

## Final Project Evaluation Report

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We ask all grant recipients to complete a project evaluation that helps us to gauge the success of your project. This must be sent in **MS Word and not PDF 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 – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Complete the form in English and be as concise as you can. Note that the information may be edited before posting on our website.

Please email this report to [jane@rufford.org](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

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| Your Details               |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Full Name</b>           | Neeraj Sharma   |
| <b>Project Title</b>       | Status and distribution of large predators and their prey species in Kishtwar High Altitude National Park and its neighborhood, J & K, India. |
| <b>Application ID</b>      | 18107-1   |
| <b>Grant Amount</b>        | £5000   |
| <b>Email Address</b>       | neeraj_ju@jammuuniversity.in ;<br>nirazsharma@gmail.com   |
| <b>Date of this Report</b> | January 24, 2018  |

**1. 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   |
|--|--------------|--------------------|----------------|--|
| Validation of the presence of large predators and their prey base in Kishtwar high altitude National Park (KHNP) and its neighbourhood |              |                    |                | Secondary information collected from 65 respondents including the nomads substantially ascertains the distribution of large mammals in the study area. Sign surveys and camera trapping conducted during one season only owing to inclement weather and security issues.                               |
| Occupancy modelling  |              |                    |                | Structured interviews conducted for the presence / absence of three large predators and five prey species in and around KHNP. Interesting interactions were video documented. Analysis part in software PRESENCE 5.5 under process.  |
| Socio-religious, economic significance, conflicts and other anthropogenic determinants   |              |                    |                | Information about sightings besides other information on socio-religious relevance of wildlife and man-wildlife conflicts viz., livestock predation, animals involved, associated reasons of attack and location of attack, etc. collected from the locals and wildlife department to a larger extent. |
| Vegetation classification and mapping  |              |                    |                | Vegetation classification and mapping done. The interpolation of wildlife presence - absence on map under process.   |
| Informal meetings Biodiversity workshop  |              |                    |                | Informal public consultations conducted along the bordering villages and that of nomads. Biodiversity workshop could not be conducted.   |

**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.**

Tough terrain, lack of access and logistic support are major limitations of the study area. The nearest road access is 29 km away from the entry point and all the watersheds are roughly 8-18 km long. The vast area with rugged terrain is the major

challenge demanding heavy logistics, extra manpower and ample funding for such studies.

The aberrant weather scenario and security concerns are the other major factors affecting the field surveys and progress thereof. The available working window of 7 months (May to November) mostly coincides with a huge nomadic activity forcing the upward wildlife migration and thus unconvincing results.

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

- i) The baseline information about the presence and distribution of large mammals (predators and prey) in terms of their occupancy on spatial scale generated to a larger extent.
- ii) Socio-religious relevance, man-animal conflicts and public perception about the biodiversity in and around KHNP documented.
- iii) Major anthropogenic determinants influencing the mountain biodiversity recorded.

**4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.**

The local / nomadic communities were actively involved during the surveys especially during the secondary data collection and to some extent for the sign surveys. The project staff succeeded to a great extent in sensitising and convincing the nomadic populations about the importance of wildlife and their habitats. Few community heads also accompanied the team during field surveys and shared their valuable inputs on historical sightings and conflict scenario in the park and neighbourhood.

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Yes, we definitely look forward to continue the investigations with broader objectives and wider scope for a longer duration. The area owing to its vastness and distinct habitat heterogeneity offers a huge scope for intensive studies at species as well as landscape level.

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

In the form of publications and data sharing on public domain, say in the form of maps, photographs, video documentaries, posters and pamphlets, etc. We are in process of developing the posters on birds and butterflies of Chenab catchment besides the mammals. Few of our images are uploaded on the sites like <http://orientalbirdimages.org>; [www.birdsofindia.org](http://www.birdsofindia.org) and [www.ifoundbutterflies.org](http://www.ifoundbutterflies.org).

