

## 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. 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. 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org). Thank

you for your help.

Josh Cole Grants  
Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your Name	Jayanta Das
Project Title	Strengthening the protection measures in Manas National Park, Assam, India
RSG Reference	RSG 21.09.08
Reporting Period	Project :- March-2009 to April-2010 (14 months) Reporting :- May-2010 to July-2010
Amount of Grant	£ 5785
Your e-mail address	<a href="mailto:gibbonconservation@yahoo.com">gibbonconservation@yahoo.com</a>
Date of this report	09.08.2010

**1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.**

Overall, the conservation of *Rhinoceros unicornis* in Assam and India has been a great success. But 85% of the rhinos are restricted to a single Area in Kaziranga exposes the species to stochastic risks. Moreover, a significant population of 100 rhino was exterminated by poachers in Manas NP during the 1990s in the wake of a poor law-and-order situation and ethnic conflicts. Likewise, poaching has eliminated the species from Laokhowa, which once contained 90+ rhino. Under IRV-2020, Forest Department Assam identified Manas as priority site for rhino translocation from Pabitora and Kaziranga. For that matter improvement of security was a top priority. Park management deployed 100 additional staff for the better protection of the park. 50nos. of volunteers and 50nos. of Home Guards with arms were deployed and after 10 months of protection first batch of 2 male rhinos were translocate to Manas NP. The volunteers are working day in and day out for the protection of Manas. But basic things like uniform, mosquito nets and safe drinking water were not provided to volunteers. Hence this project is generated to address some basic problems faced by the volunteers along with a short training to get optimum output in protection.

Goal of IRV-2020:

*The goal of the program is to increase the total rhino population in Assam from about 2000 to 3000 over the next 15 years (i.e. by the Year 2020) and just as significantly ensure that these rhinos are distributed over at least 6 Protected Areas to provide long term viability of an Assam metapopulation of rhino.*

Objectives of this project	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
1. Strengthening basic infrastructure for patrolling and other facilities.			To facilitate the volunteers to perform better job and to boost the morale, some facility like uniform, shoes, socks, leech guards, mosquito nets, water filters	
2. Assessment of volunteers' attitude before and after giving the basics materials and the impact on anti-poaching patrol.			Questioner survey of the volunteers.	

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

As it was a part of a bigger programme Indian rhino Vision 2020 and the park management was supportive of the project there was no difficulty in implementing the project. However there was difficulty in getting more Indian Rhinos translocate to Manas National Park from Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary and Kaziranga National Park. One of the major difficulties was to get the drug for tranquilization of Rhinos.

**3. Briefly describe three most important outcome of the project.**

- Improving the living condition of the volunteers
  - Mosquito nets to prevent malarial which is very common in the park
  - Providing safe drinking water for the volunteers
- Uniform dress code for all the frontline staff. With the uniform the volunteers feel that they are the part of the management team. On the other hand it was very helpful in the part of the management to know their staff during ambush.
- During rain or cold they can perform their duty
- Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project (if relevant).

Selection of volunteers (additional staffs) was very crucial. In the recent past Department has apprehended many poachers from Manas NP, from the buffer zone of the Manas Tiger Reserve and many ex poachers have surrendered before the park authority. After reviewing the present parks management and security scenario with the existing limited resources, the Park authority has realized that after a short training if the ex-poachers from the fringe areas be involved in the protection of the park on a contractual basis, Manas will get multiple benefits along with the protection of endangered wildlife, including tiger, rhino, elephant, pigmy hog, hispid hare, etc.

- A. *Confidence building* :- the park authority gain confidence of the fringe villagers by involving local people in park protection
- B. *Improve intelligence network* :- the park authorities establish good intelligence network involving the fringe villages
- C. *Employment generation* :- the park authorities provide employment for the ex-poachers and motivate them to do the conservation activities

After selection they were trained for 10 days. Training covers how to deal with the apprehended persons. In the training schedule 'behaviour in the camp' has also been incorporated. It will basically cover – how to keep camp site clean, litter control and noise control (avoid loud speakers) and so on. It is always necessary to maintain and enforce discipline amongst the volunteers. It basically cover – how to keep camp site clean, litter control and noise control (avoid loud speakers) and so on. (The training was supported by USFWS)

The training will basically address the following issues:

1. Training on wildlife
2. Training on Tourism
3. Lecture on human rights observation
4. Interaction with Kaziranga Field staffs regarding behaviour in the camps, anti-poaching activities, type of patrols, etc.

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

It is expected that the next batch of 18 rhinos will move to Manas National Park in the winter (November, 2010 to April, 2011). So it will be very crucial if we can maintain the support for the next year also to keep the volunteers well organized with uniform like all other frontline staff.

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

I am planning to prepare a paper on 'Status of Manas National Park after Indian Rhino Vision 2020'. In that paper I have a plan to give emphasis on all the Governmental and Non-Governmental donors who contributed for the betterment of Manas National Park.

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

Project: - March-2009 to April-2010 (14 months)

In the proposal we anticipated to complete the work within 12 months but actually it took 14 months to complete.

It took some time in procuring the right kind of cloth for dress and for stitching the leach guards.

**8. Budget: Please 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.**

	Item	Total (£)	Actual Amount	Difference	Comment
1	Uniform - 2 pairs of uniform per volunteer Cloth required for 1 Shirt = 2.1 meter Cloth required for 1 Pant = 1.2 meter Cloth requires per pair (one shirt and one pant)	660	750	-90	
	Teaching charges	800	830	-30	
2	Cap	100	90	10	
3	Socks 2 pairs each (50+80)	260	250	10	
4	Leach Guard (1 pairs each) (50+80)	260	275	-15	
5	Umbrella	175	180	-5	
6	Bledger (during cold weather)	250	250	0	
7	Shoes (1 pairs each volunteers) (50+80)	910	700	210	
8	Mosquito net (to protect them from malaria) (50+80)	780	795	-15	
9	Water Filter (One in each Anti-Poaching camp)	240	270	-30	
10	transportation costs for the materials form Guwahati to Manas NP	300	345	-45	
11	Assessment of volunteers performance level before and after distribution of kits Honorarium for the co-investigator for 100 days @ £ 6 / day	600	600	0	
12	Lodging in the field for 100 days @ £ 3 / day	300	300	0	
13	Salary of Principal investigator for one year			0	
14	Salary of the volunteers for one year			0	
15	Other logistic support- camps, wireless, vehicles, arms, etc.			0	
16	Administrative costs	150	150	0	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5785</b>	<b>5785</b>	<b>0</b>	

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

Indian Rhino Vision 2020 is getting pace and Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam (India) is optimistic about the next phase of translocation of 18 rhinos from Pabitora WLS to Manas NP in the month of November, 2010. All the required drugs have already arrived and it is with the department. From the last 3 years USEWS is supporting the salary of 50 number so Home guards and 50 number of Volunteers along with the support from the local Government Bodoland Territorial Council who is supporting the salary of additional 80 number of Volunteers all from the fringe villages of Manas NP. Besides the other support from WWF, Government, Atree, IRF, etc.

Support from Rufford was also very significant to provide the volunteers with dress and some other logistics. Manas will receive another 18 rhinos besides existing 5, the task in front of the management is huge. If similar kind of support can be extended for the next year it will be very helpful for the future of Rhino conservation in Assam.

**10. Did you use RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project?**

Yes I have used them in some of the materials.

Manas Tiger Project IRV-2020

Sticker produced during the project

**11. Any other comments?**

Brief overview of the Project



Released rhino moving in Manas NP



Before the initiation of the project the volunteers' on duty look like



Volunteers along with Home Guards during anti-poaching patrol



Volunteers along with Home Guards during anti-poaching patrol at Bansbari Range



Volunteers along with Forest Staff during anti-poaching patrol at Latasha



Volunteers along with Forest Staff during anti-poaching patrol under Bhuyanpara Range



Volunteers along with Forest Staff during anti-poaching patrol under Bhuyanpara Range



Volunteers along with Home Guards during anti-poaching River patrol on Beki River



Volunteers along with Home Guards and Forest staff during anti depredation drive under Bhuyanpara range.



GPS training of the volunteers and forest guards (by Aaranayak and WADWT)



Training of volunteers on the use of Radio Telemetry for tracking released rhinos.



Tracking released rhinos on the bike



Living room of the volunteers in one anti-poaching camp



Mosquito nets to protect the volunteers in one of the Anti-Poaching Camp in Manas NP



Drinking water facility



Entrance of Manas National Park



Few Volunteers of Manas National Park

### Operation Protocol for Volunteers

After training, the volunteers were posted in the interior anti-poaching camps of Manas NP along with the existing Forest Guards. As the guards will be under total control of the Forest Department, their activities will be strictly directed and supervised by the Department personnel only. They have to patrol along with the Forest Guards, under the control of the Beat Officer. They were posted in the anti-poaching camps along with the Forest Staffs and sometimes with the Home Guards. In the joint patrolling operations Forest staff, Home Guards and Volunteers work together under the guidance of Range Officer. Sometimes when the park authorities need they will be posted in temporary tents to deceive the poachers.

