains. Primary lowland and lower montane rainforest, up to 2400 m above sea level (but normally below 1600 m). It prefers floristically rich patches of relatively undisturbed forest, but can tolerate moderate disturbance.



Moloch Gibbon
 Owa-owa
Hylobates moloch
 EN

Color variants

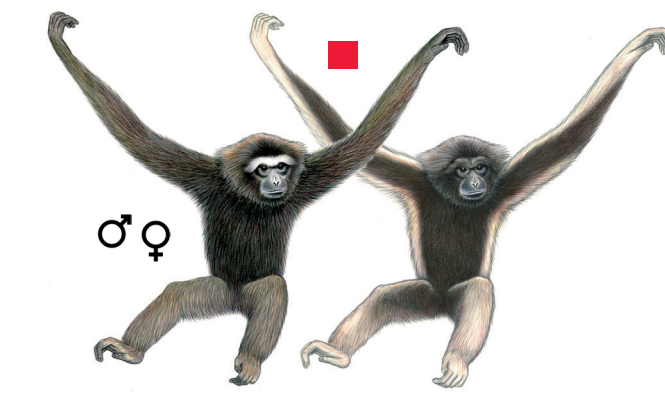


Hylobates moloch



Hylobates moloch "pongolaoni"

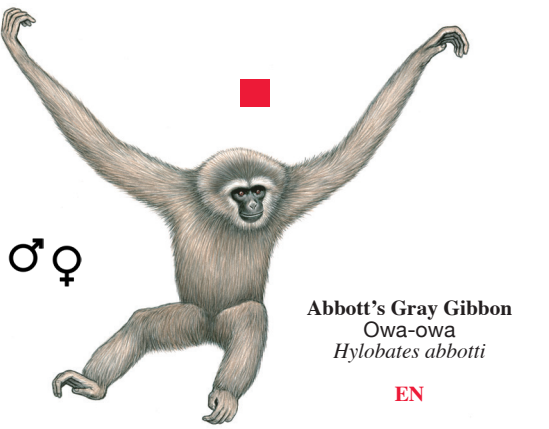
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Color variants

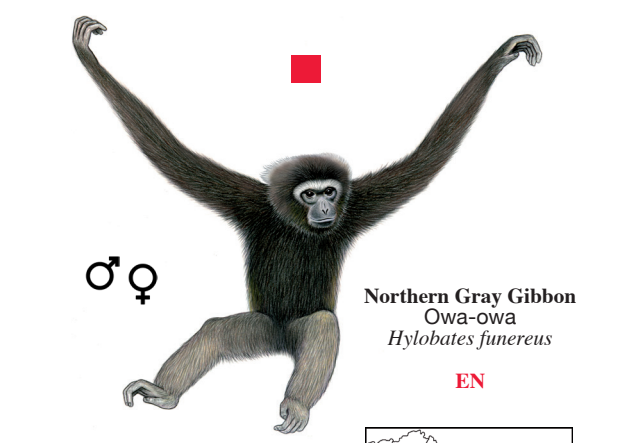
Müller's Gibbon
Owa-owa
Hylobates muelleri
EN

Kalimantan, Indonesia, on the island of Borneo, in the SE of the island, approximately S of the Mahakam River and W of the Barito River. Primary and secondary semi-deciduous monsoon, dipterocarp and tropical evergreen forest.



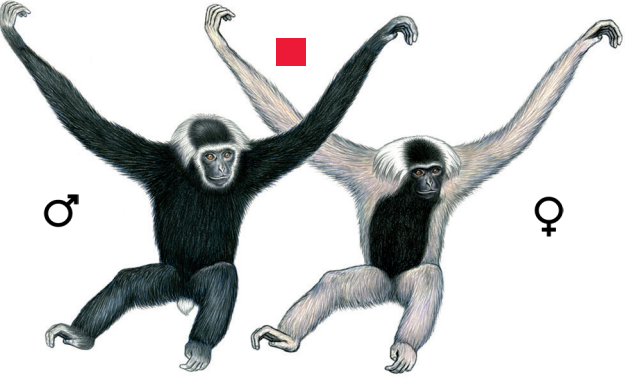
Abbott's Gray Gibbon
Owa-owa
Hylobates abbotti
EN

Indonesia, in Kalimantan on the island of Borneo, and Malaysia in Sarawak, N of the Kapuas River and E as far as the Saribas district of Sarawak. Primary and secondary semi-deciduous monsoon, dipterocarp and tropical evergreen forest. It hybridizes with *Hylobates albibarbis* in central Borneo.



