



GREEN SOCIETY

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The Sentinel

Dhekiajuli Police turns a blind eye to poaching

গৰাকীয়া পলিচিয়ে হিংগলৈ পোহৰ কৰা নহয়।



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মঙলদৈত 'ষ্টেট বেংক আৰু গ্ৰীণ চ'ছাইটি'
উদ্যোগত বিশ্ব পৰিবেশ দিবস উদ্‌যাপন

গৰাকীয়া পলিচিয়ে হিংগলৈ পোহৰ কৰা নহয়।

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GREEN SOCIETY

Welcomes

Mr. Fred M. Bagley,
Wildlife Biologist, US Fish & Wild life Service, USA.

Mr. Nico Van Strein
of International Rhino Foundation, Netherlands.

Mr. William Stracy
of WWF working in Nepal.

Ms. Rajashree Sarma,
Officer, State Forest Department, Assam.

and

All the Hon'ble distinguished guests, Ladies,
Gents and Students to the Felicitation function to be held
at Gandhi Memorial Park, Mangaldai

on
11-02-2002



A REPORT OF GREEN SOCIETY

Bhargab Kr. Das
Secretary, Green Society.

The Darrang district is situated in the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra, that is naturally endowed with rich biodiversity. The foothills of the great Himalayan range border the northern limit of the district. This is again in contiguous with the southern border of the Royal Kingdom of Bhutan. To the east and west of the district lies the Sonitpur and Kamrup district respectively. It is noteworthy to mention that the entire northern boundary is a corridor for a large number of wild herbivores as well as big cats from the foothills of the Bhutan and the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Under this backdrop lies the Orang National Park on the alluvial flood plain of the river Brahmaputra, which is an unique habitat for the great Indian one horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) next to the Kaziranga National Park. This National Park also hosts a large number of diversified avian fauna both migratory and nonmigratory in type, for example, the Bengal Florican (*Ulu mora*). It also shelters a large number of big cat species, the Royal Bengal Tiger including other small carnivores. To the north-west of the district lies another important wildlife habitat, the Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary which is the last refuge of the wild stock of the most endangered porcine species, the Pigmy Hog (*Nal gahori*). Though small, some other forest covers with bewildering beauties are the Nanoi Forest Range, Mazbat Forest Range, Kuruwa Forest Range and other un-classed state forests of this district. With so much bountiful of nature in this district, the people are living in a low profile of life amidst poverty, lack of education, poor health and least incentive for self-sustaining economic growth. Moreover, the scenario of wild life is fast degrading due to lack of awareness among the common people about our great wildlife heritage and their conservation. With a view to create an awareness among the people in general and the students community in particular for conservation of the important wildlife habitat of the district, their



social and economic upliftment and to extend all logistic and active support to forest officials, a Non-Government voluntary Organisation (NGO) under the name of GREEN SOCIETY was formed on the 5th of October 1996.

Members of the All Darrang District Students Union - The District Unit of All Assam Students' Union - which is the apex students' organization of Assam also rendered active support and co-operation in formation of the GREEN SOCIETY and became member of the Society. The Divisional Forest officer (Wildlife) of the Darrang Division, Mr. Chitta Ranjan Bhabora also took extreme pain to bring the activities of the society in the forefront.

The aims and objectives of the Society are as follows :-

1. To inculcate love for wild life in general and the Rhinos and Tigers in particular.
2. To take part and to organize exhibitions, seminars, group discussions, film shows and slide projections as a part of educational / awareness campaign in support of conservation of wildlife.
3. To correspond and co-ordinate with other like-minded organizations / groups / societies promoting wildlife conservation anywhere in the globe, and to seek information, data, guidance as well as to become their associates.
4. To identify the potential spots in the inaccessible remotest parts of this district having rich bio-diversity for tourism development and encourage the local populace for self- sustaining economic growth.
5. To educate the villagers in the fringe areas how to reduce the biotic pressure on the protected areas.
6. To bring about an awareness on the health education of the villagers.
7. To assist visiting the National Parks and Sanctuaries of the state by the locals so that the need to conserve the local wildlife / habitats can be understood.
8. To monitor, assist and provide local logistic support



on the wildlife health and protected areas in consultation with the managers, veterinary experts, lawyers and law keepers.

