



newborn calves. This finding confirms that with minor modifications on camera placing and sample site selection these equipments can be used for detecting and identifying the newborn rhinos in the wild. Advance sampling methodology is being discussed in

order to allow long term monitoring of the calves that will yield information on the population growth, as well as the growth rate of the individual calf. Current data shows that the calf can grow from 13-cm foot print size to 18-cm size in a period of 18 months.

Strengthening Conservation Measures of Greater One-horned Rhino in Orang National Park, Assam, India

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Though the Greater One horned rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) is considered as vulnerable by IUCN it is still in high risk for its survival in Assam because of severe threats from poachers, wildlife trafficking, fragmentation and degradation of its habitat in the past couple of decades. Assam is one of the last strongholds of the Indian rhino with a total population of 2201 as estimated by the Assam Forest Department in the year 2009. Orang National Park, with an area of 78.8 sq. km. is an important rhino bearing area having 64 wild rhinos as estimated by Assam Forest Department in 2009. The rhino population in Orang National Park is fluctuating from 35 rhinos in the year 1972 to 97 rhinos in the year 1991 and which is again reduced to 64 rhinos in the 2009. This fluctuation of rhino population in Orang National Park is mainly due to the severe intensity of poaching in comparison to other rhino bearing areas of Assam. From 1983 to 2009, 122 rhinos were poached in Orang National Park. During the period from 2006 to 2009 approximately 30 rhinos were poached in the park. The major factors attributable to the increased poaching are lack of awareness among the local stakeholders about the need to conserve rhinos, unscientific monitoring system of rhino and lack of socio-economic database of the fringe villages of the park.

The overall goal of this project is to provide training on handheld GPS to the ground staff of the Orang National Park which will be useful for monitoring of rhino and other wild animals in the park.

Progress till 10 January, 2011.

Purchase of GPS60 device:

One of the major objectives of this current project was the purchase of GPS device. Aaranyak has purchased 33 number of GPS 60 device in the month of December, 2010, which was funded by Asian Rhino Project to provide support to the frontline staffs of Orang National Park.

GPS training to the frontline staffs:

Two training programmes on GPS device has been given to the frontline staffs of Orang National Park in the month of January, 2011 for regular monitoring of rhino and other animals and also to map the distribution pattern of invasive species like *Mimosa invasa* in the park.

A questionnaire is developed to do the socio-economic survey of the fringe villages of the park.