

Training on Wildlife Genetic Research



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Drishana Kalita 13 December 2015 Updated 14 Dec 10509 views

Can genetic research be used to protect wildlife? [Aaranyak](#), a Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation based at Guwahati, has proven that the answer is a resounding 'Yes'. After breaking new grounds in conservation efforts in Assam, [Aaranyak](#) has now reached out to neighbouring country Bhutan.

Bhutan shares a common border with Assam along with a portion of the [state](#)'s Manas Tiger Reserve. In a bid to further strengthen conservation activities among both countries, 13 officers of Department of Forests and Park Services from Bhutan have participated in a special capacity building [training](#) on application of genetic techniques for wildlife population monitoring, in Guwahati, from 7th to 13th December 2015. The [training](#) titled "Hands on [training](#) on genetic population estimation" covers various aspects of application of genetic tools for population monitoring, such [as](#) study design, development of sampling strategies, various molecular biology laboratory techniques and statistical data analysis. The [training](#) is being organized by [Aaranyak](#)'s [Wildlife](#) Genetics Division and sponsored by the Government of Bhutan.

"The [training](#) is informative and hands-on. It has given much needed impetus for us to plan and carry out national [Elephant](#) survey using genetic sampling method," commented a senior Forestry Officer, Royal Manas [National](#) Park, Bhutan.

[Wildlife](#) Genetic Research has recently been taking major leaps in [India](#), with [Aaranyak](#) taking a pioneering step in the direction in [North East India](#). Application of genetic techniques for wildlife conservation is a relatively new concept, which [Aaranyak](#) is pushing forward in [India as](#) well [as](#) in other countries like Bhutan and Indonesia. Udayan Borthakur, Head of [Wildlife](#) Genetics Division at [Aaranyak](#) said, "This [training](#) will help the officers in planning for undertaking advanced genetic research for conservation of various threatened wildlife species in Bhutan and also strengthen trans-boundary monitoring of various species between [India](#) and Bhutan."

The [Wildlife](#) Genetics Laboratory of [Aaranyak](#) is a [state](#) of the art facility situated in Guwahati and has been undertaking genetic research on various threatened wildlife species for past several years. The laboratory has been working in [India](#) [as](#) well [as](#) providing support to other countries such [as](#) Bhutan and Indonesia in application of genetic techniques for research and conservation of wildlife species. It has carried out conservation genetic research work on species such [as](#) tiger, leopard and elephants in [India](#), Javan and Sumatran rhinos in Indonesia and White-bellied Heron and snow-leopard in Bhutan.

It is worth mentioning that during 2011-13, the laboratory had undertaken similar capacity building efforts for the researchers of Indonesia, enabling them to undertake genetic research on Critically Endangered Javan and Sumatran rhinos in the country.

Drishana Kalita

BY DRISHANA KALITA

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