

TALK ABSTRACTS

Gibbon rehabilitation – challenges and opportunities

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The trade in illegally captured wildlife is an ongoing, and in many cases increasing, threat to conservation. Primates in particular make appealing pets when young but are frequently rejected or abandoned upon reaching sexual maturity. The trade in gibbons is a lucrative market with infant gibbons fetching anything from US\$10-500 on the international black-market. This represents a huge amount of money for the average Indonesian family, even if the cost of a bullet and gun are accounted for. Trade in highly-endangered gibbons still goes on, despite there being legislation against hunting throughout the gibbons' range and this is not the only problem facing gibbons. Logging and the permanent conversion of the forest to plantation result in the loss and fragmentation of the habitat. Despite this rather bleak outlook, conservation NGO's working with local communities are having an impact. I will discuss the merits and challenges facing rehabilitation and reintroduction of primates using gibbons as a case study. Using data I collected at the Kalaweit Gibbon Central Kalimantan, Indonesia I will highlight the many considerations behind a successful rehabilitation and reintroduction project, the importance of detailed behavioural data and the keys to success. I will finally discuss "The Rehabilitation Debate" i.e. are rehabilitation and reintroduction good tools for conservation of a species?

Mitigating trade: A case for treating the symptoms and affecting a cure

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The international primate trade involves both captive and wild born individuals, many species, is spread over many continents and involves issues of welfare and conservation.

The Monkey Sanctuary Trust's work in the UK, where the primate pet trade is legal, highlights the poor coordination of regulations and legislation and widespread ignorance of the issues involved. The Trust hopes to end the UK primate pet trade by working closely with Government bodies and interested NGO's as well as educating the general public. Although most primates in the UK pet trade are captive born, provenance is difficult to trace and there are links to both legal and illegal international trade.

Where knowledge of a legal trade encourages illegal trade elsewhere, there may be an ethical imperative to end trade, whether or not there the legal trade is seen as a conservation issue. The perception of the value of a species is integral to both welfare and conservation, where value may be defined by economics, culture or ecology. It is often left to primate sanctuaries, which by definition treat the symptoms by providing homes for the victims of the trade, to mitigate welfare by offering the opportunity of social rehabilitation, but where reintroduction is rarely appropriate or possible.

However, unless prevention, including a reduction in demand, is recognised to be essential to cure, current evidence shows that the trade will continue to grow.

The Monkey Sanctuary Trust supports various projects that address these issues and which focus on the education of the general public, specific communities, enforcers and legislators in both native range states and trading states such as the UK.

Addressing the illegal bushmeat trade supply chain

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The illegal commercial bushmeat trade in Cameroon has grown organically due to the ‘pull’ of the city bushmeat markets and the ‘push’ from opportunistic enterprise reacting to new conditions.

Bristol Zoo Gardens has been working with communities living in areas where the hunting of apes for meat has historically been high and where the local people are considered to be intrinsic to the bushmeat supply chain. The project aims to examine the motivation for hunting of apes and develop strategies for reducing such hunting.

Key outputs of the projects have been a greater understanding local people’s role in the commercial bushmeat trade and identifying realistic alternatives to the market. The messages coming from the community confirm some of our understanding of the trade, but are – in other ways – surprising, and lead us to re-examine our intervention strategies.

A by-product of the illegal bushmeat trade is the number of orphaned apes that are confiscated by the government. Bristol Zoo works in partnership with the Cameroon Wildlife Aid Fund (CWFAT) to provide sanctuaries for orphaned apes. The sanctuaries enable the government to carry out a programme of law-enforcement and confiscation of illegally held apes. They also give the opportunity to highlight the consequences of the trade in apes through formal education, outreach sessions and high profile campaigns such as ape reintroduction.

There are currently a number of ape re-introduction projects being implemented or considered in Africa. The Cameroon Chimpanzee Reintroduction Group is one of those examining the possibility of putting apes back into the wild. Is this ‘just’ an initiative driven by a sense of what is ‘right and wrong’ by those that can afford it? Or is there the possibility of creating a value for the conservation of apes based on their ability to attract interest, visitors and income to local economies?

Identifying the CITES Appendix I-listed slow lorises: a training programme for enforcement officials and rescue centres in Southeast Asia

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In June 2007, Asian slow lorises (*Nycticebus spp.*) were transferred to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) Appendix I, due to unsustainable harvesting for the pet and medicinal trades. Trade hubs in *Nycticebus* are Jakarta, Singapore and Bangkok, destined for countries such as China and Japan as pets. Important sources for lorises are Cambodia, and Indonesia. The Southeast Asian Mammal Database and CITES call for additional slow loris education to be conducted as officials are unable to identify the species seen in illegal trade. We designed a capacity building education programme for enforcement officials and rescue centre personnel with the aim of increasing the awareness of, and ability to identify slow lorises, in order to improve detection levels and decrease trade. We implemented four 1-day awareness training sessions in Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand. A mix of educational materials and techniques were used to maximise learning effectiveness. Using a range of quantitative evaluation techniques approximately 100 officials were evaluated. We ascertained that in the countries where the workshops were conducted, most enforcement officials were unable to identify slow lorises to species level and that training was lacking. Analyses indicated that the workshops created significant changes in knowledge levels across key areas such as species identification, species knowledge and legislative awareness. This study reveals the importance of providing species identification training to those involved in preventing slow loris trade and shows that a short training workshop can be effective in improving species identification ability.

