



# EDUCATION AND AWARENESS PROGRAM FOR CONSERVING THE SANGAI IN KEIBUL LAMJAO NATIONAL PARK, MANIPUR

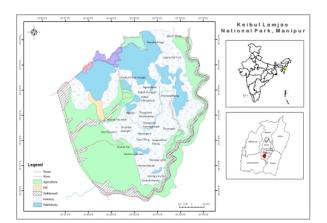




North East Nature Conservation and Development Trust









Jungle cat (Felis chaus), Otter (Lutra lutra) etc. The park is also a unique wintering ground for various migratory waterfowls and permanent home to many resident waterfowls. The lake has also been the breeding ground of a number of riverine fishes and continues to be a vital fisheries resource.

## **Conservation Awareness**

The conservation awareness programmes were conducted among various schools and colleges adjoining the Park. Stakeholder's workshop and focused group discussions was also conducted involving indigenous local communities, forest department, non-governmental organization, academic and research institutions in order to preserve and protect the biodiversity of the Keibul Lamjao National Park and to ensure long lasting survival of Sangai.

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## Preserve and Protect SANGAI





## Brow-antlered deer (Rucervus eldii)

The Brow-antlered deer, *Rucervus eldii* is a highly endangered Southeast Asian cervid once distributed throughout much of Asia but of late due to severe anthropogenic pressures like hunting and habitat degradation, these deer have been extirpated from much of their historical range and now persist only in small and fragmented populations in Manipur, North-eastern India to Myanmar; Cambodia; Laos; Vietnam and Hainan's Island in China. Eld's deer is classified into four subspecies viz. Sangai or Manipur brow-antlered deer, *Rucervus eldii eldii; Thamin* or Myanmar brow-antlered deer, R. e. *thamin; Siamese* brow-antlered deer, R. e. *siamensis* and a fourth subspecies R. e. *hainanus* which is endemic to *Hainan*'s Island in south China.

critically endangered (data deficient) by the IUCN Red list 2004. The fourth subspecies, R. e. hainanus is classified as vulnerable, listed on CITES appendix I and also considered as a rank I key species of national protection under the Wild Animal Protection Law.

## Distribution of Brow-antlered deer

The three subspecies of Brow-antlered deer show some variability in their habitat preferences. Sangai inhabit low-lying swamps and live on floating mats of dense vegetation, "Phumdi". This species is especially adapted to the unique Phumdi habitat. The deer has divided hooves and its pasterns are greatly elongated unlike those of other deer species. Therefore, the animal can walk conveniently over

## Population status of Sangai

The Sangai was considered extinct until a small population was rediscovered in the early 1950s. The population has increased from 14 (Aerial census) as recorded in 1975 to 57 (Ground census) in 1984, which comprises of 20 stags, 25 hinds and 6 fawns respectively. Though the population had recovered from a meagre 14 to nearly 150 individuals now, the survival of these species is still not bright.

## Habitat

The Keibul Lamjao National Park is the last natural refuge of Sangai located in the Southeastern fringe of Loktak Lake in Manipur valley between 24°30'to 50°N and 93°48'to 93°54'E.







