

Project Update: February 2010

Meeting of the Committee on Rationalization of Boundaries of National Parks and Sanctuaries convened on 15th January, 2010 at 3.00 P.M. in Room No.402 of the Ministry –
List of Participants:

- Shri Praveen Bhargav, Wildlife First, Bangalore.
- Shri Mahendra Vyas
- Chief Wildlife Warden, Maharashtra
- Dr. Y.P.S. Rao, CF (WL), Pune.
- DCF(WL), Assam
- CF, Madhav National Park, Shivpuri, M.P.
- Director, Rajaji National Park, Uttrakhand
- Shri Asad Rahmani

A meeting of the Committee on Rationalization of Boundaries of National Parks and Sanctuaries was convened on 15th January, 2010 at 3.00 P.M. in Room No.402 of the Ministry. The Meeting was chaired by Additional Director General of Forests (Wildlife).

At the outset, Chairman welcomed all the members and confirmed the minutes of the last meeting held on 9th April, 2009. It was followed by discussion on the agenda items where site inspection was to be carried out. The details of discussion and the decisions taken in the meeting are as follows:

1. Rationalization of Boundaries of Dihing Patkai Sanctuary, Assam

As per the decision taken in the last meeting, an inspection of this Sanctuary was to be conducted by DIG (WL) and Shri Mahendra Vyas. DIG (WL) carried out the site inspection as Shri Mahendra Vyas was pre-occupied. The inspection was carried out on 9th December, 2009 along with CCF (WL), Assam. State Government of Assam has requested to take out the river Buridehing out of the Sanctuary and have proposed to keep the inner bank of the river as the boundary of the Sanctuary. During inspection, it was observed that the area under the Sanctuary is one of the finest lowland evergreen forests and is a hot bed of biodiversity. As per the reports available, there are 43 mammals including 17 carnivore species along with elephants, Hollock gibbon, Gangetic dolphin etc. The Buridehing River passes through two reserved forests and is critically important in maintaining this forest eco system. Possibility of river not part of reserved forest was ruled out as on both sides of river there are reserve forests except a small stretch where on one bank is Namsang tea state and on other side is Upper Dehing Reserve forest. Further, in past Fish Mahals used to be auctioned by Forest Department only and not by Revenue Department. State representatives could not show any document indicating that the river was a part of revenue land.

During the visit, it also came to the notice that none of the villagers solely depends on fishing. Further, a patch of about 2 kms of the river which is not a part of the Sanctuary could be used for fishing by the State by forming Eco- development committees or societies in a sustainable manner which could also support the people.

Considering these facts after deliberations, the Committee unanimously decided to reject the proposal of the State Government of Assam for realignment of the boundary of Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary.