



## **Baby Gibbons in the Wild ~**

White-handed baby Gibbons are born with their eyes wide open and ready to go. These small tree-dwelling apes are born with good strength in their very long arms, but very little if any body hair. Due to the lack of hair even on their limbs, they are very dependent on the warmth of their mother's body. They wrap themselves around the mother's mid-section and cling to her sides even as she is swinging through the trees.

Gibbons do not have nests, nor do they sleep on the ground, instead they sleep sitting up in the fork of tree branches high up in the canopy. The mother acts like a natural hammock for the baby.

The mother is solely responsible for the baby's care until he is about 6 months old, then the father and siblings can step in and help him learn the art of brachiation – swinging through the treetop canopy from tree limb to tree limb only using their arms. When Gibbons are in their natural habitat, they use this type of travel 90% of the time, rarely going down to ground level. Some Gibbons even hang upside-down from a tree limb to drink water.

The *Flight of the Gibbon* is an awesome sight - adult gibbons flying through the air at up to 35 mph and traveling 20 to 40 feet until they reach another tree limb or branch. The Gibbons have short fingernails instead of claws, allowing them to wrap their hands around those small tree limbs. Male Gibbons are a bit larger than females, growing to about 3 feet tall and weighing usually about 15 pounds. This is a small breed of ape, and like all apes, they have no tail.

Gibbons love fruit, which makes up about 75% of their diet. Bananas and figs are favorites. The rainforest contains a good diet for our little Gibbon - fruit, leaves, tender plants, flowers, seeds, some tree bark, insects and bird eggs. Gibbons have the ability to grasp things with both their hands and feet, sometimes carrying their snack through the trees to find their favorite spot to eat.

The Gibbons need the rainforest for their home and their food – the rainforest needs the Gibbons for much needed seed propagation of trees and vegetation. The Gibbons drop seeds throughout the rainforest while they are brachiating through the treetops.

The white-handed Gibbons are native to the rainforest in Southeast Asia, their natural habitat, but they are on the endangered species list. The white-handed Gibbons are now extinct in China. Thailand is one of the few countries that have recently provided protection for the Gibbons, and Flight of the Gibbon Adventure Tours has collaborated with the Thai Government to conserve and protect this wonderful ape. Now that they have a second chance, the Gibbons and the rain forest will work together hand in hand to protect and provide for each other.