

Project Update: October 2014

Objectives:

To use past experience on human-leopard conflict to make media more aware about the issue in other states. Partially achieved.

- We completed a workshop in the state of Goa and next week we are going to have a workshop in Himachal Pradesh. In November 2014, a workshop is going to be held in the state of Kerala.

To involve the local NGOs and Forest Department in these workshops. Partially achieved.

- In Goa, we worked closely with Mhadei Research Station. Forty-seven Goa Forest Department officials attended the workshop on 18th September 2014. Twenty-five media personnel, 24 panchayat (village administration) members from conflict area and six animal rescuers attended the media workshop on 19th September 2014.

To involve media from Maharashtra and other places in the workshops. Not achieved

- Two journalists who were the project partners in our Mumbai project and had experience in dealing with reporting on leopard conflict also gave a presentation each.

Preparations for the other states.

- I was to carry out the media workshops in a total of four states. However, it is likely I would be able to do it in six states. We have one in Himachal Pradesh this coming week, the one in Kerala is going to be carried out in November 2014.

We had started dialogue with the Forest Department in Andhra Pradesh and had even held a workshop there for the senior officers of the Forest Department but then the state was bifurcated and there has been too much of turmoil with respect to the attention of the media and the officials we were dealing with are now in one state and the conflict area is now in another state, so we have not progressed with the media workshop there.

Outcomes of project:

1. Awareness among forest officials (senior and field level) about the complex nature of the conflict issue. Interaction with officers from Maharashtra who have dealt with this issue in high conflict areas.
2. Awareness among media on the complex nature of the conflict and that their reporting can change the way the public view potentially dangerous wildlife.
3. Sharing of new research findings across a wide area among people who make the most difference on ground (managers and media).

The project ends in October 2015, if there are funds we would be covering more states.

I have distributed more than 200 of the manuals I had made as part of an earlier Rufford grant to the officials in Andhra Pradesh, Chandigarh, Goa and Himachal Pradesh. It was translated in Konkani for Goa, in Malayalam for Kerala and by partners Nature Conservation Foundation in Tamil for Tamil Nadu where we plan to have workshops in three places early next year. It contains the Rufford logo. I am attaching the reports from Andhra Pradesh and Goa.