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Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary

Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) was established in 1986, 70 km south of Chittagong City and is managed under the newly created Wildlife and Nature Conservation Division. The total area of CWS is 7764 ha. CWS comprises mainly of secondary growth, scrub, and extensive areas of sun grass, including some areas where plantations of exotic trees were initiated.

Surrounding Communities:

Around 9400 households with a population of approximately 48,913 people depend on resources (e.g., fuel wood, medicinal plants) from the area. Around 15 villages are in very close proximity of CWS with around 70 settlements (paras). Within these settlements nearly one-third of the population is unemployed. Encroachers who settle on forestlands are mostly people who have been affected by riverbank erosion or have become landless due to various reasons. The local agricultural laborers typically find work for only six months a year and even during this time work is not available in a regular basis. Hence steady work is often not a viable option for many locals who otherwise engage in cutting firewood, trees and bamboo and other forest resources for commercial and household gain.

Biodiversity :

CWS mainly constitutes of grass species, scrub and cultivation on the low hills, which comprises what may be deemed a secondary growth habitat. Patches of the original hardwood forest remain, most notably near the Chunati Range Office near Chunati town and the Chambol Range Office of the Jaldi Range near Banskhali. Sun grass is now the dominant plant species on the hills, while young regenerated hardwood seeds are often cleared for use in betel leaf cultivation. Rice cultivation is also a popularly grown crop. Around 19 mammal species like the Binturong are living within the sanctuary, beside 53 birds species like the Red-breasted Parakeet *Pittacula alexandri* and few other common species. Additionally, there are 4 amphibians, 7 reptiles and 143 plants. CWS is most excitingly the natural migration area of the Asian Elephant, one of the main attractions of the sanctuary.

Sanctuary Threats

CWS is one of the Protected Areas (PAs) most under threat from a variety of factors. Including encroachment by nearby settlements, slash-and-burn (jhum) agriculture practices, heavy dependency on forest products by local populations, and the utilization of its available lands for farm use. Non-sustainable felling for commercial uses is another great threat as the locals living within and outside the PA look for alternate sources of income.

Nishorgo Network :

CWS is a valued member of the Nishorgo Network, Bangladesh's growing group of forest and wetland 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.



Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary



CPG Women at Chunati



Crimson Sunbird





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Co-Management & Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary

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

- Formation and re-election of a co-management platform including a Co-Management Committee and Council (CMC); Village Conservation Forums (VCFs) and a Peoples' Forum (PF).
- Establishment of Community Patrol Groups (CPGs) engaged in regular Joint Patrols with Forest Department field staff.
- Development of eco-tourism support for CWS, including training a cadre of eco-guides from local communities as well as the establishment of eco-cottages near the Sanctuary.
- Entrance Fee Revenue collection and placement of a sharing mechanism that ensures 50% of tourism fees accrue to the CMC.
- Alternative Livelihoods Development training and support for CWS-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 CWS 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 CWS including:

- Training forest dependent communities on different AIGAs including weaving, bamboo craft making (where the intricate weaving of the Khareng baskets by the community women is gaining popularity), fish farming and nursery plantation,
- Eco-tourism efforts in the area include setting up signboards, availability of eco-guides, eco-rickshaws and a Nature Interpretation Centre constructed through private-public partnership.
- Raising adequate awareness regarding Eco-cottages and training eco guides
- Introducing Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS) for reduced indoor pollution via a partner organization.
- Development of 2 CMCs and 2 Peoples Forum to overlook the Sanctuary's management.
- Arrangement of 60 VCFs to increase consciousness and promote conservation focused actions.
- 60 Nishorgo Sahayak (facilitators) have been trained to execute conventions and administer co-management activities.
- Currently 13 eco-tour guides and 424 members of CPGs have been trained to help with the protection of CWS.
- 7 conservation Clubs have been formed to engage youth in conservation of CWS. This includes Forest Conservation Clubs involving not only students, but youth and older members of the community who can help in raising awareness.
- Entry Fee Collection at the gates of CWS ensures benefit sharing between the government and local communities.

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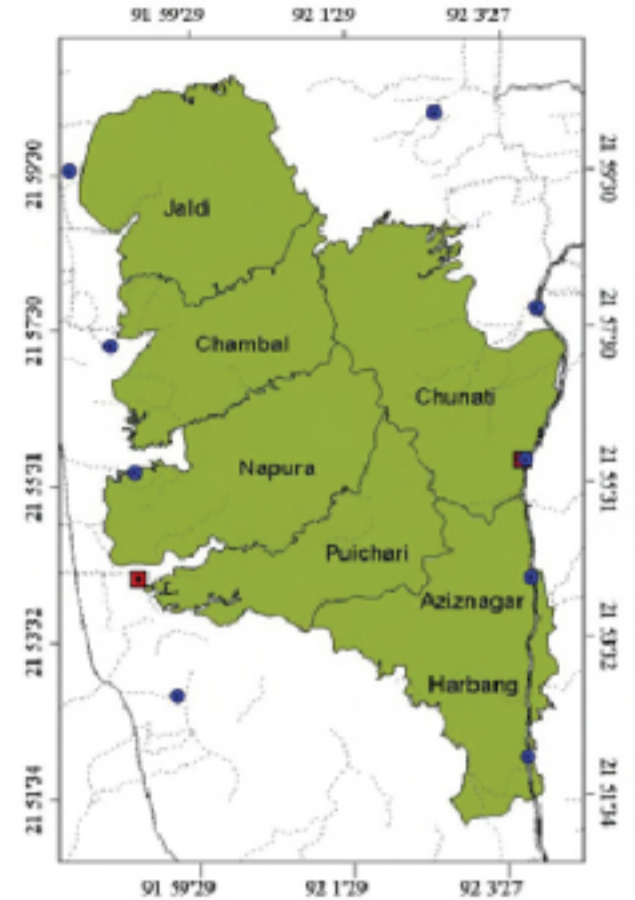
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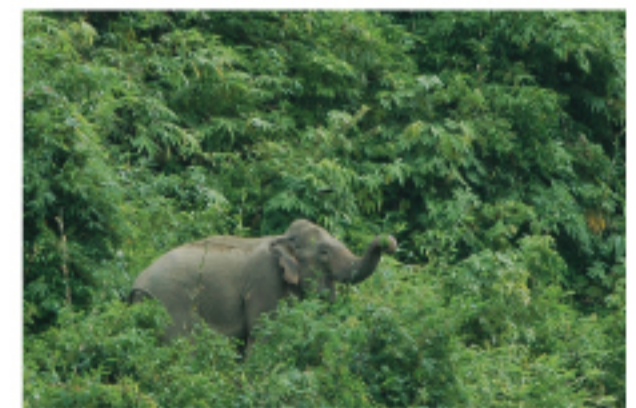
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Department of Environment



The Interpretation Centre



Resident Asian Elephant

