

Workshop on “Basic Wildlife Monitoring Techniques” promoting wildlife conservation education among students in Chotanagpur plateau, India

Conservation threats to non-human beings include deteriorating forest habitats, increase in invasive species, human-climate negative interactions, and overexploitation. In India, these threats are more prevalent in reserve forests and other unprotected forest areas than in protected areas, which results in negative interaction between wildlife and humans. Similarly, on the Chotanagpur plateau, various conflict issues involving large mammals such as elephants, leopards, striped hyenas, and so on have emerged in recent decades.

Green Plateau (<https://www.greenplateau.org/>) is a non-governmental organization that focuses on various capacity-building programmes in conjunction with public education and awareness about wildlife research and conservation. Green Plateau



Participated students during the field expedition at Ajodhya hills, Purulia



Installed camera trap captured a striped hyena during the field expedition at Ajodhya hills, Purulia - © Green Plateau Workshop 2021 and Purulia Forest Department

has launched an initiative for skill development programme with an interdisciplinary approach – “Basic Wildlife Monitoring Techniques” – to impart scientific knowledge on basic wildlife monitoring techniques using an active learning approach. The programme included field-based training to hone applied technical skills and educate participants on the principles and ethics of wildlife life research.

A group of 59 undergraduate and postgraduate students of different disciplines (zoology, botany, agriculture, computer science, medical, engineering, and so on) from various districts in West Bengal attended the workshop in July–August 2021. The workshop began with a series of online sessions and concluded with a three-day field expedition (image 1). The sessions presented an interdisciplinary approach to study non-human life forms. Students learned about various theoretical components of variation in wildlife research, conservation issues, and monitoring techniques, among other things.

Then, 16 students from the group participated in the field expedition. They visited several landscapes: agroforest, wild forest, and social forest.

They learned how to use various essential equipment such as GPS, binoculars, range-finders, drones, camera traps, etc. in wildlife monitoring surveys. Their installed camera traps captured a striped hyena, as shown in image 4. They saw the presence of wild animals right alongside us, next to human settlements, which gave them an understanding of wildlife living harmoniously in a human-dominated world. They understood that people’s relationships with native wildlife can always be positive rather than negative. And the presence of these wild animals is essential to the surrounding ecosystem and, therefore, our own well-being.

Finally, the workshop has become a successful event after motivating participants to use their enthusiasm to explore their local

biodiversity with scientific rigour. They joined Green Plateau's skill development forum, and the majority of them are working to promote wildlife research and conservation education programmes. Green Plateau will be continuing this workshop every year and it will be beneficial if more institutions and organizations become involved in the workshop and work together in different parts of the Chotanagpur plateau in the future.

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