

HORNBILL NEST ADOPTION PROGRAM MID-SEASON REPORT – 2013



Male Great Hornbill
Photo credit : Jaya Rane

In partnership with Nyishi Ghora-Aabhe, Nature Conservation Foundation
and Arunachal Forest Department

- ▶ 12 NYISHI NEST PROTECTORS
- ▶ 49 URBAN NEST ADOPTERS THIS YEAR
- ▶ OUTSIDE PAKKE TIGER RESERVE

25 nest sites; 13 active nests

- ▶ INSIDE PAKKE TIGER RESERVE

33 nest sites; 18 active nests



Female Great Hornbill cleaning inside the nest cavity.
Photo credit : Jaya Rane

ACTIVITIES

1. Team capacity building for the season: January 2013 was mostly spent in getting the team back together after a four-month break since end of 2012 breeding season. We invested time in planning work for the season, training the team to systematically write field visit notes in the diary, learn to scientifically identify and name (English and Nyishi) four hornbill species found in Pakke. We also tried to learn to read maps (world, India, Arunachal) and get acquainted with hornbill distribution and understand the importance of Pakke and protection work that the team is doing.

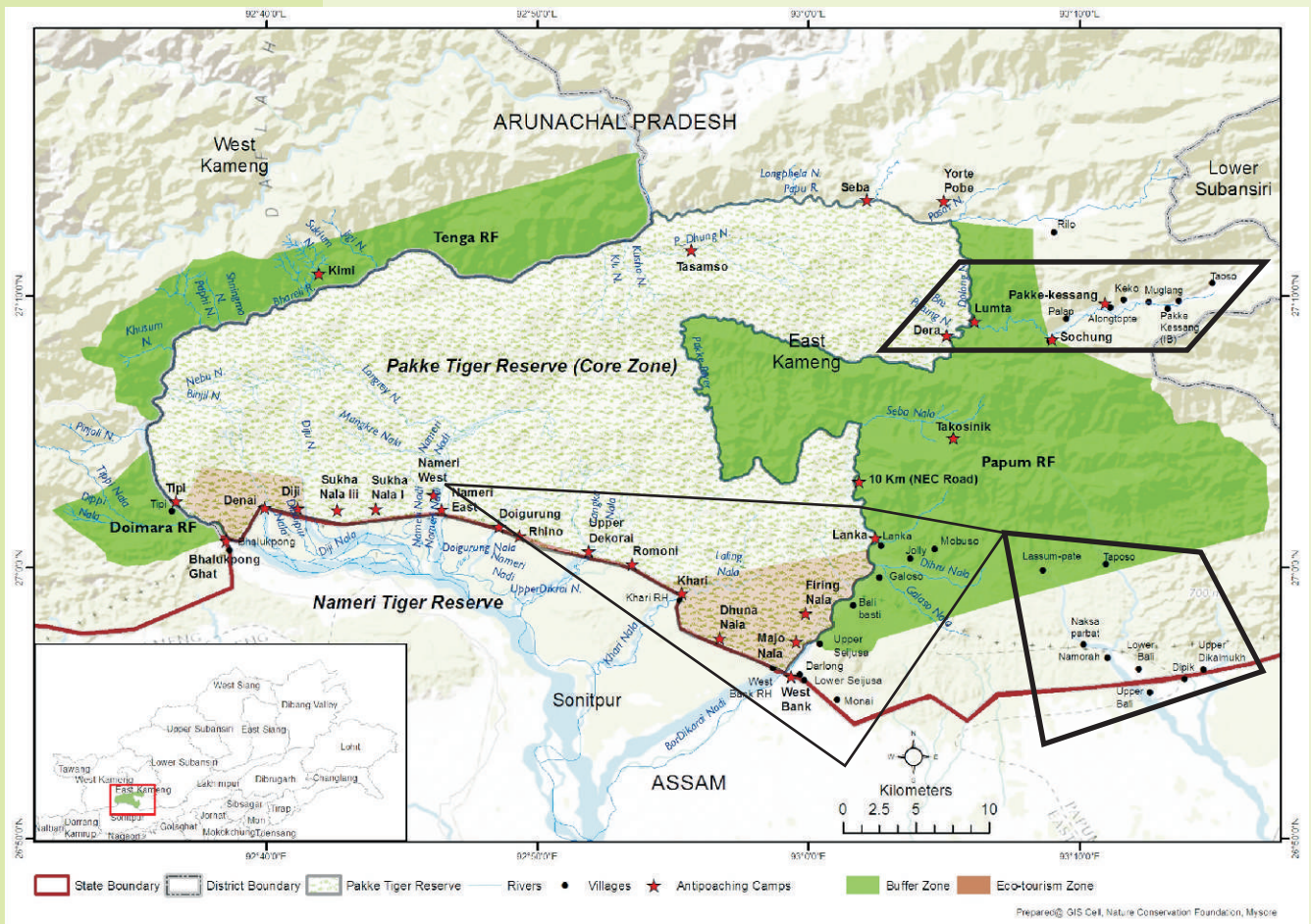
In April 2013, we had a one-day exposure trip to Kaziranga Tiger Reserve for the entire team.



