

The Rufford Foundation

Final Report

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

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. 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. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. 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	Mohan Chandra Bishwakarma
Project title	Participatory Turtle Conservation Project in Jagadishpur Reservoir, a Ramsar Site in Nepal
RSG reference	13190-1
Reporting period	2013-2014 (April 2013- October 2014)
Amount of grant	£5760
Your email address	mohanchandrak@gmail.com
Date of this report	17 October 2014

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
Aware local communities on illegal turtle trade and involve them in conservation activities			Fully achieved	Ten turtle awareness campaigns were conducted for community forest user groups, lake conservation committee, cooperative groups etc. Around 500 people were directly benefited and turtle conservation message widely disseminated through them. Jagadishpur Reservoir Conservation Multistakeholders' Forum, a district level management committee and local people are highly sensitised on illegal turtle trade hence, actively engaged in monitoring of turtle hunting and trade activities in and around the reservoir which they do not care before. (10 awareness camps)
Aware school children on importance of turtle conservation			Fully achieved	Five awareness classes were conducted in five secondary schools. Around 450 students directly benefited from the classes and more from extracurricular activities. They were made aware of the ecological importance of turtles, illegal hunting, turtle trade and their potential role in conserving turtles. (Five awareness classes)
Sensitise local enforcement agencies			Fully achieved	15 sensitisation meetings were conducted for nearby forest offices (five), custom offices (five) and police stations (five). The whole office unit including the officers in charge (all together 200 officials) were directly sensitised in their respective office stations. Turtle conservation importance and its illegal hunting and trade issues of the area were heavily discussed. Officials are now fully convinced on this illegal trade issue. Similarly, one sensitisation meeting was held for journalists at Jagadishpur reservoir to explore this issue. Turtle conservation messages were published by local magazines and FM Radios. Frequencies. (16 sensitisation meetings/campaigns)
Identify turtle species found in		Partially Achieved		Five traps (two baited hoop traps and three basking Traps) were placed in most

<p>and around Jagadishpur Reservoir</p>				<p>potential locations in the lake for 10 continuous days in March 2014 and 7 continuous days in September 2014. Unfortunately, no turtles were trapped during both trapping efforts. In addition to trapping, we also made search efforts in second trapping in and around the lake for turtles and their shells. Due to search efforts, we could able to identify four turtle species in the reservoir. We suspected that one or two more species can be found in and around the lake. We realised that there is a low chance to trap turtles in such traps due to human and other disturbances such as grazing, thatch cutting, vegetable collection and even fishing.</p>
<p>Identify and assess livelihood of the commercial turtle hunters and most dependant families</p>			<p>Fully achieved</p>	<p>Structured questionnaire surveys were conducted for 60 commercial hunters and most dependent families. Analysing the survey data we found most of the families are dependent on agriculture supported with labour wages. Few years ago, fishing was major activity of most families whereas turtle hunting was of few families. Their livelihood was hugely supported at that time. But now commercial hunting has discouraged. In spite, occasional hunting during fishing still exist. All most all families are dependent on lake resources such as thatch collection, ferns for vegetables collection, grazing, even fishing etc. As the restriction on fishing and turtle hunting increased, they are changing their occupation and adopting other economic activities. They are demanding ponds for fish farming as an alternative livelihood option. (60 questionnaire surveys)</p>
<p>Monitor illegal turtle hunting in and around jagadishpur reservoir</p>			<p>Fully achieved</p>	<p>12 monitoring visits were organised around the lake. Local management committee members, journalists, community forest users groups were for involved monitoring. In addition, two local people were trained and actively involved in regular monitoring of the lake work. During these monitoring visits, commercial turtle hunting was not observed but few fishing activities were observed. We also found that turtles were captured or hunted during fishing. (12</p>

				monitoring visits)
Monitor turtle trade and survey market places			Fully achieved	More than 80 monitoring visits in all most all nearby local market places were conducted to check whether turtle trade still exists or not. Visits were focussed to those market places where turtles were sold openly few years ago. Two locally trained persons were heavily engaged in this work supported with the project team and police personnel. No open turtle trade was observed during monitoring. From undercover survey, we also found that underground turtle trade still exist in these market places where turtles are imported from India. (80 visits)
Produce and distribute turtle conservation calendar and leaflets			Fully achieved	2000 copies of poster on illegal turtle and 5000 copies of leaflets were produced in Nepali language and distributed during awareness camps, meeting and other conservation programs organised at local level. Posters were developed instead of conservation calendar realising the effectiveness of posters. Some mounted posters and leaflets were also distributed to governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations. The focus of the poster and leaflets was on illegal turtle trade and its control. (7000 copies)

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

We planned to trap turtles with basking and baited hoop traps for species identification. After discussing within the team and with local communities, we conducted trapping work (15 continuous days) in March 2014 but we couldn't capture any turtles. Due to the unsuccessful effort, we again planned to do second trapping efforts in July-August 2014. But at that time, we also planned to do additional search efforts for turtles and their shells in and around the reservoir for identification. With a little bit late, we did second trapping effort (7 continuous days) along with search effort in September 2014. Again trapping effort failed but due to the additional search efforts we could able to identify four turtle species in and around the reservoir. We don't know whether the trapping design was appropriate or not but we assumed that reason behind the failure of trapping works was due to the disturbances such as grazing, thatch and fern collection, fishing etc.

