

Project Update: April 2011

With the target to locate the availability of Jungha Mahseer in Northeastern waterbodies, the field survey work was started in February 2011. It took some time to begin the programme immediately after the fund was received, as because I had to shift my address from Rajiv Gandhi University Itanagar to Assam University Silchar.

1. Field/market survey: Frequent visits to potential fish landing sites/fish markets. Discussions with fishermen/ fish sellers. Tour summary as given below:

Items of work	Base station	Tours completed	District	Approx. distance from base station (one way)	Approx. duration spent excluding travel X no. of times
Market survey	Assam University, Silchar, Cachar	Sonabarighat, River Barak	Cachar	20 km	3hrs X 5
Market survey	Assam University, Silchar, Cachar	Srikhona, River Barak	Cachar	26 km	2hrs X 2
Market survey	Assam University, Silchar, Cachar	Motinagar, River Sonai	Cachar	30 km	3hrs X 1
Field survey	Assam University, Silchar, Cachar	Bandhor khal, River Jatinga Borkhola Market	Cachar	54 km	2hrs X 1 1 hr X 1
Market survey	Assam University, Silchar, Cachar	Guwahati, Ujan Bazar, River Brahmaputra	Kamrup	350 km	1 hr X 2
Field survey	Assam University, Silchar, Cachar	Dihangi, Haflong, River Diyung (N25°25.239', E92 ° 59.602')	NC Hills	650 km (via Guwahati)	4 hrs X 1 6 hrs X 1

2. Results: Few people know this species of fish in Cachar district of Assam. This fish is less available. It has declined very much. Only the fishermen in the district know this species by the local common name as Pakiranga. The name Pakiranga however refers in a broader sense to group Mahseer. As it is a common fact that the group Mahseer is an assortment of three genera, *Tor*, *Naziritor*, and *Neolissochilus*. According to fishermen in the district, there are three kinds of Pakiranga available in the region. However, the survey in the district revealed single species of

genus *Tor* so far. This single specimen was observed in the Sonabarighat Market. It was weighed about 3.5 kg and total length 50.5 cm. Many of morphometric parameters were recorded for this specimen, and muscle tissue was collected for bar coding. The gathered people were interrogated to understand its site of capture.

Field survey in NC Hills district revealed a very conducive river habitat in River Diyung. Almost all age classes of people inhabiting on the river bank in Dihangi village know the group mahseer. According to the people in the area, there are five kinds of mahseer available in the River Diyung. They call the mahseer by their local Dimasa tribal language as *Nah-Yung*; where *Nah* means fish and *Yung* means large. The five species have different local name as *Nah-Yung-Hangar*, *Nah-Yung-Sligdi*, *Nah-Yung-Kundi*, *Nah-Yung-Naso*, *Nah-Yung-Namsang*. The Jungha mahseer is probably called as *Nah-Yung-Kundi*.

During the second visit, a single specimen of genus *Tor* was collected from a fishermen fishing in the river. The spot identification suggests the species *T. progeneius*. Further taxonomic identification would be done in the laboratory.

Several parameters of the River Diyung were recorded and these will be analysed later. A very good nursery ground of Mahseer fish was identified in the River Diyung (N 25°24.966', E92°59.879', 407.2 ft elevation). In the spot, many fries of Mahseer were identified as they were aggregated for food and playing in the shallow pool.

3. Conservation campaign: The first visit to NC Hills district has shown that chemical poisoning by some unscrupulous local people in river bodies in and around Haflong is very common during water recession period every year. This kind of destructive fishing has been responsible for mass killing of mixed age classes of fishes. In the April 2011, a local news paper also reported a mass destruction of River Taijuwari due to poisoning which has kept almost no fish live in the river.

Focusing the bad effect of chemical poisoning in river, a meeting was organized at Dihangi village on 14th April. The meeting was attended by village headman, members of Dihangi Samphariphang Youth Club, and villagers. The meeting highlighted the awareness and conservation campaign to almost 20 people of both sexes. The meeting followed by display of conservation slogan in the form of flex banner in five different locations in the market and in front of house of village headman

