

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants 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	PANT, Basant Mr.
Project title	The Transboundary Project for Swamp Deer Conservation in Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve (A Project among the Communities of Tatargunj Area of India and Beldandi Area of Nepal)
RSG reference	12.12.07
Reporting period	July 2008
Amount of grant	£ 4969
Your email address	basant32@hotmail.com
Date of this report	March 2010

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
Swamp Deer Protection Group			√	Two groups are formed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Barasingha Samrakchyan Samuha' in India having 7 members in the group. • 'Barasingha Samrakchyan Samuha' Barasingha Conservation Group, Nepal having 7 members in it.
Conservation Boards			√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed: 3 Boards in Tatargunj India and 3 in Beldandi Nepal. • Completed: 3 Boards in Tatargunj India and 3 in Beldandi Nepal.
Public coordination meeting			√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed: Meeting in Nepal and India. • Completed: Meeting held in Nepal and India.
Quiz and essay competition			√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These were held in both Tatargunj and in Beldandi school.
Youth empowerment training			√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 persons from Tatargunj and 10 from Nepal were trained for 5 days each.
Extension activity			√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jungle visit was conducted and documentary film show was done in each area i.e. Tatargunj and Nepal.
Herders education programme			√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Altogether, 20 herders were given non-formal education on the swamp deer conservation.
Website creation			√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website created; update is ongoing http://www.swampdeer.net/.

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

The main difficulty for the project implementation was different needs of the local people. People of both Indian and Nepalese part have different needs than one thinks for conservation. They don't have daily things to eat, they don't have better schools, and don't have better infrastructure, or in summary, we can say, these people don't have better livelihood strategies, thus keeping them in poverty trap. The project was affected by unstable political circumstances. Local people (in Nepalese part) were highly suffering from effect of the unstable socio-political condition. This has led to suspicion prevailing towards any outsiders, where more time was consumed in rapport building with the community. These might have, in some instances, affected the accuracy of the information.

Moreover, these areas are in isolation. Lack of accountability is another important hindering factor for smooth functioning of the project. On the top, the huge sudden summer monsoon rain has affected the whole village of India and Nepal, the water from Mahakali River and other adjoining river entered into the houses of the villagers, which has blocked their access to the main market.

Daily life had been more and more difficult at that time. The project team however, reached at the site, discussed with the local people, and postponed the schedule for about six months in total.

These sorts of difficulties were countered by building goodwill with the local people, and postponing the schedule according to their requirement.

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

Increase in Knowledge, Change in Attitude and Commencement of Positive Role for conservation

A number of local practices and technologies were in existence and refined in both communities for swamp deer conservation. Moreover, this project has provided the sound **knowledge** about swamp deer, its importance and on the subject of biodiversity.

Regardless of many difficulties associated with the implementation of the project, it was successful in passing the **positive attitude** towards swamp deer conservation. Comparatively more educated and older aged people were found to have significant positive attitude.

With the **increase in awareness** that the swamp deer population is declining, the communities were found to have started protecting their swamp deer by forming informal protection committee. Various efforts had been done by the communities, among which majority of respondents have obtained awareness regarding swamp deer.

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

Local community were mainly involved in coordination meeting, school programme, and conservation awareness campaign where they were given the information about the importance of the swamp deer in our daily life. The key activity that included the local community's involvement is as follows

Deer Protection Group

Two groups were formed – one each in Tatargunj and Beldandi. These mobile groups were given the mandate of conveying the information regarding the importance of swamp deer and demoralize poaching activities in the community. Moreover, these groups were requested to work towards providing the information to their respective forest offices to take necessary actions. These groups have started to work to educate the community (through non-formal teaching / learning) regarding the sustainable way of using natural resources in the reserve buffer zone and adjoining forest and to control illegal activities such as grass cutting, fuelwood collection, timber smuggling, and swamp deer poaching. Quarterly wall magazine were made and published as planned. Also, these groups were oriented on how to inform the communities about protected area's rules and regulations.

Public Coordination Meeting

The coordination meeting is important prior to implementation of the program properly. All key political leaders of local communities and VDC - level committee members, were invited to attend for the meeting in Beldandi and Tatargunj separately. The meeting was successful in developing common agenda of protecting swamp deer. However, people of India were found more conscious towards swamp deer protection. The meeting agreed to follow the objective i.e. to develop a collaborative mechanism for conservation among local leaders and reserve officials and to inform local residents about various conservation initiatives taken thereafter.

School Programme

School programmes were particularly targeted toward teachers and students. Two schools were selected Shree Rauleswori Higher Secondary School in Beldandi, Nepal and Sidhnagar Public School, Tatargunj, India. Proper conservation awareness materials were developed and distributed to ninth and tenth grade students and secondary level teachers for teaching programme. This programme was mainly targeted to create awareness among the students. It was mainly focused on showing how swamp deer is linked in a same chain as those of human beings, by showing the linkage of the life cycle of human and swamp deer in the ecosystem. Information about the food chain was given at the time. Quiz competition were organized among tenth grade students in both Beldandi School and Tatargunj School, and the series of questions related to environment and swamp deer were asked to the students. The best two students in each school were given education stationeries.

