

# EAST: the Endangered Asian Species Trust

SUPPORTING THE RESCUE, REHABILITATION AND RELEASE OF ASIAN WILDLIFE.

## WHAT IS EAST?

EAST, The Endangered Asian Species Trust, (Charity No 1115350) is a charity set up by the Monkey World Ape Rescue Centre in the UK to support conservation work in South-East Asia.



EAST supports the rescue, rehabilitation and conservation of Asian wildlife species both *in situ* and *ex-situ*. EAST's primary project is the Dao Tien Endangered Primate Species Centre in Cat Tien National Park Southern Vietnam.

## DAO TIEN ENDANGERED PRIMATE SPECIES CENTRE



Dao Tien specialises in rescuing and rehabilitating endangered primates that are caught up in the illegal wildlife trade. It is located on a 57-hectare island within Cat Tien National Park, Vietnam.

It focuses on species that would naturally be found in this region:

- Y Golden-cheeked gibbon
- Y Black-shanked douc
- Y Silvered langur
- Y Pygmy loris

These are endangered species, which means that reintroducing them back into the wild will not only help the individuals, but will also support the wild populations, which are rapidly decreasing due to illegal hunting.



## THE MAIN AIMS OF DAO TIEN

### **1) To provide a facility for confiscated endangered primates**

In order for the Forestry Protection Department of Vietnam to uphold the law, there must be centres like Dao Tien to send confiscated animals. If there was nowhere for the primates to go, these important confiscations could not happen and there would be no way of enforcing the laws set out to protect these animals.

### **2) To reintroduce healthy primates back into the forest.**

These rehabilitated animals are important founders of new populations and are vital for the survival of these species. Dao Tien is also writing protocols for rehabilitation and release of these species, based on the data from the initial releases. These protocols can be used to allow this project to continue sustainably in the future.

### **3) To raise awareness through local education programmes.**

By working with local communities and highlighting the plight of these species, it is hoped that this trade can be stopped altogether.

## WHAT IS THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE?

The illegal wildlife trade is where animals are taken from the wild and sold. This is the greatest threat to Vietnam's primates.



There are 3 main reasons why these animals are illegally taken out of the wild:

**Meat:** Not only for local people to eat when hungry, but also for commercial purposes. The meat from these animals is sold in expensive restaurants throughout Vietnam for tourists who want to try exotic meat.

**Use in Chinese Medicine:** The bones of many primates are boiled down to make a medicinal paste, which is used as a tonic for pregnancy.

**The Pet Trade and Tourism:** This is one of the most shocking things; primates are kept illegally in small cages at restaurants and petrol stations in appalling conditions just to please tourists. These animals will have been hunted from the forest as babies, their mother and the rest of their family killed in the process. Many of these infants will have not survived and only a few make it to be used in tourism.



Dao Tien works with the Forestry Protection Department of Vietnam to rescue the primates caught up in this awful trade. Many of them arrive in the centre half their natural body weight through malnutrition. Some are locked in small cages in the dark and due to lack of sunshine they develop rickets (weak, brittle bones).

## THE REHABILITATION PROCESS

Dao Tien works to rehabilitate and release all of these primates, where possible, to allow them to go back in to the wild where they belong.

This will not only increase the numbers found in the wild, but also increase the genetic diversity of the wild population. These individuals will be important founders of new populations and vital for the survival of these species.

The rehabilitation process has 5 main steps:

**1) Health checks:** The primates can easily be infected with human diseases through close contact with their 'owners'. Some of these diseases, although relatively harmless to us, can cause big problems in other primate populations. We must carry out health checks on these animals to make sure that they are healthy and do not carry any disease which may harm other primates.



**2) Social Groupings:** Most primates are social and need a friend or a partner. If they are left on their own they can become very stressed and develop stereotypical behaviours (such as swinging back and forth in the same spot or self-hugging). These behaviours may turn into self-mutilation. Some individuals will get twigs

and use them to replicate the feeling of being groomed by a friend; grooming is not just for picking out fleas, but a way of maintaining close bonds and friendship. They are not meant to be alone.

**3) Feed them up:** Primates often have very specialised diets. For example, Black-shanked doucs eat nothing but leaves and unripe fruit. If they are fed anything else it can kill them. Gibbons eat a variety of fruits, leaves, flowers and insects. Many of the animals are fed very poor diets before they arrive at Dao Tien so we need to introduce them to a normal wild diet again.

**4) Semi-Wild area:** There is a 20 hectare area on the tip of



Dao Tien Island where the primates can learn to live a wild life again. The area is large enough for them to behave as they would in the wild; finding food and moving through the trees, but is protected enough that field staff can

keep an eye on their progress. To help with this they are fitted with radio collars, which enable staff to locate them. The most important lesson they must learn here is to stay away from humans.

**5) Wild release and monitoring:** Once they have passed their 'final exam' in the semi-wild enclosure they can be released back into the wild. They are monitored for the first few months of their release to ensure that they are healthy, are finding food and have managed to find a territory.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

There are many things you can do to help stop this abusive trade.

### DON'T ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE PART OF THE PROBLEM:

**1) NEVER keep a primate as a pet:** These animals may have been taken from the wild, their families killed in the process. Aside from that, primates do not make good pets, they make look cute and cuddly but they are strong and often bite and scratch their owners. Also it is illegal to keep most primate species as pets, so you could end up in a lot of trouble with the police.

**2) Never have your photograph taken with wildlife on holiday:** most often these are wild animals that have been caught as babies and are kept in hideous conditions and often drugged.

**3) Report any wildlife issues to the relevant authorities.**

You can also support us by sponsoring an animal at Dao Tien or raising money to help run the centre, support the monitoring teams or help buy radio collars.

Finally, and probably the most important thing you can do is pass on the message. Make your friends and family aware of the problem and let them know the simple ways they can ensure that they are not part of the problem.

**WITH YOUR HELP WE CAN STOP THIS ABUSIVE TRADE.**