A first generation microarray-system for forensic identification of primate species subject to bushmeat trade

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About a quarter of non-human primate species are threatened by extinction in the near future. Loss of habitat, disease and illegal hunting, especially for the bushmeat trade, are major causes of concern. Here we develop an identification tool for primate genera using diagnostic nucleotide positions in the epsilon globin gene, apolipoprotein B gene and mitochondrial 12S rRNA. We identified 111 diagnostic nucleotide positions suitable for genotyping in a microarray format. To show the applicability of the microarray, we typed 70 non-human primates representing all primate infraorders. Sixty-five samples were assigned to the correct infraorder and 32 were assigned to the correct genus. Our results show that it is feasible to distinguish among a high number of taxa if the system allows hierarchical assignation of the samples at different levels and includes taxon-specific and redundant positions.

Primate trade in Southeast Asia

Chris R. Shepherd

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

Wildlife trade in Southeast Asia is huge with tens of millions of animals being traded annually. The bulk of this trade comprises reptiles, especially turtles and snakes, but significant numbers of mammals are traded as well. Among these are the primates, which are traded live for pets, zoos, wildlife collections and bio-medical research and for their part, to be used as meat or in traditional medicines. This has a dramatic impact on populations of already rare primates. Despite primates being relatively well known and high profile species, little is known of the levels of trade and the impacts trade has on the conservation of many primate species. Efforts to end the illegal and unsustainable trade in primates are insufficient, and more efforts need to be made. Inadequate legislation and insufficient enforcement allows the illegal trade to continue, often across international borders.

While most primates are legally protected by national legislation in most countries, and all international trade in primates is regulated by the Convention on international Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), primates continue to be traded, often openly despite being illegal, in significant numbers.

Based on spot-checks carried out in markets throughout Southeast Asia in the period 1997-2008, many locations have been identified as key trade hot-spots for primates. A detailed study of one such location was carried out in Indonesia, on the pet trade in Medan, Indonesia, where approximately 2000 individuals of 11 species were observed in 65 market inventories.

While the illegal domestic trade in primates needs to be curbed primarily by individual countries, the international trade in primates is best tackled using CITES or through regional initiatives, such as the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network. ASEAN countries have recently come together to form the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN). However, until national legislation and levels of enforcement are raised, the full potential of tools such as CITES and the ASEAN-WEN cannot be realized.

Great Apes Film Initiative: How can conservation films be a force for change and generate positive action?

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Television programmes can be a powerful means of raising awareness and triggering action to solve conservation problems. Wildlife documentaries especially make fascinating and compelling viewing that elicits a strong audience reaction – hence cultivating a positive attitude towards the species portrayed and the conservation and sustainable management of their ecosystems. Television viewers in Europe and USA are used to seeing fascinating discoveries about animal behaviour and ecology.

The vast majority of viewers, however, live far from where most of the species or habitats under threat are found. Wildlife programmes could make a far greater contribution to worldwide conservation if they were more widely seen by the people who live and work in the places where these animals exist and by decision-makers who control the fate of those habitats. Broadcasters in developing countries cannot afford to buy transmission rights for expensive documentaries, and so their viewers seldom see such programmes. Film can also play a direct role in addressing conservation issues by showing solutions (e.g. purpose-made training videos) or by giving communities a voice that can be heard in the corridors of power.

The GAFI negotiates for documentaries relevant to or about the great apes to be freely available to audiences in their countries of origin. These are screened on national television, in public places, remote villages, colleges and education centres. To better understand how this generates discussion and changes attitudes, GAFI monitors how often the films are seen and what reactions they elicit. GAFI also facilitates the making of bespoke films to highlight wildlife-related problems and support local solutions.

Developing alternatives to bushmeat: a discussion of the options with specific reference to the Lebialem Hunters' Beekeeping Initiative

Juliet Wright,

Lebialem Hunters' Beekeeping Initiative

The changing socio-economics of western and central Africa have undoubtedly created a formidable bushmeat industry with severe ramifications for wildlife, but bushmeat utilisation is an important livelihood strategy with many advantageous characteristics. The unregulated and decentralised nature of the bushmeat industry means that an unusual degree of equality is apparent, there are few barriers to entry and initial investment costs are low. Although the commercialisation of bushmeat may have played an important role in short-term poverty alleviation, reliance on a depleting resource will have negative social consequences in the long-term. If the volume of species harvested for bushmeat and the level of human dependence is to be reduced, economic and dietary alternatives must be developed alongside education and legislation components in a multi-faceted approach to conservation. Whilst many alternatives have been proposed and piloted, knowledge is limited regarding the effectiveness of these strategies in terms of bushmeat mitigation. The Lebialem Hunters' Beekeeping Initiative is a locally-led partnership that aims to train bushmeat hunters in the Lebialem Highlands of Cameroon in beekeeping and develop the local market for honey and bee products in order to create a sustainable trade with high earnings potential. A comparison will be made between the various bushmeat alternatives with details given as to how a beekeeping project can be designed to maximise impact on the bushmeat harvest and trade.