



NATURE'S FOSTER

(Regn. No. 123 of 1994-95. Under the Indian Societies Registration Act 1860)

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SECRETARIAL REPORT PLACED IN THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF NATURE'S FOSTER HELD ON 27.07.2003 FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2003

The executive committee has the pleasure in submitting the summary of activities for the session 2002-03 for the period from 01.04.2002 to 31.03.2003, as below.

I. ASSET BUILD-UP :

An initiative was taken to generate some fixed asset for the organisation during the last session and for which we specially approached some member / person for their contribution and also some old / used assets. The response was a very good and we could manage to collect some field equipments such as Backpacks, books, binoculars, digital compass and some office furniture.

II. MEMBERSHIP:

A total 12 new member has joined the organisation this year and the present strength of members rises to 57. .

III PROGRAMMES:

A. SURVEY & STUDY TRIP:

1. Survey of flora & Fauna at KRF and conservation of Golden Langur

We have almost completed the Survey for assessment of vegetation of Kakojana Reserve Forest, where about 75 % area of the forest is trekked and details of the habitat type / vegetation quality were assessed. The study was carried out as a part to document the floral and faunal diversity of Kakojana Reserve Forest.

2. Nakkati Reserve Forest:

The Nakkati Reserve Forest was also visited for several trips as part to document and record the biodiversity of Bongaigaon District.

On the basis of feed back from the members, more emphasize was given on outdoor and field based programmes and as apart of that more new areas were covered.

3. Bhairabchurah Hill and Conservation Of Golden Langur:

As Bhairabchurah is also home of isolated population of golden langur and still holds some good vegetation inside the forest a few trips were made to collect information on Golden Langur and on the spot assessment of habitat destruction. Dr. Robert Horwich, a renowned Community Conservation expert from USA, who accompanied us in our one of the visits and expressed his views for conservation of the Golden Langur also in Bhairab Hills with People's participation.

B. FIELD TRIPS

During the beginning of the winter some field trips to various forests and wetlands of Bongaigaon and Goalpara districts were organised and attracted a good nos. of members mostly the newcomers. The sites were covered were Tamranga – Konora Beel Complex, Urpad Beel Kakojana Reserve Forest, Hatimutra beel, Aie River, Doloni Beel and also to the villages of Garo Para & Ravapara.

C. CELEBRATION OF IMPORTANT DAYS AND EVENTS:

1. Dr. Salim Ali Bird Count:

The organisation has participated in Dr. Salim Bird Count and visited Tamranga –Konora beel complex on the nearest Sunday 12th November 2002 i.e. on 10th November 2002. Altogether 12 members has participated in the bird count programme and enjoyed the trip as well as the bird count.

2. Asian Mid Winter Waterfowl Census.

We also took part in Asian Mid winter waterfowl census in Tamranga, Doloni, Paropota, River Aie, and Urpad beels during January 2003 and the count sheets have been sent to the BNHS for final compilation.

D. EXHIBITION ON WILD LIFE CONSERVATION:

A Two days long exhibition on Wildlife conservation with the display of various posters and photographs were organised during the celebration of 50th year of Assam Science Society at Birjhora H.S. School, Bongaigaon. One of the major attractions of the exhibition was the photograph of Butterflies of Bongaigaon taken by Mr. Arnab Bose a young enthusiastic butterfly expert from our organisation.

IV PROJECTS

A. IMPORTANT BIRD AREA (IBA) AND URPAD BEEL:

As a part of the IBA Survey, our members has carried out the winter population and diversity survey of wintering Avifauna in Urpad beel with the support from BNHS. The beel is very rich in its avifaunal diversity, which holds more than 20,000 wintering waterfowl apart from some globally threatened species. The report on the survey is under compilation and will be send to the Bombay Natural History Society very shortly once it is completed. Apart from the survey students were also visited the beel as part of field study on Bird watching census during the winter months.

B. NEAC: 2002-03 :

A project proposal for an awareness campaign among the villages in the bank of Tunia River in the Bongaigaon District with the theme “*Water: Elixir of Life* ” has been prepared and submitted for sanction to the Assam Science Society, the Nodal agency in Assam for Ministry of Environment & Forest under NEAC-2002-03. The proposal is under consideration and not yet sanctioned. .

C. CONSERVATION OF GOLDEN LANGUR:

The conservation of Golden langur in Kakoijana Reserve Forest funded by then **Indo US Primate Project (2001)** with people's participation has been completed. Under the project Two nurseries for food plants of Golden langur was established in Garopara & Rabhapara and the sapplings were planted in and around the Kakoijana Reserve Forest. Apart from the two Nurseries and plantations some awareness drives in the other surrounding villages were also carried. A sticker with slogan "**Save Kakoijana Save Golden langur**" on Golden langur of Kakoijana have been published. Two more signboard was also put as a part of awareness on Conservation on Golden langur.

D. NWDpra: (NATIONAL WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR RAINFED AREAS).

This Two projects namely a) Kolobari Thorthori Watershed Project under Srijangram Development Block and Lungai Watershed Project under Tapattary Development Block is going on, where some development work will be done purely by the communities with financial support from Govt. of India as well as contribution from the communities.

