

Extensive information:

Project Different Gibbons (White handed-, Concolor- and Piliated gibbon) Thailand



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Note: Annually the text of this extensive information will be developed and will be kept up with regularly in cooperation with this project. Because there can be made some changes or because there will be some changes be necessary because of certain and unexpected results, etc., it could be that this text not every time will compare in practise at this project.

This version was updated in April 2009

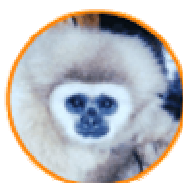


1. Gibbon introduction

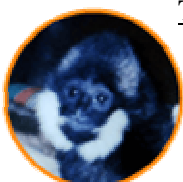
Gibbons are small, monogamous, territorial primates that live in the top canopy of the lower rainforests of Southeast Asia.

Thailand's gibbons are threatened mainly by the destruction of the rainforests. Poaching for meat, medicine and for exploitation of live gibbons in the tourist and pet trade is also a major threat. All twelve species of gibbon in South East Asia are listed on Appendix 1 of the Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Since 1992 it has been illegal to take a gibbon from the wild in Thailand.

1.1 Anatomy and locomotion



The White-handed Gibbon: Easily recognized by their white hands, white feet, and white heart shape border around their face. The colour of their fleece varies per individual ranging from off-white (light brown) to brown and even black.



The Concolor Gibbon: Young gibbons have a yellow fleece, which eventually turns to black if they are male. They have a cone shaped head and white cheeks. The females fleece is light beige or almost golden colour with black stripes on her head.



The Piliated gibbon: *Recognized* by the long black hairs on their crown, and light grey (almost silvery) fleece for the female. The males have a black fleece with white eyebrows and white bottom.

Gibbons are small, lightweight apes (approximately 4 – 7 kg), with a lifespan of 35 – 40 years. They have a small round head, and very long arms, which are longer than their legs. They have a short, slender body and, like all apes, they have no tail.

The gibbons' DNA is for about 98% the same as humans. Their hands are very similar to humans as well: they have four long fingers and a smaller opposable thumb. Their feet have five toes, including an opposable big toe. Their hands and feet have a leather-like hand palm / foot sole, which gives the gibbon a very strong grip for swinging. Because their opposable big toe has a gripping function, they are able to walk upright on branches and use their outstretched arms to keep their balance. Gibbons are extremely agile and are the acrobats of the jungle spending most of their lives in the trees. They swing through the forest from branch to branch using their long arms. It's a very efficient manner of moving quickly through the forest called *brachiating*. When they brachiated, gibbons use four fingers of their hands like a hook, but not the thumb. Gibbons can reach speeds of up to 30 kilometers an hour swinging through the trees, making them the fastest flightless animals in the forest. As their eyes are situated on the front of their head, they are able to calculate distances with amazing precision. Gibbons rarely walk on the ground but when walking short distances they walk biped ally (on two legs). Gibbons are unable to swim and generally avoid water.



1.2 Social habits and behaviour



Gibbons are social animals that are active during the day (they are diurnal). They live in small, stable family groups consisting of a mated pair and their immature offspring.

They are monogamous primates, which mean that they choose their male or female for life. In the wild, dark gibbons have a preference to choose dark mates and light gibbons prefer light mates. The reason for this is not known.

They breed every 2 – 3 years. Male and female appear to be on equal footing within the family group. Like other apes they mature very slowly, the offspring being completely dependent on its mother for the first year, who will not be receptive to the male until the infant can function independently at about two years of age.

When the young gibbons become sexually mature, at around 6 or 7 years old, they will eventually be driven from the family territory, find a partner and develop a territory and family of their own.

During the day gibbons will come together to groom. They clean the fur of a family member by removing dirt and parasites from fur and cleaning wounds, if they have any.

Grooming is not only important from a hygienic point of view, but it also serves as a group bonding function as well. Gibbons spend about 15 minutes a day on grooming.

Unlike other apes, gibbons do not make ‘sleeping nests’. They sleep alone or with other gibbons huddled together in a fork between branches. They sleep in an upright position by folding their hind legs in front of their chest and put their hands on their knees, while their head nods on their chest.