Activities :

Since its inception, the Society has been running on its own fund that has been generously contributed by its members only. No donation, grant, has been received from any source in kind or coins till date. Yet many a programmes could be accomplished with such a narrow budget and public involvement. Following list will reflect the activities of the Society.

- 5th October 1996 : Celebrate the wildlife week at Mangaldai. Plantations and competitions for school children were organized.
- 11th January 1997 : Awareness camp at Salmari High School adjacent to the western boundary of the Orang National Park. Plantations and competitions for school children were organized.
- 8th February 1997 : Winners of previous competitions held were taken to the Orang National Park as awareness camp.
- 3rd-5th June 1997 : A three day Photographic exhibition of Mr. Prasanta Bardoloi, an accomplished wildlife photographer of Assam was held entitled "WILD LIFE OF ASSAM" in collaboration with the State Institute of Science Education at Mangaldai.
- 5th June 1997 : World Environment Day at Mangaldai was celebrated. District level competitions for students under the section spot drawing, essay writing, quiz competitions were held. Plantations were also done. The meeting was attended by Prof. Parimal Ch.



Bhattacharyya of Zoology Deptt Gauhati University and Mr. Pramod Tiwari IAS, Deputy Commissioner, Darrang.

10th-28th June 1997 : Special awareness campaign in various schools of the district was organized. A lecture cum slide show was also arranged. A number of various resource persons were invited from different disciplines. They were: Dr. Anowaruddin Choudhuary, ACS, Chief Executive, The Rhino Foundation. Dr. Saidul Islam, Associate Professor and Wildlife Veterinarian. Dr. Atul Burhagohain, Asstt. Professor and Wildlife activist, both of College of Veterinary Science, Guwahati. Mr. Bibhav Kumar Talukdar, Wildlife Biologist and Secretary General Aranyak Nature Club, Guwahati. Mr. R.K. Das, Divisional Forest Officer, Western Assam Wildlife Division, Tezpur. Mr. Prasanta Bordoloi, renowned wildlife and nature photographer of Assam, Mr. Budhin Hazarika, Lecturer of Zoology, Mangaldai College and Mr. C.R. Bhobora, DFO (WL) Darrang. Plantations and competitions for school children were organized.

16-17th Dec. 1997 : Conducted free tour to the Nameri and Kaziranga National Park for the winners of various competitions organized by GREEN SOCIETY to encourage them for conservation of Nature and Wildlife.

14th& 15th Feb. 1998 : A total of 40 prominent citizens, village Headmen and school teachers from the nearby areas of the Orang National Park were taken to the Kaziranga National Park to get them acquainted with the wild life management, conservation and the importance of eco-tourism.

8th& 9th May 1998 : Special awareness camp at the village



Gariajhar on the foothills of the Bhutan near Nanoi Reserve Forest and Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary in association with Faster writing English School and the Forest Department of Assam. The teachers and students of the College of Veterinary Science, Guwahati and the doctors of the state Veterinary department, Darrang district attended the veterinary camps. The members of the Mangaldai Branch of the Indian Medical Association and the State Health Department, Darrang, attended the medical camps. Various competitions like - quize, spot drawing and cultural programmes were also held. Mr. P. Lahon, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Assam. Mr. Baldeep Singh, Chairman, Assam Branch, Indian Tea Association, Mangaldai Circle and Mr. P.K. Das, District Magistrate, Darrang attended the closing ceremony as Guests of Honour.

16th May 1998: Green Society Members met Mr. Fred. M. Bagley wildlife Biologist, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Mrs. Anne Wright Chairperson, Rhino foundation during their visit at Orang National Park. Mr. C.R. Bhobora DFO (WL) and Mr. Baldeep Singh Chairman ABITA Mangaldai Circle were also present.

