

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Krishna Prasad Bhusal
Project title	Integrated conservation of critically endangered vultures in Arghakhanchi district, Nepal.
RSG reference	10619-1
Reporting period	November-2012
Amount of grant	£4500
Your email address	bhusalkrish@yahoo.com
Date of this report	12 Feb 2013

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Diclofenac Free Zone declaration through a district level workshop			Fully Achieved	Project district Arghakhanchi was declared as Diclofenac Free Zone on the basis of survey result of no record of diclofenac in the agro vet shop and District Livestock Service Office also certified that no animal diclofenac in the district by their own survey. Chief District Officer Shambhu Prasad Marasini Declare the district as Diclofenac Free Zone of area 1193 km ² which expands the volume of Vulture Safe Zone of Nepal. In the programme chief and representative of all Government district level line agencies participated including political leaders, community intelligent persons, local conservation bodies and media persons.
Public Awareness Raising				
a. Develop and print awareness materials.			Fully Achieved	Project site was newly explored vulture nesting site in Nepal and thus to make community people and other stakeholder fully aware, posters, T-shirts and three fold full and fact vulture information containing leaflets in Nepali language highlighting the vulture nesting sites and pictures have been developed, printed and distributed widely, within and beyond the project sites. More could be achieved with co-funding from other organisations The Peregrine Fund, USA and Bird Conservation Nepal.
b. Community /School Children Awareness × 3 events			Fully Achieved	Three awareness programmes in the vicinity of nesting site of white-rumped vulture, Egyptian vulture, Himalayan griffon and lammergeier targeting community forest user groups (in their forest vulture made nest), local youth and school children were held with the direct participation of 195 individuals and the programme were highlighted by local and national Radio, Television and Newspaper.
c. District level stakeholder meeting			Fully Achieved	District level stakeholder meeting was held in Sandhikharka Arghakhanchi among the government agencies and

				stakeholders; District Administration Office, District Development Office, District Forest Office, District Livestock Service Office and Nepal Para veterinary and Livestock Association, Arghakhanchi with president of two community forests where vultures breed. In the meeting government bodies committed to take pro-active steps for vulture conservation in district. Similarly, the president of community forests committed that to include the vulture conservation programme in their community forest action plan/guidelines to save Critically Endangered vulture species and their habitat.
Nest monitoring and NSAID Survey				
a. Nest Monitoring			Fully Achieved	Arghakhanchi district was newly explored nesting sites of vulture in Nepal and where four species of vulture breed regularly. We monitored extensively the breeding ecology of white-rumped vulture, Egyptian vulture, Himalayan griffon and lammergeier all over the district (project site) and analysed their breeding success of the breeding season 2011-12. 15 nests of white-rumped vultures were monitored of which 10 nests were successful. Nine nests of Egyptian vulture were monitored of which five nests were successful. Thirty-six nests of Himalayan griffon were monitored in a single cliff of which 21 were successful and one nest of Lammergeier is monitored and is 100% success in this breeding season.
b. NSAID Survey		Partially Achieved		25 agro vets of the district were surveyed and there is no record of animal diclofenac and recorded other safe alternative NSAIDs such as meloxicam in the form of injection and bolus. In the village areas of the district unregistered vets are the key person in veterinary field and they have no permanent shop; they buy medicine put in bags and treat livestock wherever called. Thus that is hard to meet each and every vet.

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

Three nesting trees (*Pinus* spp.) of white-rumped vulture are located in the private land of community people and they sell these trees to cut down for furniture purpose. We counselled them to stop the cut down of these trees all over the breeding season to ensure the breeding success of vulture but unfortunately they cut down later on.

