

Project Update: December 2009

John T's visit to Baghmara - A brief report

I visited Garo Hills during December 2009 to attend training on nature sensitization focussing on bird and butterfly identification with my colleagues at Baghmara organized by our Meghalaya field base. Before I venture in to share of the training I share that the visit also presented me with an opportunity to visit Panda village, on Bangladesh border, where our field base has been involved in a programme on Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP) and the Baghmara Winter Festival on the beach of Simsang river; the later reminding me of Chapchar Kut back home.

The training consisted of field visits and classroom sessions; the former being to Baghmara Reserve Forest, Karvani stream and Paddy fields while the later were organized at our office. It was facilitated by Mr. Sanjay Sodhi; a researcher, journalist and an environmentalist from Dehradun.

We discussed why we should conserve natural resources; be it water, soil, trees, animals or air. The interrelatedness of all living beings drove the urge to conserve them. The next question that was put forth was why do we watch butterflies? We watch them as they are key indicators of ecosystem health, floral temperatures and humidity besides being effective pollinators of plants. As we see we appreciate their beauty and raise our knowledge on these issues. The question that followed pertained to our avian friends; as to why do we watch birds? Birds are key indicators of health of ecosystems, crucial part of life cycle, have a crucial role in seed dispersal and that they feed on insects, rodents and reptiles.

Post discussion focus moved on to identify birds and butterflies, love them and pass on our sensibilities (*regarding them*) to our brethren. Some co-participants were of the view that cameras were needed for identifying birds and butterflies while others said that field-guides were more suited for the purpose. We agreed then that both these and binoculars were useful for the purpose. The facilitator then mentioned that for observing birds best time was after sunrise and before sunset while observing butterflies demanded a lot of patience. We should rely on our patience and interest for observing them and should not desist from discussing with friends when we are not sure of the species we have come across and even if we are sure we can discuss them with experts so as to know more. Parameters that could help us identify butterflies and birds were then discussed. We also saw a power point presentation (*that Kamal has agreed to share over email*) and a wildlife film (*that we do not possess at our field base*).

Then we moved on to the field where Fernando, Vikash and Bensen accompanied me during the trip besides the facilitator who brought forth the merits and ideal practices of bird and butterfly watching; however at one point I did get confused on whether we had to observe birds or butterflies.

I intend to put this learning to good use during coming months at Saiha in Mizoram where I am based and we plan to take school going children and members of youth associations for nature walks. We shall then discuss gibbons and other wildlife.

Each of us also made a list of birds and butterflies we saw and share the experience; am pleased to share my list.

Birds sighted.

Ashy bulbul (*Hemixos flavala*)
Ashy woodswallow (*Artamus fuscus*)
Asian fairy blue bird (*Irena puella*)
Black naped oriole (*Oriolus xanthornus*)
Black-crested bulbul (*Pycnonotus melanicterus*)
Black-headed bulbul (*Pycnonotus atriceps*)
Black-hooded oriole (*Oriolus xanthornus*)
Black-naped oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*)
Bronze drongo (*Dicrurus aeneus*)
Cattle egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)
Common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)
Common myna (*Acridotheres tristis*)
Common ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)
Fire-breasted flowerpecker (*Dicaeum ignipectus*)
Golden-fronted leafbird (*Chloropsis aurifrons*)
Greater yellownape woodpecker (*Picus flavinucha*)
Grey –backed shrike (*Lanius scachch*)
Grey-headed woodpecker (*Picus canus*)
Large cuckooshrike (*Coracina macei*)
Lesser racket-tailed drongo (*Dicrurus remifer*)
Lineated barbet (*Megalaima zeylanica*)
Little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*)
Long-tailed minivet (*Pericrocotus ethologus*)
Maroon oriole (*Oriolus traillii*)
Oriental honey buzzard (*Pernis ptilorhyncus*)
Oriental magpie robin (*Copsychus saularis*)
Pale-headed woodpecker (*Gecinulus grantia*)
Pompadour green pigeon (*Treron curvirostra*)
Purple sunbird (*Nectarinia asiatica*)
Red whiskered bulbul (*Pycnonotus melanicterus*)
Red-throated flycatcher (*Ficedula parva*)
Red-vented bulbul (*Pycnonotus leucogenys*)
Red-wattled lapwing (*Vanellus indicus*)
River lapwing (*Vanellus duvaucelii*)
Ruby checked sunbird (*Anthreptes singalensis*)
Rufuous treepie (*Dendrocitta vagabunda*)
Rufuous-capped babbler (*Stachyris ruficeps*)
Rufuous-necked laughing thrush (*Garrulax monileger*)
Short billed minivet (*Pericrocotus brevirostris*)
Spotted dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*)
Stork-billed kingfisher (*Halcyon capensis*)
Streaked spiderhunter (*Arachnothera magna*)
Tawny-breasted wren babbler (*Spelaornis chocolatinus*)
Velvet-fronted nuthatch (*Sitta frontalis*)
White rumped munia (*Lonchura striata*)
White rumped shama (*Copsychus malabaricus*)
White-crested laughing thrush (*Garrulax leucolophus*)
White-throated kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)

Butterflies sighted.

Chocolate albatross (*Appias lynceida*)
Chocolate pansy (*Junonia iphita*)
Common bush brown (*Mycalesis anaxias*)
Common emigrant (*Catopsilia pomona*)
Common evening brown (*Melanitis leda*)
Common imperial (*Cheritra freja*)
Common mormon (*Papilio polytes*)
Common nawab (*Polyura athamas*)
Common palmfly (*Elymnias cottonis*)
Fulvous pied flat (*Pseudocoladenia dan*)
Glassy tiger (*Parantica aglea*)
Grey count (*Tanaecia lepidea*)
Grey pansy (*Junonia atlites*)
Lemon pansy (*Junonia lemonias*)
Mottled emigrant (*Catopsilia pyranthe*)
Peacock pansy (*Junonia almanac*)
Striped tiger (*Danaus genutia*)
Three spot grass yellow (*Eurema blanda*)
Yellow pansy (*Junonia hierta*)

Contact.

Samrakshan ~ Mizoram Field Base
Web: <http://mizoram-samrakshan.blogspot.com/>
Email: nimesh.ved@gmail.com