

Project Title

Conservation of Hoolock Gibbon (*Bunipithecus hoolock*) and Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) in Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam, India through strengthening of communication and capacity building of frontline forest staff.



28 February 2006

Project team



Bibhuti P Lahkar, M.Sc



Gautam Uzir, LL.B.

Supported by



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AARANYAK, 50 Samanwoy Path, Survey
Guwahati-781 028, Assam, India, bplahkar@vsnl.net

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT

1. Objectives as started in original application

- a) To train the frontline staff about prevention of wildlife crime.
- b) To impart training to forest staff to collect, maintain and reporting of wildlife observation records to strengthen management.
- c) Support the frontline staff with communication equipments to reduce man animal conflict and to detect and pursue wildlife crime efficiently.
- d) To improve the rapport between the forest department and the fringe villagers through improving the efficiency of the staff to attend and follow up animal depredation cases.

2. Progress in attaining these objectives

The project objectives have been attained as expected without much hurdle. The forest department and authority of Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary has welcome this project and fully assisted in implementation. Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary was established in 1997 and is only place in India where 7 species of primate harbour together. Till the beginning of project the sanctuary was lacking in communication device, they had a very hard time to pass information between management camps and to managers. Through this project wireless equipments were supported to Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary and have boosted the morale of the staff. It becomes easier for staff to communicate with managers whenever the need arises to protection of Gibbon and other endangered species found within the sanctuary. The Motorcycle provided by this project has improved the mobility and efficiency of staff in protection related activity.



Photo1& 2- Wireless equipment donated in Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary



Photo 3- Handing over wireless equipment to S.K. Sribastava, Conservator of Forest, Eastern Assam



Photo 4 & 5- Protection staff using wireless set with smile



Photo 6- Solar battery charger for wireless

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Photo 7 & 8- Motorbike donated to Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary



Photo 9- Signage developed for the project at entrance gate of Gibbon

The project was very effective on training of frontline on wildlife law and crime. Two training have been organized one for staff of Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary. The other training was organized for staff of other protected area, where around 120 numbers frontline staffs of six forest divisions of upper Assam were trained up in Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary. These training were divided into two components.



Photo 10 & 11- Legal orientation training, conducted by Gautam Uzir, Advocate Guwahati High Court

One component dealt with pre and post crime scene, while the second component dealt with after arrest of accused or seizure of wildlife articles. The legal orientation curriculum was mainly based on the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 as amended until 2002 that provides provision for protection of wild animals, birds and plants. Besides the above mentioned acts orientation was also given to the participants regarding the constitutional duty of every Indian citizen and also briefed them about the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), Assam Forest Regulation of 1891 and Forest Conservation Act, 1980. Advocate Mr. Gautom Uzir conducted the legal part of the training.

A field base training programme was conducted for frontline staff to monitoring and maintaining records of wildlife. Researches of Aaranyak provided training to staff for monitoring both vegetation and animals.



Photo 12- Researcher of Aaranyak giving hands on training to forest staff



Photo 13- Binoculars donated to monitor animals in the sanctuary

As a short-term measure to reduce human-elephant conflicts in fringe villages 5 searchlights were given to office of Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary.



Photo 14- Searchlights donated to Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary

Aaranyak has been working with fringe villagers around Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary for their socio-economic development. Through different consultation workshops few Self help Group has been formed. Aaranyak has been playing as catalyst role between villagers and forest department. The world environment day was celebrated to create awareness and spread message of conservation to students, local villagers.



Photo15 & 16- World Environment Day celebrated in Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary



Photo 16- Public motivation meeting in fringe village of Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary

3. Particular challenges faced and solutions adopted

The project proposal was developed with higher forest official. The forest officials were briefed about the project well in advance and they showed their keen interest as outcome of the project is directly helping the protection and management of the endangered species and their habitat. Through this project communication network of the protected area has been uplifted and hence forest department of Assam have appreciated the effort made by the project team.

4. Changes to your project arising during the year

Yes, one major change has been taken while executing the project. In original proposal 2 motorbikes were suppose to be donated through this project. However as per request made by the ground staff of Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary one motorbike was replaced with wireless equipments. This change was intimated to Rufford Foundation and necessary endorsement for the change was also received promptly from Mr. Josh Cole of the Rufford Foundation.

7. How will this take you and the team forward?

This project, as expected, has shown the success indicators and immediate benefit to the protection and management could be enhanced. Looking at the success of this project, our team is keen to replicate the same initiatives in other protected areas of Assam where the need of such assistance is of utmost necessity to enhance conservation and protection and usher a new era of partnership between NGO and the Forest Department to address the conservation issues. Through this project we have realized the need for capacity building of conservation workers, NGO leaders is also important along with training of forest personal. In near future we are looking forward to provide training to various groups.

8. People's comments on the project-

S. K. Sribatava, Conservator of Forest, Eastern Assam, "I really appreciate Aaranyak for their effort to bring up this immediate result oriented project in Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary. The equipments and training provided by the project team will really help in long term conservation of the area."

A. K. Das, Divisional Forest Officer, "The communication network project taken up by Aaranyak has benefited the frontline staff, managers to effective protection of primates, elephants and their habitats."

Mahendra Baruah, Assistant Conservator of Forest, "The legal orientation training organised by Aaranyak in Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary has benefited me and my protection staff. We have learnt lessons for framing wildlife cases. I would like to request Aaranyak for organizing such training programme in near future".

Gunin Saikia, Assistant Conservator of Forest, "Aaranyak is playing a major role in conservation of forests in Assam, they compliments where it is difficult for forest department to work or generate resources".

Joy Ram Baruah, Range officer, Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary, " Thanks to Aaranyak for making the sanctuary fully equipped and capacity building of staff. Me and my staff have got new enthusiasm to protect the important primate habitat in India."

Pramod Saikia, Forester, " Training provided by Aaranyak was very good, but duration was short, instead of two days, field base training should of 5 days."