Conservation Awareness Campaign (Extension Activity)

Extension activities on conservation awareness were carried through jungle visit and documentary film shows with an aim to convey conservation messages, where all user groups, user committees and community based organization chairman and members actively participated. A half-day jungle visit programme was organized in both side and the discussion programme was organized at the end to share the experience.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

It is strongly suggested that training regarding importance of swamp deer conservation on socio-cultural environment of the communities should be given and information regarding the cause of swamp deer population decline should be disseminated from primary level education in school and ward level in villages. Since the people having lesser amount of land, low income and low education were found more dependent on wild resources; more community oriented programmes should be launched focusing on these three socio-economic variables. Training regarding identification of wildlife and the way of protecting wild fauna and flora should be given to young aged and middle aged people. The traditional means of managing protected areas and the species in it should be eluded and a new landscape level approach should be promoted and launched. Putting these things into consideration, this projects needs to be brought ahead further.

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

The results of the programme are shared through the project website; the meeting will be organized in future in other adjoining VDCs to inform them about the importance of the swamp deer and advantage of conserving it. More updated information regarding swamp deer will be uploaded in the website which will be maintained from projects core funding.

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

Activities	Beldandi	Tatargunj	Remarks
Swamp deer protection group	July-Aug 08	Sept-Oct 08	Late start of the project due to summer rain
Conservation boards	Nov-08	Nov-08	Done
Herder's education programme	Dec-08	Jan-09	Conducted on different sub groups rather than two proposed

			basis
Public co-ordination meeting	Feb 09	Mar 09	Taken more time due to different rules in both countries
Jungle visit and documentary film show	April 09	May 09	Conduct successfully
<u>Two months project halt due to unpredicted monsoon rain (June-July)</u>			
School programme	Aug-09	Sep-09	Conducted successfully
Empowerment training	Oct-09	Nov-09	Taken more time due to different rules in both countries
Website creation	Jan-09	To date	Update continues

8. Budget: (Esterling: NRs = 1:130)

Particulars	Budget	Actual	Diff.	Comments
DSA for team leader	1825	1825	0	Salary
DSA for field assistant	1248	1248	0	Salary
Website creation	234.37	234	0.37	Contract made with Website designing firm
Conservation boards	140.58	150	-9.42	Over expenditure due to investment in manpower
Herder's education programme	31.4	50	-18.6	Lunch for 10 Indian and 10 Nepali herders
Public co-ordination meeting	18.84	20	-1.16	Meeting arrangement cost
Quiz and essay competition	156.24	150	6.24	Program running expenses
Stationary, equipments and teaching materials	156.25	160	-3.75	Budget spent for prize distribution
Empowerment training	780	725	55	Expenditure made for programme running cost (Balance adjusted in other heading)
To publish quarterly wall magazine	93.72	95	-1.28	Paid to the club for the work related cost
Extension activity	156.25	150	6.25	For programme running
Travel allowance for team within the study area	78.12	130	-51.88	Travel to Kathmandu and within the project area
Final report preparation	50	50	0	(Printing, binding and disseminations)
Total	4968.77	4987	-18.23	Managed from other source (i.e. Salary).

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

The existing ecological information on the swamp deer in the Reserve is limited (except population count (1715-2008/09 count)). The local population needs awareness regarding swamp deer's intrinsic role in an ecosystem. The local people should be involved in conservation related activities. Since, forest fire is severe to both flora and fauna, extension programme on controlling forest fire should be organized in adjoining villages. Awareness about probable forest fires should be disseminated through school programmes. Swamp deer poaching has always been a serious problem in and around the Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve (SWR), networking with Indian counterparts who look after Lagga-Bagga forest for anti-poaching operations, should be continued in a more effective and

sustainable way. The capacity of the Reserve staff to manage biodiversity is limited due to their skill and knowledge. Therefore, the training on social mobilization, observation tours to exchange views and share experience are essential and should be provided. The current awareness and education programmes are not adequate for the target audiences, particularly UGs, UCs, policies, local government, community and the school children. There is a lack of effective coordination mechanism with the district level politicians, concern government officials, stakeholders and representative of INGOs and NGOs. As a result, several biodiversity conservation programmes are facing policy-related criticism. Therefore, public hearings and institutional relations are important channel to inform local residents about the conservation approaches.

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

The activity is made possible through RSGF funding. The support of this project is kept at central point. The RSGF logo was used while conducting school level programme+, on quarterly magazines, conservation boards and swamp deer conservation website <http://www.swampdeer.net/>.

11. Any other comments?

It is strongly suggested that anti-poaching activities should be promoted and launched in more intensively, frequently and in effective way. Updated Information regarding status, habitat and distribution of swamp deer and other protected species should be disseminated to the local people in a regular basis. Since the people having lesser amount of land, low income and low education were found more involved in poaching activities more community oriented programmes should be initiated focusing on these three socio-economic variables. Training as regards to the identification of rare wild species should be given to young aged and middle aged people. The traditional approach of managing species and their habitat should be modified and a new community oriented approach should be promoted and launched.