Team in Kaziranga

2. Pakke Jungle camp: A few nest adopters (Kelly Edmunds and Jaya Rane) visited Pakke with their friends and stayed at Pakke Jungle camp which helped this local eco-tourism initiative. Their friends are now our new supporters. Other people who visited Pakke Jungle Camp (Bhalchandra Barve and his family and Geetanjali Dhar) also became new supporters of the Nest Adoption Program.

3. Exploring opportunities for expansion of our Program: We visited villages in two circles (Pakke Kessang and Dissing-Paso), one surrounding the northern boundary of Pakke and another near the eastern boundary of Papum Reserve forest. The main purpose of the visit was to see if in future we can expand the Nest Adoption Program to include a few villages from these two circles. These areas are important to try and include because there are extensive forests with suitable hornbill habitat, especially for the globally 'Vulnerable' Rufous-necked hornbill, a species that is mainly restricted to higher elevation forests (above 500 m).



Map of Pakke kessang and Dissing-Paso Circle (Present work area: thin line; potential expansion area; thick line)



4. Love Hornbill Day: A drawing competition for kids (age 6-15 yrs) was organized on 13th February 2013 which is celebrated as 'Love hornbill' day. We organized a simultaneous online competition for urban kids and a separate class-room competition for children in Class 7 & 8 in Darlong school in Seijosa.

For the online hornbill painting competition, we got a total of 21 entries, with 13 coming in from the younger age group (6 to 10 yrs) and 8 from the older age group (11 to 15 years). The children came up with wonderful creative messages (much more original and fun than what some of us adults think up!). Although, it was partly meant to be a competition too, given the lovely paintings/drawings and messages, we sent every child a gift from the Nature Conservation Foundation. These paintings will be used to make calendars and a set of postcards for 2014.

5. Hornbill Conference: The 6th International Hornbill Conference was held in Manila, Philippines from the 24th April to 27th April 2013. The conference was organized by Hornbill Research Foundation - Thailand, Wild Bird Club of the Philippines and Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation. Delegates from 10 different countries (Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, South Africa, USA, Myanmar, Philippines, India and England) participated in this conference.

The Hornbill Conference was started by Dr. Pilai Poonswad in 1992. Since then, this conference is held every 4 years. The first three conferences were held in Thailand, the fourth in South Africa and 5th in Singapore.

A new photographic reference book 'Hornbill of the World' by Pilai Poonswad, Alen Kemp and Morten Strange was launched by Ng Bee Choo at the conference.

It was nice to meet and chat with people with similar interest. It helped me to get an overview of hornbill work (research and conservation) in the world. The atmosphere during the conference was filled with lots of enthusiasm and energy. I felt very motivated to continue, expand and organize our 'Hornbill Conservation Program in North-East India'.



Hornbill Conference



Hornbill Conference



Whitley Award

6. Whitley Award: Aparajita Datta won the Whitley award at a special ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society, London for her work to protect threatened hornbills in the Himalayan forests of Arunachal Pradesh, India. This is a team effort of the Eastern Himalayan Program of NCF, Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department and the Ghora-Aabhe. Our team includes me, Aparajita, Rohit Naniwadekar, Swati Sidhu, Karthik Teegalapalli, Divya Mudappa, Ghora-Aabhe members and Tana Tapi, field director of Pakke Tiger Reserve. The award money is for a grant proposal and it will be used to focus attention on hornbills as a flagship species, and expand and scale-up our current research and conservation work to help improve the conservation status of these charismatic birds.

Project Title: Celebrating a flagship: hornbills and local communities in North-east India.

Abstract of project: India's north-east is known for its biological and cultural diversity. Hunting and deforestation today threaten the survival of wildlife and their habitats. Most forests are community-owned, yet conservation efforts have largely been Protected Area-centric. Hornbills, a conservation flagship, and seed dispersers in these forests are declining rapidly.

Aims and objectives of the proposed expansion of our work with the Whitley award

- Expand the Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme to include 5 more villages in the Pakke landscape and set up a pilot forest restoration project.
- Determine the status of hornbills, threats, conservation needs in multiple sites across North-east India and identify sites for expansion of community-based conservation model.
- Further a scientific understanding of ecological needs of hornbills and drivers of hornbill breeding success and population persistence.
- Generate awareness and monetary support for the programme from the state by initiating 'Hornbill Nyishi' festival, an eco-cultural event.
- Assist in capacity-building for research and facilitate citizen participation in research and conservation through the creation of an open-access online database on hornbills.