

Project Update: August 2017

In the preliminary phase of the project, 30 questions were developed in order to conduct questionnaire survey in the field (Langtang National Park). A university professor of zoology and a former Rufford grantee assisted to finalise the questionnaire form. A BSc student of forestry campus was hired to jointly carry out the survey and do support for the whole project implementation. A local assistant was hired as a field guide. Twenty-four individuals including park rangers, hotel owners and locally existing conservation committee members were interviewed to collect details about hunting and poaching activities in the LNP. Everyone accepted that the musk deer are under threat - 83% of them stated that the threat is due to illegal hunting for musk pod. Twenty-five percent of the respondents told us the trade of musk pod is especially for medicine and perfumes. One respondent explained about its religious importance. A majority of them told us the musk pod is transported to Tibet while some assumed that commercial dealing happens in Kathmandu. None of them knew about the poachers, however according to them there were a few poachers caught at Nepal-Tibet border while transporting animal parts in the past who no longer live in the region. It has been speculated that, mostly hunters visit musk deer habitat from Helambu and Chilime side.



Left: Interviewing Local People. ©Aasish Tripathi. Right: Musk Deer Habitat in the Background. ©Aasish Tripathi.

After the questionnaire survey, musk deer habitat was explored to find out its potential threats. There were old snares found spread in the forest area opposite Sindhum village. Similarly, the buffer zone conservation committee had also done forest monitoring and found leg snares and a dead fawn. The committee shared the information with us. The findings achieved from questionnaire survey and the field exploration will be shared in the upcoming workshop with park officials.



Left: Leg Snare of Musk deer. ©Tashi Tshiring. Right: Fence Snare of Musk deer. ©Mitra Pandey.