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

1. Local communities, community forest user groups, law enforcement agencies (police administration, customs, district forest office, etc.), local and national media personnel are now

very much aware of conservation status of turtles and its illegal trade in and around Jagadishpur reservoir. Local communities with the support of local management committee are regularly doing monitoring to control illegal hunting and trade of turtles around the reservoir where as police administration and district forest officials are regularly doing patrolling around the reservoir and local market places to control illegal turtle trade. As a result, more than 10 Indian flap shell turtles were rescued from fishermen and released to the reservoir. Despite of high dependency of local communities on the reservoir resources, turtle hunting and fishing has greatly reduced.

2. Five local people have been trained and their capacities developed at local level and are now engaged in conservation activities. Similarly, two forestry graduate students from Tribhuvan University have been technically trained during this project and they are now planning to do turtle conservation projects in Nepal. Fortunately, one of them is also planning to do her thesis work on turtle.
3. Four turtle species, Indian flap shell turtle (*Lesimys punctata*), Triticarinate hill turtle (*Melanochelys triticarinate*) and brown roofed turtle (*Pangshura smithii*) were directly observed and identified by live turtles whereas Indian soft shell turtle (*Nilssonina gangetica*) was identified by the shell which was recently hunted from the lake. Four species, Indian flap shell turtle and Indian flap shell turtle are most commonly hunted for meat. This finding will help to identify priority species and plan priority conservation actions. We suggest to conduct more research work to identify potential all species of the reservoir.

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

Local participation was key for the successful implementation of this project. Their participation was ensured from the beginning to the end of the project. Local communities directly benefited from the conservation awareness campaigns, monitoring activities and other project activities. Moreover, few local persons got opportunity to be trained on turtle conservation and paid for their engagement on the project activities. Due to the project interventions, local communities have been sensitised and engaged in conservation of reservoir resources such as control of fishing, turtle hunting, grazing, thatch collection etc. Thus, it has been expected that the project interventions will bring other indirect benefits such as, tourism promotion of the area and more conservation opportunities there.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. We realised that the real conservation target of this project will not be achieved unless and until alternative livelihood options created for them. Because they are very much dependent on reservoir resources for livelihood. From the livelihood questionnaire survey and planning discussion with local management committee, we found that there is need to support for fish ponds and other livelihood opportunities to reduce their dependency on reservoir resources. That's why we are planning and discussing to implement livelihood focussed project there as a continuation of this project.

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

Turtle conservation messages have been already disseminated through conservation awareness campaigns, meetings at local level. Besides, conservation posters and leaflets have been distributed

widely at local level, and to national governmental and nongovernmental conservation organisations. The brief project activities and overall outcomes will be disseminated through www.ggnepal.org. I am also planning to publish at least one article in relation to this project in a national journal.

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

The project was initially planned for 12 months from April 2013 to March 2014. Due to the difficulties in turtle trappings for species identification, we extended the project only for this research work up to October 2014 by taking permission from the Rufford Small Grants Foundation. Otherwise, planned activities were completed within the planned schedule.

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
Conservation awareness campaigns in communities	£ 800	£800	0	
Conservation awareness activities in schools	£ 500	£400	-100	Conservation tour and demonstration for school students not carried out because it was not practicable and we didn't realised the effectiveness of this activity. And partial support received from schools for this.
Conservation awareness and sensitisation activities in custom offices	£ 200	£200	0	
Conservation awareness and sensitisation activities for police administration	£ 200	£200	0	
Conservation awareness and sensitisation activities in forest offices	£ 200	£200	0	
Conservation awareness and sensitisation activities for media personnel	£ 70	£70	0	
Turtle species identification of the reservoir	£ 400	£525	125	Cost became high as trapping efforts done twice
Reservoir monitoring activities by the local communities	£ 480	£480	0	
Turtle trade monitoring and survey at market places	£ 640	£640	0	

Identification and livelihood assessment of commercial hunters	£ 320	£290	-30	Cost became low due to the involvement of our locally trained persons, as they are also engaged in our other project activities
Development and distribution of conservation calendar on turtle trade control	£ 350	£300	-50	Poster developed instead of conservation calendar at low cost and partial support received from CARON and BRCN
Leaflets production on turtle conservation	£ 200	£150	-50	partial support received from CARON and BRCN
Travel for team members	£ 350	£400	50	Additional two forestry graduate students from university were also mobilised
Field subsistence and lodging for team members	£ 800	£900	100	Due to additional three locals, two graduate students and two experts from CARON mobilised
Stationary, communication and other logistics	£ 250	£270	20	We supported to celebrate World Wetland Day, 2014 at Jagadishpur Reservoir organised by local committee and also supported for turtle conservation message wall painting
Total	£5760	£5825	65	Internally managed from Green Governance Nepal- I am also involved in this organisation

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

For this particular Jagadishpur reservoir, local communities should be primarily supported with fish ponds for fish farming in their private land as an alternative livelihood options because fishing is the main livelihood option of the local communities. This will help to reduce peoples' dependency on reservoir resources and ultimately support conservation. And other locally feasibility livelihood options should be supported.

A study on national level turtle trade should be carried out and disseminated to sensitise national level governmental and nongovernmental conservation organisations in conservation of these least care species, and plan priority actions for the conservation of turtles in Nepal.

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

RSGF logo was used in posters and pamphlets developed during this project. RSGF logo was also used in each and every programme banner and presentations made during conservation campaigns, meetings. Besides, the RSGF logo was placed in a large Programme banner developed to celebrate World Wetland Day, 2014 organised by the local committee at Jagadishpur Reservoir.

11. Any other comments?

I am extremely grateful to The Rufford Small Grants Foundation which supported me to accomplish this project which was really of my interest. I am happy that I did something to conserve these innocent and least cared species with the support of RSGF. I will continue my efforts to conserve turtles. At the same time, I really appreciate RSGF flexibility on timescale. Otherwise, the project accomplishment within the proposed schedule was not possible. Thank you so much.