

Brown Mahseer conservation underway in Dima-Hasao



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Syed Miraz Ahmed 5 November 2014 Updated 5 Nov 19604 views

Mahseer plays an important role in the river ecosystem and is very popular among international and local anglers. Mahseer angling rose to a favorite sport during the British Raj in India.

A total of four species inhabit different rivers and lakes in [Northeast India](#). Among them [Neolissochilus hexastichus](#) ([Brown Mahseer](#)) is [found](#) in [River Diyung](#) of the [Dima-Hasao](#) district in Assam. This species has long been synonymized with other species of Mahseer until the recent publication of a research article in the Public Library of Science (PLOS ONE), USA, which has revived the species to be a valid name (Laskar et al. 2013). It is endemic to India (Assam), Nepal and Myanmar. [IUCN](#) reports its presence in the River Brahmaputra and Barak drainages in Assam.

However, due to threatened natural habitats and narrow distribution range and unabated fishing the species is rapidly declining. Beginning 2011 researcher [Boni Amin Laskar](#) has been involved in awareness campaigns to save Mahseers in [Northeast India](#) under the [Rufford Small Grants Project](#).

A village level awareness program themed “[Save Rivers, Save Mahseers](#)” was held in the Dehangi M. E. School premise in [Dima-Hasao](#) recently. Eighty school students attended the program along with the teaching fraternity besides local villagers. Printed information on Mahseers were distributed in different localities in and around the district.

Addressing the gathering Laskar stressed on the importance of Mahseer conservation and explained how fish poisoning and dynamite explosions in rivers effect the Mahseer population and other aquatic life forms. He appealed the gathering to stop devastating malpractices of fishing that threaten the life cycle of the [Brown Mahseer](#) and ends long term harvesting of the species as food and game.

Following the program seeds of [Brown Mahseer](#) collected from [River Diyung](#) were stocked in [Lake Dibrarai](#) in [Haflong](#) in a joint venture between the Rufford program and [Waimijing](#) (a local NGO based in [Haflong](#)). The objective of the venture is to boost [Brown Mahseer](#) seed production in [Haflong](#) and help replenish the depleting stock in the rivers.

Speaking on the occasion the District Fishery Development Officer assured all necessary assistance from the department to raise the brooders of Mahseer in [Lake Dibrarai](#). Seeds of [Brown Mahseer](#) are also stocked in the Jasingfa Aqua Tourism Resort at Dimoruguri in Nagaon.

Syed Miraz Ahmed

Writes, edits and researches. In 2013 he was conferred the Rotary International District 3240 Young Achiever Award for his work in the area of environment and digital journalism. In 2006 he was awarded first in the category of Wildlife Photography by the Department of Environment & Forests and Tourism, Government of Assam.

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