

NATIONAL

Two smuggled apes rescued



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Two Hoolock Gibbons, the only apes to be found in India, were seized by officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Kolkata Zonal Unit, near the India-Bangladesh border on Thursday.

Hoolock Gibbons are extremely rare primates, listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act (1972) and as an endangered as per the red list of IUCN.

The primates, along with two palm civets listed in Part II of the Schedule II of The Wildlife Protection Act, and about 40 parakeets were recovered from a vehicle near Bhojerhat on the Basanti Highway near Kolkata. The animals were crammed into three cages inside a vehicle and were smuggled into India from Bangladesh.

Hoolock Gibbons are found in certain specific habitats of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh and also in Eastern Bangladesh. It is not clear whether the animals were sourced from India or Bangladesh.

The animals have been shifted to Kolkata's Alipore Zoological gardens.

According to the World Wildlife Fund for Nature, Hoolock Gibbons are one of the most endangered 25 primate species in the world.

DRI arrests two for smuggling gibbons, exotic birds from B'desh

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The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has arrested two men for allegedly smuggling gibbons and some exotic birds into the country from Bangladesh.

Acting on inputs, the DRI officials intercepted a car near the Indo-Bangla border at North 24 Parganas yesterday.

Three cages full of wild animals and 40 exotic birds were found inside the intercepted car, a statement issued by the agency said today.

On examination, one cage with two partitions was found to contain two hollock gibbons (endangered species under the Wild life Protection Act, 1972) on one side and two palm civets (another endangered species) on the other side, it said, adding that they were badly crammed up.

A second cage, containing 15 colorful rosella birds (exotic in nature) and a third cage containing 27 exotic birds like nandin conure, peach fronted conure, grass parakeets, maroon tailed Conure were recovered, the DRI said.

Conure birds are like parakeets -- they are found in Central and South America and also in Australia.

They are also called as clowns of the parrot world due to their constant attention-seeking behaviour. Rosella birds, which are very colorful, are found in Australia

The officials also found gibbons and civets (each in a pair) from the car, it said.

The DRI immediately contacted the office of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, West Bengal and also the officials of the Wild Life Crime Control Bureau, Kolkata.

Accordingly, a rescue team from the Wild Life Crime Control Bureau and a team from the Kolkata Zoo reached the DRI office to whom the wildlife (recovered from the car) was handed over.

Two persons have been arrested in this case, the statement said.

Last week, the DRI had seized 24 pieces of ivory weighing 5.838 kg from Guwahati. In March this year, the DRI made a seizure of 214 numbers of Indian star tortoise at Kolkata.

"There is an urgent need to step up the fight against wildlife crime, which has environmental, social and economic impact and a concerted effort is need by all the law enforcement agencies in combating the same," it said.