

Training on Wildlife Genetic Research



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Drishana Kalita 13 December 2015 Updated 14 Dec 10555 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.

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