

Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve, Location, Flora, Fauna

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The **Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve** is one of India's most ecologically significant protected areas, located in the northeastern state of **Assam**. Known for its **riverine ecosystems, wetlands, grasslands, and tropical forests**, the biosphere reserve supports a remarkable diversity of wildlife, including several endangered and endemic species. It also serves as an important habitat for migratory birds and is recognized for its unique **feral horse population**.

Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve

The **Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve** is located in the **Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts of Assam**, in northeastern India. It lies between the **Brahmaputra and Lohit rivers**, forming one of the country's most important riverine ecosystems. Established as a **Biosphere Reserve in 1997**, it covers approximately **765 sq. km.** and includes the **Dibru-Saikhowa National Park** as its core area.

Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve Geographical Features

The Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve is distinguished by its dynamic riverine landscape, floodplains, wetlands, and swamp forests, making it one of India's most diverse and ecologically important biosphere reserves.

- Located in the **Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts of Assam**, between the **Brahmaputra and Lohit rivers**.
- Covers an area of approximately **765 sq. km.**, including the **Dibru-Saikhowa National Park** as its core zone.
- Characterized by **alluvial floodplains** formed through continuous deposition of sediments by major rivers.
- Comprises **river islands (chars), sandbars, oxbow lakes, marshes, wetlands, and swamp forests**.
- Home to **India's largest Salix (willow) swamp forest**, a rare riverine forest ecosystem.
- Receives **heavy annual rainfall**, resulting in seasonal flooding that replenishes soil fertility and supports biodiversity.
- The landscape is constantly reshaped by **river erosion and sediment deposition**, creating new habitats for wildlife.
- Dominated by **tropical moist deciduous forests, semi-evergreen forests, tall grasslands, and reed beds**.
- The extensive network of rivers and wetlands provides ideal breeding grounds for **fish, amphibians, reptiles, and migratory birds**.
- The reserve plays a crucial role in maintaining the **ecological balance of the Brahmaputra floodplain ecosystem**.

Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve Flora

The **Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve** supports a rich variety of **riverine, swamp, grassland, and forest vegetation**, creating ideal habitats for numerous wildlife species and maintaining the ecological health of the Brahmaputra floodplain.

- It contains **India's largest Salix (willow) swamp forest**, one of its most distinctive ecological features.
- **Hollong (*Dipterocarpus macrocarpus*)**, the **State Tree of Assam**, is one of the dominant tree species.
- Other important tree species include **Nahor (*Mesua ferrea*)**, **Simul (*Bombax ceiba*)**, **Sissoo (*Dalbergia sissoo*)**, **Kadam (*Neolamarckia cadamba*)**, and **Khair (*Acacia catechu*)**.
- The reserve has extensive **riverine grasslands** dominated by **elephant grass, reeds, and canes**, which provide food and shelter for herbivores.
- Dense **bamboo and cane brakes** are widely distributed throughout the reserve.
- Wetlands and marshes support a variety of **aquatic plants**, grasses, and floating vegetation.
- The fertile **alluvial soil** and seasonal flooding promote the rapid regeneration of vegetation.
- Several **medicinal plants, shrubs, climbers, and herbs** are naturally found in the reserve.
- The diverse plant communities play a vital role in **soil conservation, flood control, carbon sequestration, and sustaining the reserve's rich biodiversity**.

Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve Fauna

The **Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve** is renowned for its **rich wildlife diversity**, supporting a wide range of **mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and aquatic species**. Its forests, wetlands, grasslands, and river systems provide ideal habitats for several rare, endangered, and migratory species.

- The reserve is best known for its **feral horses**, one of the few wild populations of free-ranging horses found in India.
- Important mammal species include the **Royal Bengal Tiger, Asian Elephant, Clouded Leopard, Leopard Cat, Fishing Cat, Jungle Cat, Wild Boar, Chinese Pangolin, Hoolock Gibbon, Capped Langur, Rhesus Macaque**, and **Slow Loris**.
- It is recognized as an **Important Bird Area (IBA)** and is home to **more than 500 bird species**, including both resident and migratory birds.
- Notable bird species include the **White-winged Duck, Greater Adjutant Stork, Lesser Adjutant, Spot-billed Pelican, Black-necked Stork, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Marsh Babbler**, and **Swamp Francolin**.
- During winter, thousands of **migratory waterfowl** visit the reserve's wetlands and floodplains.
- Reptiles found in the reserve include the **King Cobra, Indian Python, Water Monitor Lizard, Common Monitor Lizard**, and several species of freshwater turtles.
- The rivers and wetlands support a rich diversity of **freshwater fish**, amphibians, and aquatic invertebrates, which are essential for maintaining the ecosystem.
- Seasonal flooding creates productive habitats that support breeding and feeding grounds for many wildlife species.

Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve Conservation Efforts

The **Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve** is protected through a combination of **legal safeguards, habitat management, wildlife monitoring, and community participation** to conserve its unique riverine ecosystems and rich biodiversity.

- Declared a **Biosphere Reserve in 1997** to protect the unique floodplain ecosystem of the **Brahmaputra and Lohit rivers**.
- The **core area** is protected as **Dibru-Saikhowa National Park**, providing strict protection to critical wildlife habitats.
- Conservation measures are implemented under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, to safeguard endangered flora and fauna.
- **Anti-poaching patrols** and regular surveillance help prevent illegal hunting and wildlife trafficking.
- Continuous **wildlife monitoring and biodiversity surveys** are conducted to track the status of key species, including **feral horses, tigers, elephants, and migratory birds**.
- **Habitat restoration** focuses on conserving wetlands, riverine forests, grasslands, and swamp ecosystems affected by erosion and floods.
- Sustainable management of the **Brahmaputra floodplain ecosystem** helps maintain ecological balance and natural river processes.
- Local communities are encouraged to participate in **eco-development programmes**, conservation awareness, and sustainable livelihood initiatives.

- **Eco-tourism** is promoted in a regulated manner to support conservation while generating income for local residents.

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/dibru-saikhowa-biosphere-reserve/>

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