

## Project Update: April 2016

We surveyed bearded vulture *Gypaetus barbatus* along the Annapurna range in Mustang, Kaski and Myagdi district of western Nepal from 6th to 29th March 2016. Distance sampling of the species was conducted by walking along the transect line of 168.28 km length. Along with the line transect we also conducted point transect. Points were taken opportunistically from line transects in the area having 360 degree view of the surrounding landscape and 38 points were taken. Two observers were employed throughout the survey effort. We used Swarovski 10 x 42 binoculars to observe and identify species and age category. During the survey we also recorded parameters related to habitat, weather and disturbance. To find out the possible threats and effects of persecution, we conducted interviews and questionnaire survey along the settlements of survey area. In our study we observed total of 35 bearded vultures and four active nests. Along with the bearded vultures we also recorded 24 other raptor species including 242 Himalayan vultures *Gyps himalayensis*. Initial result of questionnaires and field survey shows there is no sign of human persecution and destruction of nest to reclaim the fabrics and to collect chicks/eggs as mentioned by BirdLife International, however there might have some impacts from the poisoning used to exterminate predators.



Left: Typical landscape of the study area in Upper Mustang. Right: Sky burial-The Buddhist priest chop the dead body and leave it for vultures to feed.



Left: Questionnaire survey with the local peoples of study area. Right: Line transect survey of bearded vulture in Upper Mustang, Nepal



Fully grown chick and adult bearded vulture in nest.