

**FORMAT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF
STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS
BY THE STATES PARTIES**

(in compliance with Paragraph 169 of the Operational Guidelines)

MANAS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY (INDIA) (N 338)

1. Executive Summary of the report

[Note: each of the sections described below should be summarized. The maximum length of the executive summary is 1 page.]

Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (India) (N 338)	
Response to Decision 43 COM 7B.7 of the World Heritage Committee, 2019	<p>Para 3: Protection level has increased with new anti-poaching camps established, mobile patrol team functions and multiple arrests made. No rhino poaching since 2017.</p> <p>Para 4: A proposal has been submitted to the BTC, State of Assam for sanctioning of funds for eviction drive in Betbari area of Manas National Park.</p> <p>Para 5: Contractors to be finalized soon to work on habitat management in different locations of Manas National Park.</p> <p>Para 6: Site level transboundary meeting and agreements in place.</p> <p>Para 7: This matter and relevant response pertains to the State Party of Bhutan</p>
Other current conservation issues	Translocation programmes and Eco-development and local community initiatives
Any potential major alterations, restorations, construction, etc	None
Public access	Yes
Signature of authority	<p>Field Director, Manas Tiger Project, Bodoland Territorial Council Government of Assam Barpeta Road - 781315, Assam, India Tel : +91-3666-261413(O) Res : +91-3666-260251 Mobile : +91-9435111172 Email : fd.manastp@gmail.com</p>

2. **Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee**

[Note: The State(s) Party(ies) is/are requested to address the most recent Decision of the World Heritage Committee for this property, paragraph by paragraph.]

The World Heritage Committee vide Decision 43 COM 7B.7 adopted at its 43rd Session held in 2019, requested the State Party of India to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2020, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the recommendations, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 45th Session in 2021. In this context, response of the State Party of India is provided below.

PARA-3: Appreciates the commitment and upscaled efforts by the State Party in cooperation with other stakeholders to combat poaching and to improve staff morale and capacity, which appear to have resulted in zero rhino poaching within the property, and improving the overall management effectiveness, and encourages the State Party to continue its efforts to ensure that the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is protected from poaching threats;

The authorities of Manas National Park have continued its efforts to protect the site from incidents of poaching. In one such case, the Park Directorate has achieved yet another milestone in conservation management as a successful arrest leading to conviction for poaching inside the Park has been made during June 2019. (<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/7-year-jail-for-killing-mongoose-birds/article28119054.ece>). In the landmark verdict given by State of Assam Court, 5 persons were handed over seven years in prison, extendable to 10 years, and a minimum fine of ₹ 50,000 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for killing Hispid hare, Mongoose and other protected wild animals inside the Protected Area. This would serve as a major deterrent to all poachers, thereby further strengthening the Park Management. Besides that, continued joint effort between Manas National Park authorities, relevant enforcement agencies and other stakeholders have led to apprehensions of poachers, including the recent cases namely, apprehending two culprits (Offence report no. BB/Offence/1/2019/Dt. 20/9/2020), two person arrested (Offence report no. BB/Offence/1/20/Dt. 24/05/2020), two persons arrested (Offence report no. BB/Offence/2/2020 Dt. 10/7/2020 and BB/Offence/3/2020 Dt. 03/10/2020).

Two new anti-poaching camps have been established namely, Gabharukhunda under Panbari Range and Kathpura under Bansbari Range, while Baidoghat and Ranighat anti-poaching camps at Panbari which were abandoned earlier have been revived. The total number of camps has now increased to 82.

Manas National Park is also carrying out a unique approach for Conservation Law Enforcement System, where a team of highly skilled frontline staffs carries out efficient patrol in two ranges led by the Forest Range Officer in the field and commanded by the Field Director. The system is being implemented since March 2016 starting with a three-week skill development training followed by field implementations. Currently two such mobile patrol team are functional in Bhuyanpara and Bansbari ranges. The team at Bhuyanpara is designated as 'Manas Tigers', and the team at Bansbari as 'Manas Panthers'. Both the team carries out daily patrolling extensively by foot, and also by elephant, bikes and vehicles as and when required. The team gathers all of the information required to understand types of threats and then directly address those through the means available in hand. This helps in understanding a threat and seeking to shape the assets into most effective force possible, which is a key factor here in this system.

The total number of sanctioned frontline staffs currently stands at 277, while additional manpower in form of service providers and casual labours are available for protection.

It is pertinent to note that there has been no rhino poaching in Manas National Park from 2017 till the date of filling this report.

