

Hunting of avifauna in proposed Tsangyang Gyatso Biosphere Reserve, Western Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract:

The Monpa tribe living in the higher altitude of Arunachal Pradesh practices age old transhumance practices and livestock till date remain the major source of income for these people. Transhumance in this part of the world is seasonal instead of nomadic and they mostly return to their respective villages during winter. During this period of time these livestock herders tend to hunt avifauna along with other faunal species. This paper documented more than 60 species of avifauna mostly hunted during transhumance along with the conservation priorities and traditional belief associated with some species.

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Status, abundance, and habitat associations of the red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) in Pangchen Valley, Arunachal Pradesh, India

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Abstract:

The present study looked at the presence and distribution of red pandas in Pangchen Valley, Tawang District, Arunachal Pradesh, including parts of two Community Conserved Areas, based on the field studies carried out between 2009 and 2013. Priority areas were identified by conducting village interviews, followed by field surveys documenting presence-absence of red pandas (based on direct sightings, droppings, and feeding signs) and assessing their habitat status. A total of 183 plots were sampled, of which 74 (40.4%) showed red panda presence. The results show a healthy abundance of red pandas throughout the higher areas of the valley (sign encounter rate, 0.63/h) and their preference for areas above 2800

melevation with dense bamboo cover of *Arundinaria* sp. and dominant trees such as *Rhododendron* sp. and *Sorbus* sp. with less understory. Their habitat extended till the higher mixed conifer forests dominated by *Abies* sp. Signs of recent human disturbance were minimal in the sampling areas, which reflected the strong conservation measures implemented by the local communities. Overall, Pangchen Valley was found to be extremely vital for the long-term conservation of the red pandas in the region and continued collaborative measures with the local community are required to safeguard their future.

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RICH BIODIVERSITY OF RIVER KULSI

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River Kulsī, a southern tributary of Brahmaputra, is considered as one of the last refuges of the endangered Gangetic dolphin (*Platanista gangetica gangetica*) in the state of Assam. Wakid and Braulik (2009) reported a total of 29 individuals. The presence of a top carnivore and an indicator species like the dolphin not only indicates the significance of the river, but also presents a picture of a healthy freshwater ecosystem. Dolphin is to a river as tiger is to a forest. And indeed it is true in case of Kulsī.

Recent studies report the richness of fish and aquatic invertebrate fauna. Goswami and Ali (2012) report the presence of 63 fish species belonging to 8 orders and 21 families. Of these, six were exotic and the rest indigenous having ornamental and economic value. Islam *et al.* (2013) report the presence of 5 crustacean species. Kulsī also supports a rich and varied semi-aquatic macrophytes distributed along its bank exhibits a heterogeneous assemblage. Plenty rainfall, high humidity, moderate to high temperature influences primarily the profuse development of semi-aquatic macrophytes, *Ipomea carnea* var. *fistulosa* during monsoon and early autumnal period in Kulsī. Geographically, Kulsī originates in the state of Meghalaya (25°38' N, 91°38' E) and enters in Assam after travelling about 12 km from the origin. It finally discharges into main Brahmaputra at Nagarbera. It is surrounded by a number of wetlands viz., Kulsī, Dorabeel, Kukurmara, Salsola, Barpith, Baweli, Chandubi, etc, among which wetlands Chandubi, Solbeel and Beeldora play a pivotal role in providing a healthy prey base for the Gangetic dolphin. It also receives several tributaries namely, Botha river, Kharkhar river, Bokor river, Singra river, etc. Therefore the river is characterized by structural complexity.

There are 25 villages along the entire course of the river. The people depend on river water for bathing, washing, fishing, sand mining, cattle bathing, recreation and

other purposes. Roy (2009) observed that 70% of the total population abounding the river, use the river for the above mentioned purposes. It is indeed a life giving river with rich biodiversity. However, the picture is not all happy and presently Kulsī is in dire condition. It faces serious threats in the form of sand mining, overfishing, uncontrolled motorboat traffic, river bank erosion, construction of Kulsī dam, etc. Proper planning, further research and awareness activities are necessary to sustain the ecology of the river.

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