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AGORATOLI RESORT

Birding tourism at Kaziranga National Park, India – ecotourism contributing to conservation

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Agoratoli Eco Tourism Initiative – Kaziranga National Park, India

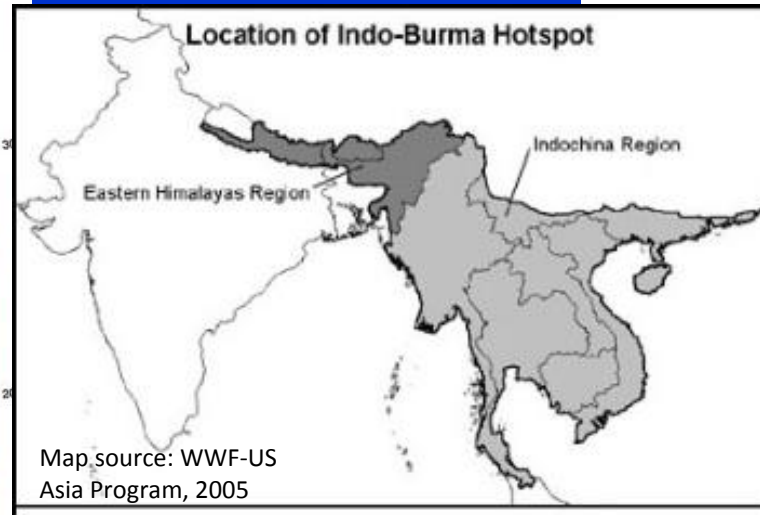
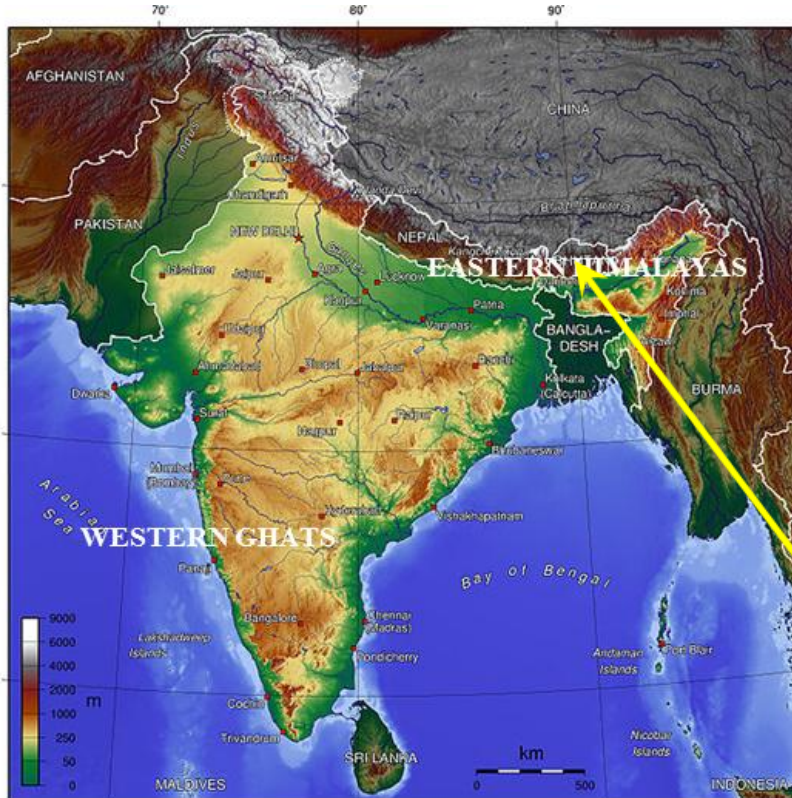


OUTLINES OF THE PRESENTATION

- ❖ INTRODUCTION – Eastern Himalayas and Kaziranga National Park
- ❖ Avifauna of Kaziranga National Park
- ❖ Agoratoli Eco Tourism Initiative
- ❖ Birding Tourism through Community Participation
- ❖ Focus and Future Plans of Agoratoli Eco Tourism Initiative
- ❖ Conclusion



EASTERN HIMALAYAS



Indo-Burma Hotspot, Myers *et al.*, 2000

Indo-Malayan, Indo-Chinese & Afro-tropical biogeographical realms

HIGH DEGREE OF ENDEMISM

Eastern Himalaya

MAJOR FOREST TYPES :

- Tropical Wet Evergreen & Semi-Evergreen
- Tropical Moist Deciduous
- Sub-tropical Broad-leaved Hill
- Temperate , Alpine
- Savanna type of grassland
- Littoral/Swamp forest

Champion & Seth 1968

THE EASTERN HIMALAYAS (Indo-Burma Hotspot, Myers *et al.*, 2000):

- The Sikkim Himalaya
- Eastern Nepal
- Bhutan
- North-east India
- Some parts of China and Myanmar



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KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK & TIGER RESERVE



2006
Kaziranga Tiger Project :
Total Area: 807 sq. km.
Core Area : 378 sq. km
Buffer Area: 429 sq. km

Geographic coordinates: 26°35'–26°45'N and 93°05'–93°40'E
Total area - 430 km² (national park)
Climate - subtropical monsoon
Annual rainfall - 1500 and 2500 mm (May –August) > 2300 mm
Average temperature - 5°C to 35°C
Relative humidity - 60% - 90%
Altitude - 410 to 810 meters above sea level





UNESCO World Heritage Site (1985)

Conservation history > 80 yrs.

