

In Search of Hoolock Gibbons

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Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh (WTB) and Global Science Production (GSP) in association with national media partner Channel-i organized an expedition to the



northeastern part of Bangladesh. This expedition was planned when the GSP team came to Bangladesh last year on a filming expedition for a TV documentary especially on the plight of gibbons throughout all of Southeast Asia and was introduced to the Hoolock gibbons of NE, Bangladesh. This time the goal of the GSP team came to work on a TV documentary especially on hoolock gibbons of Bangladesh with special emphasis on important ecosystems (wetlands), cultural and natural heritage of Bangladesh. This TV documentary will be completed and broadcast over the international TV stations later in the spring or early summer. During this trip about 50 bird species were recorded from these wetlands, some are globally threatened.

Objectives

This programme was arranged with hopes that the national and international contribution to the fight to save the hoolock gibbons, will be the turning point for these animals on the brink of extinction here in Bangladesh.

The objective of the programme was also aimed to involve children, local people even the forest personnel who live in around Lawachara National Park in some awareness raising activities. It was to give the participants a good feeling towards the animals through



games, songs, paintings and some other cultural activities using hoolock as an example. Different important wetlands of national and international significance

were visited with a hope to design more awareness raising programmes to save natural heritage of Bangladesh.

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Team members were divided into three groups led by Mr. Haque of WTB, Dr. Haimoff of GSP, and Mr. Pantha of Channel-i. Activities were coordinated by Dr. Islam, Chief Executive, WTB. This team work was designed to get great footage on hoolock gibbons (feeding, parental care and some other attractive activities) from different positions, and angles.

Two groups of hoolock gibbons with new born babies were filmed. In addition major threats to hoolocks and



some important activities of Bangladesh Forest Department were also documented.

WTB received a broadcast quality, high-definition Canon XL-H1 video camera as a gift from GSP which was also used in this activity. The goal of this event was to make

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a TV special on the plight of the hoolock gibbons of Bangladesh, an effort to save these animals and to educate people about the plight of their gibbons, before it is too late. This TV documentary will be completed in mid 2009 and broadcast over the international TV stations.

Save hoolock, protect forests

Ms. Ambalika Deb Barma, coordinator of *Tripura Kishori Nishorgo Club*, Dolubari, Srimangal organized all the students of Dolubari village who attended WTB's conservation education programme before. A few questions were asked to assess how the children remain involved in some conservation activities. Most of the students explained how they looked after the plants they planted in their school campus in June 2008 as a part of WTB's conservation education programme to save hoolocks.

Theme and materials: The theme of the programme 'Save Hoolock Gibbon, Protect Forests, Conserve Biodiversity' was explained to all the participants. All of them got a 'Hoolock Gibbon Packet' which includes hoolock masks, placards and some other education materials. The agenda was discussed briefly with the participants to make them understand the programme well and ready for the activity.

Hoolock Gibbons of Bangladesh: The objective of this activity was to attract the participants to the living world through a beautiful but threatened species, the hoolock gibbons - a globally endangered, but critically

endangered species of Bangladesh. Participants were requested to wear hoolock masks to feel for hoolocks.

Environment, biodiversity and hoolocks in art: An art competition was arranged. Participants expressed their creative ideas through it. Drawing books and colour pencils were distributed to the children.

Hoolock gibbon cultural programme at Dolubari Members of *Tripura Kishori Nishorgo Club*, Dolubari, Srimangal have organized a cultural programme where they came up with their traditional dresses, dances, songs and some other activities. This was to express their love towards the natural resources they have around them.

Hoolocks in Song: A hoolock song has been developed by the Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh where the singers express their love for Hoolocks. Students wore hoolock masks where the caption "Save Hoolock Gibbons, Protect forests, Conserve biodiversity" has been inscribed. The participants also held a placard where similar caption has been inscribed.

Hoolock Gift: All the students and other participants of the cultural programme have received hoolock gibbon conservation education materials as gift, designed by the Zoo Outreach Organization, India. Community leaders and the teachers of Dolubari village received a bunch of hoolock gibbon conservation education materials designed by the Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh and Zoo Outreach Organization, India for their future use.

