



Gibbon Comeback

Did you know...? Gibbons are apes and not monkeys.

- The terms 'monkey' and 'ape' actually refer to different types of animal.
- Almost all monkeys have a tail whereas apes do not. Apes are generally larger and more intelligent.

Illustration: A Hainan gibbon.

New Rare Gibbon Family Found

Hainan gibbons are the world's rarest ape. However, they now may be making a **gradual** comeback.

A new family of Hainan gibbon was spotted in a small forest on the island of Hainan, China. This is a positive sign for the rare gibbon.

About seventy years ago there were 2000 Hainan gibbons alive in the wild. Twenty years later, that number dropped to 10 because of **habitat** destruction.

Although numbers have gone up since then, there are still fewer than 30 of them left in the wild today.

Gibbons have long arms to help them swing through the trees. They spend most of their time in the branches and have loud, musical voices.

It was the loud calls of a male Hainan gibbon that alerted local people to the new family. It was in a forested area about 8km away from where they are normally found.

Scientists visited the area and heard a 'great-call'. This is when gibbon couples sing **duets** together at **dawn** to strengthen

their bond.

The scientists hope that the number of gibbons will continue to slowly increase as they make homes in new areas.

This is not the only hopeful animal story that has been in the news recently. The shrill carder bees are rising in numbers. This important bees help plants make seeds.

The number of cranes have also been rising in the UK.

Although these are small steps, it is great news for animal lovers.

Glossary

gradual	Taking place slowly.
habitat	The natural home or environment of an animal or plant.
duet	A piece of music sung or played by two people.
dawn	The first appearance of light in the sky before sunrise.

Questions

1. What alerted local people to the new gibbons?

2. In the sentence "This is a positive sign for the rare gibbon." the phrase "positive sign" suggests that...

- There are sign posts with the gibbons name on.
- Things aren't looking good for the number of Hainan gibbon.
- The monkeys are really happy.
- Things might be looking good for the number of Hainan gibbon.

3. What do you think the scientists might do next to help increase the numbers of Hainan gibbons?

4. Tick each statement to show whether it is true or false.

	True	False
Gibbons are monkeys.		
There are only 10 Hainan gibbons alive today.		
Gibbons have short arms.		
Locals alerted the scientists after hearing the gibbons' 'duet'		

5. Use information contained within the text to describe one difference between apes and monkeys.

6. Summarise the key information in the story in 20 words or fewer.