Volunteers cooperate with the existing forest staffs in performing day-to-day activities. As the volunteers are basically ex poachers they have intensive knowledge of the poaching trails, this helps the management to improve the protection measures of the park. As the selected volunteers are from the fringe areas of the Manas NP this will also help the management to improve the intelligence network.

Schedule of works of the Volunteers:

Major activities of the volunteers:

- A. Protection of elephants and their habitats in Manas NP along with other wildlife, through regular monitoring and patrolling
- B. Establish good report with the fringe villagers. This in turn will help to establish information network for the anti-poaching activities.
- C. Accompany the tourists and act as a guide when required.
- D. Help the Departmental elephant mahouts for caring the Departmental elephants.

The Volunteers should be alert 24 hours of the day and they are totally under the command of the Forest Department. The objective of the Volunteers is to monitor and protect the Asian Elephants and their habitat (Manas NP) and other wildlife of Manas NP, including the 2 rhinos translocate from Pabitora WLS and 4 rhinos released from CWRC.

A. Patrolling schedule :

The entire day has been divided in several blocks, so that while one party patrols other can take rest. Generally the day patrolling has been divided into 3 blocks 5.00 to 9.00 AM, 9.00 to 13.00PM and 13.00 to 5.00PM. Night patrolling from 5.00 -8.00 PM, 8.00-12.00PM and 12.00 – 5.00 PM blocks. But they are not rigid, they may be altered according to the need.

B. Wireless Network :

Volunteers are trained and equipped with the wireless network supported by the USFWS and the existing equipment's of the department.

C. Patrolling Routs and Mode :

Volunteers use patrolling paths (by Foot, Cycle, Motor Cycles, Elephant Back, Vehicle) and in river they use country boats and Rubber boats. Sometimes they also use elephants to crisscross the forested area. Most important duty entrusted to them is to guard the southern boundary of the park which is the direct contact zone with the fringe villages.

D. Other duties :

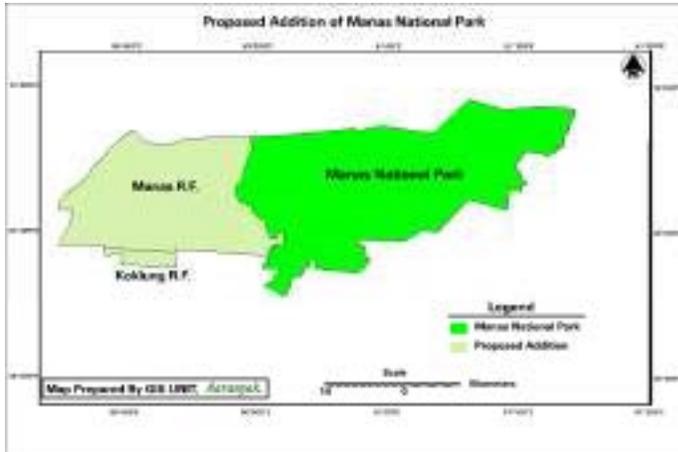
- I. They are also involved in the anti-depredation works and protection of wildlife habitats (Encroachment, Tree felling, Illegal Fishing etc.).
- II. Initially they were involved in the grazing control.
- III. Awareness campaigns, motivating peoples in conservation and preservation of Manas NP and other developmental works.
- IV. Sometimes they are also involved in tourism activities.
- V. Those who are trained they were used by the Department in recording data and tracking and monitoring the rhinos and other wildlife.
- VI. After basic training they were also used in animal census (Elephant census).
- VII. Volunteer's keeps daily field records like other Forest Department field personal.
- VIII. They help in gathering information of the movement of the trespassers.
- IX. When emergency arises they were also used as Boatman & Driving vehicles.
- X. They also sometimes help the department during capture and treatment injured wild elephants

E. Health Security :

The Park Management (Forest Department) takes the responsibility of the treatment of the Volunteers.

## F. Outcome

1. Increase the protection measure of Manas NP.
2. Park authority and the BTC have keen interest to increase the park area by adding another 300 km<sup>2</sup>.