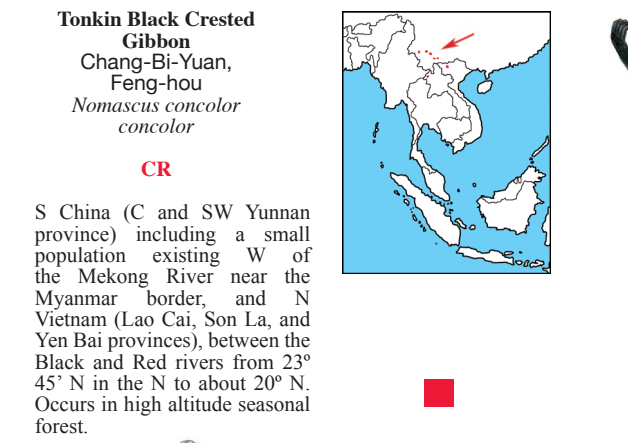
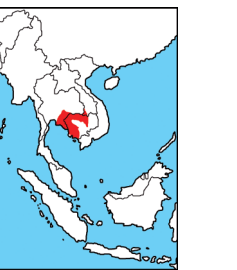
Northern Gray Gibbon
Owa-owa
Hylobates funereus
EN

In NE Borneo, from Sabah S to the Mahakam River and perhaps W to the Baram district and the IV Division of Sarawak. Primary and secondary semi-deciduous monsoon, dipterocarp and tropical evergreen forest. The elevational range reaches about 1700 m above sea level in Sabah, densities decrease at higher elevations.



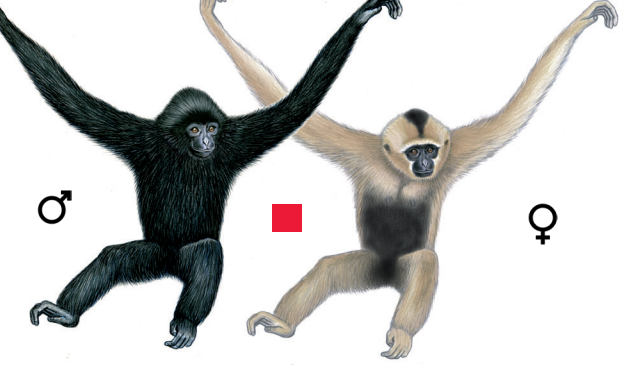
Pileated Gibbon
Capped Gibbon
Hylobates pileatus
EN

W Cambodia, SW Laos, and SE Thailand, S of the Mun and Takhrong rivers and W of the Mekong River. The eastern border may have formerly been the Bang Pakong River in Thailand, and the species may have formerly occurred in S Vietnam as well. Moist, seasonal evergreen and mixed deciduous-evergreen forests up to 1200 m in Thailand and up to 1500 m in Cambodia. It prefers the high canopy.



