

Karbi Anglong

Moving ahead for Biodiversity Conservation



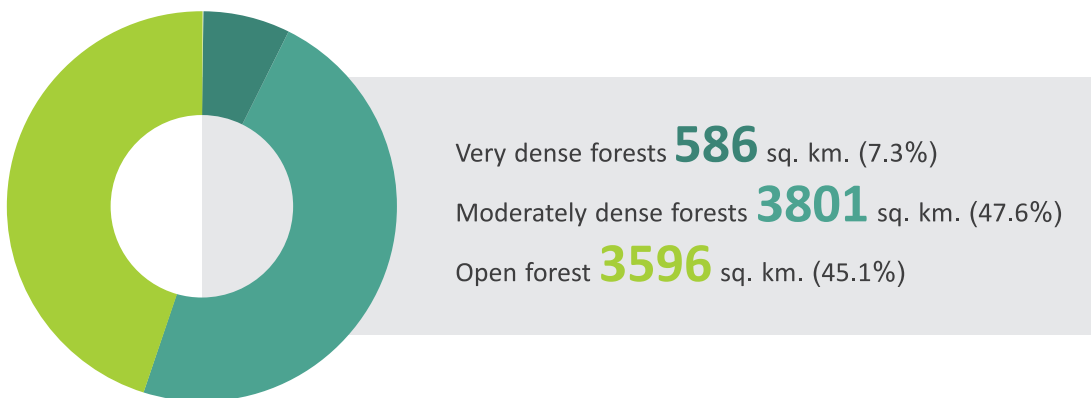
ASSAM FOREST DEPARTMENT



Karbi Anglong

Moving ahead for Biodiversity Conservation

- The Karbi Anglong has its political origin in Mikir Hills, which together with North Cachar was declared as United Mikir and North Cachar Hills District in 1951. It was bifurcated into two separate districts 'Mikir Hills' and North Cachar Hills district in the year 1970. The Mikir Hill district was again rechristened as 'Karbi Anglong District' in October 1976, and in 1996 declared as Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) with more political and regional autonomy under the 6th Schedule of the Constitution. In August, 2015, it was bifurcated to create a new West Karbi Anglong District.
- Of the total geographical area of 10,434 sq. km. about 85% comprises of undulating hills, famous for its hot water springs and scenic waterfalls. The highest peak at Singhason rises to a height of 1360 meters. It is an abode to biodiversity and a Hotspot within the Himalaya Biodiversity Hotspot. It is a home to a variety of rare, endemic and endangered species of flora and fauna and a gene bank of wild-stock of many cultivated crops.
- About 7,983 sq. km (i.e. 76.5%) of the geographical area of KAAC is under Forest Cover.



- There are 14 Reserve Forests, 17 Proposed RFs and 18 District Council Reserve Forests.
- There are about 89 wetlands in KAAC covering about 58.10 sq. km.

- **Wildlife Sanctuaries:** Garampani, East Karbi Anglong , Nambor, Morat Longri and North Karbi Anglong (Proposed)
- **Elephant Reserves:** Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong and Dhansiri-Lungding
- **Sacred Groves:** Karbi Anglong has a long tradition of nature worship and there are seven Sacred Groves in the District – Ronghang Rongbong, Inglong Kiri, Ritasor, Bichikri, Arlongpuru Hamren, Mahamaya, Rek Anglong.
- **Biodiversity:** Karbi Anglong is a part of the Indo-Burma biodiversity hot zone; it includes the oriental zoological region.
 - There is no exhaustive report to describe the total floral and faunal diversity of KAAC. However, over 316 orchid species have been reported from KAAC.
 - The faunal diversity of KAAC constitute of more than 89 mammals, 604 birds, 61 fish species and over 413 butterfly species.
- **Traditional Knowledge:** Communities in KAAC have a strong tradition of using locally available plants for their common illness. There are more than 1000 species of plants that are known to be used for their medicinal properties. It is need of the hour to document these traditional knowledge into Peoples' Biodiversity Registers.
- **Constitution of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs):** The Biological Diversity Act and the Rules require that BMCs be constituted at different levels of Panchayats. Since Karbi Anglong does not have Panchayat System, a unique method was devised by clubbing the local committees within a Forest Range jurisdiction for constituting BMCs. In this manner 10 BMCs have been formed:

Sl. No.	Name of the BMC	Chairman	Member secretary
1	Eastern Range, Bokajan BMC	Sri Borsing Bey	Sri J. Ch. Rongpi (ACF)
2	Dalamara BMC	Sri Davinson Terang	Sri Proholad Kro (ACF)
3	Parkup Pahar BMC	Sri Bidyasing Lekhthe	Sri Sing Rongpi, Fr-I
4	Silonijan BMC	Sri Rolan Tisso	Sri Bibison Tokbi, Fr-I
5	Dokmoka BMC	Sri Manik Teron	Sri Rajen Rongpi, Fr
6	Central Range, Manja BMC	Sri Lowrance Rongpi	Sri B. S. Rongpi (ACF)
7	Diphu BMC	Sri Jensing Teron	Sri K. J. Rengma, Fr-I
8	Barlangfer BMC	Sri Dorpolal Thousen	Sri Sikari Teron, RO
9	Langpher BMC	Sri Kangjang Teran	Sri Vikram Terang, Fr-I
10	Rangapahar BMC	Sri Amit Nunisa	Sri Prabal Dutta, Fr-I

Biodiversity

In Karbi Traditions



Sacred Bird of Karbis: The Greater Racket-tailed Drongo

Scientific name: *Dicrurus paradiseus*

Family: Dicruridae

Assamese name: Bhimraj



Source: Nipon Tirmung

Men of Karbi community wearing Vojaru Ani

- Karbi people wear a gear called '**Vojaru Ani**' ornamented with the tail feathers of a 'Racket-tailed Drongo' during cultural festivals.
- It is a highly prized gear for bachelors with status such as *Klengsarpo* (Chief) and *Klengdum* (Deputy Chief) of the traditional Youth Dormitory or *Jir*.
- This head gear carries specific cultural, ritual and hierarchical significance for the wearers.

