



Everyday, thousands of domestic ducks which are painted in different colors to easily identify their owners, enter the haor to feed and forage.



A typical morning in the Tanguar Haor.

TECHNOLOGY AT TANGUAR HAOR

How scientists are using technology to monitor the flight of birds

ABIDA RAHMAN CHOWDHURY

It took three separate modes of transportation, a major fight between a bus driver and his helper, and a sleepless night before I managed to reach the foothills of Meghalaya to witness conservation and technology merge and in turn, make history for Bangladesh.

At the foothills of Meghalaya is the vast network of waterbodies that make up Tanguar Haor, where a team of wildlife conservationists and scientists of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (Bangladesh) and Linnaeus University in Sweden, set

up camp for two weeks to try and understand flight behaviour, disease ecology and migration of wild ducks from Bangladesh to Europe and its connection with the spread of the highly pathogenic avian influenza through wild waterfowl from Asia to Europe.

Tanguar Haor is a unique ecosystem, where the wild and domestic co-exist—for better or for worse.

An episode of Man meets Machine meets Wild in Tanguar?

Watching the project unfold in front of me day in and day out was like

watching the shoot of a National Geographic show with live commentary, performed by yours truly.

A typical day unfolded like this: I would wake up at 7:00am to find one group of scientists already returning on small country boats from their morning round of checking the mist-nets (nets put up inside the haor to safely get wild ducks for setting up solar GPS tags on them). If it was a good day, the wildlife conservationists would be returning with at least two to three wild ducks of certain targeted species and other spe-

cies of birds to either ring them or fit them with solar-battery powered, GPS-enabled satellite tags.

Then would begin the next round of work for the morning. They would set up a small table under the Hijal trees on a mound that separated us from the water of the haor. Under the shade of the Hijal, the researchers would bring out their delicate science equipment—the solar powered GPS-enabled satellite tags, vernier calipers, small metal rings, weighing machines and a bunch of other equipment.



The haor keeps on changing its colors throughout the day.