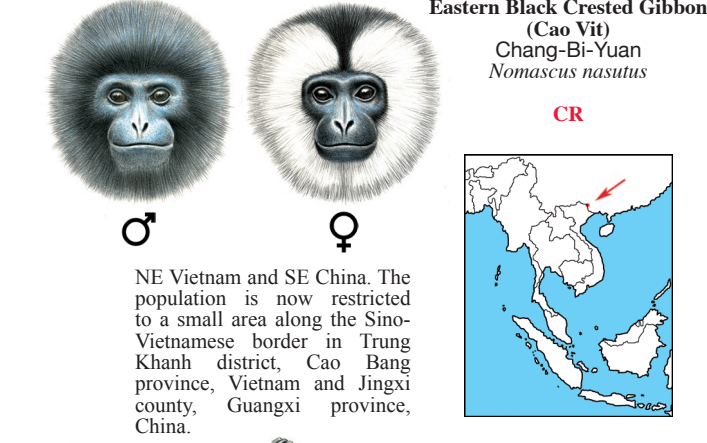
Laotian Black Crested Gibbon
Nomascus concolor lu
CR

NE Laos (Bokeo and Luang Namtha provinces), occurring in a small isolated population, confined to the east bank of the Mekong River at about 20° 17'–20° 25' N.



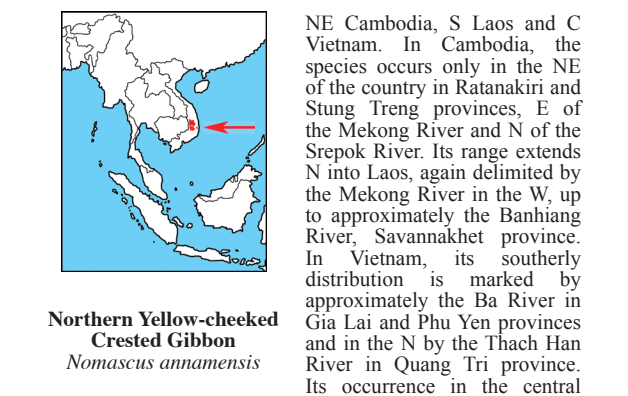
Hainan Crested Gibbon
Chang-Bi-Yuan
Nomascus hainanus
CR

Endemic to Hainan Island, China. *N. hainanus* was once widespread on Hainan, but today the known population is restricted to Bawangling Nature Reserve in the west of the island.



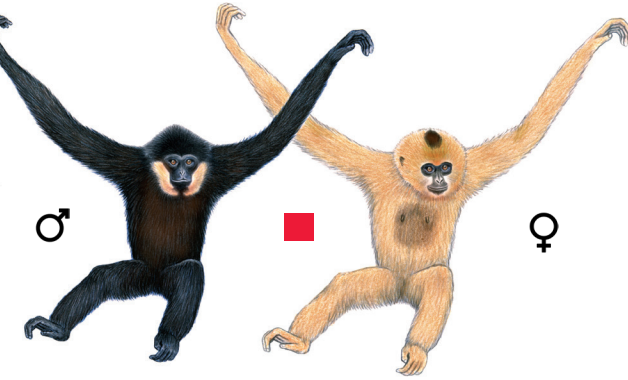
Eastern Black Crested Gibbon
(Cao Vit)
Chang-Bi-Yuan
Nomascus nasutus
CR

NE Vietnam and SE China. The population is now restricted to a small area along the Sino-Vietnamese border in Trung Khanh district, Cao Bang province, Vietnam and Jingxi county, Guangxi province, China.



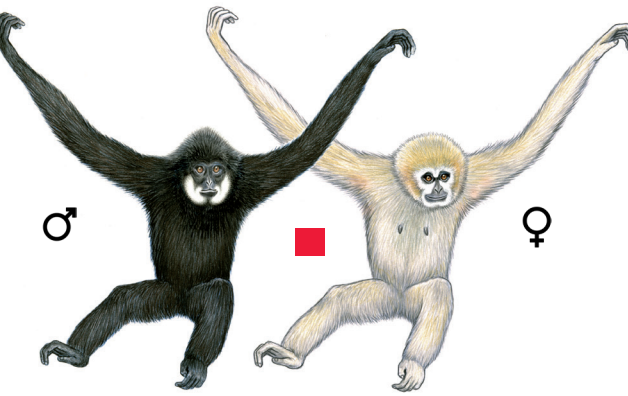
Northern Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbon
Nomascus annamensis
EN

NE Cambodia, S Laos and C Vietnam. In Cambodia, the species occurs only in the NE of the country in Ratanakiri and Stung Treng provinces, E of the Mekong River and N of the Srepok River. Its range extends N into Laos, again delimited by the Mekong River in the W, up to approximately the Banhiang River, Savannakhet province. In Vietnam, its southerly distribution is marked by approximately the Ba River in Gia Lai and Phu Yen provinces and in the N by the Thach Han River in Quang Tri province. Its occurrence in the central Annamite Mountain range gives it its name.