1.3 Diet

These gibbons spent most of the day looking for food. They are omnivores, which mean that they eat plants as well as meat. They forage for food in the forest, eating fruit, which constitutes about 50% of their diet. The remaining food consists of about 30% leaves, 13% insects and 7 % flowers.

They drink water, often by dipping a furry hand into the water or rubbing a hand on wet leaves, slurping up the water from their fur.

1.4 Territory and vocalization

All gibbons awaken shortly before sunrise and greet the day with loud singing (with a different sound). This territorial singing is unique to this species and the songs are repeated throughout the day to claim their territory, which is usually about 20 to 30 hectares of rainforest. This ‘song’ is very loud and complex with pure, melodious and sonorous tones. It takes years of practice before a gibbon is a proficient singer. When a female is singing, the females of the neighbouring territory respond, which you will also, can hear frequently at this project. The males make simpler quavering sounds and remain silent when the females sing.



1.5 Endangered species

In Thailand huge tracks of forest are disappearing at an alarming rate, destroying the habitats of many species of flora and fauna, gibbons being one of the most vulnerable species.

Since 1992 it also has been illegal to acquire a gibbon as pet. But poachers still continue to poach them for meat, medicine and the pet trade. Because of this most of Thailand’s rainforests are under-populated or even absent of gibbons.



To acquire a baby gibbon, an entire family of 9-30 gibbons will be hunted down. The mother is shot and falls 9 meters or more from a tree, still clinging to her baby. The baby will continue to hold on to its mother's belly during the fall. It is estimated that only one in three of the little ones survive this fall. The killing of female gibbons also greatly reduces the overall reproduction rate, which is steadily declining every year. Baby gibbons, that survive, are snatched by poachers. They are then sold illegally as pets or to serve as a tourist attraction in the tourist industry.

Young gibbons respond to humans and are very easy to handle. They are very affectionate, intelligent and have a behaviour pattern very close to humans. That's also the main reason why they are so attractive as pets. But, more tragically, they also often end up in bars, where they are taught to drink alcohol and smoke cigarettes just to entertain the customers. Gibbons in the wild go to sleep shortly before sunset, but for these exploited gibbons drugs are often given to keep them awake until late into the night. Another tragic way in which gibbons are exploited is when the owner of a "pet" gibbon displays the gibbon to people roaming the beaches near resorts.



This owner collects money in exchange for photos of the tourists together with the cute little gibbon. Unaware of the gibbons nutritional needs the owner will feed them a very poor and often wrong diet

When gibbons reach the age of 6 or 7, they become sexually mature, this leads to aggressive behaviour. At this point gibbons develop large canine teeth. When the owners are no longer able to handle the gibbons, they file down the canine teeth or have them pulled out. Having lost the ability to make money due to the gibbons' aggressive behaviour, owners will often dump or kill the gibbon. If the owner decides to keep them, they are locked in a small cage or tied to a chain. If the owner decides to dump the gibbon, they are often given to the Thai authorities whose sanctuaries have limited resources and housing. This glut of wild-born captive gibbons has created a problem for the Thai government.



2. The project



In 1991 the founders of this project relocated from America to Thailand, with the intention to retire from their business careers.

One day a baby gibbon was brought to them. They cared for her lovingly. This baby gibbon introduced them to the crisis in the world of gibbons. Despite the fact that the founders initially had very little knowledge of gibbons, they sought help from vets and primatologists, and are now experts on this species. Sixteen years later this home for one baby gibbon has become a gibbon sanctuary, caring for 42 gibbons and 7 monkeys. The project also cares for a few species of birds.

Much remains to be done, but they are on the right track. At the moment the sanctuary cares for 3 different gibbon species. A third of these gibbons is handicapped (resulting from earlier abuse or accidents) or psychologically unstable.

This projects aims to provide all gibbons brought to the project with a safe and loving home, special diet, medical attention and socialisation with other gibbons. With so many tragic stories of the gibbons' lives before arriving at the project, the hope is to provide each gibbon a brighter future filled with tender loving care. Only when the gibbons feel safe and loved they will start to thrive again.