Indo-Malayan Ecozone

Big Five !!



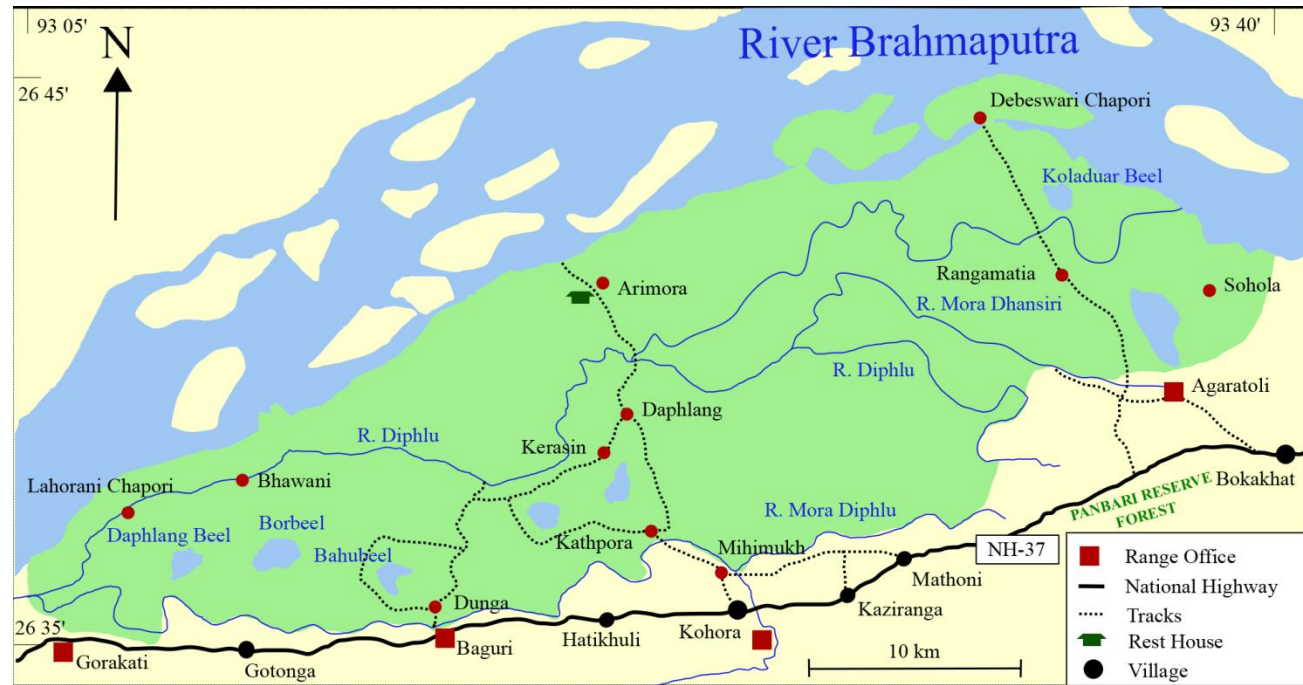
Indian Rhinoceros
Rhinoceros unicornis

Asian Elephant
Elephas maximus

Bengal Tiger
Panthera tigris

Asiatic Water Buffalo
Bubalus bubalis

Eastern Swamp Deer
Cervus duvaucelii ranjitsinhi



KNP is located on the floodplain of the Brahmaputra river – alluvial rich soil - annual flooding – 50-70% of the park area gets submerged under flood waters during monsoon



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Big Five !!

