

Hoolock Gibbon Awareness Campaign organized by Assam University

Parthankar Chowdhury*

An awareness campaign on Hoolock gibbon was organized on 16 November 2013 in a school near Roosekandy Tea Estate, located in the fringe areas of Inner-Line Reserve Forest, Cachar, Assam, where Western Hoolock gibbons are fighting for their last survival in few isolated groups. The programme was organized under the banner of the Department of Ecology and Environmental Science, Assam University, Silchar, as a module of the UGC funded major Research Project entitled, "Status Survey of Western Hoolock gibbon (*Hoolock hoolock*) and conservation initiative through mass awareness in the reserve forest areas of Barak Valley, Assam, India".

At the onset, one of the local inhabitant and departmental technical staff Sri Siddharta Sen explained the need of conservation of this elusive animal that occur in the adjoining areas. The Head master of the School, Mr. P. Goala and Dr. Shovan Dattagupta, Senior Technical staff of the Department of Ecology and Environmental Science, Assam University, Silchar spoke on the relevant theme. On the life style pattern of hoolock gibbon a talk was delivered by Mr Mofidul Islam, a scholar pursuing research under the UGC project. On the need of conservation of Hoolock gibbon and other endangered animals, special emphasis was laid by the author in his speech. The campaign programme was presided over by Emeritus Prof. Biman Kumar Dutta, former Dean, E. P. Odum School of Environmental Studies, Assam University, Silchar.

In this context, it is to be mentioned here that about a few days back, in the adjoining areas where gibbons inhabit, a lady gibbon was detected in injured condition by one Sri Pradip Goala, who then had taken the lady



Talk on the Western Hoolock Gibbon's behaviour



Students wearing sun shade caps bearing Hoolock Gibbon Conservation message

gibbon to his residence. Subsequently, the matter was brought to the notice of local forest officials, who reached the location to give first aid. Later on, Vet. Specialist of the Zoo, Dr M. L. Smith reached Silchar and then for adequate treatment of the animal, it was taken to Khanapara Veterinary Hospital, Guwahati, and afterwards kept in the Assam State Zoo cum Botanical Garden, Guwahati. Sri Pradip Goala was felicitated for such an action towards conservation and was rewarded with cash prize. The

programme was attended by about four hundred school students and local village men, all of whom were given the sun shade cap bearing Hoolock gibbon conservation messages. The programme ended with vote of thanks by Mr. Anisur Rahman, Scholar of the Department of Ecology and Environmental Science, Assam University, Silchar.

*Associate Professor, Dept. of Ecology & Env. Sci., Assam University, Silchar. Email: parthankar@rediffmail.com