

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Ethno-zoological aspects of certain endangered animals in Assam

DIPSIKHA DUTTA BHUYAN AND M.GOGOI

ABSTRACT..... Assam is bestowed with vast and rich biodiversity and is a part of Eastern Himalayan region .It is a land of multi- ethnic identity since time immemorial .Ethnic communities have a historical continuity of resource use practices and they still rely on animals for various purposes .Habitat degradation, loss of wild stock in association with the loss of local traditional knowledge specially ethno-zoological knowledge led to rapid degradation of biological resources all over the world . Human activities, both directly and indirectly are responsible for high rate of species losses leading to extinction of certain IUCN designated endangered and threatened species. In the present survey, ethno-zoological aspects of certain endangered species have been studied to ensure their conservation measure and also to document the unexplored, degraded traditional knowledge of the ethnic communities for the future generation.

KEY WORDS..... Biodiversity, Ethnic communities, Ethno-zoological knowledge, Endangered, Threatened species.

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Author for Correspondence -

DIPSIKHA DUTTA BHUYAN
Department of Zoology, Sibsagar
Girls' College, SIVASAGAR
(ASSAM) INDIA
Email: deepshikhaduttabhuyan22@gmail.com

See end of the article for **Copied authors'**

INTRODUCTION.....

Assam is one of the global hotspots of biodiversity of North East India. The district Sivasagar extends from 94°15' East to 94°45' East longitude and 26°45' North to 27°15' North latitude. Total geographical area of the district is 2,668 sq.km. with an average density of 431 per sq. km. Temperature ranges from 8°C to 38°C, average rainfall is 432.9 mm. Humid monsoon climate with wet summer and dry winter, vast plain topography with occasionally hills, hillocks and wet lands, plain and new alluvial soils, tropical deciduous, semi-evergreen and evergreen forests, seven reserve forests with one bird sanctuary, three major tributaries, viz., Dehing, Desang and Dekhow with eleven sub-tributaries are the significant geographic characters of the district. As per 2011 census, it comprises of three sub-divisions, viz., Sivasagar, Nazira and Charaideo and nine developmental blocks with 886 villages. About 70 per cent of Tai-Ahom population inhabits in this district. Since historical time, many ethnic communities and tribes started peopling to this area through various routes, with their inherent tradition

and culture.

Ethno-zoology is the branch of biological science that deals with the study of past and present inter- relationships between the human culture and the animals in their environment. Ethno-zoological studies are now emerging as a vital frontier in the field of Ethno-biology. North East India with numerous ethnic composition and culture is an important part of the larger Indian cultural heritage with its unity in spite of all its diversity. Biodiversity is a term we use to describe the variety of life on earth. According to the Millinium Ecosystem Assessment ,the total number of species on earth ranges from five to thirty million and only 1.7--2 million species have been formally identified. IUCN has access to many different kinds of information on species. The Red List of Threatened Species provides global assessments of conservation status of species. The IUCN Species Survival Commission together with the Species Programme and their co-workers have developed a number of approaches to build up a comprehensive picture of the status and trends in species