

Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary

By IASToppers | 2023-08-31 16:10:00



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Primatologists recently suggested **rerouting** a **railway track** that divided **Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary** in **Assam** into unequal parts.



[Ref- Northeast Now]

Need for re-routing the track:

- Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has advised to design an **artificial canopy bridge** to facilitate the movement of the **hoolock gibbons** across the **broad-gauge railway line** within the sanctuary.
 - An **artificial canopy bridge** facilitates the movement of **arboreal animals** across life-threatening **man-made structures** or projects.
- The sanctuary had become a '**forest island**', due to losing **connectivity** with the surrounding **forest patches**.
- **Gibbons** are particularly **sensitive** to **canopy gaps** as it inhibits the **upper canopy of forests**.
- Gibbon families on both sides of the **railway track** were isolated from each other, which compromised their **genetic variability** and **endangered** their already threatened survival.
- **Northeast Frontier Railway** constructed an **iron canopy bridge** in **2015**, but it was unsuitable for the gibbons to swing across the track.
- The **Forest Department** grew a natural canopy bridge, but regular felling of the **trees** during track maintenance had **affected** the **movement** of apes.



[Ref- Indian Express]

About Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary:

- It is an isolated protected area of **evergreen forest** located in **Jorhat district** of **Eastern Assam**.
- It was **named** after its **dominant tree species- hollong** or **Dipterocarpus macrocarpus**.
- It is home to the **only apes** in **India- western Hoolock Gibbon** as well as the **only nocturnal primate** in the **northeast India- Bengal slow loris**.
- **River: Bhogdoi River**, South bank tributary of **Brahmaputra**
- **Habitat:** Evergreen and semi-evergreen forests
- **Flora:** Hollong, Sam, Hingori trees, Sassi, dolu and bojal bamboo.
- **Fauna:** stump-tailed macaque, northern pig-tailed macaque, eastern Assamese macaque, rhesus macaque, Indian elephants, tigers, three types of civet etc.
- It is an **Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA)** with **800 species** of birds.

About Western Hoolock Gibbons:

- **Description:** Males are **black-colored** with **white brows**, while females have grey-brown fur, which is darker at the chest and neck.
 - **White rings around eyes** and mouths gives it a **mask-like appearance**.
- **Scientific Name:** *Hoolock hoolock*
- **Distribution:** **Assam, Mizoram, and Meghalaya** in **India, Bangladesh, and Myanmar** west of the **Chindwin River**.
 - It is found in **Brahmaputra** and **east Dibang** Rivers.
- **Habitat:** contiguous **canopy, broad-leaved, wet evergreen**, and mixed evergreen forests, including **dipterocarp forests**.
- It is an important **seed disperser** as its **diet** includes mostly ripe fruits, flowers, leaves, and shoots.
- It is **India's only ape species** that is **diurnal** and **exclusively arboreal**- brachiating through the trees with long arms.
- **Found in protected areas of:**

- **Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary, Tripura**
- **Ntangki National Park, Nagaland**
- **Namdapha National Park, Arunachal Pradesh**
- **Sonja Wildlife Rescue Centre, Meghalaya**

Conservation status:

- **IUCN Status:** Endangered (EN)
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972:** Schedule-I
- **CITES status:** Appendix 1



[Ref- PRC foundation]