As per the latest animal census data, the population of different faunas are as follows:

Tiger	: 30
Rhino	: 43
Elephant	: 1034+
Wild buffalo	: 502
Swamp deer	: 99
Gaur	: 706
Pygmy hog	: 150
Bengal Florican	: ~50
Golden langur	: 400 (Panbari range)

Poaching data: The recent poaching related data are as follows:

(A) Panbari Range:

On 30/05/2019 -Arrests against Tiger Poaching Case- Offence Case No. PB/03 of 2019 & PB/05 of 2019 (Offences are related).Arrested & sent to the SDJM, Bijni. Seized one Motor Cycle No.- AS-16/8596

On 23/06/2019 with joint effort of West Bengal Forests & Assam Forests apprehended 5(five) accused and sent to the Hon'ble SDJM, Bijni. Seized one Government vehicle & 6 (six) mobiles.

On 12/10/2019 -SunilalBoro (main culprit &second time offender) who absconded arrested by Bilsipara Police & taken on remand from Hon'ble SDJM, Bilasipara& arrested again on 12/10/2019 & sent to Hon'ble SDJM, Bijni.

On 15/10/2019- from Hasimara area -One Tiger skin, one Tiger Skull, 110 nos. Tiger bones recovered related to above case by West Bengal Forest Department and arrested two persons. Prayed for interrogation & taken on remand from the Hon'ble CJM, Jalpaiguri & taken on remand by proving the tiger poached from Manas NP (M-059) & **arrested on 16/11/2019 and sent to Hon'ble SDJM, Binji**

On 19.11.2019 - One absconding and whose bail petition rejected Sri BarlangfaDaimary alias BijenDaimarywas arrested and sent to the Hon'ble SDJM, Bijni on 20.11.2019.

On 17/06/2019 -Arrest and Seizure against Offence Case No. PB/04 of 2019 (Sambar hunting Case)

On 18/06/2019- One more accused involved with O.R No. PB/04 of 2019 surrendered and arrested and sent to the Hon'ble SDJM, Bijni, Chirang.Recovered and seized one handmade Gun, one Anthler and one bicycle from the above 3 accused persons.

On 30/10/2019- Case No. PB/06 of 2019. Arrest & recovery of one handmade Gun for illegal entry inside the park.

On 31/7/2020 – Case no. PB/03 of 2020, two persons was arrestedfor hunting wildlife.

(B) Bansbari Range:

On 20/09/2019 Arrest against Offence Case No. BB/Offence/1 2019 and sent to Hon'ble CJM, Baksa, Mushalpur -related to poisoning case where two Leopards died at Narayanguri under Bansbari Range

On 10/10/2019 -Detected and dismantled on illegal Saw Mill running jointly at Chunbari area and recovered 270 pcs battens, 40 pcs plank 117 pcs logs all taken custody by Baksa Division.

(C) Bhuyanpara Range: No arrests

PARA-4: Expresses its utmost concern about illegal encroachments in Bhuyanpara range, including the reported construction of houses and requests the State Party to clarify the current status of encroachment within the property and, if confirmed, to urgently address the issue and step up efforts to prevent further encroachment through inter alia allocating appropriate financial and human resources for surveillance along with efforts to improve local livelihoods;

The issues of human dependence on forest landscapes of Protected Areas in the region, including Manas Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam, has long history with various cultural, political and socio-economic dimensions associated with it. The area of the property where this temporary, seasonal agriculture is undertaken as a livelihood enhancement measure by the indigenous communities is only for sustenance and non-commercial purpose. The challenge is to address the sustainability of such a practice so that there is no direct threat to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. The park management has been significantly engaging with the local communities and other stakeholders for resolving the matter.

A proposal (letter no. FD/TP/Encroachment/3275, dtd- 07/08/2020 & FD/TP/Encroachment/6982 dt. 31/12/2019) has already been submitted to the BTC, State of Assam for sanctioning of funds for eviction drive in Betbari area of Manas National Park. Due to CAA agitation and later on lockdown due to outbreak of COVID 19 Pandemic, Code of Conduct for BTC election and non-receipt of funds, the eviction operation could not be conducted. The authorities of Manas National Park is working closely with local administration, police and civil societies for implementing the eviction operation.

PARA-5: Noting with concern that invasive plant species, notably *Chromolaena odorata* and *Mikania micrantha* are spreading at an alarming rate, commends the work undertaken by the State Party to develop a science-based protocol for grassland management, and urges the State Party to subsequently prepare and implement an Action Plan to implement control measures across the property and to continue monitoring trends in order to assess the longer-term effectiveness of these measures;

The Park Management, in association with conservation non-governmental organisations, is facilitating development of a scientific habitat management protocol for devising short and long term plans for sustainable management of the grassland-woodland ecosystem, including accounting for invasive species and fire regimes. This will subsequently result in an Action Plan to implement control measures in the site.

A follow up workshop with concerned stakeholders was conducted in January 2020 to finalize the action plan for habitat management. The authorities of Manas National Park have initiated the process of inviting tenders from competent registered contractors Class-I (A), (B), (C) and Class-II category of Assam PWD, Operation (APO) under State CAMPA, Assam during 2020-21 for habitat management in three different locations. The final selection of the contract will be done within a short period of time from CHD office, Kokrajhar.