2.1 Education

The gibbon project attempts to promote awareness through the education of school children, tourists and the media in order to reduce and eventually eliminate poaching and deforesting.

1. Schools:

The project provides tours of the sanctuary to local school children.

The project wishes to provide the next generation of local people a better understanding of the importance of preserving the natural environment.



3. Tourists:

The project provides visiting tourists with a tour of the sanctuary and an information board, which are made and updated by volunteers.

The project encourages visiting tourists to not take pictures with gibbons on beaches or in bars and to report such activity to the authorities.

4. The media:

The project has had a steady interest from the media, both local and international, which enables the project to promote awareness all over the world.

2.2 The Sanctuary



The gibbons are not free to roam the sanctuary grounds and the enclosures are for their own protection since they do not possess the same traits as wild gibbons. It's questionable whether captive and injured gibbons could ever acquire jungle release survival traits.



Another reason for the use of enclosures is for the visitor's safety. A young gibbon is cute and responds consistently to humans in play or nurturing situations. On the other hand, a four-year-old plus gibbon can put you in hospital if you try to handle it. Adult gibbons must be addressed with extreme caution 100% of the time.

It is important to understand that each of the gibbons has existed in a unique environment. The majority of gibbons held in captivity have never seen another gibbon prior to arrival at the sanctuary. Most were removed from the jungle at very young age (months) and lived in a private home. They have never had a gibbon parent to teach, provide love and protection.

During your participation in this project, working directly with the gibbons, you will experience the greatest reward: to witness the gibbon's behaviour and health quickly improve when they know that they are saved and loved.

2.3 The Future

The sanctuary is working on better and bigger enclosures for the gibbons. The sanctuary's plans for the future focus on alternatives to the current enclosures for the benefit of the gibbons. For example, separate larger enclosures where they are able to roam freely, such as a formation of islands. The project has adequate land available and therefore they are exploring the possibilities.



3. Volunteers

The gibbon sanctuary is in need of many things such as equipment, volunteers and project funding. Volunteers support the project's work by providing a contribution to the day-to-day operations of the sanctuary. The project is entirely funded by donations and the founder's retirement money. Costs include food, healthcare and new housing for the gibbons. The project does not receive financial support from the government.

Volunteers who study or complete their study in a field such as biology, ecology, primatology, zoology, animal management or veterinary science may, by prior agreement, be able to do non-invasive behavioural, disability and disease research.

Note: The projects number one priority is the welfare and care of the animals. All research is secondary to the primary care of the gibbons. Any research will be under supervision of the project's director. It should be noted that there is no resident scientist on-site and you will have to arrange for scientific guidance by your own university while participating.

3.1 Period / duration

Volunteers are welcome at the sanctuary all year around. You are free to choose your own arrival date. The minimum duration of your stay must be 2 weeks.



3.2 Requirements

To participate at the project no skills or experience in animal care and welfare are required.

However there are some other requirements to participate at this project which are:

- Minimum age for participation is 20 years old
- Volunteers must be in good physical condition
- Volunteers must be able to communicate in English
- A letter of motivation stating why you would like to work at this project is required. (this letter must be written in English and sent via email)
- Vaccinations (see medical advice)

3.3 Costs (including and not including)

The costs per person to participate at this project are as specified in the Global Spirits' website.

These costs include:

- Accommodation
- Three meals a day (+ tea and coffee)
- A donation to the project
- Training and supervision
- Administration costs

These costs not include:

- Flight to and from Thailand including airport taxes (Airport taxes will be about 500 Baht for international flights and about 40 Baht for domestic flights)
- Passport / visa
- Travel- and cancellation insurance, which is compulsory for all participants
- Personal expenses like: telephone bills, internet, souvenirs, etc.
- Any excursions undertaken by the volunteer



3.4 Accommodation



The project has accommodation available for about 6 volunteers. This accommodation consists of a separate two-bedroom house and one apartment at the sanctuary.

