

PRESS RELEASE

Review moots increased patrolling coverage in Raimona National Park

Guwahati, December 12: Increased patrolling coverage and identification of sensitive areas to set up new anti-poaching camps were mooted during the recent annual review of Data Driven Patrolling in Raimona National Park (RNP) in Assam.

Data Driven Patrolling was introduced in the youngest national park in Assam in October, 2022 at the central range of the national park.

Raimona National Park (RNP) authority conducted the annual review meeting on November 30 last to discuss the progress and outputs of the Data Driven Patrolling.

Taking part in the review meeting, the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and the Council Head of Department of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Forest Suman Mohapatra appreciating the work done so far by the park Rangers underscored identification of sensitive areas for building new anti-poaching camps, increased patrolling coverage for better threat detection especially in the Eastern and Western Ranges.

The Additional PCCF while flagging concerns regarding increasing threat of timber and firewood collection in the Park, suggested use of the temporal graphs to plan better patrolling strategy to mitigate the threat. He also inquired about the condition of forest roads, accessibility and logistical issues.

Appreciating Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) for their support, the Additional PCCF encouraged forest staff to keep collaborating with Aaranyak as well as keep up their efforts. The meeting was actively participated by DFO of Kachugaon Division Bhanu Sinha, Secretary General & CEO of Aaranyak Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Director Tiger Programme Panthera Dr Abhishek Harihar, senior scientist of Aaranyak Dr Firoz Ahmed as well as staff members from the RNP and Aaranyak.

Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar appreciated the efforts of the RNP forest staff. He also mentioned low conviction rates in wildlife crime cases and pledged support Aaranyak's in Legal and Advocacy through organising workshops and training for the forest officials of Raimona National Park in scientific investigation of wildlife crime cases.

Dr. Firoz Ahmed also thanked the Forest Range Staff and spoke about the importance of the threat data collection in developing better mitigation strategies.

The Data Driven Patrolling was introduced in Raimona National Park with an aim to strengthen the security of the wildlife habitat. Over the year, the frontline staff of the RNP have been trained and mentored in patrol data collection and data management with assistance from Aaranyak's assigned team. The patrol data have been periodically analysed and reviewed to improve the patrolling effort and threat detection inside the park.

The patrol data collection over the time will be crucial in better threat understanding and developing effective intervention strategies for threat deterrence.

The crucial patrol data systematically collected by patrol teams of both the ranges highlighted the importance of recording threat data and its presentation for effective planning of patrol to minimise threats in the park, which was appreciated by Additional PCCF.

The review meeting was anchored by Aaranyak's senior conservationist Dr Dipankar Lahkar. A team of Aaranyak including Bijeet Baro, Mukesh Kherkatary, Mizing Boro, Momita Narzary assisted the park authority to conduct the review meeting.

The monitoring steps over the year and its findings were presented by Biswajit Basumatary and Jashamanik Mushahary, range forest officers with analytical inputs from, Binita Baruwati and Rounak Dean of Aaranyak.

Range Forest Officer, Eastern Range, Kankanjyoti Kaushik, ended the review meeting with a vote of thanks.

It is worth mentioning that Aaranyak has been complementing the efforts of the Forest Department of BTC in improving patrolling through improved strategies built upon systematically collected patrol data since 2016 starting in Bhuyanpara and Bansbari Ranges of Manas National Park based on MoU between BTC forest Department and Aaranyak. Later the best practices of the model were transferred to the newly-established Raimona National Park.

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