

Project Update: May 2014

Project work was formally started in the first week of March.

Phase I – Three months:

An extensive survey of bat roosts has been initiated to in the study areas. To date, parts of Panchmahal, Chotaudeipur and Sabarkanta have been surveyed. Major roosts of fulvous fruit bats and flying foxes have been located and further work is in progress. Lots of photographs of bat roosts and habitats have also been taken. Results on GPS details, reproductive cycle, etc shall be envisaged in the final report.

Some of the observations such as baby birth of a fulvous fruit bat were indeed interesting and educative for us. This event was observed inside ruins of a Hindu temple in Polo Reserve Forest. These ruins are protected archaeological monuments that support a major bat population in this area.

A rapport with locals was developed for smoother functioning of the project. Few locals have been identified as volunteers for RSGF project.

A meeting with the officials of Gujarat State Forest Department was conducted and importance of this project was explained. Since they have already been introduced to the concept of bat awareness and conservation in RSG 1, they were very supportive and promised full cooperation this programme. It was also resolved that a dedicated awareness campaign will be conducted for the foresters and beat guards who are the field staff of the forest department and directly involved with conservation at the grass root level.

An awareness camp was conducted in Polo Reserved Forest in Sabarkanta District (north Gujarat) for Foresters and beat guards. Also, several awareness campaigns have been conducted for school students in various areas of Gujarat. A small group of college students were taken to the cave roosts in Jambughoda sanctuary and fruit bat roost near Shivrajpur, Gujarat wherein, they were intensively trained to study behavior of bats within their roosts.

I am also updating our educational booklet that I expect to be ready by next month. Currently, we are using the older booklet made during RSG 1 for conducting awareness. ***RSGF's logo has been prominently displayed in all materials and at all venues.***