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## Lawachara National Park:

Lawachara National Park (LNP) is part of the West Bhanugach Reserved Forest and is located at Kamalgonj Upazila in Moulvibazar District, northeastern Bangladesh. The Park is under the jurisdiction of the Forest Department's Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Division, Moulvibazar.

Lawachara National Park was first established in 1996 and later expanded to its current area of 1,250 hectares. LNP is located about 7 kilometers east of Srimangal, Moulvibazar, Sylhet Division, and is a popular tourism destination for both domestic and international tourists.

## Biodiversity :

LNP is mixed, with understory comprised of evergreens and an upper-canopy composed of tall deciduous trees. Important trees species include Jarul *Lagerstroemia parviflora*, Chapalish *Artocarpus chaplasha*, Gamar *Gmelina arborea*, Nageswar *Mesua ferrea* and Bohera *Terminalia belerica*. Approximately 167 plant species, more than 15 species of amphibians, more than 40 species of reptiles, 246 species of birds and 20 species of mammals are found in this park. About 18 families of Hoolock Gibbon *Hoolock hoolock*, a globally Endangered lesser ape, is LNP's flagship attraction. Other species of global concern include the globally Critically Endangered White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*, Vulnerable Bengal Slow Loris *Nycticebus bengalensis*, Near Threatened White-cheeked Partridge *Arborophila atrogularis*, Pig-tailed Macaque *Macaca nemestrina*, Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel *Dremomys lokriah* and Barking Deer *Muntiacus muntjak*. LNP is a magnet for birdwatchers offering spectacular views of Asian forest jewels such as Asian Fairy-bluebird *Irena puella*, Red-headed Trogon *Harpactes erythrocephalus*, Blue-naped Pitta *Pitta nipalensis*, Hooded Pitta *Pitta sordida*, Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus*, Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx erithaca*, Vernal Hanging Parrot *Loriculus vernalis*, Blue-winged Leafbird *Chloropsis cochinchinensis* and Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja*.

## Local Communities :

The LNP landscape includes about 30 villages comprising 7,348 households. Of these, 18 are directly adjacent to the Park while 2 villages are located within its boundaries. Cultural diversity is rich in and around LNP, and includes Khasia and Tripuri communities as well as migrants from Noakhali, Comilla and Assam. Communities in the LNP landscape are largely farmers, though there is significant dependency on LNP forest resources including collection of firewood, bamboo and fodder. Managing the balance between sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity conservation is a significant challenge which is being addressed by LNP's active co-management initiatives.

## Park Threats :

LNP faces a range of threats resulting in dwindling forest cover where non-sustainable extraction of a variety of forest resources including firewood, timber, bamboo and fodder. A certain extent of illegal felling of timber, especially in the rainy season, as well as encroachment of farming land into the boundaries of the Park are further issues which pose threats. With its surging number of visitors, unsustainable tourism is an emerging threat to LNP. This includes littering, noise pollution and harassment of wildlife. Finally, unregulated release of wildlife into the Park threatens the ecology of the Park and the carrying-capacity particularly of primate species.

## Nishorgo Network :

group of forest and wetland Protected Areas (PAs) being conserved through co-management. Co-management brings together community, government and other stakeholders to work together to conserve Bangladesh's rich natural heritage and eco-system services in a manner that contributes to long-term sustainable development, increased food security, and integrated climate change adaptation and mitigation. Nishorgo Network co-management shares roles and responsibilities between communities and government, demonstrating economic benefits of PA conservation to local communities through eco-tourism and sustainable alternative income generation activities, as well as by actively involving them in conservation management of PAs through participation in co-management organizations and joint patrol initiatives. The Nishorgo Network actively engages women, youth and ethnic minorities in co-management, and provides a foundation of good governance.