## Conservation status

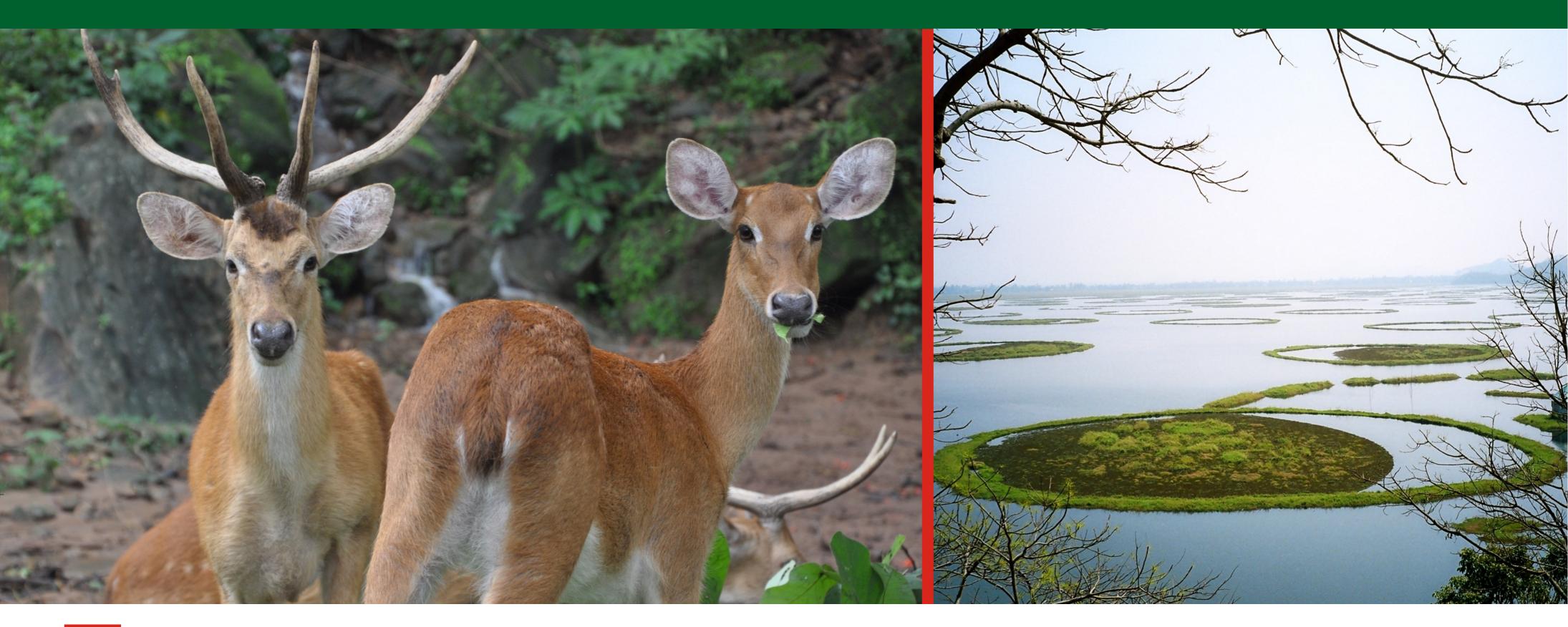
Of all the three sub-species of Eld's deer, Manipur Browantlered deer locally known as Sangai is highly endangered cited currently in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), considered as endangered by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and is also included in schedule I of IWPA, 1972. Myanmar's brow-antlered deer inhabiting upper and lower Myanmar as well as western Thailand is listed as Lower Risk/Near Threatened. The Siamese brow-antlered deer ranged across the Mekong lowlands in the dry dipterocarp forests of Lao PDR from Vientiane to Champasak Province on the Cambodia border. However, R. e. siamensis distributed in Eastern Thailand and Kampuchea listed as

the quaking surface. In contrast, Thamin and Siamensis are found most often in dry, deciduous dipterocarp forests. Wheareas Hainan's Eld's deer inhabits the tropical plains and hills, predominately scrubland and grassland. The most abundant among these three subspecies was Thamin. Past population censuses indicate around 2,200 individual of Thamin in the Chatthin Wildlife Sanctuary However the present population were estimates at around 250 to 500 individuals. wheareas in Cambodia and Laos the population is around 150 individuals. In hainan's Island there is one natural and two reintroduced population of Hainan's Eld's deer which is estimated at more than 500 individuals.

It is the largest natural freshwater lake in northeastern India. It is also called the only "Floating lake" in the world due to the presence of floating Phumdis (a Manipuri word meaning floating mats of soil and vegetation) on it. The Park is situated near Moirang, Bishnupur district about 45 kms south of Imphal, Manipur. The total area of the park is 40 km² of this 26 km² is covered by thick and almost contiguous mat of floating mass, Phumdi and remaining 14 km² is open water, drylands, uplands and hills.

The park accounts for 22 species of mammals, 81 species of birds and 25 species of reptiles etc. Some important mammalian fauna that dwell in park along with Sangai are the hog deer (*Axis porcinus*), wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), large Indian civet (*Viverra zibetha*), Small Indian civet (*Viverricula indica*),

# CONSERVE SANGAI



he Brow-antlered deer *Rucervus eldii eldii* (locally known as Sangai) is present only in the state of Manipur within a habitat of 40 km2 and thus making it endemic to the Keibul Lamjao National Park. This has led the state government of Manipur to declare Sangai as the State Animal in 1989. Once believed to be extinct, a small population of around 14 animals was rediscovered in the south-eastern fringe of the Loktak Lake, Manipur in 1975. This area was then protected and declared as Keibul Lamjao National Park in 1977 which helped to increase the population of Sangai from 14 to around 150 individuals in the wild today. The Sangai is considered as endangered by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), cited currently in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), and the Indian Wildlife Protection Act (IWPA), 1972 has accorded the highest protection status by declaring as Schedule I species. The long term survival of Sangai is threatened by habitat degradation, poaching, competition with wild ungulates and domestic livestock grazing. Local people are highly dependent on the park for vegetables collection, extraction of grass and thatching material, fodder for livestock and fishing. The Sangai can be protected through carrying out long-term scientific documentation, ecological monitoring and protection by involving different stake holders viz. Government, non-governmental organization and more importantly the indigenous local communities who are directly or indirectly dependent on these natural resources. Strong and Vigorous research is imperative to evaluate proper second home for Sangai and encourage captive breeding programme for rapid multiplication, in order to sustain a viable population both in wild and in captive population.



Let us join hands and work together to Save our Sangai and their habitat.



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