

Botanical Excursion to Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary on 15-11-2011

In 2011 Department of Botany of our college organized study tour for the UG students to Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary, Jorhat Assam under guidance of departmental faculties Dr. D. Hazarika, Dr. J. Barukial and Dr. R. Sarmah

The Hoollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary is actually an isolated forest track near the Assam-Nagaland border set amidst the tea gardens and small villages. Initially, the forest used to extend to the foothills of the Patkai range. Even when the forest was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1997, the forest extended from Assam to Nagaland. But an extensive expansion of tea gardens and human settlement fragmented the forest and the reserve became isolated from the foothills. Also, a railway track running through the sanctuary has further fragmented it. Currently, the sanctuary is fragmented into five segments.

This is the only sanctuary in India to be named after gibbons as it contains the largest density of gibbons. The sanctuary is the home to seven types of apes – western hoolock gibbon, Bengal slow loris, stump-tailed macaque, northern pig-tailed macaque, eastern Assamese macaque, rhesus macaque, and capped langur. Apart from the apes, the forest is also abundant in elephants, tigers, leopards, jungle cats, civets, Himalayan squirrels, wild boars and other mammals. There are also a large number of bird species and several types of snakes inhabiting the forest.

The sanctuary has a rich diversity of flora as well. The tall hollong trees form the upper canopy (at around 90 feet), the Nahar trees form the middle canopy (at 30 feet) and the shrubs form the lower canopy. The forest is so dense that the only way to explore the place is by foot, inspite of the fact that the forests contain wild animals like leopards, wild elephants and wild boars. No vehicles are allowed inside the sanctuary. This is quite a rarity in the national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in India. So it is essential to take a guide and an armed guard with every group that enters the forest.



Photos plate: activities during field trip to Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary