

Project Update: December 2012

People have overall good information regarding bats. People of the study area perceive bats as the flying rats. Most of the people have seen bats flying during the rainy season. Most of the people know habitats of bats. They have good idea on colour of the bats. Feeding habits of bats are well known as insects and fruits. People know bats are advantageous but do not have specific reason except their guano can be used as fertilisers. Still, a good number of respondents have no idea. Fifty percent of informants do not have specific cause of bat harm except fruit raiding and they make the house dirty with stinky guano answered by another 50% of the respondents. Bat killing is unknown to almost all of the people. Ten respondents reporting the bat killing are unaware of the cause for bat killings.

Bat sounds were recorded for three genera and additionally unknown species with different frequencies. In the second field too, bats occurrence with elevation gradient is exhibited. Bats were recorded from 206m a.s.l. to 1373m a.s.l. Bats diversity and population were found greater at mid-hills rather than in the Tarai and higher elevations. *Eonycteris spelaea* was found at Haleshi as in the first field but the roost sharing of *Rousettus leschenaultii* was not observed. This time, *Hipposideros* sp. was additionally recorded from the main cave at the Haleshi. Also, the colony of 4000 individuals at Paame is the first record of the largest colony of *Rousettus leschenaulti* in Nepal. Species variation with altitude has been interestingly exhibited. *Eptesicus* sp. occurs in the higher elevation, whereas, *Pipistrellus* sp. is distributed in lowlands as well as highland both. However, both species inhabit bamboo hollows and additionally the later inhabits the tree.

Altogether, six schools were approached for the post-awareness open-art competition. Maximum programmes (four) were conducted in Government Higher Secondary School, minimum (two) in Private Higher Secondary School and Private Secondary School each. Equal number of students (24) participated at each school. Some schoolchildren are confused bats with birds. Few participants draw bats face like that of bird and rats. Some schoolchildren perceive bats as funny and amazing creatures. Most of them know very well about their habitat such as bats live in caves and in trees and their diet comprises of insects and variety of fruits. Still, few have misconception that bats suck blood of cattle and even human.

The level of knowledge regarding bats and their importance of ecosystem services was found to be upgraded amongst local people including schoolchildren.