PARA-6: Welcomes the intensification of transboundary cooperation with the State Party of Bhutan in the field of management of the property and the neighbouring Royal Manas National Park;

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New evidence-based information regarding population status and distribution of flagship species such as tigers, elephants, wild buffalo among others have brought in good news. It is evident that the wild denizens of Manas in India are also moving across to neighbouring Bhutan in the Royal Manas National Park. The contiguous landscape of pristine forests and multitude of micro-habitats is spread across an area of more than 2000 sq. km. across international boundaries. Bhutan has recently reported the increase in their tiger numbers in Royal Manas National Park based on simultaneous camera trapping exercise with Manas, India . (<https://www.thethirdpole.net/en/2019/03/18/tiger-numbers-increase-in-bhutan/>).

A site level transboundary meeting was held between the Field Director, Manas National Park and Park Manager, Royal Manas National Park on 30/7/2019. Both officials agreed to carry out regular quarterly meetings and continuing the synchronized patrolling along the border. It was also decided to exchange information on wildlife crimes and illegal wildlife trade.

Para 7: Also recalling the Committee's concerns regarding the potential impact of the Mangdechhu hydro-electric project on the OUV of the property, deeply regrets that the State Party of Bhutan has not provided information on the status of this project nor submitted a copy of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), despite repeated requests by the Committee since 2012 and, in accordance with the Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, reiterates its request to the State Party of Bhutan to provide without further delay a copy of the EIA as well as updated information on the project to the World Heritage Centre, for review by IUCN, and to consult with the State Party of India regarding an assessment of potential impacts of this project on the OUV of the property;

This matter and relevant response pertains to the State Party of Bhutan.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value

[Note: this includes conservation issues which are not mentioned in the Decision of the World Heritage Committee or in any information request from the World Heritage Centre]

This section may highlight any other conservation issues:

- **Status/duration of latest management plan and funding sources:** The Tiger Conservation Plan for the period of 2014-2024 was approved by the National Tiger Conservation Authority. The TCP will pave way for effective management of the site. **Funds under APO-2019-20:**
 - (A) **CSS-Project Tiger:** Total amount released Rs. 551.276 lakhs as per approved APO. Utilized Rs. 551.276 lakhs as per Progress Report during the financial year 2019-20 and 2020-21.
 - (B) **CSS-Project Elephant:** Total released Rs 9.485 lakhs for compensations to affected people and utilized Rs 9.485 lakhs during the financial year 2019-20.
 - (C) **Biosphere Reserve:** Total Rs 89.047 lakh released against the approved APO and utilized Rs 89.047 lakhs during the financial year 2019-20 and 2020-21.
- **Translocation Programmes:**
 - a) **Rhinos:** On 23/12/2019- local translocation of two Rhinos from Boma (Enclosure) of Rhino Camp, Bansbari to Sidhajhar under Kahitema Beat within Manas National Park was successfully done. On 01/03/2020, two Rhinos were brought (translocated) from Kaziranga National Park successfully.
 - b) **Wild Buffalo Translocation:** Two wild Buffaloes (one male & one female) captured during were captured in February& March2020 and were sent to

Barnwapara WLS, Chattishgarh on 15/04/2020 from Manas National Park successfully.

- c) **Pygmy Hog Translocation:** As per decision taken during meeting on 26/02/2020 in the presence of the then Addl. PCCF, Wildlife & CWLW, Assam at Pigmy Hog Research and Breeding Centre, Basistha to trans-locate 14 numbers of Pigmy Hog from Nameri to Bhuyanpara under Manas N.P, the actual translocation has been done in two batches on 14/05.2020 and 17/05/2020.

• **Eco-development and local community initiatives:**

- a) Funds to 26 EDCs – Rs 3.51 lakhs for distribution of piglets & Assistance of Rd 2.70 lakhs for Yarn bank in connection with Handloom are provided from **CSS- Project Tiger**
- b) Fund for revival of Eco-Tourism Centre at Bansbari-run by EDC & Local Population –Rs 0.50 lakh & Rs 1.00 lakh for 100 School Bags with Manas Logo under **CSS-Biosphere**

4. **In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.**

None

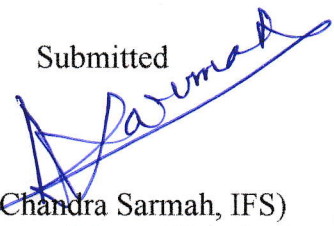
5. **Public access to the state of conservation report**

[Note: this report will be uploaded for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of conservation Information System (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>). Should your State Party request that the full report should not be uploaded, only the 1-page executive summary provided in point (1.) above will be uploaded for public access].

6. **Signature of the Authority**

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Submitted


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