

= Hoollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary =

The Hoollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary , formerly known as the Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary or Hollongapar Reserve Forest (Assamese : গৰুগাপাৰ গিৰি সংৰক্ষণ অঞ্চল) , is an isolated protected area of evergreen forest located in Assam , India . The sanctuary was officially constituted and renamed in 1997 . Set aside initially in 1881 , its forests used to extend to the foothills of the Patkai mountain range .

Since then , the forest has been fragmented and surrounded by tea gardens and small villages . In the early 1900s , artificial regeneration was used to develop well @-@ stocked forest , resulting in the site 's rich biodiversity . The Hoollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary contains India 's only gibbons ? the hoolock gibbons , and Northeastern India 's only nocturnal primate ? the Bengal slow loris .

The upper canopy of the forest is dominated by the Hollong tree (*Dipterocarpus macrocarpus*) , while the Nahar (*Mesua ferrea*) dominates the middle canopy . The lower canopy consists of evergreen shrubs and herbs . The habitat is threatened by illegal logging , encroachment of human settlements , and habitat fragmentation .

= = History = =

The Hoollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary derives from a patch of forest once part of the Hollongapar Reserve Forest in the civil district of Jorhat in Assam , India . Set aside as a " Reserve Forest " (RF) on 27 August 1881 , it was named after its dominant tree species , Hollong or *Dipterocarpus macrocarpus* . At the time , it was considered an " integral part " of the foothill forests of the Patkai mountain range .

Although the sanctuary is currently completely surrounded by tea gardens and a few small villages , it used to connect to a large forest tract that ran to the state of Nagaland . The protected area started with 206 ha (0 @.@ 80 sq mi) and then shrank in 1896 as sections were de @-@ reserved . As tea gardens began to emerge between 1880 and 1920 , and villages were established during the 1960s to rehabilitate people from Majuli and adjoining areas who had lost their lands to floods , the forest became fragmented and the reserve became isolated from the foothills .

Historically , sporadic evergreen trees covered the area along with Bojal bamboos (*Pseudodactylum* sp .) . In 1924 , artificial regeneration was introduced in an attempt to develop well @-@ stocked , even @-@ aged forest . These plantations along with the natural vegetation subsequently created a forest stocked with a rich variety of flora and fauna (biodiversity) . During the 1900s , forest areas were added to the reserve , eventually totaling 2 @,@ 098 @.@ 62 ha (8 @.@ 1 sq mi) by 1997 . However , the sanctuary remains fragmented into five distinct segments .

On 30 July 1997 , in notification no . FRS 37 / 97 / 31 , the sanctuary was constituted under the civil district of Jorhat and named it the " Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary " after the only apes found in India : the hoolock gibbons (genus *Hoolock*) . It is the only sanctuary in India named after a gibbon due to its distinction for containing the densest gibbon populations in Assam . On 25 May 2004 , the Assam Government renamed it as the " Hoollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary " through notification no . FRP 37 / 97 / 20 .

= = Surrounding region = =

The sanctuary officially extends to the Dissoi Valley Reserve Forest , Dissoi Reserve Forest , and Tiru Hill Reserve Forest , which are used as dispersal areas for Indian elephants (*Elephas maximus indicus*) and other animals . Three extensive tea gardens that belong to the estates of Dissoi , Kothalguri , and Hoolonguri span the distance between the Hoollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary and the nearest forests in Nagaland , the Dissoi Valley Reserve Forest .

The tea gardens include Katonibari , Murmurai , Chenijan , Koliapani , Meleng , Kakojan , Dihavelleoguri , Dihingapar , Kothalguri , Dissoi and Hoolonguri . Neighboring villages include Madhupur , Lakhipur , Rampur , Fesual A (the western part) , Fesual B (the eastern part) , Katonibari , Pukhurai , Velleoguri , Afolamukh , and Kaliagaon .

= = Biota and habitat = =

The Hoollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary is classified as " Assam plains alluvial semi evergreen forests " with some wet evergreen forest patches . It receives 249 cm (98 in) of rainfall on average per year . Situated at an altitude between 100 and 120 m (330 and 390 ft) , the topography gently slopes downward from southeast to northwest . The Bhogdoi River creates a waterlogged region dominated by semi hydrophytic plants along the border of the sanctuary , helping to create three distinct habitat zones or micro ecosystems in the park : the up slope zone , the down slope zone , and the flood prone zone .

= = Fauna = =

The sanctuary has a very rich biodiversity and is home to the only apes in India , the western hoolock gibbon (*Hoolock hoolock*) , as well as the only nocturnal primate found in the northeast Indian states , the Bengal slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*) .

Other primates include the stump tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*) , northern pig tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*) , eastern Assamese macaque (*Macaca assamensis assamensis*) , rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*) , and capped langur (*Trachypithecus pileatus*) . Also found at the sanctuary are Indian elephants , tigers (*Panthera tigris*) , leopards (*Panthera pardus*) , jungle cats (*Felis chaus*) , wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) , three types of civet , four types of squirrel , and several other types of mammal . At least 219 species of bird and several types of snake are known to live in the park .

= = Flora = =

Most of the vegetation within Hoollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary is evergreen in character and is composed of several canopy layers .

The upper canopy consists mostly of *Dipterocarpus macrocarpus* rising 12 to 30 m (39 to 98 ft) and having straight trunks . Other species found in the top canopy include Sam (*Artocarpus chaplasha*) , Amari (*Amoora wallichii*) , Sopas (*Mcheliai* spp .) , Bhelu (*Tetramels mudiflora*) , Udal (*Sterculia villosa*) and Hingori (*Castanopsis* spp .) .

Nahar (*Mesua ferrea*) dominates the middle canopy with its spreading crown , casting fairly heavy shade over a wide area . Other species that make up the middle canopy include Bandordima (*Dysoxylum procerum*) , Dhuna (*Conarium resiniferum*) , Bhomora (*Terminalia belerica*) , Ful Gomari (*Gmelina* sp .) Bonbogri (*Pterospermum lanceaefolium*) , Morhal (*Vatica lanceaefolia*) , Selleng (*Sapium baccatum*) , Sassi (*Aqualari agolacha*) , and Otenga (*Dillenia indica*) .

A variety of evergreen shrubs and herbs make up the lower canopy and ground layers . The most common of these are Dolu bamboo (*Teinosstachyum dullooa*) , Bojal bamboo (*Pseudostachyum polymorphum*) , Jengu (*Calamus erectus*) , Jati bet (*Calamus* spp .) , Houka bet (*Calamus* spp .) , Tora (*Alpinia allughas*) , Kaupat (*Phrynium imbricatum*) , and Sorat (*Laportea cremulata*) .

= = Conservation = =

The isolation of the park by numerous tea gardens creates a geographic barrier for migrating animals . The growing populations of tea garden workers also threatens the habitat since many people rely on the forest for firewood , traditional medicine and food . Large quantities of leaves and grass are collected from the forests to feed cattle . During the rainy season , herbicides and pesticides from the tea gardens wash through the sanctuary .

The tea gardens are also used by elephants as a migration route to Nagaland , making them vulnerable to frequent poaching . Railway lines further divide the park , stranding a single group of gibbons in the smaller fragment . Illegal logging and the encroachment by local people employed by the tea gardens degraded the habitat quality .

