

Celebration of Stump-tailed Macaque in Assam State Zoo & Botanical Garden

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Assam State Zoo has been displaying Stump Tailed Macaque quite successfully for quite a long time and the species has been breeding well in captivity in the Zoo. On 3rd July 2005, one female was born in Assam State Zoo but the mother died after 3 days due to septicemia. The zoo veterinarian and Zoo staff successfully hand reared the baby. On the 3rd July 2006, the birthday of the young animal was celebrated in the Zoo organised by the zookeepers. The Zookeepers had named it 'Dhun dhun'. Different programmes were organized on the day wherein Sri Rockybul Hussain, Hon. Minister, Environment and Forests, Government of Assam, Commissioner, Department of Environment and Forests, Government of Assam, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Assam, Chief Wildlife Warden of Assam along with other dignitaries, public, NGO and students were present. Though the day was celebrated as birthday of 'Dhun dhun', but the objective was to draw attention to the less popular but endangered species of the region.

The Assam State Zoo authority while celebrating the Birthday of 'Dhun dhun', announced the decision of celebrating the Stump Tailed Macaque Day in Assam State Zoo on the 3rd of July every year to create awareness among the people in support of its conservation. Accordingly the 1st Stump Tailed Macaque day was observed in Assam State Zoo on the 3rd July 2007.

The Stump-tailed macaque has a global distribution in Bangladesh, India, Northern Myanmar, China south to West Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, and a national distribution in the 7 states of Northeast India (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura). Its distribution is restricted to Southern bank of River Brahmaputra-Debang River system.

South Asia Primate Camp 2003: Critically Endangered in South Asia
IUCN Red list: Vulnerable globally
CITES: Appendix II
Wildlife Legislation: Schedule II, Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

3 July 2007

On this day the first Stump Tailed Macaque Day was observed in Assam State Zoo. The Assam State Zoo Authority in collaboration 'Zoo Society' and 'Aaranyak' celebrated it by educating children at its cage. At 9-30am dignitaries and visitors gathered at the Herbarium Hall of the Zoo wherein an inaugural function was organized for the day. Sri Rockybul Hussain, Hon. Minister, Environment and Forests, Government of Assam inaugurated

the 1st Stump Tailed Macaque day. Competitions and games followed and a primate file was screened.

At 3 PM a workshop was organized in the Zoo on the topic 'Conservation of Stump Tailed Macaque' which was presided over by Sri M.C.Malakar, Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam wherein several experts, researchers, veterinarians, students, media personals, NGOs took part. Initially Dr. Dilip Chetri who did his Ph D on Stump Tailed Macaque, gave a presentation on the status and threats of Stump Tailed macaque with special reference to Assam. Almost all the participants took part in the discussions and finally the workshop recommended the following:

1. Need to assign STM as Endangered in IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals and upgrade the STM to Schedule-1 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 from Schedule-II.

2. An Assessment Group on STM may be formed to enhance management strategy of the species in Assam. The meeting suggested forming the group with the persons having experience on the subject. The meeting suggested the names of Dr. Bibhab Talukdar, Dr. Jioshu Biswas, Dr. Jayanta Das and Dr. Dilip Chetry for the assessment group for having their expertise on the field. However the meeting opined for inclusion of an experienced forest officer in the group. This group will also generate information whether the presence and absence of large carnivores like tiger and leopard has any impact on the population build up of the STM as the species is terrestrial in nature. Further this group will also explore the possibilities of experimental re-introduction of the species in some other sites of Assam.

3. Data on STM needs to be consolidated and updated.

4. In-breeding threats to STM in each habitat needs thorough study and use of hair follicle for detailed DNA study could be taken up. The Chief Wildlife Warden may take urgent steps in this matter.

5. The concept of *Species of the Month* by highlighting one little known species of Assam in State Zoo could be initiated. DFO State ZOO may take necessary follow up steps in this matter.

6. The concept of *Species of the Year* in Assam by highlighting one little known species of Assam may be initiated by the Chief Wildlife Warden of Assam

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at the beginning of each year. The Chief Wildlife Warden may seek suggestions from all other stakeholders if he feels appropriate.

7. A request to Indian Postal Department may be made to prepare a stamp of the STM. Forest Department, NGOs, and Educational Institutions etc may make a request to the Postal Department.

8. Survey for estimation of the STM population in Assam may be made in every five years to assess the population trend and conservation measures needed.

9. Dung/faecal materials of STM may be collected by forest staff or person/s authorised by the Chief Wildlife Warden for further study at the College of Veterinary Science, Khanapara, to be coordinated by Prof. Apurba Chakraborty, Pathology Department of the college.

10. Each year on 3rd July, STM day need to be observed across the state of Assam and in other states of North Eastern states where STM population exists.

The next year - 3 July 2008

On the 3rd July 2008 the 2nd Stump Tailed Macaque Day was again observed in Assam State Zoo cum Botanical Garden by the Assam State Zoo Authority in collaboration with Zoo Society. At 9:30 am school children were taken to the Stump Tailed Macaque enclosure and briefed about the species, its distribution, behaviour and habitat, present status, threat, biology etc. The students were also given exposure to different types of primates like

Pig tailed macaque, Lion tailed macaque, Bonnet macaque, Rhesus macaque, Slow loris, Assamese macaque, Hoolock Gibbon, Golden langur, Capped langur, Common langur etc by taking them to the enclosures.

A drawing competition was organized in the zoo amongst the school children with topics related to Stump Tailed Macaque. After the competition was over a film on wildlife was screened for the children and their parents. After the film show the results of the drawing competition were announced and prizes were distributed among the winners. The Prizes were distributed by Sri Naren Chandra Malakar, Head Animal Keeper and Sri Prema Nanda Thakuria, Animal Keeper who are the persons to look after the stump tailed macaque in Assam State Zoo. In Group- A, Sri Aman Baruah Das, class -V of DPS School of Guwahati, Sri Bhaskar Jyoti Das, Class III of Modern School of Guwahati and Sri Madhurjya Das, Class IV of Modern School of Guwahati were awarded with 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize respectively. Whereas in the Group-B, Sri Amlan Das, Class VII of Modern High School, Guwahati, Smti Arundhuti Das, Class VIII of Moder High School, Guwahati and Miss Debashree Mahanta, Class VII of Maria's Public School, Guwahati were awarded with 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize respectively.

After the prize distribution programme a plantation programme was also organized where the school children and their parents took part. In the programme total 135 numbers of seedling were planted in the zoo campus.

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40. Shri Vinod Rishi IFS, Retd. Director, IGNFA, Dehradun
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