

Press Release

Aaranyak-Kamlang Tiger Reserve ramps up conservation of Hoolock gibbon

Guwahati, November 10: Region's premier research-driven biodiversity conservation organisation, Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) in collaboration with the authority in Kamlang Tiger Reserve of Arunachal Pradesh, organised a Hoolock gibbon conservation training workshop at the interpretation center of the Tiger Reserve at Wakro in Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh on November 8 and 9. The initiative was supported by the Arcus Foundation.

The training programme was focused on introducing the forest staff to Hoolock gibbon (*Hoolock hoolock*), the only ape of India, and to motivate them for the conservation of this threatened species. Hoolock gibbon is an endangered species of primates which is found in the seven states of Northeast India and restricted to the south bank of river Brahmaputra-Dibang river system.

Kamlang Tiger Reserve with an area of 783 sq.km is the potential habitat of this charismatic species. This training, facilitated by Aaranyak, is first of its kind in Arunachal Pradesh. The workshop was inaugurated by Divisional Forest Officer cum Director of Kamlang TR Jumdo Geyi, DCF.

Mr Geyi while appreciating Aaranyak for conducting this training for the greater interest of Hoolock gibbon conservation in the state and requested all the participants to attend the classes with commitment and learn from the experts so that they can apply in the field.

Senior primatologist Dr Dilip Chetry, Head of Aaranyak's Primate Research and Conservation Division as well as Vice Chair of IUCN SSC Primate specialist Group, South Asia was the resource person in this first session of the training workshop.

He highlighted the current conservation status of Hoolock gibbon, threats and its conservation needs. Dr Chetry also highlighted the different population estimation method of gibbon. He requested the forest department of the state to consider Hoolock gibbon as a flagship species for conservation of biodiversity in this region.

Ranger officer of the Kamlang Tiger Reserve Bunty Tao highlighted the practical difficulties in the field and how to tackle the use of the GPS and requested the forest staff to make use of this workshop to empower themselves on the application of GPS and GIS.

In the second session of the workshop, Arup Kumar Das, Senior Manager of Geospatial Technology and Applications Division of Aaranyak, highlighted the application of GPS in wildlife research. Hands-on GPS training was conducted by Aaranyak's Avishek Sarkar, Akshay Kumar Upadhyaya, Simanta Medhi and Pitam jyoti Gore that includes waypoints, tracks, proximity and related aspects.

In the first of the session of the second day of the workshop, participants undertook field practice of the GPS and also recorded the 4 gibbon calls from different directions with the help of the experts at Mithun Gate of Kamlang TR.

The GIS practical session of the training was conducted with support from Avishek Sarkar, Akshay Kumar and Aditya Das, a field biologist from Kamlang Tiger Reserve.

There were 52 participants from the Kamlang TR and Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar. The training programme concluded with distribution of the study material and poster of Hoolock gibbon and QGIS software.

***Press statement issued by Bijay Sankar Bora, Publicity Secretary, Aaranyak.
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