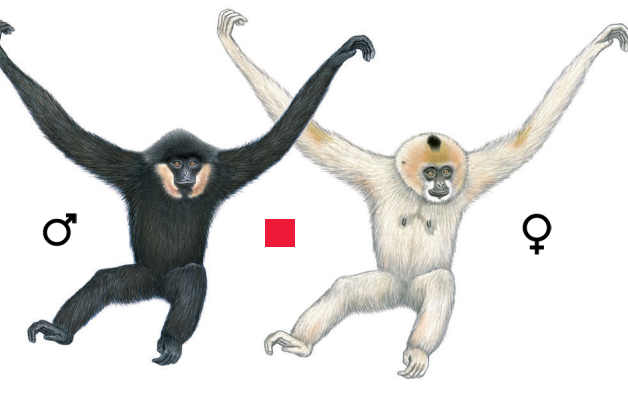
Northern White-cheeked Crested Gibbon
Nomascus leucogenys
CR

N Laos, NW and NC Vietnam and southernmost Yunnan province, China. Restricted by the Mekong River in the W and the Black River in the E.



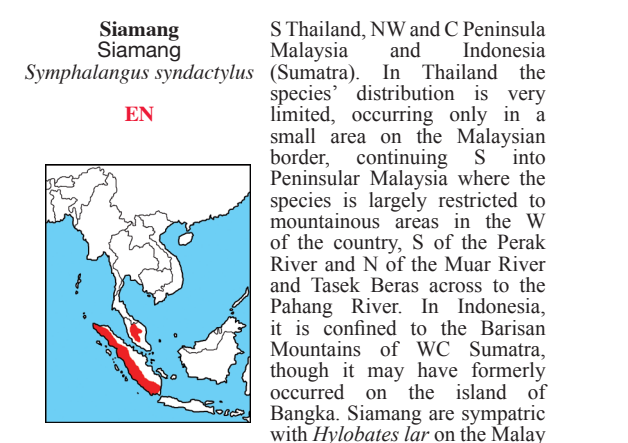
Southern White-cheeked Crested Gibbon
Nomascus siki
CR

C Laos and C Vietnam, the species is restricted by the Mekong River in the W and coastal agricultural areas in Vietnam in the E.



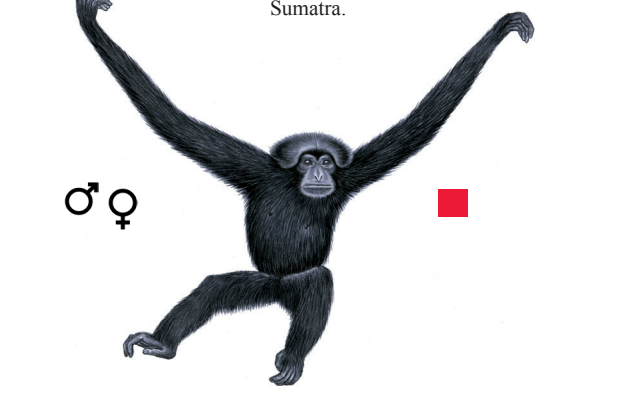
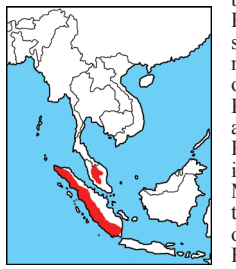
Southern Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbon
Nomascus gabriellae
EN

SE Cambodia and S Vietnam. In SE Cambodia, it occurs E of the Mekong River and S of the Srepok River. In Vietnam, it is distributed from Nui Ong Nature Reserve (11° 01' N), Binh Thuan province in the S to the Ba River (13° 00'–13° 10' N) in Gia Lai and Phu Yen provinces in the S. Wet evergreen and semi-evergreen forests of the Indochina lowlands. It is also recorded in mixed deciduous and bamboo forests, but possibly limited to where these forest types are found in association with preferred habitats.