From the mid time of the project work I was appointed as a Field Biologist under the Vulture Conservation Programme of Bird Conservation Nepal, thus I was a little stretched and there were some delays in completing the target activities and reporting.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

- ❖ The project district Arghakhanchi was declared as Diclofenac Free Zone through the initiation and support of the project by the local government, veterinary community, political parties, media, conservation organisations and community forest user groups. Arghakhanchi make up a part of 1,193 km² Vulture Safe Zone in Nepal. Establishment of Vulture Safe Zone in Nepal is leaded by the Bird Conservation Nepal solely supported by RSPB and other conservation organisations; the first of its kind in the world.
- ❖ First extensive research and documentation of vulture breeding status in the newly explored habitat and studied three species of cliff nesting vulture's association in a single cliff habitat which is first of its kind study in Nepal (detailed study is continuing with support of The Peregrine Fund). In Nepal the colonies of white-rumped vulture were recorded below 1000 m (a typically southern lower altitude breeder) but in the project site the colony lies above 1000 m up to 1400 m and is interesting point which was find out. Besides this the population status of Critically Endangered red-headed vulture also monitored which is readily available in the project site and may breed in and around the district.
- ❖ The advocacy with stakeholder and awareness supported by this project trigger up the community initiative to save the Critically Endangered vulture species feeling ownership. For that community forest user groups plan to include vulture conservation programme in their forest guidelines aiming to sustain conservation programme practically as well as legally. Through this project a massive sensitisation work was carried out in schools, communities, among veterinary groups and widely through mass media. Thus among the key achievement of this project is that knowledge of vultures, their distribution in district and their importance, their decline and cause of decline is widely known in the project district and surrounding districts.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

A number of key activities declaration of Diclofenac Free Zones; monitoring of NSAIDs drug use practices, community/school children awareness were led by local government bodies and community-based conservation/management organisations with our technical backup and financial support. The continuous nest monitoring and community counselling to save vulture species was done by community forest member Prakash Acharya trained in BCN training workshop and by us, handing over essential skills as well as providing a small remuneration.

Thus the most important benefit for the local community was the handover of knowledge and skills to the community so that they can continue carrying out activities like nest monitoring, monitoring

of vulture population and monitoring of NSAIDs. District Forest Office focussed the vulture nesting forest site of district and ordered them to stop the cut down of tall nesting trees haphazardly and this ultimately help to save and managed the community forest biodiversity.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The project site is significantly important for Critically Endangered vultures (detail in section 3) where red-headed Vulture is also frequently seen in the stage of soaring and since few last year its nest had not been recorded in Nepal. Thus there is need of extensive research and exploration of additional colony of vultures and red-headed vulture nest in the potential nesting site of district and surrounding districts.

In Nepal there is a threat of human diclofenac misuse in veterinary use (30ml vial available) and this is high chance of misuse by unregistered vets of villages. Thus there is urgency of aware and counselling the unregistered vets about vultures, diclofenac impact upon it and legal status of it.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

The sharing of project work was done with wide coverage in local and national mass media. In Nepal media coverage of vulture is exceptionally well and this is the best means to get vulture conservation message out to a wider audience. As a free article writer of Conservation Biology I also wrote about seven articles related to vultures and their status, conservation challenge in the district in local and national newspaper. Key activities of the project were done in coordination with government line agencies and local conservation groups which have helped widen the implication of the project.

We have a stock of some posters and leaflets with content and picture of project site thus plan to distribute these materials in schools and community-based conservation organisation with a Nepali version report of this project in the time of opportunistic field visit.

We are also working on the data analysis collected from the field study and survey and we hope to publish this in a national and international science journal.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The project was initially planned to start from June 2011 and end in October 2012 but it was slightly late to complete one community/school children awareness programme in field site because of the need to ensure the covered of nest monitoring visit cost of this breeding season also means to continue the monitoring work.

The Diclofenac Free Zone declaration programme was done in the initial period of project to match the technical backstop availability time of Bird Conservation Nepal experts. Besides these all activities were completed within the project period.

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Diclofenac Free Zone Declaration Programme	200.00	250.00	50.00	Additional cost borne by Bird Conservation Nepal
NSAID monitoring of whole district	300.00	300.00	00.00	
Poster, Leaflets and T-shirt preparation and print out cost.	600.00	700.00	100.00	Additional cost borne by The Peregrine Fund
Awareness programme in field site (three events)	300.00	300.00	00.00	
Stakeholders meeting in district headquarters	200.00	170.00	30.00	To be paid the nest monitoring youth of this breeding season.
Equipment hire cost	500.00	500.00	00.00	
Local assistant cost of whole year	300.00	300.00	00.00	
Transportation (6 trips × 2 way) of two team members	550.00	600.00	50.00	Additional cost borne by The Peregrine Fund
Lodging and Sustenance during travel(6 visits × 3person)	1000.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Stationary, communication, Report preparation/Dissemination	250.00	250.00	00.00	To be used to disseminate research report
Medicine in field and general field gear and forest guard sustenance (Miscellaneous)	300.00	250.00	50.00	To be paid the nest monitoring youth of this breeding season.
TOTAL	4500	4620	120	

Note:- It appears that we have overspent because of we received little co-funding from other sources Bird Conservation Nepal and The Peregrine Fund to help meet the costs. We have some funds (80) saved from the activities that will be used to support local youth for the nest monitoring and flow up the project work as possible.

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

- a. The Diclofenac Free Zone created and extensive research of the Critically Endangered vulture species by this projects in newly explored nesting site Arghakhanchi district needs to be enlarged further in the mid hills of Nepal which is less studied area as compared to lower region of the country to established the Vulture Safe Zone as vultures easily fly well over 100 km in search of their food.
- b. There is need to keep on engaging and flow up the key stakeholders (veterinarians, para-veterinarians, veterinary drug sellers, government line agencies, local communities and forest user groups living close to existing nesting sites) in the conservation of vultures. To be

ensure the implementation of Vulture Conservation Activities by Community Forest User Group including in their forest conservation and management Action Plan/Guidelines. This will be most important achievement to save vulture by community initiation in the long term because all nesting colony of vultures in the project site are lies out of the protected area system of Nepal Government.

- c. Misuse of human diclofenac in veterinary use and deliberately poisoning to kill other carnivores (feral dogs, jackals etc) is now the key threat to vultures and strong advocacy and massive awareness is need to stop misuse of human diclofenac and poison. Minor threats such as habitat loss, human disturbance etc also can now impact the surviving vulture population and these need to be investigated and necessary measures taken based on the investigation.
- d. The project area is a habitat of critically endangered vulture species and other globally threatened bird species (cheer pheasant) thus there is need of extensive research and survey (with detail of red-headed vulture) to qualify as Important Bird Area of Nepal. In Nepal there are already recognised 27 places as Important Bird Areas by Birdlife International with main criterion the habitat of Globally Threatened bird species.

10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The RSGF logo was used on Poster, leaflets and T-shirt produced by the project and JPG copies have been emailed to RSGF. The logo was also used on banners during awareness, notice in media and Diclofenac Free Zone declaration events and RSGF has received publicity. The logo will be used in the reports disseminate in project sites among line agencies and also in the short documentary will make to pile up the field footage.

11. Any other comments?

The project work of the vulture conservation in the site was recognised as a good point by Bird Conservation Nepal/RSPB and hence appointed me as a Field Biologist under the Vulture Conservation Programme. It provides me a good opportunity to do more effective work in the field of vulture conservation of the country to halt the rapid population decline of species. I am committed to continue my work especially vulture research and conservation in the project site and all over the Nepal at the grassroots level.

Nepalese Conference for Rufford Grantees workshop was held in Nepal in the month January 13-14, 2012 where all the Rufford Grantees of Nepal assemble in to a single forum to share their research result; which is the first of this kind in Nepal. Replication of such programme widens more the key role of RSGF in the biodiversity conservation/management of Nepal and learns more by younger researcher and conservationist.