



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Cambodia

Field Assistant: Gibbon Habituation and Research

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is seeking applicants for the position of Field Assistant to support gibbon habituation and behavioral research for Jahoo Ecotourism and Conservation project.

Background

WCS assists the Royal Government of Cambodia to conserve species and habitats in four landscapes across Cambodia, namely, the Eastern Plains (consisting of the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWS) in Mondulkiri and Kratie provinces), the Northern Plains, the Tonle Sap, and the Freshwater Rivers. Taken together these landscapes support all of the major habitat types in Cambodia, as well as vital population of most of Cambodia globally threatened species. These protected areas are also extensively used by human populations that reside in and adjacent to the protected areas.

KSWS covers an area of almost 3,000 km² and includes 20 villages and is home to more than 350 species of bird, 60 species of fish, 90 species of mammal, and 80 herptile species. More than 70 of the 900+ species of flora and fauna found in KSWS are threatened or endangered. Around 32,000 people live in and around the protected area and are key stakeholders in the long term success of the area.

In Andoung Kraloeung village, inside KSWS, WCS supports the community-based ecotourism project Jahoo. Support includes the habituation program of southern yellow-cheeked crested gibbons, the primary species of interest for visiting tourists. Habituation is key to allow tourist observations and behavioral research of gibbons in the wild.

Normally wild gibbons are very elusive, but the process of habituation allows wild gibbons to become used to the presence of people, without eliciting a fear response such as fleeing, allowing researchers to gain unprecedented access to better understand gibbon behavior and allowing tourists to observe and photograph gibbons. In turn, tourism brings revenue to the community and provides jobs incentivizing continued gibbon and forest conservation.

Field Assistant

The Field Assistant will manage a habituation team of 4 people hired from the local indigenous community. The team works everyday locating and following 1 gibbon family of 8 individuals. The Field Assistant will be responsible to improve habituation success and improve current practices, ensuring that the team are following IUCN best-practice methodologies.

The Field Assistant will also support the transition from paper-based to mobile app data collection, providing trainings to the local habituation team to improve their data collection capacity. In addition, the Field Assistant will lead the search and identification of a second gibbon group suitable for habituation as well as training of new staff to expand the local habituation team for the habituation of a second gibbon group.

Qualifications and Experience

Responsibilities

- Manage the habituation of southern yellow-cheeked crested gibbon at Jahoo

- Training
 - Receive training on habituation protocols and best practice
 - Receive training on data collection, both on paper and using a smartphone
 - Provide training and on the job coaching to local habituation team on the above

- Supervision
 - Ensure implementation of data collection protocol
 - Ensure adherence to habituation best practices
 - Provide habituation team with monthly updates, feedback and targets for following month

- Data collection
 - Process data collection in database
 - Provide WCS Data Analyst and Operations TA and Jahoo Project Manager with monthly updates on habituation progress
 - Assist WCS Data Analyst and Operations TA with data analysis and habituation reports

- Outreach
 - Support gibbon education and outreach activities in local communities
 - Contribute to Jahoo website and social media blogs, newsletters and posts

- Ecotourism
 - Support Jahoo guides and tours when visiting the gibbons to ensure visiting protocol is followed whilst sharing gibbon research information

- Reporting
 - Provide WCS Data Analyst and Operations TA and Jahoo Project Manager with monthly feedback on habituation success and progress

Remuneration

- Monthly stipend, depending on experience, starting at \$500 per month
- National travel and accommodation

Duty station

- Andoung Kraloeung village and Sen Monorom Town, Mondulkiri Province, Cambodia

Reports to

- WCS Data Analyst and Operations Technical Advisor

Employment period

- 3 months