



भारतीय वन्यजीव संस्थान
Wildlife Institute of India

**TWO DAYS TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR WEST BENGAL FOREST OFFICIALS ON “BIODIVERSITY
CONSERVATION AND MONITORING TECHNIQUES OF AQUATIC SPECIES OF GANGA RIVER”
(21st AND 22nd, DECEMBER 2017)**

DETAILED REPORT

The Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun under the project “Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation” conducted two days training workshop for frontline forest officials of West Bengal Forest Department on “Biodiversity Conservation and monitoring techniques of aquatic species of Ganga River”.

The training workshop was organized in collaboration with the trained spearhead team of forest officials, and was held on 21st and 22nd December, 2017 at Kolkata, West Bengal. It was attended by 39 frontline forest staff. Few representatives amongst them had already been trained during the National training workshop for spearhead teams of the Ganga river states, organised and held at Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun from 6th to 12th November, 2017.

Workshop objectives

The overall objective of the workshop was to check the capacity of the frontline professionals co-ordinate this workshop, since they have specifically been trained as Spearhead team to carry forward the training activities. It also aimed to provide the participants with an opportunity to discuss and exchange information on their current programme with regards to conservation, management and utilization of forest genetic resources and also about the biodiversity of Ganga River and the challenges associated therein with the specialist and team members from Wildlife Institute of India.

The training workshop was held on 21st and 22nd December, 2017, at Van Bhavan, Kolkata, West Bengal. A field visit was also organised on the second day of the workshop at Santragachi Jheel, a Ramsar site, near Kolkata. The workshop was divided into three sessions viz. two technical

sessions on monitoring biodiversity and participatory management respectively. The third session consisted of the field visit as mentioned above.

The first day of the workshop started with a welcome address by Dr. Ruchi Badola, Scientist G, Wildlife Institute of India. Pre-training impact assessment forms were distributed amongst the participants before the start of the technical session. The session started with Dr. Sangeeta Angom, Training Coordinator, commenced the workshop by welcoming the participants of the workshop. Followed by an introduction to the NMCG-WII project “Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation”, given by Dr. Niladri Dasgupta, Project scientist (Annexure III). He gave a detailed overview of the project related to its inception, the major objectives, the work that has already started in the other Ganga river states and what initiatives need to be taken for the biodiversity rejuvenation of the Ganga river, in the state of West Bengal. It was followed by a talk from Shri Kalyan Das, (Chief Conservator of Forests, South-East Circle, West Bengal) highlighting the issues affecting the biodiversity of the Ganga river with special reference to West Bengal. He gave a detailed overview of the state of the Ganga river in West Bengal, problems and issues the river is facing in the present day and what measures are being taken for its rejuvenation process.

Subsequently a short discourse on the monitoring of turtles, crocodiles, Gangetic river dolphin and water birds associated with the river, was given by Dr. Niladri Dasgupta. He highlighted on the importance of river fauna, talked about the different species of fauna found in the river Ganga, their condition in the present scenario, position in the IUCN red list category and how their conservation, will in turn help in the rejuvenation of the Ganga river. Thereafter Dr. Sangeeta Angom, gave a lecture on how biological sample collection and genetic monitoring should be carried out. She taught the frontline staff members, simple ways of collecting biological samples and how to preserve them properly using easily available chemicals and send them to WII or any other forensic laboratory for further tests and analysis. The technical session on monitoring biodiversity aimed at improving the theoretical understating of the biology, ecology, monitoring methods for various taxa viz. Waterbirds, Dolphins, Crocodiles, Turtles and Otters. The first part of technical session concluded with lunch.

The second part of the session consisted of a group activity and a talk by Dr. Pariva Dobriyal, Project Scientist, related to participatory management. For the group activity the participants were divided into 3 groups and a box was filled with miscellaneous objects like pen, pencil, battery, flower, leaf, phone, phone cover etc. Each group had to select one group leader. The first group was called in and the box filled with items was just shaken and the members were asked to list out the items inside it based on the sound of it. The second group was asked to feel the contents of the box and make a list of it. While the third group was shown the items inside the box and were asked to make a list. The list of items submitted by each group leader, from

all the three groups were then collected and compared. The result showed that the third group fared the best as they could name most of the items inside it, and was followed by the second and first group. The inference from this group activity was then highlighted by Dr Pariva Dobriyal, who emphasised on the importance of participatory management. She explained as in why the third group fared the best as they were shown all the items , which is analogous to a situation, where the frontline staff are most aware of a crisis situation in field and how the relevance of the information dies down during its passing in the hierarchical order. She accentuated that there needs to be coordination between frontline forest staff, higher officials and the community for better biodiversity rejuvenation process.

The second day of the session consisted of a field visit to Santragachi Jheel, which is also a Ramsar Site, near Kolkata. There different aquatic and riparian vegetation were shown to the participants by Ms. Monika Sharma. She went to describe the importance of each of those species and how some of them act as pollution indicators while a few of them help in natural purification of water. Dr. Niladri Dasgupta talked about different water variables and how they should be monitored and measured. This was followed by distribution of the Post – training impact assessment forms to the participants. Afterward a valedictory function was organised at the Van Bhavan, Kolkata. Dr. R.P.Saini, IFS, Director and Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Sundarban Biosphere Reserve, was the chief guest. He stated that this was a very enlightening workshop for the frontline staff members and more such training workshops should be planned in the near future, since for rejuvenation of Ganga River a large number of human resources are required. The function concluded with certificate distribution to the participants.

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

21st Dec. 2017	Technical session I: Ecological Monitoring
1030 -1100	Registration (and Tea/coffee) – Ms. Aditi Dev and Ms. Sayantika Banerjee
1100-1110	Workshop inauguration and welcome address- Dr. Ruchi Badola
1110-1200	Introduction to the NMCG-WII project “Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation” : Issues and Challenges in Biodiversity Conservation of Ganga River - Dr. S.A Hussain/ Dr. Niladri Dasgupta
1200-1240	Issues affecting the Biodiversity Conservation in Ganga River with special reference to West Bengal - Shri Kalyan Das
1240 -1330	Monitoring of Gangetic River Dolphin and Waterbirds – Dr. Niladri Dasgupta

1330 -1430	Lunch
1430 - 1520	Monitoring of Turtles and Crocodiles – Dr. Niladri Dasgupta
1520-1550	Biological Sample collection and Genetic Monitoring - Dr. Sangeeta Angom
1550 - 1610	Tea
1610 - 1700	Community Participation in Conservation of Ganga River- Dr. Pariva Dobriyal / Ms. Tripti Sah
1700- 1730	Training Impact Assessment/ Feedback
1730 - 1800	Concluding Remarks and Future Actions
22nd Dec. 2017 Technical session II: Field visit to Santragachi Jheel, West Bengal	
1100 - 1200	Measuring and Monitoring of River Variables - Dr. Niladri Dasgupta
1200 - 1300	Monitoring of Aquatic and Riparian Vegetation - Dr. Sangeeta Angom/ Ms. Monika Sharma
1300-1400	Lunch
Technical session III: Participatory Management	
1400 - 1500	Community Participation in Ganga River Conservation – Dr Pariva Dobriyal/ Ms. Sayantika Banerjee
1500 - Onwards	Distribution of Certificates and return

PHOTO GALLERY





