

Education and Awareness programs

Project: Identification of network of grassland corridors for conservation of threatened birds of Brahmaputra floodplains.

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Workshop for stakeholders (I): Farmers/ settlers at targeted grassland areas – Feb 2019. On Feb 27th and 28th 2019, an interaction session and a workshop were organised by BNHS, Mumbai for the stakeholders. The aim of the workshop and interaction session was to make aware the targeted group of stakeholders specially farmers, school children and settlers at and near grassland chapories area near Guwahati.

Highlights: Interactions were made with land owners and farmers in an area. Our study showed that the area has pressure from various anthropogenic activities like- grass cutting, fire, agriculture expansion, siltation, tourism and feral dogs' population. The area has 550 houses from different communities mainly farmers, fisherman and workers from Brick industry. Due to multiple flooding events and sand deposition the land has become less productive. Therefore, 80% of the population on the river island and outside have shifted to other areas or opted other livelihoods. Now people have shifted their settlements to nearby hillocks and wetlands that have been converted to agricultural fields. Some have continued agriculture on islands by cutting and burning the grasses and encroaching the nearby land. We found that brick clines and sand extraction are also a major threat to these sites. The major tourist influx in this area has increased due to activities such as paragliding and Eco-camps.

During our workshop, farmers, fishermen and school children participated in various activities. They were introduced to the bird diversity, threatened birds, importance of grasslands and wildlife in the region. Further, we focused on the importance of birds to the farmers and threats to the avifauna. Problems like siltation and floods were discussed with the stakeholders. All participants interacted with the team members and were eager to understand about the birds in the area. We discussed about scope of future tourism in this area which could help youth with

livelihood options. The stakeholders were willing to cooperate for the cause of conservation and take it further.

Future planning: BNHS team is working on habitat assessment, land use change and educational awareness among the stakeholders having conflicting interest.



Event photographs: Top: workshop participants, Middle: BNHS Climate Change Team interacting with stakeholders, Bottom: database for stakeholders and student participants.