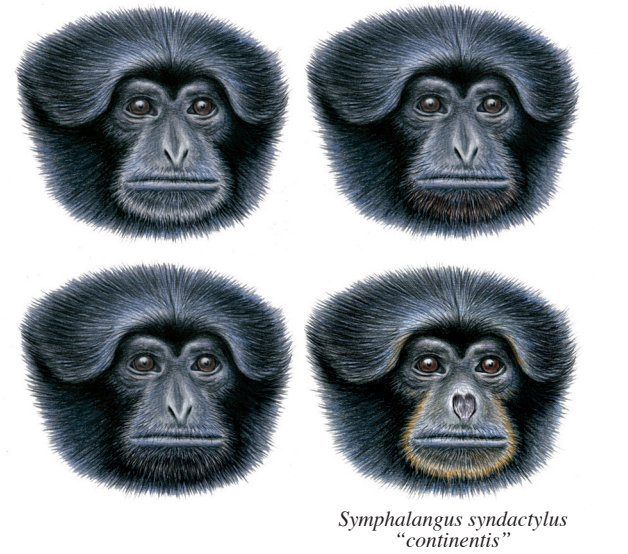


Siamang Gibbon
Symphalangus syndactylus
EN

S Thailand, NW and C Peninsula Malaysia and Indonesia (Sumatra). In Thailand the species' distribution is very limited, occurring only in a small area on the Malaysian border, continuing S into Peninsular Malaysia where the species is largely restricted to mountainous areas in the W of the country, S of the Perak River and N of the Muar River and Tasek Beras across to the Pahang River. In Indonesia, it is confined to the Barisan Mountains of WC Sumatra, though it may have formerly occurred on the island of Bangka. Siamang are sympatric with *Hylobates lar* on the Malay Peninsula and northern Sumatra and with *H. agilis* in southern Sumatra.



Variations in facial hair coloration



Symphalangus syndactylus
"continentis"



Checklist and Conservation Status of the Gibbons
Key to Status in IUCN Red List: LC, Least Concern; NT, Near Threatened; VU, Vulnerable; EN, Endangered; CR, Critically Endangered

Scientific name	Red List status	Date observed	Locality observed
<i>Hoolock hoolock</i>	EN		
<i>Hoolock leuconedys</i>	VU		
<i>Hoolock hoolock mishmiensis</i>	??		
<i>Hoolock tianxing</i>	EN		
<i>Hylobates agilis</i>	EN		
<i>Hylobates albibarbis</i>	EN		
<i>Hylobates klossii</i>	EN		
<i>Hylobates lar lar</i>	EN		
<i>Hylobates lar carpenteri</i>	EN		
<i>Hylobates lar entelloides</i>	EN		
<i>Hylobates lar vestitus</i>	EN		
<i>Hylobates lar yunnanensis</i>	EN		
<i>Hylobates moloch</i>	EN		
<i>Hylobates muelleri</i>	EN		
<i>Hylobates abbotti</i>	EN		
<i>Hylobates funereus</i>	EN		
<i>Hylobates pileatus</i>	EN		
<i>Nomascus concolor concolor</i>	CR		
<i>Nomascus concolor lu</i>	CR		
<i>Nomascus nasutus</i>	CR		
<i>Nomascus hainanus</i>	CR		
<i>Nomascus annamensis</i>	EN		
<i>Nomascus leucogenys</i>	CR		
<i>Nomascus siki</i>	CR		
<i>Nomascus gabriellae</i>	EN		
<i>Symphalangus syndactylus</i>	EN		