5th June 1999: " World Environment Day" at Mangaldai was celebrated. District level competitions for school children under the section spot drawing, essay writing, quiz competitions and plantations were held. The programme was organized in association with the State Bank of India, Mangaldai Branch. Mr. P.K. Das Deputy Commissioner Darrang and Mr. Pallab Bhattacharyya IPS, Supdt. Of Police Darrang took part in plantation.

7th November 1999: Group discussion with All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) and the villagers Dimakhuchi area near the Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary was held. The meeting was



attended by the student leaders of ABSU and AASU, Forest officials and the local prominent citizens.

9th November 1999 : Planted nine valuable Sanchi trees at Sanantan Dharma Mandir, Mangaldai at 9.00 A.M. by nine prominent persons of the locality to mark this rare day the 09.09.99.

26th November 1999 : A seminar on the occasion of "Conservation Day" of country wide celebration of Quami Etkha Week was organized at Mangaldai in association with the District Administration and Forest Department. The seminar was attended by prominent citizens, women activist and government officials.

10th February 2000 : Secretary Green Society participated in the seminar organized by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India, entitled "Development of Bodo Land Autonomous Council Area" held at Udalguri. The seminar was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Governor of Assam, Lt. Gen. (Retd.) S.K. Sinha.

23rd February 2000 : The Green Society held discussion with Mr. Fred M. Bagley Fish and Wildlife Biologist, US Fish and Wildlife Service during his visit to Orang National Park.

11th & 12th April 2000 : 25 Village Headmen, primary teachers and youths of Dalgaon and Silbori area near Orang National Park were taken to Kaziranga National Park in a free tour by the Green Society in association with DFO (Wild life), Darrang to get them acquainted with wildlife conservation and management.

5th June 2000 : Celebrated the World Environment Day in Mangaldai with a day-long detailed programme in association with the District Transport Office and District Forest Department, Darrang. Competitions among students and a seminar was also organized



on the theme : "2000 Environment Millennium - Time to Act". Mr. Sanjay Lohia, IAS, DC, Darrang attended the programme as guests of honour and gave away the prize to the winning students. Mr. Bineet Kr. Saikia, SDO (Sadar), Md. M. Hussain, DFO (T) and Mr. C.R. Bhabora, DFO (WL) were also present in the meeting.

1st-7th October 2000 : Special awareness campaign was launched on the occasion of " Wild Life Week" in and around Orang National Park. Tree plantation, Competition among students, inter action with villagers were organized.

December 2000 : Group discussions on conservation of Nature & wildlife were organized in many places in the Northern part of the district along Indo-Bhutan border.

February 2001 : The joint effort of the Divisional Forest Officer (WL) Mr. C.R. Bhabora and the Green Society achieved a new dimension in the field of conservation of wild life and nature with the surrender of 25 Rhino poachers living in the fringe areas of Orang National Park. The poachers vowed before public to shun poaching and to protect Orang National Park. In the beginning of a new chapter in conservation of wild life & Nature in Darrang. Mr. Labanya Ramchairy Range Officer, ONP and Sub Inspector Mr. Pradip Bora in Charge Silbori Police out post also contributed a lot.

June 5th2001 : World Environment Day was observed with a day long programme in District institute of Educational Training (DIET) Dalgaon in association with Dalgaon Ban Aru Banyapranis Surakksha Samiti. Competition among students, tree plantations and public meeting were arranged.



June 11th 2001 : Submitted written complaint with documentary evidence before Mr. M.P. Gupta Supdt. of Police, Darrang against the Officer In-charge, Dhekiajuli police station in Sonitpur district for his involvement with Rhino poachers. As per the recommendation of Supdt. of Police, Darrang, Mr. Anurag Tangkha, Supdt. of Police, Sonitpur immediately instituted an inquiry headed by an Addl. Supdt. of Police, and on 28.02.2001 the Officer in-Charge of Dhekiajuli police Station was placed under suspension. Mr. Rajendra Kumar, IGP Bureau of Investigation & Economic Offence, Guwahati also instituted an inquiry on the basis of the report published in The Sentinel dated 16.06.2001.

11th&12th January,2002 : 12 award winning students in "World Environment Day 2001" were taken to Kaziranga National Park in an awareness tour with active co-operation from district police authority. Mr. Dharani Dhar Boro Range Officer, Kohora Range delivered a valuable lecture to students on Wild life & Nature.