Lawachara National Park



Hoolock Gibbon in the LNP





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## Co-management and Lawachara :

Lawachara National Park is a leader of co-management for effective conservation, beginning in 2004 with USAID's Nishorgo Support Project and currently with support from USAID's Integrated Protected Area Co-Management (IPAC) project implemented in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh's Ministry of Environment and Forests and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. Co-management highlights in LNP include the following:

- Formation and re-election of a co-management platform including 55-member Co-Management Council; 19-member Co-Management Committee; 30 Village Conservation Forums (VCFs); and one Peoples' Forum.
- Establishment of 4 Community Patrol Groups (CPGs), including one Women's CPG, engaged in regular Joint Patrols with Forest Department field staff.
- Development of eco-tourism support for LNP, including training a cadre of eco-guides from local communities as well as the establishment of 2 eco-cottages near the Park.
- Entrance Fee Revenue collection and sharing mechanism in place, ensuring 50% of tourism fees accrue to the CMC.
- Demonstration of community forestry activities based on revised Social Forestry rules 2010, contributing to reforestation of the LNP landscape and revenue sharing upon harvest of fast rotation tree crops planted near the Park.
- Alternative Livelihoods Development training and support for LNP-dependent communities, including sustainable value chain support and MoUs between local communities and national buyers in both fisheries and handicrafts.
- Training and capacity building as well as leveraging additional financial support to sustain effective co-management of LNP conservation into the future

USAID's Integrated Protected Area Co-management (IPAC) Project in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MOEF) and Ministry of Fisheries & Livestock (MOFL) has taken significant steps to conserve LNP including:

- Promoting the Revised Social Forestry Rules through community involvement for plantations.
- Conservation partnership developed by signing MOU especially between Aarong and local weaving groups in Doulobari Tipra Community.
- Organizing school awareness program at PA landscape area village.
- Broadening 'Value-Chain' assistance by creating fish and basket weaving value chains and connecting them to the market.
- 16 ha of land have been given out to 40 members of the community from CPG and VCF under the Social Forestry model.
- Facilitating with a shop set up to sell the Tipra woven items near LNP.
- Training, promoting and facilitating the initiative of Eco-Cottages in the Landscape zone of LNP that house visitors and promote the concept of eco-tourism.
- Training Eco-guides to educate visitors to the PA
- Alternate livelihood options include turmeric and ginger cultivation in the buffer zone as well as some fisheries in the landscape area.
- Arranyak foundation funds interest free loans provided by CMCs to encourage the locals to adopt alternate livelihood options like cow fattening, rickshaw/van services and sewing groups to name a few.
- At LNP, there is 1 Co-management Council with 55 councilors, 1 Co-management Committee with 19 members, 30 Village Council Forums (VCFs), 1 People's Forum (PF) and 4 Community Patrol Groups (CPGs) of 60 members.
- There are 23 trained Eco-guides and 12 eco-rickshaw pullers. 27 Nishorgo Sahayaks (facilitators) have also been trained.
- Being a catalyst for meetings among the CMC, FD, CPG, Tour guides, Youth Club representatives for better tourist management.

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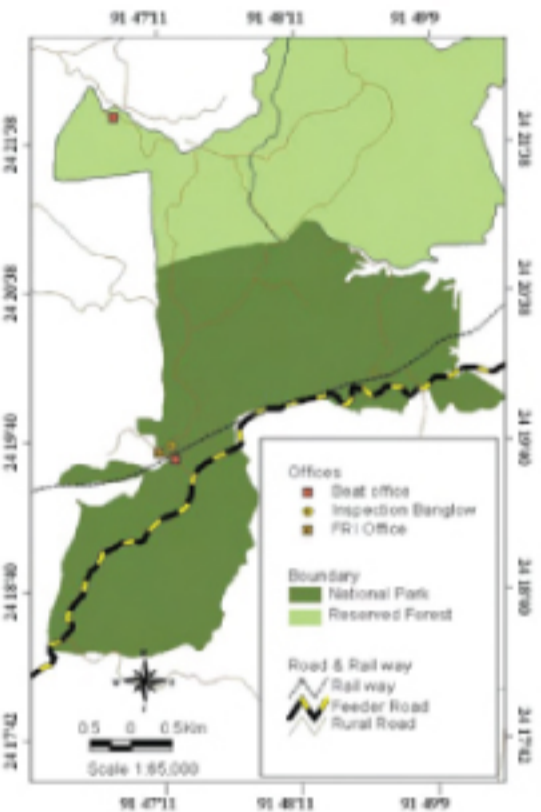
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Department of Environment



AIG Activities: Woven products



Community level meeting at LNP

