
RESCUE NEWS --

News of some primate rescue centres in Asia

Pingtung Rescue Center For Endangered Wild Animals Taiwan, ROC

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This note is to brief you about our work on the management of captive orangutans in the south and southeast Asian region and to make an appeal for information about the holdings of orangutans in southern Asia (India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh).

During January 1996, four Indonesian government officials namely; Mr. Somersono (Director General of Forest Protection & Nature Conservation), Mr. Wilie Smits (Personal Advisor to the Minister of Forestry), Mr. H. D. Susilo (Head of Tanjung Puting National Park), and Dr. Dondin Sajuthi (Director of Primate Center, Bogor Agricultural University) visited the Pingtung Rescue Center For Endangered Wild Animals in Taiwan to participate in a workshop on the management and relocation of captive and confiscated orangutans.

During the workshop, we decided to select healthy orangutans under eight years age for future repatriation to Indonesia. The orangutans are to be resocialized and rehabilitated to Taiwan prior to the repatriation. The workshop recommended that individuals older than eight years of age be relocated to zoos overseas for captive breeding programs.

To follow-up the discussion on the captive management and relocation of orangutans to zoos, we organised another workshop at our center during late last year. Participants from the Singapore Zoological Gardens (Mr. Sam Alagappasamy, Curator-Zoology) and Mr. Ayathan Vinodh, (Manager-Animal Presentations), Wildlife Information Network, London (Dr. Suzanne Boardman), and Honkong Kadoree Zoological Park (Mr. Rupert Griffiths, Conservation Officer) joined the workshop to discuss about the procedures of relocation of endangered species including orangutans. We continued our discussion on the regional management of orangutans during the Southeast Asian Zoological Parks' Association conference in Melaka, Malaysia later in the year.

We came to an agreement that our rescue center and the Singapore zoo will collaborate a program to manage the captive orangutan populations in southeast Asia with the co-operation of orangutan captive facilities in the region. It is important to understand the problems of captive management of orangutans in southeast Asia and our co-operative efforts would help us all in issues such as; orangutans conservation breeding; captive management, disease control, relocation, finding new individuals to increase gene pool, rescue, rehabilitation, re-introduction, welfare and fund raising. We are currently updating the information on the existing populations of captive orangutans in southeast Asia.

The Orangutan International Studbook does not include all of the orangutan facilities in south and southeast Asia. Therefore it would be very useful if zoos having orangutans would send me detailed information about the orangutans housed in their facility. The information should include: sub-species (Bornian, sumatran or hybrid), age, sex, history, health condition and diseases etc. Please include what type of assistance you need (e.g. disease control, need of mate, diet problems, funding etc). Please send this information directly to the address below.

The Pingtung Rescue Center and Singapore Zoological Gardens (Vinodh Ayathan) will jointly maintain the regional captive orangutan database which will be circulated to interested individuals and institutions in the region. P

The South East Asian Zoo Association conference is scheduled to be held in Singapore during October this year. I would like to receive information regarding captive orangutans in southeast Asian Zoological Institutions as soon as possible, so that we could discuss further on regional management issues of captive orangutans during the SEAZA conference to develop effective management strategies.

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Endangered Primate Rescue Center, Cuc Phuong National Park, Vietnam

The Cuc Phuong Endangered Primate Rescue Centre was established about 1993 following growing concern about endemic and threatened primate species in Vietnam. In 1992/3 a Memorandum was prepared by representatives of the IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group, Conservation International, Zoological Society for Conservation of Species and Populations, Royal Zoological Society of South Australia and others. The Memorandum was followed by a symposium at the Cuc Phuong National Park organised by ZSCSP and Allwetterzoo Munster. At this meeting representatives of Viet Nam's Ministry of Forestry, nature conservationists and international NGO's ratified a MoA, Memorandum of Agreement between the Ministry of Forestry and the international NGO's of which a key point was the establishment of an endangered primate breeding facility at Cuc Phuong National Park.

In early 1993 two Delacour langurs were confiscated from individuals who should not have had them and this led to the actual construction of a facility to hold them. They were in very poor condition, having been fed a poor diet and release back

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to the wild was not an option due to actual hunting in the National Park itself.

In March 1993 a Hatinh langur was confiscated and the necessity for constructing quarters which could hold both Delacour and Hatinh as well as other species which may be confiscated in future made the signing of the MoA a very positive step.

In the early stage of the centre an experienced foreign animal keeper was arranged to look after the centre. Later, as the number of animals at the centre increased, two Vietnamese rangers were employed. One of them was sponsored to travel to Germany for three months to gain more skills in animal keeping through work experience in several zoos. Other foreign animal keepers worked at the centre donating their time and expertise with financial support and materials coming from ZSCSP, Allwetterzoo Munster, Henry Doorly Zoo, Adelaide Zoo, Leipzig Zoo animal keepers and visitor donations.

In 1994 the Director of the National Park designated a permanent site for the Centre which was fenced and a complex of cages begun. By the second half of 1995 the complete building was desperately needed for animals but funds were not available. The building was completed, however, on credit ! Many zoos around the world have contributed equipment and expertise to this facility. In addition more than US \$ 110,000 has been raised from zoos, NGO's and individuals, not including the amounts for conservation education.

There are plans to construct a semi-free facility with electrical fencing this year so that the Delacour langurs and Gibbons can be kept in a virtually natural conditions.

Most of the animals as the EPRC have been confiscated from hunters, merchants or illegal animal shipments. Primates have also been confiscated by rangers working on the Chinese border. The Laos langurs were obtained as a result of a tip from an airport customs official. A Douc langur was confiscated from a restaurant ! Other species were confiscated from a small zoo not authorised to keep endangered species. In several cases foreign tourist bought monkeys at markets with the intention of taking them home.

Currently the centre has more than 30 monkeys in 10 forms (species or subspecies. Two of these have a questionable taxonomic status. The Register of primates of the centre includes Delacour langurs, Hatinh langurs, Laos langurs, Phayre's langur, Tonkin snub-nosed langur, Red-shanked douc langur, Douc langur, White-cheeked gibbons, Southern white cheeked gibbons, Gabriella's crested gibbon, Slow loris, and Pygmy loris.

Editor's Note : This Report has been extracted from the Endangered Primate Rescue Centre Newsletter, 1996. For a copy of the complete 6 page report write to ZOO and send Rs. 10 for a xerox copy.