In addition to the above, the society has already distributed First Aid Kits with necessary medicines to the staffs of the Orang National Park as logistics support to the conservation of Rhinos and tiger.

Outcomes of the activities of the Society:

There has been a sea of change in the attitude of people contiguous to the protected areas due to relentless effort made by the Society. There has been several cases of recovery and rehabilitations of wild animals which were brought to the notice of Society members. The members made immediate contact with the respective forest officials for taking appropriate actions of the recovered animals and birds. For example, in the year 1998, a juvenile Himalayan black bear was rescued by sensitive villagers



near Sareng, a small village of Darrang District in half dead condition. It was transported to the Divisional Forest Office (Wildlife), Darrang. the officer in turn took utmost care to save the life of the animal by providing necessary facilities and veterinary care in collaboration with wildlife veterinarians. Fortunately enough, the animal escape death.

In the surrounding areas of the Orang National Park, there has been a wave of change regarding the conservation and poaching activities of Rhinos and tigers. Even, the small herbivores like deer in several occasions have been rescued and safely translocated to the National Park. A very interesting case happened when a few villagers saved the life of a pregnant deer that accidentally came out to park. Subsequently, the same was caught without harm and let loose in the Park with the help of the park authorities.

It is very significant to note that with the Surrender of 25 poachers the number of poaching in Orang national Park has been reduced in the year 2001. Meanwhile, the police and Forest (WL) Deptt. have also intensified their operation against the Rhino poachers and recovered a number of Sophisticated arms and ammunitions and arrested a number of poachers.

Future Plan :

From the above activities and achievements it is obvious that, the Green Society has a potential role in bringing about a change in the conservation of wildlife and other socio-economic condition of the people of this district. It has an immense network and manpower who are sincere, devoted and committed to the cause of wildlife conservation. However, the society runs with the good will and moral support of its members and well wishers who think in the same wavelength. The Society has recently found out some targets areas to involve with, such as, reducing threat factors to the protected areas of Rhinos and Tiger, establish a network information about illegal poaching activities of Rhinos, education



and awareness programmes for villagers surrounding the park, rehabilitation of the stray wild life most particularly the Rhinos and Tigers with wildlife veterinarians. As these activities are very difficult to run without a sound and continuous financial flow, it has been proposed to prepare a viable scheme / Project to be funded by any National / International agency working in this field. The society will always welcome constructive criticisms and suggestions from all the corners.



ORANG NATIONAL PARK - FROM LOSERS TO WINNERS

S.P.Vashishth, IFS,
DFO(Wild life) Darrang.

Name, Location, Constitution & Extent :

The Orang National Park is located in the districts of Darrang and Sonitpur and lies between the geographical limits of 92° 15' E and 92° 27' E longitudes and 26° 29' N and 26° 40' N latitudes. The total area of Park is 78.80 km². About 70% of the area lies in Darrang district while 30% of the area lies in Sonitpur. The State Government declared its intention to constitute the area into a Wildlife Sanctuary vide the notification no. FRS 133/85/5 dated 20.09.1985 published in the official gazette. Upon settlements of rights, privileges and concessions, the area was finally declared a sanctuary vide notification no. FRW. 28-98-116 dated 17.03.1998 published in the official gazette. The sanctuary was further upgraded into a National Park vide notification no. FRW 28/90/154 dated 8.4.99.

Statement of significance:

Conservation Values:

- * Last refuge of Rhino population on the northern bank of Brahmaputra.
- * Representative area of Brahmaputra valley floodplain grassland, forest & wetland.
- * Research, recreation and educational values.

The Orang National Park area is a shallow depression located on the northern bank of River Brahmaputra floodplains. The area comprises of grasslands dotted by woodlands and water bodies. The vegetational succession is arrested at the grassland seral stage by annual controlled burning and uprooting of trees, which colonize the grasslands. The fertile soil deposited by the floods every year also promotes the growth of grasses.

