

An Observation of Captive Breeding of Hoolock Gibbon (*Bunopithecus hoolock hoolock*) in Dhaka Zoo, Bangladesh

Md. Waliur Rahman Akand*

The Hoolock Gibbon is the only species of ape in South Asia. It occurs only in India and Bangladesh and has been categorised Endangered and Critically Endangered in each country respectively. It is held only by a few zoos: 2 in Bangladesh, 4 in India and (Burmese variety) one research centre in California, USA.

Dhaka Zoo acquired four hoolock gibbons from the wild on 20.05.2001. The enclosure had been prepared previously keeping in mind the welfare of gibbons. The enclosure consists of two exhibition areas measuring (in cm) 60 x 38 x 30 and 48 x 28 x 25 respectively and an indoor or holding area. The indoor area is used for feeding and night housing of gibbons. The outdoor area is used for playing and grooming of animals during the day. Some enrichment items such as rubber tires, chains, ropes, etc. were arranged in the outdoor area.

In view of their threatened status, these apes have been kept with great care and special attention by zoo personnel. The animal keeper, Zoo Officer, and Curator have been involved in their up keep and everyone was highly interested in breeding the animals. After a seemingly successful mating during May, 2003, a hopeful countdown began for the great event. The birth took place on 5.12.2003 at 6.00am.

Special care was taken to keep the gibbons free from infection by adopting special sanitary measures. The animals were kept off-exhibit for some days to give them protection and rest, particularly for the mother and the baby. Special diets with vitamin supplements were provided for proper lactation of the mother. Even during pregnancy mother had been given special supplemental food. A 24-hour watch on the mother and the baby was arranged round the clock. A wooden platform in the indoor area had been provided with a hope that mother and baby would use it for privacy and night shelter, but they hardly used the platform.

The diet of the mother consists of the following ingredients, some of which are of wild origin :-

Stable food items:

- | | | | |
|----|--------------|--------|-----|
| 1) | ripe bananas | 500gm | |
| 2) | date | 100 gm | |
| 3) | apple | 100 gm | |
| 4) | grapes | 50 gm | |
| 5) | Bengal gram | 20 gm | |
| 6) | ground nuts | 20 gm | |
| 7) | egg | | 1no |

Seasonal food items:

- 1) orange\ malta\ pineapple\ guava\ - 125 gm
- 2) wild origin ebony (*Diospyros peregrina*), fig wasp and sapotella - 200 gm

Occasional food items

green leaves of epil epil

Conclusion :

The offspring has grown up well and is only partly dependent on its mother. We have celebrated his first birth anniversary with a public ceremony on 05.12.2004.

Hoolock Gibbon PHVA

BIAM, Dhaka

14-18 February 2005

Hoolock Captive Management Training

Dhaka Zoo, 19 February 2005

Chittagong Univ, 20 Feb 05

Teachers for Tigers Workshops

Asiatic Society Dhaka 20-22 Feb 05

Sunderbans 23 - 27 Feb 05

Dhaka Zoo 2-4 Feb 05

Small Mammal

Conservation Training

Field Techniques, Conservation Welfare and Reintroduction for Chiroptera and Rodentia, Dhaka Zoo, 2-6 Feb 2005

Zoo Outreach Organisation

Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh

Forest Division of Bangladesh

PSG South Asian Primate Network

Wildlife Information Liaison

Development

CBSG, South Asia

RSG, South and East Asia

CBSG, SSC, IUCN

US Fish and Wildlife Service

Wildlife Conservation Society

MMBF / PSG-PAF / CI

Twycross Zoo

Appenheul Primate Park

**WATCH FOR REPORTS
IN ZOOS' PRINT**



* Education Officer, Dhaka Zoo, Dhaka, Bangladesh