The project work in Kolobari - Thorthori project Area has been going on smoothly as per project plan but the progress under Lungai project has suffered due to involvement of Politically motivated persons in the projects. Although we are taking utmost care for smooth running of the project but we are very little optimistic about the success of the Lungai Watershed Project.

E. ECO DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OF BONGAIGAON:

Our organisation is carrying out an active role in the eco development project undertaken by the District Administration at various places of Bongaigaon District. The blue print on Development of Tamranga – Bishnupur Satra as a Eco-Tourism complex, suggested by our organisation has been completed its first phase of project period named as Bihanga Vihar on the bank of Conora Beel. Other works are going on to develop a full-fledged Community managed Eco tourism complex.

V. MEETINGS & TRAINING:

1. Workshop on Forest and Forest Communities:

A three days workshop on Forest and Forest Communities was organised at Rishi Bhawan, Siliguri jointly by Rashtriya Van Sramajivi Manch, Nespon and Nature's Foster to discuss the various issues relating to Forest Communities and Forest Conservation. Mr. N.K. Dey, Mr. Joydeep Chakrabarty, Mr. Pankaj Choudhury, Mr. Raju Das and Mr. Arnab Bose represented the workshop on behalf of Nature's Foster and they have highlighted the problems of conservation in our areas.

Another meeting as a follow-up action of the above meeting at Tourist Logde, was also organised at Guwahati where good nos. of Forest conservation and community's livelihood right people from the North east interacted specially on the issues relating to Forest Communities of North East India. Mr. N.K. Dey, Sri Pankaj Choudhury and Mr. Joydeep Chakrabarty has attended the programme represented the workshop on behalf of Nature's Foster

2. Workshop on Bird Census Banding Technique at Kaziranga

The general Secretary Mr. S.N. Sen attended the Workshop On Bird Census Banding Technique At Kaziranga on organised by Bombay Natural History Society during September 2002 where talks were delivered on various techniques of bird census, banding technique and surveys. Apart from the talks discussion were also held to finalise the IBA sites and two sites which were not included earlier has been included from this area are Urpad beel, Tamranga, Doloni, Konora and Bhairab Hill Ranges.

We submitted a preliminary report on Avifaunal Diversity of Urpad beel to Bombay Natural History Society and a proposal asking for a Rapid Diversity and Population Survey, which was granted.

3. Training on Environment Education at Kaziranga:

Mr. Rakesh Saud a new member of our organisation has attended a training programme on Environment Education organised by CEE and Nature's Beckon at Kaziranga.

VI. RELIEF TO THE FOREST COMMUNITY IN GAROPARA :

We the members of Nature's Foster were shocked when we learnt that 16 families who have been residing in Garo para (a village adjacent of Kakoijana Reserve Forest) for more than 40 years ago has been evicted during June -2002 under directive from the apex court of India as encroachers including one of our nursery. We immediately provided some ration for one week to the evicted families and after that the matter was brought to the notice of the concerned Divisional Forest officer, who appraised us that it has happened due to ill demarcated boundary of the Reserve Forest. We strongly appealed to the authority to demarcate the boundary of the Reserve Forest so that no such things can be avoided in future. We could not go for legal steps as they did not had any land documents or related papers with the community.

VII RESCUE AND RELIEF OF WILDLIFE:

A. PYTHON RELEASED:

A Python was rescued from Dhantola by the members of our organisation alongwith other organisation of the area and was handed over to the D.F.O. (Aie valley division) the python was released in to the natural habitat of Kakoijana Reserve Forest.

B. TRAPPING DEVICE SEIZED :

Bout 400 trapping devices were seized with the help of police from the poacher who uses to trap the Jungle fowl, Hare etc. The seized traps were disposed later on.

C. Our member Mr. Joy deep Chakrabarty has recovered two Clouded leopard skin from illegal Wildlife Trader at Lakhipur and later on handed over to the Forest authority there with active involvement of Mr. T.. N. Choudhury the Honorary Wildlife warden of Goalpara in support.

VIII. PUBLICATION:**A) LEAF LET:**

A Leaflet on Kakoijana and its Biodiversity is under publication with the updated information kakoijana and its bio-diversity to popularise and make the people aware about rich diversity of Kakoijana Reserve Forest.

IX. NETWORKING:**1. Indian Bird Conservation Network:**

Indian bird Conservation Network (IBCN) is network for conservation of birds in India, which is a part of IBA (Important Bird Area) in India initiated by BNHS in collaboration with Bird life International and RSPB.

Natures Foster is also a partner organisation of the network and has been allotted a Survey work on Avifaunal Diversity of Urpad Beel for confirmation as IBA site.

2. Manas Biosphere Conservation Forum:

A forum of the environmental NGO s working in the Western Assam Circle of Assam Forest and also on Manas Biosphere has been formed during a meeting of four participating NGOs at Kokrajhar on 22nd February 2003 with the aim to give a concerted effort to save Manas Biosphere and also to safeguard themselves from any threats and difficulties arising out of present disturbed Situation etc.

X. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

We sincerely acknowledge to all the donors, Govt. officials, peoples and the members who extended a helping hand, cooperation and support during the session for implementation and smooth functioning of the programmes.

For and on behalf of Executive Committee

27th July, 2003
Bongaigaon

Sadashib Nath Sen
General Secretary