But for the management intervention, tree would invade the area ultimately, thus rendering the area unsuitable for the Rhinos, which feed upon the grasses. Secondly to protect the Rhinos from being



killed by the poachers due to harboring of false beliefs, the management intervention needs to be in place.

The Orang National Park is the third Rhino bearing in Assam after Kaziranga National Park and Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary. Some critically endangered species like Bengal Florican (*Houbaropsis bengalensis*) Greater Adjutant Stork (*Leptoptilos dubius*), Lesser Adjutant Stork (*L. javanicus*), Spot-billed Pelican (*Pelecanus phillippensis*), Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*), Blyth's Kingfisher (*Alcedo hercules*), Yellow Weaver (*Ploceus megarhynchus*) find a home here. The place also has a sizeable Tiger population (21 as per 1999 Census). The Gangetic Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) and seven species of turtles are found here. The list of mammals and amphibia found in the Park is given in the Annexure.

Habitat Management :

The National Park has a unique habitat comprising of grasslands dotted by woddlands and water bodies. The relative proportions of these three eco-systems are as follows:

Sl .No.	Type	% of area
1.	Grassland	67
2.	Water bodies	14
3.	Woodlands	19

The forest type occurring in Park may be described as **Eastern Wet Alluvial Grassland (4D/2S2)** as per the **Champion and Seth classification**. The simultaneous co-existence of the three eco-systems makes the area very rich in diversity and productivity. The area support a variety of rare, threatened and endangered faunal species. The grasslands may be further divided into two categories depending upon the height attained as follows:

1. Tall grasses consisting of Ekora (*Erianthus ravannae*), Nal (*Arundo donax*), Saccharum spp. Themeda arundinacea, Phragmites karka Etc.
2. Short grass consisting of Ulukher (*Imperata cylindrica*), Dubori(*Cynodon dactylon*), Locusa (*Hemerthia*



compressa) etc.

The woodlands may be further subdivided into two categories :

1. Natural forest consisting of Simal (*Bombax ceiba*), Khair (*Acacia catechu*), Udal (*Sterculia villosa*), Bogori (*Ziziphus jujuba*), Sygizium. Cuminii, Lagerstroemia speciosa, Bauhinia retusa, Tamarix dioca etc.

2. Plantation forest consisting of Dalbergia Sisoo, Acacia catechu, Anthrocephalus cadamba, Albizzia procera, Tectona grandis, Toona ciliata and Trewia nudiflora etc.

The grassland are naturally maintained as a Climax community by annually occurring floods and high moisture regime resulting from rainfall. Controlled annual burning of grasses is an alternative management tool for grassland management. The control burning has the following effects on the grasslands:

1. It helps in arresting the succession of vegetation at the grassland seral stage.
2. It prevents invasion of grasslands by woody trees.
3. It promotes the development of grasses.
4. It increases the food availability of Rhinos, as they prefer relatable tender new grasses. The tall grasses are not preferred by the Rhinos for their coarseness.
5. It helps in checking the growth of weeds.

SUMMARY OF THREATS TO WILDLIFE

The following factors pose a serious threat, in varying degrees, to the existence of Wildlife of the National Park.

1. **Siltation of wetlands** : This creates a situation of artificial scarcity of water for the Rhinos and other mammals.
2. **High floods** : Absence of sufficient highlands in the Park lead to death of Rhino caives and deer in the times of high floods.
3. **Biotic interference in fringe areas** : This leads to degradation of the habitat and makes the Wild animals prone to



the various diseases of the domesticated animals.

4. **Choking of water bodies by aquatic weeds** : This makes wallowing difficult for the Rhinos.

5. **Invasion of land areas by weeds** : This leads to degradation of the habitat.

6. **Poaching** : This makes the Rhinos vulnerable to the bullets/pits of unscrupulous elements owing to false beliefs associated with the horn properties.

7. **Invasion of grasslands by trees** : This leads to shrinkage of the habitat of Rhinoceros.

