

MANAS BIOSPHERE RESERVE

PARADISE OF WILDERNESS



Rakesh Saud



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The **Manas Biosphere Reserve (MBR)** was set up on 14th March, 1989, which is the first Biosphere Reserve in Northeast India. This Biosphere Reserve was identified as a potential area in Northeast among the first seven considered biosphere reserves in the Country. MBR is a unique area of high universal value. It has a high degree of biodiversity because it is located at the confluence of Indian, Ethiopian and Indo-Chinese realms which make this Reserve one of the richest hotspots in the country.

The entire reserve is spread in a belt of mixed forests, lying along the Himalayan foothills to the north of Brahmaputra valley, the broadest portion of this belt is in the west and gradually narrowing in the east. The northern boundary of the reserve has common international border with Bhutan. The Reserve is located in the Districts of western and central Assam, namely Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baska, and Udalguri.

This area has a rich diversity of life and a paradise for the landscape enthusiast. Great naturalist, E.P. Gooch has written about the Manas that *"Both plentiful wildlife and magnificent scenery are found together a rare occurrence anywhere in the world"*.

General Information

Area	: 2837 sq.km. (From river Sankosh in the west and Dhanshiri in the east)
Longitude	: 91°5' E to 90°0' E
Latitude	: 26°30' N to 27°0' N
Altitude	: 61 to 110 m.M.S.L.
Rainfall	: Average 333cm
Temperature	: 6°C to 37°C
Climate	: Subtropical
People	: Predominantly Bodo community with some representatives of Assamese, Bengali, Nepalese & Adivasis
Summer	: March - May
Monsoon	: June - September
Winter	: December - February



MAP OF MANAS BIOSPHERE RESERVE
(Map not in scale)



For Further Information



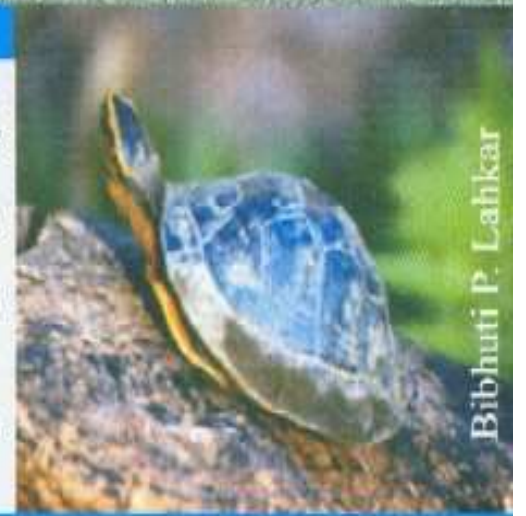
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Fauna

- * 60 species of mammals are recorded from the Biosphere Reserve. 21 of them are placed in Schedule-I Categories. The Pigmy Hog, Hispid Hare and Golden Langur are among these endemic species to this area.
- * There are 42 species of reptiles distributed in 11 families of which 9 are lizards, 30 are snakes, 2 are turtles & tortoise and 1 crocodile.
- * 7 amphibians are reported in 5 families so far and 54 species of fishes and more than 100 species of insects have been identified in the Biosphere.
- * 312 species of birds are recorded, out of these 10 are placed in Schedule-I category.
- * Assam Roofed Turtle was found to exist in Manas in 1988 and is listed under Action Plan (Rating 2) by the IUCN/SSC's Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialists Group.



Bibhuti P. Lahkar

Flora

- * Total 543 species (Angiosperms & Pteridiophytes) of plants are identified of which 374 are dicotyledons and 139 are monocotyledons. As many as 75 species of trees are recorded which are represented by 26 families. Some of the trees found in the Reserve are Sissoo, Sal, Siris, Kurn, Sonaru, Oxi, Sida, Bhelkhore, Poma, Khoir, Urium, Amlakhi, Parali, Baghnal, Khokan, Owtenga, Gamari, Palas, Dimaru, Koroi, Kalasom etc. Various colourful Orchids like *Cymbidium aloefolium* (L.) Sw., *Papilionanthe teres* (Roxb.) Schltr., *Rhyncostylis retusa* (L.) Bl. are common. Species of biological interest such as *Mangifera sylvatica*, *Bauhinia vahili* and a wide Nos. of Grasses like *Imperata cylindrical*, *Arundinella bengalensis*, *Saccharum spontaneum*, and *Narenga porphyrocoma* are dominant in this area.



Raju Das

Golden Langur is an endemic primate of Manas Biosphere area. It is cream or golden orange in colour and the face is black. This primate live in sub-tropical moist deciduous and evergreen forest. This arboreal animal is diurnal and lives in a group of 5-15. The fruit and leaves of various trees and vines are their food items.



Kaushik Debi

Conservation Priorities

The earth and all its species are connected intrinsically with each other in one vast complex web-a web on which each is dependent. This range of life forms and its habitats they live in, its totality is called the biological diversity or biodiversity.

Extensive anthropogenic pressure and manifold degradation has created a serious threat to the bio diversity of the reserve. The people are unfortunately not aware of the damage they are causing of their own natural heritage.

The growing population and man's dependence on the forest have been mainly responsible for this. The basic priorities for this biosphere reserve are , biodiversity conservation and promotion of community development , to ensure their livelihood. The eco-tourism may be a viable alternative, which has the potential to increase public appreciation of the environment and to spread awareness of environmental problems when it brings people into closer contact with nature and the environment.



Joanna V. Gruisen

Pigmy Hog is the smallest suid in the world. This animal live in a smaller group and prefer the grassland habitat. The species construct their nest in the grassland which is unusual among the suids. They are omnivorous and feed upon roots and insects. Manas Biosphere Reserve harbours viable population of this suids.

Various tribes and ethnic communities are inhabiting in this area and makes the Biosphere Reserve more colourful. Due to the their traditional practices they are largely dependent on various forest produces. Some are solely dependent on such forest produces for their livelihood, so we can not think of conservation without their co-operation. The sustainable use of the forest should be maintained through long term conservation policies. The Bodos are the major community of the area. The Manas Biosphere Reserve is under the



administrative jurisdictions of newly formed Bodoland Territorial Council (B.T.C). The dynamic leadership of B.T.C is also of the opinion that conservation of biodiversity is so vital for the survival of ethnic identity. Thus all conservation initiatives and programmes are to be invariably linked with the sustainable utilization of natural resources and livelihood of local communities.

A humble beginning has already been started by concerned Deptt. and the forum of NGOs working in this area, co-operation from all concerned in conservation effort is the need of the hour.

JOIN HANDS TO PROTECT THE BIODIVERSITY OF MANAS BIOSPHERE RESERVE

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