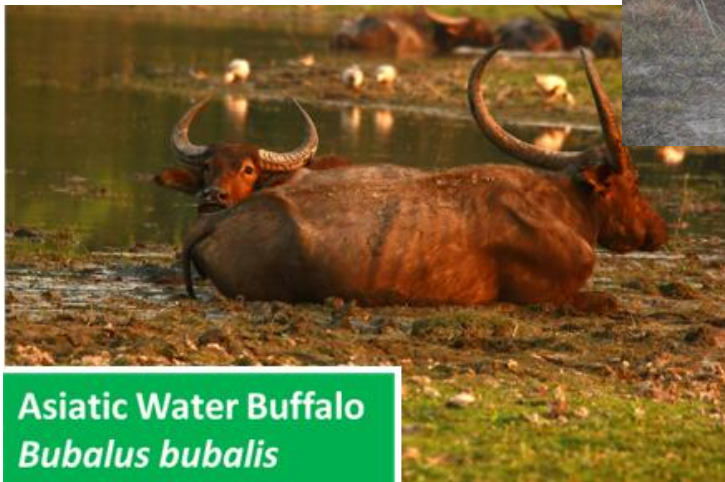
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Indian Rhinoceros
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Asian Elephant
Elephas maximus



Photos: kbarua & bibarua – November 2012



UNIQUE ECOSYSTEM – DIVERSE RANGE OF HABITATS/VEGETATION TYPES

- (1) Eastern wet alluvial grasslands
 - (2) Alluvial savanna woodlands
 - (3) Tropical deciduous forest
 - (4) Assam alluvial plains semi-evergreen forest
 - (5) Swamp areas – wetlands - 'Beels'
- (Champion and Seth 1968).

Wetlands & grasslands form a significant part of the park's area (Total area)

Wetlands - 7%, (191 fresh water lakes and 45 ponds in marshy areas.

Grasslands - > 65% (tall grass 65%; short grass/marshes 5%),

Woodlands - 29%

Sand cover 7%,

(Kushwaha 1997)



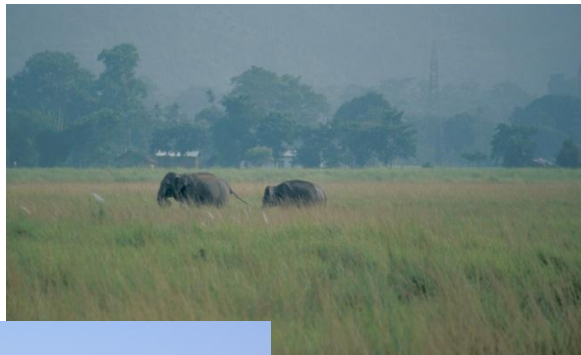
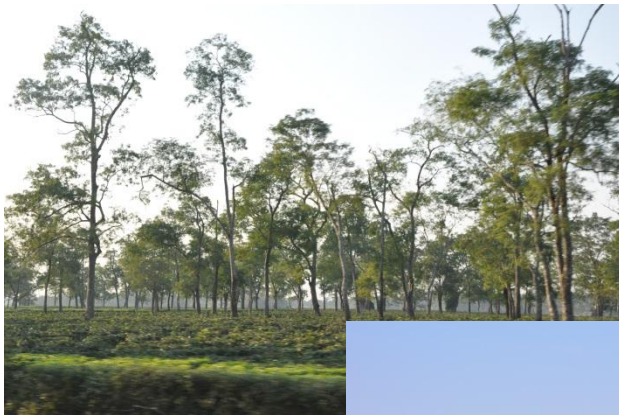
Wet savanna grasslands cover nearly 65-70% of the park area





SCENARIO

- No villages inside the park – human settlements (150 villages) & tea plantations surrounding the park
- Illegal encroachments outside the park – poor subsistence farmers – poverty driven to fish & hunt inside the park
- Poaching – rhino horn is a big problem & challenge to the wildlife department



Avifauna of Kaziranga National Park

KNP location -> intersection of Australasian & Indo-Asian flyways (migratory routes -> ≥500 sp. mark

Birdlife International has identified Kaziranga National Park as an Important Bird Area (IBA) for conservation of avifaunal sp.



Jerdon's Babbler
Chrysomma altirostre
GLOBALLY THREATENED



Common Iora
Aegithina tiphia



Pied Bushcat
Saxicola caprata



Asian Paradise Flycatcher
Terpsiphone paradise

- Several bird sp. found only in Northeast India & some localised to the grasslands & woodlands inside the park
- Migratory birds coming to KNP during winter from as far as Siberia

25 globally threatened and 21 near threatened species



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Avifauna of Kaziranga



@ bhaskarbarua photo

Grey-headed Fish Eagle
Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus



@ bhaskarbarua photography

Slender-billed vulture
Gyps tenuirostris



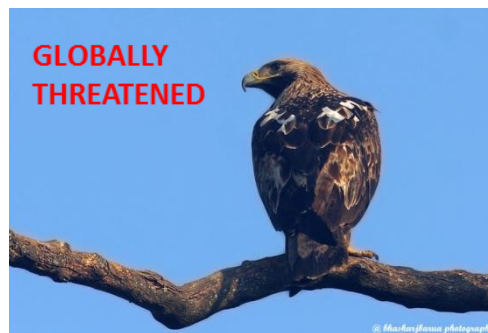
@ bhaskarbarua photography

Oriental Pied Hornbill
Anthraceros albirostris



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Palla's Fish Eagle
Haliaeetus leucoryphus