POACHING -TREND REVERSED

The area has been through the worst times in terms of poaching of Rhinos for their horn. Over 57 Rhinos have been killed over a period of five years from 1995 to 2000. However, this trend has been reversed by the efforts of the new management in the year 2001 in which only one Rhino could be killed by the poachers. This is a positive news for the surviving population of Rhinos of the Park. In the last six months, four poachers have been arrested and two have been killed in an encounter. The arms recovered include 2 nos. of .303 rifle, one .405 rifle and 50 nos. of bullets. This has given a moral boost to the staff who had been at the receiving end for the last six years.

RHINO CENSUS DATA

YEAR	ADULTS			SUB-ADULTS		CALF		Total	GRAND TOTAL
	M	F	Unsexed	M	F	<1Yr.	>1Yr.		
1985	23	23	0	7	2	1	0	10	65
1991	28	41	5	0	1	14	8	22	97
1999	17	17	1	3	2	6		12	46



RHINO MORTALITY OVER THE LAST DECADE

YEAR	MODE OF POACHING		NATURAL DEATH	TOTAL
	Bullet Poaching	Pit Poaching		
1991	1	0	2	3
1992	1	1	3	5
1993	1	0	2	3
1994	4	2	4	10
1995	10	1	6	17
1996	8	1	4	13
1997	10	1	3	14
1998	11	0	4	15
1999	7	0	0	7
2000	8	0	5	13
2001	1	0	0	1
2001			1	1

Problems afflicting the tourism:

Although the Park is located at a distance of 140 Kms. From Guwahati, yet it is not able to attract adequate visitors commensurate with its faunal and floral richness for the following reasons :

- (i) The approach road from Dhansirighat to the Park is in poor condition. As a result the visitors are not attracted to the Park.
- (ii) No trekker vehicles are available on hire basis for visiting the Park.
- (iii) The Park is lacking in lodging facilities. The Park has a dormitory that can accommodate 35 persons of a group. The Tourist lodge constructed by Tourism department is yet to start functioning.
- (iv) People's participation is virtually non-existent in this sector. As a result the local people do not derive any economic benefits from tourism.
- (v) No interpretive facilities exist in the Park.
- (vi) No trained local guides are available with the Park. No

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GRAND TOTAL
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interface exists between Forest department and Tourism department.

ANNEXURE

LIST OF PROTECTED AREA VALUES

Sl. No.	CATEGORY	VALUE
1.	Global	*Biodiversity Conservation *Rhino Conservation
2.	National	*Grassland Ecosystem Conservation * Rhino * Bengal Florican * Blyth's Kingfisher * Swamp Francolin * Lesser/Greater Adjutant Stork * Baer's Pochard * Yellow Weaver
3.	Regional	* Grassland Ecosystem
4.	State	* Rhino Conservation * Ecosystem Conservation * Ecotourism & Wilderness Experience
5.	Local	* Ecotourism & Related activities * Wild Animal-Human interface value.

LIST OF MAMMALS

Schedule I

Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*)

Gangetic Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*)

Indian One Horned Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*)

Indian Pangolin (*Mains crassicaudata*)

Indian Rock python (*Python molurus*)

Tiger (*Panthera tigris*)

Schedule II

Bengal Porcupine (*Atherurus macrourus assamensis*)

Common Fox (*Vulpes bengalensis*)

Small Indian Civet (*viverricula indica*)

Jungle Cat (*Felix chaus*)



King Cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*)
Otter (*Lutra perspicillata*)
Rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*)

Schedule III

Hog deer (*Axis porcinus*)
Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*)

Schedule IV

Blacknapped Hare (*Lepus nigricollis nigricollis*)
Rufousnecked Hare (*Lepus nigricollis*)
Small Indian Mongoose (*Herpestes edwardsi*)

LIST OF AMPHIBIANS

Emydidæ

Malayan Box Turtle (*Cuora amboinensis*)
Eastern Hill Terrapin / tricarinate Hill Turtle (*Melanochelys
tricarinata*)
Spotted Black Terrapin (*Geoclemys namiltoni*)
Brown Roofed Turtle (*Kachuga smithi*)
Indian Roofed Turtle (*Kachuga tecta*)
Indian Tent Turtle (*Kachuga tecta tecta*)

Trionychidae

Indian Soft Shelled Turtle (*Trionyx gangeticus*)