

Pre-Flood Awareness Around Kaziranga NP



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Dr M Firoz Ahmed 10 July 2013 7236 views

Non government organisation Aaranyak and the Numaligarh Refinery Limited in association with the Kaziranga National Park authority has carried out a series of pre-flood awareness camps to minimize the death of wild animals during flood and seek support of the communities to ensure safe return of the flood-displaced animals to the park.

A series of 12 such camps have been organized recently covering as many villages from Agoratoli Range to Buhrapahar range on the southern fringe of the park.

Kaziranga World Heritage site, famous for its one-horned rhino and very high density of tiger is a flood plain ecosystems and flood is an annual phenomenon here. Flood is also considered lifeline of the ecosystems and it usually causes more benefit than loss and the benefits are beyond human perspective. Last year, during one of the worst wave of flood nearly one thousand animals died in the park and many died outside when they had moved to the nearby hills of the Karbi Anglong to escape the fury of flood. Some rhinos too were poached during the period of distress.

Keeping this natural calamity in mind, Numaligarh Refinery and Aaranyak have joined hands to create awareness before the flood so that fringe villagers, who are the first to see an animal and are the custodians of the same outside the park, can help save those distressed animals.

For the animals, safe return to the park is difficult in many places around the park as those are either get killed by speeding vehicles on the National Highway, attacked by domestic dogs or killed by miscreants, some opportunistic people and poached by people backed by illegal wildlife trade network.

Out of 18 villages selected that are very sensitive to flood and wild animal encounter by the villagers, 12 villages have been covered in the first phase to hold such awareness camps. The rest of the villages will be covered immediately in the second phase.

The villages like Jugalati, Japori Pathar, Bamungaon (in Agoratoli Range); Panbari, Geleki (Beelpar), Engle Pathar (in Kohora Range); Bandordubi Tenkakushi (in Bagori Range); Silimkhaw, Deosur Chang, Natundanga, Amguri Chang (in Buhrapahar Range) have been covered during the programme.

The educators of Aaranyak were able to reach out to about 3000 villagers during the campaign. The target audience included villagers, housewives, students and youth. The villagers, most of which never visited inside the Kaziranga National Park, were awed at the rich amused natural resources, particularly the wildlife, in the park and vowed to save them at all costs.

The entire series of programme was coordinated by Uttam Saikia, a Senior Journalist based in Bokakhat and Swapan Nath, Senior Reporter of Kohora as well as Rinku Bezbaruah, a tour guide from Bagori. Senior Forest Officials, Range Officer and other staffs also joined the events held in all different ranges of the park.

Arif Hussain and Munjali Tokbipi from Aaranyak educated the audiences with standard audio-visual presentations and documentaries under the guidance of Dr Firoz Ahmed, Conservationist of Aaranyak.

Multiplying love and care for nature and wildlife by creating awareness among the present and future generation is a key to conservation. Aaranyak has been working with this objective in and around the Kaziranga National Park and the Numaligarh Refinery, Golaghat has also come forward with support to this education campaign. In the first phase of this campaign in 2013, a series of street drama and school awareness programme was carried out on the 5th June, World Environment Day.

It is worth mentioning that Aaranyak has been working on the ground since 1989 on various environmental issues with diverse impact on our society. Its tireless effort has helped in creating a positive scenario in the region's conservation movement and it has been instrumental in protecting many of the endangered species of the region like rhino, elephant and tiger through its intervention. For the last many years it has been working in Kaziranga National Park (KNP) creating awareness, ensuring protection to animals and habitats by complimenting the management and trying to reduce the human wildlife conflict by organizing awareness meet.

Dr M Firoz Ahmed

BY DR M FIROZ AHMED

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