

Kaptai National Park :

Kaptai National Park (KNP), located in the Rangamati Hill District under the Chittagong division, was established in 1999 under the Bangladesh Wildlife Act 1974. The Park comprises an area of 5464.78 ha. KNP is unique for having the oldest social plantation project in the Indian Sub-continent and was famous for its Burma-Teak trees. The area now comprises mainly of hills, valleys and forest, and is still one of the most popular tourism destinations of Bangladesh. The Kaptai Lake is the largest man-made fresh water body in Bangladesh, and other touristic attractions include the Kaptai Hydroelectric project and Kurnafully Paper Mill project, both huge contributors to the overall economy of the country.

Surrounding Communities :

The surrounding 39 villages comprise of about 1885 households. These communities were mostly displaced during the building of the Kaptai Dam and Hydroelectric Power Plant in the 1960s, settling on the outskirts or moving to the inner parts of the KNP. They are engaged in a multitude of activities such as agriculture, pond and lake fish culture, vegetable cultivation, and bamboo and handloom products. Jhum cultivation (Slash and Burn cultivation) by the ethnic communities like the Marma, and trading vegetables are also popular income options.

Biodiversity :

The park is a tropical semi-evergreen type with a hilly terrain and many valleys. Home to one of the widest variety of biodiversity in the country, the main tree species found in KNP are *Civet Swintonia floribunda*, *Garjan Dipterocarpus spp*, and *Chapalish Artocarpus Chaplasha* with some bamboo and cane species also. *Sambar and Barking Deer Cervus unicolor* and *Muntiacus muntjak*, *Orange-Bellied Himalayan Squirrel Dremomys lokriah*, *Chinese Pangolin Manis pentadactyla*, *Binturong Arctictis binturong*, *Masked Palm Civet paguma larvata*, the elusive *Clouded Leopard Neofelis nebulosa* and the shy *Bengal Slow Loris Nycticebus bengalensis*; *Rock Python Python molurus*, the uncommon *Green Cat Snake Boiga cyanea*; *Red-Headed Trogon Harpactes erythrocephalus*, *Blue-Winged Leafbird Chloropsis cochinchinensis*, *Black-backed Forktail Enicurus immaculatus*, *Hill myna Gracula religiosa*, *Ashy Bulbul Hemixos flavala*.

Park Threats :

The Kaptai dam built to protect the flooding of the Kaptai Lake along with the Karnaphully paper mill and the hydroelectric plant have all contributed to the degradation of KNP. The pollution levels rose to a point where it heavily affected the biodiversity, driving some wildlife species to eventual extinction. Furthermore, the subsequent displacement of the local populace during the building of the power plant and dam led them to occupy other parts of the region and carry out agricultural activities that eventually contributed to the overall degradation of the land. Today, non-sustainable felling of timber for household and commercial use; traditional jhum cultivation (especially by ethnic groups who carry on the age old tradition of Slash and Burn agriculture); conflicts between the ethnic communities and settlers; presence of brick kilns and forest fires are some of the major threats that the Park faces.

Nishorgo Network :

KNP 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.



Kaptai National Park



The ethnic communities of KNP



Blue leafed wingbird





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নিসর্গ নেটওয়ার্ক

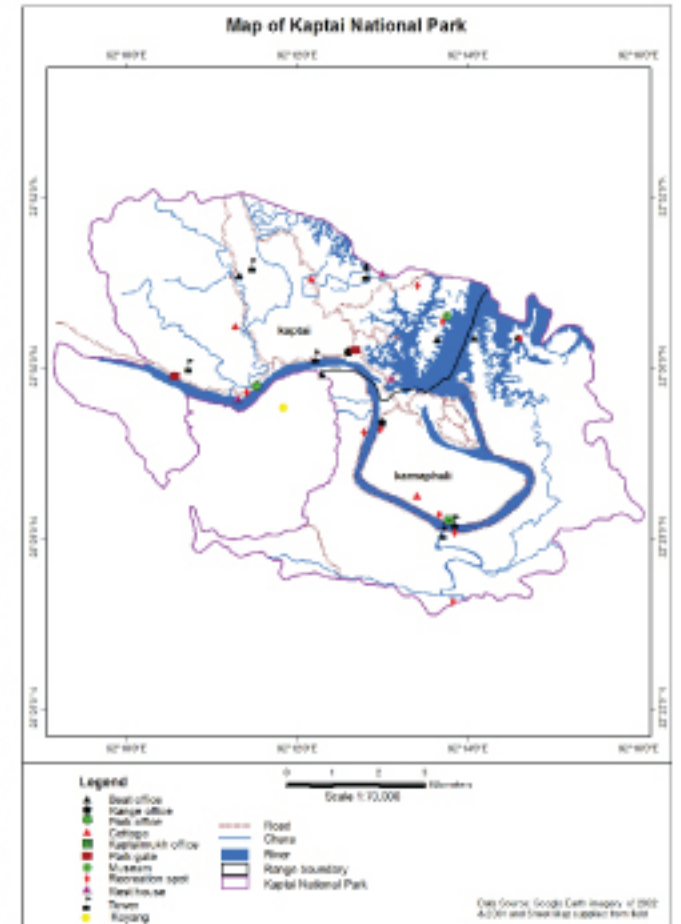
Co-Management & Kaptai National Park :

KNP is a leader of 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 KNP include the following:

- Formation and re-election of a co-management platform including Co-Management Committee and Council; 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 KNP, including training a cadre of eco-guides from local communities as well as the initiative for the establishment of eco-cottages near the Sanctuary.
- Initiating a process of Entrance Fee Revenue collection and sharing mechanism, ensuring 50% of tourism fees accrue to the CMC.
- Alternative Livelihoods Development training and support for KNP-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 KNP 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 KNP including:

- Training in Aquaculture, nursery plantations and preparing hand crafted bamboo products are some of the Alternative Income Generating (AIG) activities the local populace is encouraged to explore to lessen their dependency upon KNP's resources.
- Support is also provided for initiatives like vegetable seeds for homestead agriculture as well as setting up nurseries.
- In a bid to boost the process of (AIG) activities via eco-tourism, 14 trained eco-guides accompany visitors along the set Park trails; Eco-rickshaw pullers are also available in the site premises.
- An eco-cottage is also being set up by a local entrepreneur to further promote eco-tourism in the region.
- In a bid to raise environmental awareness amongst the local populace, the Interactive Popular Theatre (IPT) initiative communicates the varied problems of environmental degradation, its causes and solutions, via a theatrical performance. A local group in coordination with IPAC officials prepares the script and the theme maintains a local flavor.
- Arrangement of 39 VCFs to increase consciousness and promote preservation and conservation in collaboration with 39 Nishorgo Sahayaks (facilitators) and 4 Forest Conservation Clubs. The conservation clubs comprise of students from secondary school onwards.
- Setting up waste bins and signboards to further raise a conscientious approach towards conserving KNP.
- Development of 2 CMC and 2 PF to contend with the NP's management.
- Encouraging a continued liaison between FD officials and local communities to work collaboratively towards the sustainable maintenance of KNP. 10 CPG of 114 members thus patrol the forest area to ensure its protection.



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