Two-winged Beauties: Butterflies



- A feast to eyes, these two winged colourful insects are reckoned as one of the most important '*bio-indicators*' for the health of various ecosystems.
- Assam harbours about 1000 species of butterflies and Karbi Anglong is home to more than 400 species.
- Traditionally, butterflies are widely used as objects of art works and jewellery.
- The Karbi people have their own motifs woven in their 'traditional attires' inspired by nature.
- Butterfly motif known as '*Pipli*' is one of the popular motifs symbolizing freedom, joy and merriment.

Natural Dyes

- Karbi people are known for their traditional knowledge of natural dye and dyeing techniques.
- The male and female 'Traditional Attire' of Karbi people are colored with natural dyes obtained from plants such as:

***Terminalia bellirica* (Bhomora)**

- Fruit are used for dyeing
- Imparts black color to the clothing, mostly for men
- Fruits also have medicinal value for various gastrointestinal ailments, enlargement of liver-spleen, tumors, worms etc.

***Strobilanthes cusia* (Burot, buthe) and *Marsdenia tinctoria* (Sibu, bujir)**

- Leaves are used for dyeing
- Imparts Indigo and Blue to 'Pini' the female lower cloth
- *Marsdenia tinctoria* is considered medicinal and its crushed leaves applied on cat bite wounds.

***Curcuma longa* L. (Chong-ut)**

- Rhizomes are used for dyeing
- Imparts yellow color to all garments.
- It is also traditionally used for cleaning wounds or treat skin sores, indigestion, throat infections, common colds or liver ailments.



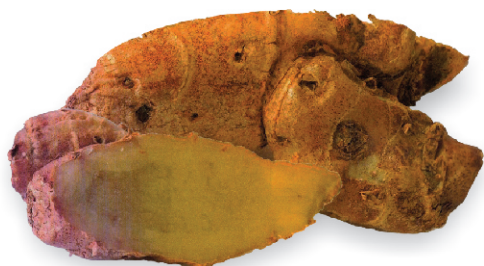
Karbi ethnic delicacies

The diet of the Karbi communities comprise of a variety of locally grown as well as wild herbs, fruits and spices. These are mostly chosen for their known medicinal properties and are taken during special period of the year and the day.

Some of such traditionally used plants/rhizomes with medicinal values are -

Karbi Anglong Ginger

(*Zingiber officinale* Rosc.)



- Assam Karbi Organic Ginger is popular worldwide and rated as one of the best spices.
- It was accorded 'Geographical Indication' on November 25, 2014 by the GI Registry of India with registration number 226 and application number is 435,
- The Ginger Growers' Cooperative Federation Ltd (GINFED), Karbi Anglong has been taking care of its export specially to Europe.
- The dry rhizome has very high oleoresin oil and low fiber content enhancing its marketability.
- Karbi Organic Ginger has become a good source for livelihood generation.

Hanthu

(*Gnetum gnemon*)

and Mehek

(*Rhynchoetechum ellipticum*)



Gnetum gnemon



Rhynchoetechum ellipticum

- These are most common dietary component of the Karbi people.
- The leaves of these plants are commonly consumed by cooking with pholo (alkaline water) and dried fish.
- An integral part of the sacred dish called 'Hanmi-Hanmoi' and the sacred offering 'Thekar'.
- The fruit of *Gnetum gnemon* is a rich source of minerals such as Manganese & Copper is believed to enhance memory & cure fever.
- The leaves of *Rhynchoetechum ellipticum* are used for boils; infusions of stems are used for curing coughs in children.

Fish in traditional health care

- Traditional and folk medicines are still prevalent among Karbis.
- These practices include both local and oral applications and rituals to cure diseases.
- Fish plays an integral part of the rituals associated with propitiation of their deity.
- The customary use of fish (toman) during the ritual of '*Nihu Kachingtung*' for curing mental orders.
- Apart from rituals, many fish species considered having medicinal properties are consumed as delicacies. Some of them are:

Monopterusuchia (Kuchia fish, Kamchirui)
and ***Anguilla bengalensis*** (Nujung)



Monopterusuchia



Anguilla bengalensis

- Commonly consumed by locals as source of protein and for their therapeutic properties.
- The blood *Monopterusuchia* is used as a cure for anemia while its flesh is used as a cure for infirmities.
- The fat of *Anguilla bengalensis* is applied and massaged to relieve rheumatoid arthritis pain.



ASSAM STATE BIODIVERSITY BOARD

The Government of Assam constituted the “Assam State Biodiversity Board” on 29th September 2010 to promote biodiversity conservation in the state, sustainable use of its components and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological resources and traditional knowledge associated with these resources. The Assam Biodiversity Rules were notified in 2010. The head quarter of the Board is located at Guwahati.

OUR VISION

Bountiful, secured and economically rewarding biological diversity.

OUR MISSION

Ownership rights to people for conservation and wise-use of local biological resources and equitable sharing of benefits on commercial utilisation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ASSAM STATE BIODIVERSITY BOARD

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