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Guwahati

Field-based training for forest staff on conservation of Hoolock gibbon concludes

Research-driven biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) successfully completed a week-long training programme on Hoolock gibbon conservation in Assam.





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GUWAHATI: Research-driven biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) successfully completed a week-long training programme on Hoolock gibbon conservation in Assam.

The field-based training, which was initiated on March 28 at the Gibbon Conservation Centre of the Hoollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary in Jorhat, was organised in collaboration with the Jorhat Forest Division of the Assam Forest Department with support from the Habitats Trust, the IUCN SSC Primate Specialists Group, and the IUCN Primate section of small apes.

The objective of the training is to carry out research, training, and conservation activities in Northeast India for the conservation of threatened Hoolock gibbon. Notably, the Western Hoolock gibbon (*Hoolock hoolock*) is the only ape in India. It is an endangered species and is distributed in northeast India only. Their distribution in India is limited to the seven states of Northeast India on the southern bank of the Dibang-Brahmaputra river system.



gibbon, Gibbon census or population estimation, Gibbon data collection, maintaining, and reporting, techniques of floristic study, gibbon habitat characteristics and restoration, population and habitat monitoring, gibbon rescue and rehabilitation, global positioning systems and their use in the field, and legal orientation (wildlife laws and their application).

“Unfortunately, habitat fragmentation and hunting are the major threats to gibbons in India. Added to this situation is the lack of basic information and poor conservation awareness about the species in different sections of the population, including the frontline staff, which is yet another major hindrance to the conservation of the species,” says conservation scientist in Aaranyak, Dr. Dilip Chetry.

“This course provided participants with an initial understanding of the basic principles of primatology and experience with the methods and techniques used in field research. The course consists of daily lectures and field exercises,” Dr. Chetry added.

The training programme was inaugurated by Nandha Kumar, IFS, Divisional Forest Officer of Jorhat Forest Division. Dr. Dilip Chetry, Head of the Primate Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak, made a request to the



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During the training, Dr. I.C. Baruah from Assam Agricultural University, Dr. Prabal Sarkar from University of Science and Technology Meghalaya, Ajoy Kumar Das of [Gauhati High Court](#), Gunin Saikia, former Deputy Conservator of Forest, Nandha Kumar, IFS, Divisional Forest Officer, Jorhat Division, Animesh Medhi, Forest Range Officer, Mariani Forest Range, Mridu Paban Phukan from Wildlife Conservation & Study Centre, and Aaranyak's Arup Kumar Das, Akshay Upadhyaya, Simanta Medhi, and Dr. Dilip Chetry trained the forest officials.

On April 2, the convocation of the training was held. The chief guest on this occasion was Nandha Kumar, IFS, DFO, Jorhat Forest Division. Kumar thanked Aaranyak for conducting the training at a much-needed time. He also requested that Aaranyak assist the Assam Forest Department in primary conservation initiatives through various measures. The training manuals, books, posters, certificates, stickers, and other study material were distributed among the trainees, a press release said.

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