

Dolphin found dead in Jogighopa



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A carcass of a sub-adult female Gangetic Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) was recovered by a joint effort of Aaranyak and Forest Protection Squad of Aie Valley Division from the Brahmaputra river at Jogighopa on 6th October 2008. The information was sent by Abbas Ali, one of the members of the network of Gangetic Dolphin Research and Conservation Programme of Aaranyak lead by Dr. Abdul Wakid.

On receipt of the information Dr. Hilloljyoti Singha, publicity secretary, Aaranyak and also an Honourary Wildlife Warden along with Ashoke Kumar Das, Assistant Regional Coordinator of Aaranyak's west Assam

zone accompanied by some other members made a joint operation with the Forest Protection Squad of Aie Valley Division, lead by Biswajit Sarkar. It was learnt that one Karik Malo, a fisherman found a dead dolphin (locally known as sihu) was being taken away by another fisherman, which had been accidentally caught in his net. Malo, already aware by an awareness campaign recently by Aaranyak convinced the fisherman to hand it over either to the Forest Department or inform Aaranyak network member. It was caught in up stream of Jogighopa ferry ghat at around 1 pm.

Later, it was found that the dolphin was a sub-adult female measuring 128 cm in length and the circumference around the body was 56 cm. It should be mentioned that Gangetic dolphin is an endangered mammal species and has been protected as Schedule 1 species by the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Dr. Wakid and his team of Aaranyak has recently estimated the population to be 264 in 2008, which was a best estimate. Killing by accidentally entangled in fishing net or hunting are major causes of population decline of this species. The Assam Government also declared the animal as the state aquatic animal on the last Environment Day on 5th June 2008.

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