Articles:

*Assam Tribune -22.03.09*

*Big haul of animal skins in Manas, 16 held*

## CORRESPONDENT

BARPETA, March, 21 – In one of the biggest operations against the illegal and cruel business of carcasses in the state, security forces recovered a huge quantity of animal skin and bones last night. However, in a related incident one Home Guard personnel lost his life while two persons including the Deputy Director of Manas National Park cum Tiger Project received bullet injury.

According to sources two teams of Assam Police, CRPF and Forest Guard conducted specific search operations at Barletta Road and Pathsala around 9 last night. When the team at Barpeta Road checked two cars they traced loads of animal skins and bones including those of leopard, tiger, deer, bison etc., worth more than six lakh rupees in the international market. There were twelve persons in the cars and all of them have been arrested.

The team at Pathsala also managed to apprehend four persons with similar items at a place a few kilometres north of Pathsala town, but their operation did not end on a safe note. While they were returning after their successful operation twenty rounds of

bullets accidentally got fired from an AK-47 assault rifle carried by one of the CRPF personnel accompanying them and Home Guard Haren Kalita (30) attached to the SDPO Pathsala was hit badly and was killed on the spot.

Deputy Director of Manas National Park C R Bhabora and another CRPF jawan were wounded. Though Bhabora is stated to be out of danger the CRPF jawan is known to be undergoing treatment at GMCH in a critical condition.

Recovery of such a huge quantity of valuable items and arrest of as many as sixteen persons involved in such heinous crime has created sensation in Barpeta and Baksa districts.

*Assam Tribune-02.03.10*

*Manas to get 18 more rhinos within 3 months*

#### CORRESPONDENT

BARPETA, March 1 – Giving a ray of hope to the people of not only Assam but the international community as a whole, as many as 18 rhinos are to be trans-located to the Manas National Park- cum-Tiger Project within three months. Out of these 18, six will be brought within March next. This was stated by Sushie Ellis, Executive Director of International Rhino Foundation recently.

Talking to a group of journalists, Ellis, who was on a tour to study the situation in Manas, said that IRF is serious about the restoration of the previous glory to Manas. She claimed that IRF, along with other organisations engaged in the preservation of the nature, are trying hard to retrieve Manas from the World Heritage Site in Danger.

Ellis was accompanied by five other companions. The six- member team visited Manas to have an on-the-spot study about the facilities and the progress after the first phase of translocation in April 2008.

It is worth mentioning that the International Rhino Foundation, in association with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, WWF and the Forest Department of the State, adopted an ambitious project Indian Rhino Vision 2020 (IRV 2020). The main objective of this project is to increase the rhino population to 3000 by the cut off year of 2020. As part of its initiatives two male rhinos were trans-located to Manas from Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary on the April 12, 2008 last.

#### Acknowledgements:

At the very onset we want to thank all the officials of Rufford Small Grant Office for their support. Mr. Fred Bagley and Dr. Meenakshi Nagemdran of USFWS were the main architect for the support under *Indian Rhino Vision 2020*. We thank Dr. Susie Ellis, Executive Director, Late Dr. Tom Foose, Late Dr. Nicco Van Sterin of International Rhino Foundation for their support and suggestions to improve *Indian Rhino Vision 2020* time

to time.

The works under the project could not be possible without the constant support and help from the Forest Department Assam, and Bodoland Territorial Council.

Our sincere thank goes to all the collaborators, supporters, Forest staff, Volunteers and Home Guards of Manas National Park.

Geographic location of the project site:

Manas National Park is situated in Baksa and Chirang districts of Assam, on the foothills of the Himalayas on both sides of rivers Manas and Beki along the Assam-Bhutan border. Manas NP lies between 26°35' to 26°40' N latitude and between 90°45' to 91°16' E longitude.

Conservation History:

- 1905 – Manas proposed Reserve Forest
- 1907 – Manas Reserve Forest
- 1928 – Manas Wildlife Sanctuary covering an area of 360 sq. km.
- 1955 – The Wildlife Sanctuary is extended to 391 sq. km.
- 1977 – It became core zone of Manas Tiger Project
- 1985 – Inscribed to the list of World Heritage site by UNESCO.
- 1989 – Declared as a Biosphere Reserve
- 1990 – Declared as Manas National Park with an area of 519 sq. km.
- 2002 – Core zone of Chirang Ripu Elephant Reserve under project elephant it is also an Important Bird Area (BNHS)