Each bedroom has space for two volunteers, which may require you to share a room with another volunteer. But this depends on the number of volunteers who are present at that time. These bedrooms are small and have separate beds. They have basic furnishing and are provided with a fan (no air-conditioning, but note that the sanctuary is located at 850 meters above sea level so temperature is cool at night). Bedding is provided by the project for each volunteer. Volunteers are expected to keep their own room clean and tidy.



The house has two bathrooms, which are western style and will be shared by all occupants. Each bathroom has a toilet, a wash basin and a shower, which has running water (hot and cold). Another bedroom is above the gibbon's kitchen area which is a little larger than the others and there is a bathroom inside (apartment).



There is also a little kitchen available in the volunteer house. There is a refrigerator and you can make for example coffee and tea. You don't have to prepare meals, because they are made and served for you in the main house.

For the evenings: after 17:00 all people are on their own. The project's isolated countryside location provides an excellent opportunity in the evening for reflection, writing, reading and relaxation. The main house has a well stocked library.

Volunteers must have a positive attitude towards working and living in a small group or alone and will have to accept all responsibilities this way of living entails.

3.5 The work

Normally on arrival you will have your first day off to acclimatize and one of the project staff will show you around, introducing you to members of the Thai staff, maybe other volunteers and the gibbons.

After the introduction programmed, your work will be varied.

For example your tasks/schedule may be:

- 07:30 – 08:30 Preparing food and feeding the gibbons and other animals as well, cleaning all food bowls and kitchen area;
- 09:00 – 09:30 Your breakfast;
- 09:30 – 11:00 Sanctuary maintenance, cleaning ,among others, the cages, water holders and food bowls, refresh water, etc.;
- 11:00 – 11:30 Preparing food and feeding the gibbons;
- 12:00 – 13:00 Your lunch;
- 13:00 – 15:00 Observing the gibbons and research/study project time, refresh water, cleaning feeding baskets (every 2-3 days) or rest;
- 15:30 – 17:00 Preparing food and feeding the gibbons, maintenance, cleaning and collecting food bowls;
- 18:00 Your dinner, discussions, questions and answers period



Other tasks may be:

- Building new enclosures and maintenance;
- Informing the tourists and school's children about the project and the gibbons;
- General up keep of the project grounds;
- Making information boards for tourists;
- In some cases a volunteer may help in rescuing a gibbon and bringing it into the project.



At the project everybody is expected to act as responsible caretakers 24 hours a day so expect to be 'on-call'.

You will work 7 days a week. Days off can be arranged in advance. During certain periods, depending on the work that has to be done and the number of volunteers at that moment, it's possible to take more days off if you want to, upon prior arrangement with the project director.



3.6 The project staff



The founder of the sanctuary runs the project. She will share with you each gibbon's tragic story and how it came to the sanctuary. The rest of the staff consists of a small group of full-time Thai employees, who will be there to help you during your stay. The languages spoken at this project are Thai and English.



4. Thailand

4.1 Geography

Thailand is situated in the heart of Southeast Asia, between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Thailand takes up about 513.000 km² and has a population of about 60 million. Thailand is reasonably well developed and has good infrastructure. Bangkok is the capital and is the geographic centre of Thailand. The North of Thailand is a mountain area and is connected to Burma by a chain of mountains. The Northeast is flat and dry and borders Laos at the Mekong. More to the south are the hills of Northern Cambodia. The South borders on Northern Malaysia.

Mae Sot, is situated in Western Tak province of Northern Thailand next to the Burmese border. The Tak province is a part of Thailand that transitions between the busy south and the forested mountains of the north. It's an area with rice plantations along a chain of hills. The national parks of this hilly region offer space for endangered plants and animals. In the areas surrounding Mae Sot are beautiful forests situated with spectacular waterfalls. Mae Sot itself is a border town and a relaxing resting stop for travellers.

4.2 Project Location



The project is located in North-western Thailand, in a remote mountainous area 42.8 km South of Mae Sot at an elevation of 850 meters. Mae Sot is an hours drive from the project site and has restaurants, supermarket, internet café and telecom office for international phone calls.

It is possible to arrange excursions in the area (t your own expense).

