

The Rufford Foundation Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford 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	Dorji Lhamo
Project title	Educating communities on the conservation benefit of Golden Mahseer (<i>Tor putitora</i>) in Sherichu River, Mongar
RSG reference	20118-1
Reporting period	December 2017
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	dorjilham91@gmail.com
Date of this report	5 th January 2018

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
To determine the habitat, distribution /occurrence of golden Mahseer				<p>For the habitat assessment, it was conducted in entire project site which is approximately 10.4 km in length. The assessment was done along the river by laying 10 m radius circular plot every 200 m on alternative side of the river. In the 10 m radius circular plots tree species were recorded. Within 10 m radius circular plots 5 m radius plots for shrub and 1 m radius plots were laid to record ground covers and herbs. The total number of plots laid and surveyed was 52. Through the entire plot dominant tree species was <i>Pinus roxburgai</i>.</p> <p>Seven species of fishes were found, including golden mahseer, during the study. The maximum density of the golden mahseer was found at the confluence while the rest of the species were found in whole stretches of the river with uniform distribution (shallow, deep and swift running water body). As per the local informants, occurrence of golden mahseer has decreased compared to previous years and the main possible reason is because of increase in threats to the particular species.</p>
To find out the natural and anthropogenic threats of golden mahseer in Sherichu river.				<p>We conducted household surveys and focus group discussions to acquire local knowledge on threats to the fish in Sherichu river. We interviewed 338 households from those communities which are near the Sherichu River. The villages included Yadi, Chaskhar and Thangrong. During the interview we</p>

			<p>asked their common fishing area and the fishing gear they usually use. According to the local people and local leaders the major threats to golden mahseer in Sherichu river is overfishing be it knowingly as well as unknowingly. People use unregulated fishing gears like blasting whereby not only golden mahseer but all the fishes in the lower part or downstream were being killed. Moreover there are lots of infrastructural developments going on around the lower part of Sherichu River proximate to the main source of Masheer-Dangmechu River confluence which contributes to the reduction of habitat and disturbance for their immigration. The road widening works nearby also create lots of disturbance and habitat reduction through rolling of rocks/stones and sand deposition.</p>
<p>Awareness raising/ conducting of conservation education of golden mahseer.</p>			<p>In collaboration with the local leaders, we carried out a workshop with local communities, teachers, students, researchers and foresters to create awareness on conservation of golden mahseer. The workshop provided a platform to share their prospective and experiences and learn from one another on importance of conservation of golden mahseer. During the workshop we discussed and identified the threats and how those threats can be managed. The major threats were illegal fishing (using explosives and poison), increased number of fishermen and infrastructural developments. The regular and priority patrolling at designated sites and enhancing law enforcement are the most reliable and immediate ways to overcome those threats as a majority of the Bhutanese population highly fear penalties and prosecution by the law. The intensification of awareness</p>

				<p>programmes and recruitment of volunteer local guards would be other alternatives. Most importantly, the initiation to introduce community based eco-tourism will be a long term conservation effort whereby local fishermen earn an income and get employed.</p>
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

I haven't come across any major problems or difficulties as such and it's all because of the grant provided by your organisation and support from my friends and referees. Some minor problems were there like catching or getting in trap of golden mahseer as it is very sensitive fish. So to overcome this problem we recruited more local fishermen.

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

The most important outcomes of my project are;

1. Through this project I could make the local people aware of importance of golden mahseer and what are applicable immediate and long-term and effective conservation measures.
2. Created baseline information on habitat, distribution and threats to golden mahseer along Sherichu River.
3. Produced a list of fishes found in Sherichu River.

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

Local people were actively involved in this project. Four experienced fishermen were involved for data collection (ex- military). We interviewed 338 households from those communities nearby Sherichu River namely Yadi, Chaskhar and Thangrong. We conducted meetings to public to create awareness on the conservation of golden mahseer. Many officials are also involved like my three referees (Jigme Dorji, Kesang Wangchuk and Rinchen Namgay), Kunzang Norbu, Phurba Drukpa, Lungten Jamtsho and my brother Dawa Sangay who was always with me.

At the end of the survey and data analysis the findings were presented to the local communities. This baseline information will help local people to initiate golden masheer conservation works, which could be strength or package for introducing eco-tourism in their village.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Since current study is carried out in only one river, I would like to carry out in some other areas and make comparisons in the future. The other alternative to continue my study on same topic would be how do golden masheer associate with other fish species and react to climate change and habitat destruction.

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

The results were presented to the stakeholders, students, local leaders and local communities during meetings and posters were also presented. The results presentation and submission of the report copy will be done to Mongar Forest Division as the study site is under its legal and protection jurisdiction. Drafting of scientific papers are underway for wider publicity.

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

The grant was fully used over a period of 1 year and the length of project period is very appropriate. We could complete all the works within that period of time.

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	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Transportation and communications	1000.17	1000.17	0	Budget managed as per plan
Professional Services	1550	1549.94	.06	Budget managed as per plan
Community Meeting, Awareness and training	1220	1216.98	3.02	The balance of \$ 3.02 has been added to equipment and stationeries
Equipment and Stationeries	1030	1035	-5	The difference of \$ 5 was met from other above item.
Report preparation and publication	200	200	0	The budget set for report was well utilized
Total	5000	5002.09	-2.09	As the difference was minimal met from my own personal money

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

It is very important to continue research and see the changes in terms of population trends and threats to the particular species. Moreover, I want to continue research in different study area on same species because people need awareness and advocacy programs in all the habitat of the golden masheer. I sincerely want to thank RF for funding my study, this study gave me lots of confidence and encouragement to pursue further works in future and most importantly helped to create awareness on importance and conservation of the golden masheer.

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

Yes, we used the Rufford Foundation logo in presentations during meetings and awareness training. The logo is been also boldly used in my report and scientific paper.

11. Any other comments?

The Rufford Foundation should re-consider funding to genuine Bhutanese researchers. To authenticate whether the applicant is genuine or not foundation could confidentially communicate several times with immediate supervisor in his or her office.



