

## Gibbon Conservation training to forest staff



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Aaranyak & Gibbon Conservation Centre in collaboration with Assam Forest Department, Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department with the financial support from US Fish & Wildlife Service are organising week long training programme for the foresters of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in five batches during the year 2012.

Each of the batches will consist of 20 participants and duration of the course is week-long and residential. A wide range of related topic areas are covered including, Biodiversity in Northeast India and conservation, Primates Conservation in Northeast India with special reference to Hoolock gibbon, Gibbon census or population estimation, Gibbon data collection, maintaining & reporting, techniques of floristic study, Gibbon habitat characteristic and restoration, population and habitat monitoring, Gibbon rescue and rehabilitation, Global Positioning System & use in field, and Legal Orientation (Wildlife Laws and its application). This course had provided participants with an initial understanding of the basic principles of primatology, experience with the methods and techniques used in field research. The course consists of daily lectures and field exercises.

First Hoolock gibbon conservation training was inaugurated on May 22, 2012 by Dr. Dilip Chetry, Programme Head, Primate Research & Conservation Initiatives of Aaranyak, a society for Biodiversity conservation in Northeast India based at Guwahati and also Executive Director, Gibbon Conservation Centre.

Dr. Chetry welcomed all the participants and requested them to make use of this training to enhance their knowledge of conservation of Hoolock gibbon. There were 15 foresters from different part of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh attending the week- long conservation training programme.

Gibbon Conservation Centre Professor P.C. Bhattacharjee, former head Department of Zoology and wildlife expert of NE India. Dr. J. Biswas of Primate Research Centre; Mr. Gunin Saikia ACF of Sivasagar Forest Division; N.K.Malakar, DFO, Jorhat. Dr Jayanta Das, WADT; Dr. Dilip Chetry, Dr.Anjan Kr. Talukdar, Dr. Pranab Bujar Baruah of Handique Girls College, Dr. Rekha Chetry of J.N.College, Mr. Arup Kr.Das of Aaranyak and Mr. K. Ghosh of Nakachari College , Advocate Ajay Kr. Das of Gauhati High were resource persons in the week-long training.

During the convocation ceremony of the 1st training held at Gibbon Conservation Centre with Dr Dilip Chetry in the chair, Mr.Naba Kr. Malakar; DFO of Jorhat Forest Division said that only ape of Assam, Western Hoolock Gibbon is an important indicator of our bio-diversity and without proper awareness education and training of the foresters it is not possible to save the habitat of this endangered species.

Mr.Malakar in his speech appreciated the activities done by Aaranyak & Gibbon Conservation Centre for the awareness and conservation of Western Hoolock Gibbon and socio-economic development of the fringe area of the Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary and also requested the trainees to make proper use of the training while discharging their duty in the field.

B.N. Dutta, ACF, Jorhat also requested the trainee to take the positive message for the conservation of gibbon. On the occasion Dr. Dilip Chetry said that it was the first combined training on Hoolock gibbon Conservation in India organized for forest officials ( foresters of Assam & Arunachal Pradesh) for conservation of Western Hoolock Gibbon in particular and other wildlife in general. He also stressed the important the trainees are expected to play in the near future for the conservation of Hoolock gibbon through a community-based approach and also requested the trainees to carry the slogan “SAVE FOREST SAVE GIBBON” along . On the end of the meeting, certificate, books, CDs and posters were hand over to the trainees. Participants of different forest divisions talked their experiences gathered during the training. Kumud Ghosh presented the vote of thanks to those who helped directly and indirectly to complete the training.

Hoollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary in Jorhat district of Assam is the only protected area in India exclusively meant for conservation of a primate species. The sanctuary with seven species of primate including Western Hoolock Gibbon (Hoolock hoolock) is one of the highest primates diverse areas in the country. Western Hoolock Gibbon is one of the two apes found in Assam which is distributed only in southern bank of the mighty river Brahmaputra.

Gibbon Conservation Centre was established in the year 2004 with a mission of carrying out research, training and conservation activities in Northeast India which also one of the field stations of Aaranyak for primates research and conservation.

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