4.3 Animal welfare

You should be prepared to be exposed to abused animals, some with amputated limbs and deformities as well as abnormal behaviour. In Thailand people treat animals very differently from the way they treat each other. In some places in South East Asia you may see wild animals kept in captivity. Like birds living in a cage no bigger than themselves or chained malnourished gibbons and other apes. If you see evidence of abuse or wild animals held in captivity please report this to the police or an animal welfare organization. These organizations are very familiar with the process of reporting the abuse of animals. Fortunately this attitude towards abused animals is changing as awareness improves and projects like this are helping to educate both local people and visitors.

4.4 Culture and behaviour

The Thai people are very proud of their country and unique culture, and they expect visitors to show respect for Thai culture and way of life. It is compulsory to wear modest clothing when visiting a Wat (temple) and in general women should consider covering shoulders and knees at all times except for resort areas. To abide by local values and customs it is also important that you refrain from public drinking of alcohol.

Before entering a Thai home or temple building kindly remove your shoes. It is also very impolite to show a Thai the soles of your shoes or feet, or to touch their head or hands.



4.5 Climate

Thailand's climate is tropical and is divided into three seasons.

The hot season:

This season, from March until May, is a combination of high temperatures and extreme humidity. Although this is not the monsoon season, that doesn't mean it will never rain in this period. The temperatures will be around 27 – 48 degrees C

The rain season:

This season, also called monsoon, from June until *October*, will be the rainy season. Rain falls mostly in the mornings and late evenings and rarely falls for the entire day. The sun will shine for most of the day and it will be hot and humid. The temperatures will be around 24 – 35 degrees C.

The cool season:

This season, from *November* until February, is pleasant as the temperature declines during this period. Again even through this is not the monsoon period it doesn't mean it will never rain in this period. The temperature will be around 15 – 35 degrees C.

Remember that the project is situated in a mountain area near 850 meters in elevation. It is often cool in the evenings.



5. Travel information

5.1 Flight arrangements

Volunteers have to make their own flight arrangements. We advise you not to reserve your flight before we have confirmed your participation at the project, unless your participation at the project is part of a bigger journey.

If you are unable to arrange your flight yourself for any reason, Global Spirit will be able to help (and with the cancellation- and travel insurances as well). If you would like us to help you, please fill this in on the booking sheet for the gibbon project.

5.2 Passport and visa

In order to visit Thailand you will need a valid passport, which must be officially valid, on arrival, for at least six months.

Most visitors are able to come to Thailand without obtaining a visa prior to arrival. On arrival travelers may be required to show proof of onward travel. Visas issued upon arrival are valid for thirty (30) days. Longer stays must be arranged in advance at the Thai embassy in your own country. This will typically take a few working days and in more busy periods may take even longer. This visa will be valid for sixty (60) days and you may renew it through the immigration Department in Bangkok or by exiting Thailand through a neighboring country, like Burma or Malaysia, and then re-entering. Be sure to check with the Thai embassy in your country as this information is subject to change. Always ask for a tourist visa. Any other type of visa will be more expensive and may unnecessarily complicate your visit to Thailand.

5.3 Insurances

Every volunteer is required to have a travel (medical) insurance policy and cancellation insurance is highly recommended. Without travel (medical) insurance you will not be permitted to work at this gibbon project. Global Spirit can help you arrange travel (medical) and cancellation insurance. Please indicate this on the booking sheet. If you already have insurance please send a copy of the policy to Global Spirit.

5.4 Arrival in Mae Sot

You will be responsible for arranging your own transport to Mae Sot.

At this moment it is only possible to travel from Bangkok to Mae Sot by (air-conditioned) bus, which will take about 8 hours.

There are two buses departing in the morning and four buses that depart in the evening. We advise you to take the morning bus. This bus will arrive in Mae Sot around 17.00 pm. Otherwise you will arrive in Mae Sot in the middle of the night around 4 'clock in the morning and have to wait for pick up around 8 am.

Providing we have received your arrival information details, you will be met at your arrival destination in Mae Sot by a member of the project staff and you will be transported to the project site free of charge.



6. Medical advice



Because volunteers will be working with gibbons in Thailand and will have direct contact with these animals, they will have to take precautions for their own protection and that of the animals. Gibbons are apes and they are very susceptible to human diseases. You must take more precautions than normal tourists in Thailand.

