

Project Update: June 2016

August 2015- December 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ We applied for the research permission from Gujarat Forest Department in August 2015. The research permission from Chief Wildlife Warden (Gujarat) was received in December-2015. During this period we made some preliminary wildlife surveys, and also to look for setting up base camp at various places. Field work was initiated outside the protected area by the end of December 2015 in nearby Patdi village of Dasada taluka of Surendranagar district.
January 2016 – February 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ For conducting the field work, I was assisted by a field assistant and a volunteer.➤ For assessing herbivore density, a total of 189.19 km of vehicular transects were covered and nearly 8 villages were visited to conduct human-wildlife conflict interview surveys. The team surveyed the villages and mostly target farmers for the interviews so that team can get a quality data on the human animal conflicts as they have the more reliable data for the cause they faced.➤ During the vehicular transects, team also studied the circular vegetation plots for the habitat of Indian wild ass and other herbivores.➤ We also carried out farm surveys by observing the farms and crops and discussed with farmers.
March 2016 – April 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ We moved our base to Patadi village to survey parts of Dasada taluka.➤ A total of 25 villages were surveyed for interviews. A total of 91 interviews were conducted during these surveys from which 43 were conducted in Halvad taluka and 40 were in Dhangadhra and 4-4 interviews were conducted in Lakhtar and Muli taluka of Surendranagar District.➤ A total of 286.5 km of vehicle transects were covered for estimating herbivore density and nearly a total 54 villages of Surendranagar district were visited to conduct a total of 178 interviews. Team carried out 1-4 interviews per village, totalling to at least 4-16 interviews per grid.➤ We also carried out total 43 nos. of farm surveys by observing the farms and crops and discussed with farmers.
May 2016- Till Now	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ A total of 16 villages were surveyed for interviews from which 10 were from Halvad taluka of Surendranagar district, 4 and 2 were from Maliya and Morvi taluka of Rajkot district, respectively (Table-2).➤ During these surveys a total 64 interviews were conducted from which 40 were conducted in Halvad taluka and 16 and 8 were conducted in Maliya and Morvi taluka, respectively (Table-2).➤ For assessing herbivore density, a total of 83 km of vehicular transects were covered and 4 vegetation plot were studied for the habitat of Indian wild ass and other herbivores.

Table -1: Villages visited in Kutch, Surendranagar and Rajkot district for human- wildlife conflict surveys.

District: Kutch : <i>Rapar Taluka</i>			
Name of Villages	Number of Interviews	Name of Villages	Number of
Bhimdevka	1	MandaviaVandh	2
Gagodar (Jodhpar Vandh)	1	Mangadh	3
Kanmer	2	Nanda	2
Makhel	2	Thoriyari	1
		Total	16
District: Surendranagar : <i>Dasada Taluka</i>			
Patdi	2	Rozva	4
Mithaghoda	2	Padiwada	4
Kathada	2	Mulada	3
Metasar	2	Ahmedgadh	3
Savda	2	Zinzuwada	3
Haripura	2	Fatepur	3
Bamanva	2	Adariyana	3
Visavadi	4	Dhama	3
Zezra	3	Pipli	3
Savlas	4	Degam	4
Mulada	3	Malvan	3
Nana Goraiya	3	Kherva	3
Surajpura	2	Kacholiya	4
Odu	4	Sidhsar	3
Surel	4	Rozva	4
		Total	87
District: Surendranagar : <i>Dhangdhra Taluka</i>			
Narali	3	Haripur	4
Sultanpur	4	Dudapur	4
Kuda	4	Rajpar	3
Jasmatpur	4	Soladi	3
Satapar	4	Sarval	3
Vavdi	4	Total	40
District: Surendranagar: <i>Halvad Taluka</i>			
Enjar	4	Raysangpur	4
Kidi	4	Chadadhra	3
Tikar	4	Dhulkot	4
Koyba	3	Survadar	3
Sukhpar	4	Vegadvav	4
Kedariya	3	Butvada	3
Nava Kidi	4	Miyani	4
Nava Amrapar	4	JunaDevaliya	4
Mansar	4	Ranjithgadh	4
Tikar	4	JunaGathila	4
Nava Gathila	4	Total	83

District: Surendranagar: Lakhtar Taluka			
Name of Villages	Number of Interviews	Name of Villages	Number of Interviews
Ingrodi	4	Manpar	4
Total	4	Total	4
District: Rajkot : Maliya Taluka			
Mandraki	4	Khakharechi	4
Vejalpar	4	Kumbhariya	4
		Total	16
District: Rajkot : Morvi Taluka			
Jetpar	4	Vaghpar	4
		Total	8

Table -2: Summary for conducted human-wildlife conflict surveys

District	Taluka (Sub District)	Number of	Number of Interviews
Kutch	Rapar	8	14
Surendranagar	Dasada	29	87
	Dhangdhra	11	40
	Halvad	22	83
	Lakhtar	1	4
	Muli	1	4
	Sub total	64	218
Rajkot	Maliya	4	16
	Morvi	2	8
	Sub total	6	24
	Total	78	256

❖ **Observations during the field surveys:**

After visiting and inspecting the various active and inactive areas, the team observed following observation

- 1) During these months (winter-summer) major farmland were cultivated with cash crops like cotton, castor and cumin in this region.
- 2) Encroachment for the agriculture is main cause of shrinking natural habitat.
- 3) Coal formation and mining are other threats.
- 4) Lack of awareness in local peoples about the species and effective mitigation measures.
- 5) In the villages near 10 km of the Rann reported wild ass crop damage but the area (more than 20 km) far from the Rann the problematic species is wild boar, domestic pig, nilgai and feral cows.
- 6) Most farmers do not use any protection strategy other than guarding to reduce crop loss.

- 7) People do not effectively guard the farms especially during the night time. It is also a reason for increase in the crop raiding during night time.
- 8) Increase in the population of feral cows also participate in crop raiding event in this area, and contribute majorly towards economic loss.
- 9) Wild pigs, nilgai and feral livestock population is in abundance everywhere and as a result crop raiding has increased in most of the areas surveyed.
- 10) Young generation peoples are more positive towards conservation in comparison to older age.



A large group of Indian wild ass crop raiding in a farm



Habitat degradation due to salt production activities inside the protected area



The crop (castor) protection effort by traditional reflective ribbon fencing



Data collection of farms by research assistant



A volunteer assisting in habitat survey data collection



A farmer giving his views and perceptions on crop depredation



Survey with farmers



Member of the research team providing nature education to the school students