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Eastern Imperial Eagle
Aquila heliaca

Birds' photos courtesy : Bhaskar Barua



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Crested Serpent Eagle
Spilornis cheela



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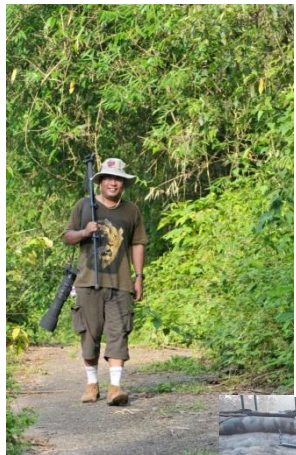
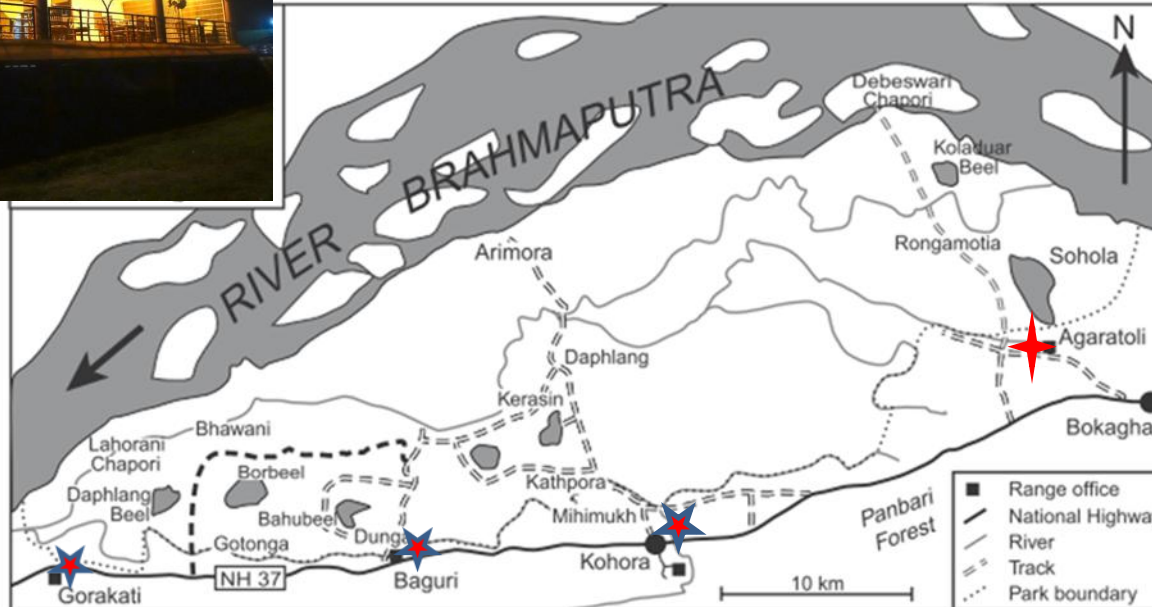
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Agoratoli Ecotourism Camp

Interactive Tourism and Community Participation in Tourism Activities



Model -< way of life of traditional Assamese community





Birding Tourism through Community Participation

Birding & wildlife training for local youths



Spotting, Identification, knowledge on habitats & protection of birds, English learning



Double up as local guides & Jeep safari drivers

Generate awareness on conservation and love for animals

Unofficial voluntary wardens of the park





Agoratoli Ecotourism camp – promoting birding tourism

**Birding Photo Exhibition
Held on 23rd January 2013**



Initially planned as a 1 day event for international tour operators but turned out to be a week-long event for the local people !!



156 species of birds on display !!





Upcoming Agenda



➤ Developing the website : assambirds.com

- Checklist of all recorded species in various places with photographs as well as information regarding various birding itineraries.

➤ Promote responsible and community-based eco tourism

- Nurture local culture –art, handicrafts, monuments
- Visitors get an enriched tourism experience – unstructured spontaneous interaction with locals
 - Visitors build pride and confidence amongst local communities



Press meet on Conservation & Tourism at Agoratoli Ecocamp

➤ Tourism is in harmony with priorities of local communities

- Involve local people in planning, decision making & implementation of tourism development activities



Orientation course

CONCLUSION

Ecotourism to Conservation – Kaziranga National Park is a model example

Engaging local communities, providing employment, and collaborating with local government, have modeled the value of effective conservation for the past 25 years.

Agoratoli Ecotourism Initiative



Conduct market research and identify places and activities of touristic interest e.g. local music, dance, cuisine, arts and craft, folk based festivals and events and use them in a sustainable manner for tourism development



Rose-ringed Parakeet
Psittacula krameri



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Thank you for your attention



Photos: kbarua – November 2012

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Visit : www.agoratoliresort.com