6.1 Advise

As Global Spirit is not professional medical services, we strongly advise you to consult a local clinic or medical authority in your own country for appropriate medical advice.

This document is provided for information purposes only.

Do not visit your local clinic or medical authority later than six weeks before departure. It is important to disclose that you will be working in a rescue centre for apes (not monkeys) and that you will be exposed to direct interaction with these animals.

In all projects with primates there is an unknown risk of communicable diseases between non-human primates and humans. As a participant in this project, you are responsible for yourself. The gibbon project and Global Spirit can not be held responsible/liable for any unexpected casualties.

We strongly urge you to follow the instructed precautions provided to you by the project director, about how to interact and care for the gibbons. Behave responsibly and always listen to the project staff and you will have a very rewarding experience.

6.2 Required vaccinations

You are required to be vaccinated against:

- D(K)TP
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B



These vaccinations are obligatory for the protection of the gibbons and of yourself. Without these vaccinations you will not be allowed to work with the animals and will you will not be allowed into the sanctuary unless you obtain these vaccinations in Thailand.

6.3 Recommended vaccinations

It is highly recommended that you obtain vaccinations for the following:

- Measles
- Rabies
- Tuberculosis
- Typhoid



These vaccinations are not required, but are still very important.

The rabies vaccines are relatively expensive. But in the event of rabies infection without being vaccinated, there should be sufficient time for you to obtain all the medication/vaccines in Mae Sot. This treatment will also be expensive.

A vaccination against Tuberculosis is often not given in a lot of countries. Instead, you will be tested before you leave to Thailand and again when you return to your own country. But for more information on this matter we strongly advise you consult a local clinic in your own country.

6.4 Medical service Mae Sot



There are good medical and dental services available in Mae Sot. If you should need a doctor for any reason you can visit the hospital of Mae Sot, which is about an hours drive. Most medications can be obtained from one of the pharmacies in Mae Sot.



7. Personal equipment

We advise you to bring as little as possible. (One of the main reasons is that you are bound to do a lot of shopping while in Thailand, so it's advisable to leave enough space in your bag.)

You will especially need light, cotton clothes, long pants and strong shirts and shoes.

Keep in mind that it can get very slippery and muddy around the project and while working. The soil at the project site is very red and may stain shoes and pants a rust colour. We strongly advise you bring old cotton work clothes and a pair of old shoes.

7.1 Essential items

Here are some essential items, which you should bring with you:

- Valid passport (and Visa)
- T-shirts for work
- Lightweight (long) trousers
- A warm jumper for the evenings
- Strong shoes (remember the red soil)
- Slippers (must take shoes off in the house)
- A Hat or cap
- Sunglasses
- Insect repellent
- Alarm clock
- A torch and spare batteries
- First-aid kit with for example plasters and disinfectant (there are some first-aid materials present at the project, but it will be better if you will bring your owns as well)
- Disinfectant hand cleaner
- A towel



7.2 Optional items

Here are some optional items, which you may choose to bring with you:

- Water bottle
- Binoculars
- A lighter
- A notebook
- A compass
- A camera (and film – digital camera photos can be saved to CD at internet cafe in Mae Sot)
- A raincoat or poncho
- Bathing/swimming suit
- Sunscreen (it's recommended to use for at least SPF 15)
- Toilet articles
- Vitamin B (it will be anti mosquito)
- Something against dehydration like ORS (we advise you to drink a lot of water)
- Imodium or other anti-diarrhea medication
- A lightweight waterproof coat
- Books
- Magazines
- Snacks



8. General information (Mae Sot and surroundings)

8.1 Food and drinks

The food in Thailand is varied, easily available and relatively cheap. Most Thai dishes are usually very spicy and consist mainly of meat, fish and vegetables with rice or noodles, which are not only fried but are also found in different kind of soups. Vegetarian dishes are also available, but you have to clearly ask for it when you order.

Thai people normally eat with a fork in their left hand and a spoon in their right hand. So most of the time you won't get a knife to eat with. Meat is typically cut into small pieces before your food is served.

