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Dudpukuria-Dhopachari Wildlife Sanctuary

Dudpukuria-Dhopachari Wildlife Sanctuary (DDWS), established in 2010, comprises a total of 4717 ha reserved forests (RF). The sanctuary is situated along with the borderline of Chittagong, Rangamati and Bandarban districts, at the foot of the Karnafuly and Sangu Rivers. It extends up to the seaward fringe of the delta, the Bay of Bengal. Natural creeks and streams traverse through the Sanctuary where waters from adjacent watersheds flow through them all year round.

Biodiversity :

The Sanctuary comprises of natural forests with rich diversity in flora & fauna, and numerous hilly creeks and streams. Historically this tract was covered with evergreen tropical rain-forest species, the dominant ones being Garjan (*Dipterocarpus spp*) and its many associates namely Gamar (*Gmelina arborea*), Hargoza (*Dellenia pentagyne*) and Chapalish (*Artocarpus chaplasha*). There are around 177 species of birds and among them Hill Myna (*Gracula religiosa*), Oriental Pied Hornbill (*Anthracoceros albirostris*), King Fishers and Bea-eaters are notable. The elusive Pallas's squirrel (*Callosciurus erythraeus*) has been observed while the Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*) is a common resident and the Asiatic Black Bear (*Ursus thibetanus*) and the shy Bengal Slow Loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*) are also found at DDWS.

Local Communities :

DDWS is surrounded by about 3000 households, of eight ethnic minority groups including the Marma, Rohingyas and Thanchyanga. These communities have been long time residents of the region and have co-existed in the environs of the sanctuary. Therefore, their dependence upon the sanctuary resources has been substantial, from where they acquired fuel wood, timber for household and commercial purposes, plants and local herbs amongst other available resources.

Sanctuary Threats :

DDWS faces a range of threats resulting in dwindling of resources. Most of the people depend on the sanctuary for fuel wood, timber and minor forest products like bamboo and bush meat. The challenges are manifold and some of them include illegal felling, forest fires, forestland encroachment and livestock grazing. Although the local communities engage in some homestead gardening, growing pineapples and guava, their involvement around the sanctuary environs needs to be co-managed. Conservation of the sanctuary requires effective co-management initiatives between the local communities; amongst themselves as well as with Government and forest officials.

Nishorgo Network :

DDWS is a valued member of the Nishorgo Network, Bangladesh's growing 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 environmental governance.





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Co-Managing Dudpukuria-Dhopachari Wildlife Sanctuary:

Dudpukuria-Dhopachari Wildlife Sanctuary is under co-management for effective conservation, 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 DDWS include the following:

- Formation of a co-management platform including Co-Management Councils, Co-Management Committees (CMC), Village Conservation Forums (VCFs); and 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 DDWS, including training of a cadre of eco-guides from local communities.
- Initiating a process to encourage Entrance Fee Revenue collection and sharing mechanism, 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 DDWS landscape and revenue sharing upon harvest of fast rotation tree crops planted near the sanctuary.
- Alternative Livelihoods Development training and support for DDWS-dependent communities, including sustainable value chain support.
- Training and capacity building as well as leveraging additional financial support to sustain effective co-management of DDWS

IPAC has initiated several interventions to reverse the adverse trends (degrading the biodiversity of DDWS) including as below:

- Promoting the revised Social Forestry Rules through community involvement for plantations.
- Training local populace dependent upon the Sanctuary, in farmstead agriculture, to help decrease wooded area dependency and resource removal.
- Provide training and support for initiatives like plantation nursery, woven products and traditional bamboo and cane handicrafts to promote AIG activities in the region.
- Facilitating the level of competency demonstrated by the FD officials, in association with local authorities occupied in forest management.
- Escalating co-management concerns and PA approaches with importance and support given to the concerned ministry and departments to raise competence.
- Raise awareness amongst the people living in the region.
- CPG patrol the Sanctuary environs to protect it from violators.
- Preparing a cadre of Nishorgo Sahayaks (facilitators) to execute conventions and administer co-management activities; eco-guides to escort visitors along the designated trails, educating them about DDWS and its resources.
- And to build eco-cottages in the vicinity.

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