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

The project exceeded the time limit to over a year than stipulated. Owing to many difficulties especially the security reasons, inaccessibility, tough terrain and extremes of climate, many a times we had to abort our trips. About two third of the area remains snow bound for about 6 months i.e., December to May end with one third being permanently snow covered and thus inaccessible at all. Most of our investigations therefore were restricted to the elevation below 4500 m in Kiyar, Kibber and Nanth watersheds. The whole area remains infested with a large number of nomads with heavily transformed landscapes during May to September. The only window available for the studies, especially the direct sightings and camera trapping is three months i.e., from October to early December. Last years' early snowfall hampered our camera trapping in the park.

So virtually speaking the workable period is early winter and late spring. In this regard, the actual length of the project is meagrely used in such terrains.

**8. Budget: 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. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.** Period: October 2015 to January 2018 All figures in £ sterling

| Item  | Budgeted Amount | Actual Amount | Difference | Comments  |
|---|-----------------|---------------|------------|---|
| Field expenses<br>(Travel / DA / Logistics)                 | 2050            | 423           | 1628       | <b>Under spent</b><br>Lesser number of field trips conducted than projected because of aberrant weather and security issues.  |
| Equipment (Trail camera, Camcorder, Battery pack, SD card ) | 2300            | 3885          | -1585      | <b>Over Spent</b><br>3 pairs of Trail Camera (Camera traps) was the minimum requirement to ascertain the presence of large predators (that too did not work). The camcorder was used for collection of secondary information / recording and video documentation of evidences / signs / interviews. The equipment will be used for future investigations / surveys in the Park. |
| Office expenses   | 350             | 642           | -292       | <b>Slightly exceeded</b> owing to the   |

|   |        |      |    |   |
|---|--------|------|----|---|
| (Satellite Imageries, Secretarial assistance, Books)  |        |      |    | release of honorarium for secretarial assistance as an inbuilt component for externally aided projects. |
| Field workshop  | 300    | -    | NA | <b>Unspent</b><br>Could not be held   |
| Total   | 5000 * | 4949 |    |   |
| <p>* Actual grant received by IME through transfer of Funds = £ 5535.05 at the current conversion rate of @ INR 89.71 / 1 £ sterling as on 24 January, 2018.</p> <p>Unspent grant = £ 585.95 (at the current conversion rate of @ INR 89.71 / 1 £ sterling as on 24 January, 2018)</p> <p>Calculated using :</p> <p>£ 5535.05 (Actual grant received by IME through transfer of Funds) - £ 4949.05 (The amount spent so far) = £ 585.95</p> |        |      |    |   |

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

We are looking forward to conduct the population dynamics and spatial modelling of large predators in next phases.

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

We have duly acknowledged RF in three of our publications out of which two stands published and one accepted (Appended along). The posters on butterflies, birds and mammals will also bear the RF logo. A paper on large mammals of KHNP is under compilation.

**11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.**

**Neeraj Sharma**, Principal Investigator and field co-ordinator. Instrumental in the project administration and management including the procurement, field investigations, liasoning with line departments for necessary permits, field logistics, etc.

**Muzaffar Ahmed**, Research Scholar. Held responsible for field surveys, liasoning with local field staff, primary and secondary data collection and statistical analysis. He is also pursuing his Ph.D on large mammals in Kishtwar National Park.

**Pankaj Raina**, the then Wildlife Warden and Mr. Majad Bashir the present incumbent. Facilitated in the field logistics and field staff during field surveys.

**Koustubh Sharma**, Snow Leopard Trust. Suggested field protocols and helped in occupancy modelling.

## 12. Any other comments?

The data generated so far will shortly be compiled in the form of report and a good publication. With the equipment (Rufford and In-house) already in place, the team will undertake intensive field surveys this year to map large mammals, this being a PhD research problem of one of our students too. IME will bear the travel / field logistics at its own for 2018. With some more field inputs this year, IME would request RSG for phase-2 in the year 2019. In the meantime, we will explore the funding options from other sources as well.

The Rufford project immensely contributed in highlighting the biodiversity of Kishtwar National Park, the hitherto neglected protected area of Jammu and Kashmir. The resources generated in the form of equipment and field gadgets will be a long-lasting asset for the researchers to conduct the future studies. Rufford will be duly acknowledged in all our future research endeavours in and around Kishtwar high altitude National Park.