At the project your meals are provided. Dinner is usually Thai cuisine. Vegetarian meals are available upon request.

Drinking un-boiled water is not recommended. Drink only bottled water from bottles with a crown cork. Soft drinks can be found in many places in Mae Sot and there is a refrigerator in the guest house. Other popular drinks are fruit-juices and shakes. Alcoholic drinks can be found in the Supermarket in Mae Sot but they are rather expensive if you compare them to food and other drinks. You are asked to respect the Thai people, public drunkenness is not polite and drinking alcohol at the project site is not acceptable.

8.2 Supermarkets and markets

Supermarkets:

In Mae Sot you can find several supermarkets where you can buy items for personal needs like drinks, snacks and toilet paper. To get there you can take the bus between the project and Mae Sot.

Markets:

There is a small market at the near by village that you can walk to. You can buy soda, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap etc.

There is also another big market at the other village which is 10 km. away. Every 3 – 4 days, the director will go to Mae Sot to send and received emails and do fruit shopping for the gibbons.

8.3 Laundry services

A washing machine is available for use at the project for free, but you have to provide your own soap. There is no clothes dryer. Clothes can be dried on the line.

8.4 Telephone

There is no regular telephone service available at the sanctuary. If you want to use a phone for international calls, you can use one of the phone services in Mae Sot.

Most foreign mobile phones will work at the project, but we recommend that you contact your long distance phone company or phone service in your home country.



8.5 Internet access

For Internet access or to check emails you can visit the internet cafe in Mae Sot. Rates as of January 2007 are 15 - 20 Baht per hour but may change. Most will be open from 9:00 am until 20:00 pm. There is no internet access at the project site.

8.6 Electricity

Thailand electricity is 220 Volt (50 Hertz). Flat- and also round two-plugs can be used. It is best to bring an adapter from your own country. These can be purchased inexpensively in Bangkok. It is rare but a power cut could occur at the project, especially in the rainy season, but it shouldn't last longer than a few minutes.

8.7 Transport during your stay

There is no taxi or tuk-tuk around the project. There is only one bus line (Song Taow) that runs from km. 48 to Mae Sot that you can catch one in front of the project. If you want to go somewhere else please contact the director of the project.

8.8 Excursion arrangements

Mae Sot is well located for making short trips into the surrounding areas. You can arrange excursions yourself or through a travel agency in Mae Sot (at your own expense). A few examples:

Trips nearby:

- Visit Wat Thai Watthanaram about 5 km from Mae Sot. Behind the Wat there is a Burmese style large reclining Buddha.
- To the south of Mae Sot along the road to the project you can find the Pha Charoen waterfall, a much lovely place for picnics.
 - The Tee-Lo-Su waterfalls in Umphang is a national forest where many birds and little mammals live.
 - National Parks Mae Wong, Lan Sang and Taksin Maharat are very nice to visit as well.



Trips further away:

- Historical Park Sukhothai is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Wat Mahathat was the spiritual centre of the Sukhothai kingdom. There are many beautiful things to see there such as the Phra Attharot Buddha sculptures.
- Historical Park Si Satchanalai-Chalieng. The ruins of this old city are situated at the river Yom.
- Chiang Mai located to the North is further away but is a major tourism center with many things to see and do.



8.9 Photo and film materials

Film for cameras is available in Mae Sot at the supermarkets and photo shops but tend to be more expensive than in Europe and America. It is possible to develop film before you go home and one-day film developing is available in Mae Sot. Slide film and videotapes may be more difficult to find.

8.9 Currency

The monetary unit of Thailand is the Baht. Cash machines are available in Mae Sot. Cash and traveller checks can be exchanged in most banks. We advise you to bring traveller cheques instead of cash because they are insured and the exchange rates are usually better. Banks are open on Monday – Friday from 8:30 am until 15:30 pm.

Credit cards like American Express, Master Card and VISA are accepted in larger hotels, shopping malls, most shops and restaurants although many shops do add an extra charge for paying with credit card. Credit cards can be used at most banks to obtain cash directly (at additional charge). Most cash machines also have instructions in English.

