

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	Raju Acharya
Project title	Owl Conservation in eastern hills of Nepal
RSG reference	20834-B
Reporting period	October 2016-October 2017
Amount of grant	£ 10,000
Your email address	rajuhugu_13@yahoo.com
Date of this report	20 October, 2017

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
School based owl conservation awareness camps (50 camps)				We conducted 15 additional awareness camps beside our target of 50 awareness camps. (130% - 60 camps)
Public based owl conservation awareness camps (15 camps)				Ten camps were not completed in even second attempts due to heavy rainfall and local election in the country. Five camps were completed with assistance from local communities and other stakeholders like youth clubs, NGOs and government organisations. (33% 5 camps at two districts targeting 55 people)
Owl conservation radio programs (12 episodes)				Radio programmes were aired from Bhojpur, Okhaldhunga and Khotang districts. Additional online news has highlighted the programme too. (300% (12 episodes were repeated once from various FM stations)
Production and distribution of owl conservation poster (500 pcs) and Brochure (1000 pcs)				Posters and brochure were distributed to school students, local people and conservation stakeholders where school based and public based owl conservation camps were conducted. Posters were placed on the display during the World Owl Conference (26th-30th September 2017) in Portugal. Colorful brochures were printed and distributed where ever necessary. This could be done in the future even when the funding is not granted.
Conservation workshop (three units)				This workshop was targeted at Okhaldhunga and Khotang for enforcement agencies and other conservation stakeholders. One location which was proposed to do in Udaypur was shifted to Khotang due to local election.

Owl conservation book (one)				Two books were designed, consulted and printed. One book briefs about the entire conservation issues of owls in Nepal and another will serve as a field guide for owl researchers. (200%two books).
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

The project was completed successfully except public conservation camps which were only partially achieved. Local elections were being held all over Nepal and all local people were divided over various political agendas. Thus that was not the appropriate time to deal about owl conservation issues while they have their own local agendas. This year country faced long rainy season which made field visits harder than we expected. The project was delayed a bit because we prepared to publish two books instead of one as planned earlier. We had to change the plan because we felt the need for a book that serves as a field guide to the 'owls of Nepal' instead of cramming everything in one book. It was very hard to collect photographs of owls for free to use in the book. Collection and photographs and editing process took longer than we expected.

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

3.1 Owl conservation workshop:

Three owl conservation workshops were conducted in Khotang and Okhaldhunga districts in eastern Nepal. In Khotang, workshops were held in Diktel, the district headquarters, and Jalapa. Workshop in Okhaldhunga was held in Okhaldhunga Bazaar. All together 95 participants from government offices, conservation organisations and media were present at the workshop. Participants were chosen carefully to include relevant stakeholders for owl conservation such as the police force since they are law enforcement agencies, district forest office since they are responsible for wildlife conservation at district level and journalists because they are the ones who are responsible to relay the owl conservation message to the general people. Other participants like civil society members were also present.

Workshops included a detailed presentation on owl ecology, threats and conservation issues in Nepal. At the end of workshop, discussions were held with participants on the current status of owls in their area.



Owl conservation workshop in Diktel, Khotang.

3.2. School/public awareness camps:

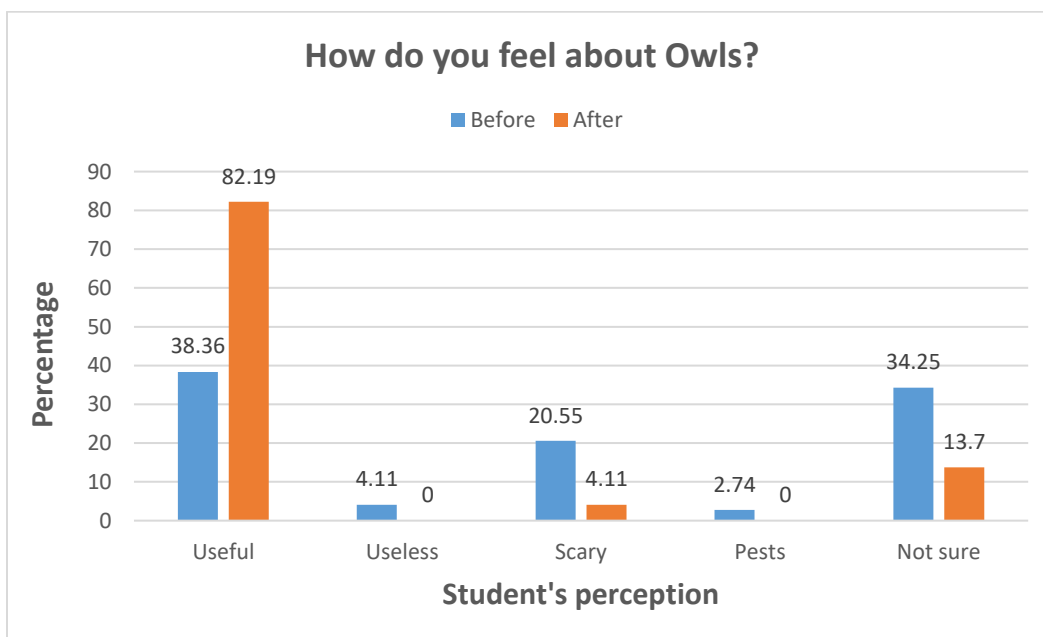
School level owl conservation awareness camps have been completed in Okhaldhunga, Khotang and Bhojpur districts of eastern Nepal. Students from 22 schools actively participated in the camp. 65 camps have been completed which included 1708 students. Students basically got the induction about owls, their ecology, threats to owl conservation in Nepal, importance of owl conservation and students' roles in owl conservation. Information about the captive owls kept in the area was also collected from students. They were also motivated to contribute towards owl conservation locally.

School level owl conservation awareness camps started with a quick survey on owls (see below for example). This included questions of students seeing or hearing owls, killing of owls, owning catapults and such. It was followed by filling up of pre-evaluation form by groups of students. After this, different owl sounds were played via external speakers. Then, characteristics of owls were described followed by reasons why owls are important and why they should be conserved. Then, the students were told about threats to owl in Nepal and what can be done to conserve them. They were also instructed what to do in case of injured or captive owls. Finally, they were given post-evaluation form to be filled collectively by the same groups.

quick survey at school conservation camps - Excel (Product)

	A	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
2											
3											
4	sn	5. Class	6. Total students present	7. Camp counted as	8. How many have seen owl?	9. How many have heard owl?	10. How many have seen owl nest?	11. How many have catapult ?	12. How many have killed owl?	13. How many have eaten owl meat?	14. How many have heard of owl trade?
5	1	5	31	1	21	20	0	8	1	1	0
6	2	4	35	1	11	12	4	7	1	1	0
7	3	6	33	1	24	10	1	9	1	1	1
8	4	4,5,6,7	61	3	40	36	14	21	4	0	0
9	5	1,2,3,4,5	16	1	13	1	0	4	0	0	0
10	6	1:10	53	2	19	7	2	4	1	0	0

Preliminary assessment help us to know about the area as well as which aspect to be focused in school and public based owl conservation camps in the project site



Responses of students before and after the conservation workshop in Okhaldhunga district



Activities during school-based owl conservation awareness camps in eastern Nepal.

Public based owl conservation awareness camps have been conducted in Okhaldhunga and Bhojpur districts of eastern Nepal. Total of five conservation camps have been completed with 55 participants. During the camp, participants were introduced about owls, their ecology, threats to own and importance of owls. Posters and brochures were also distributed during these camps.

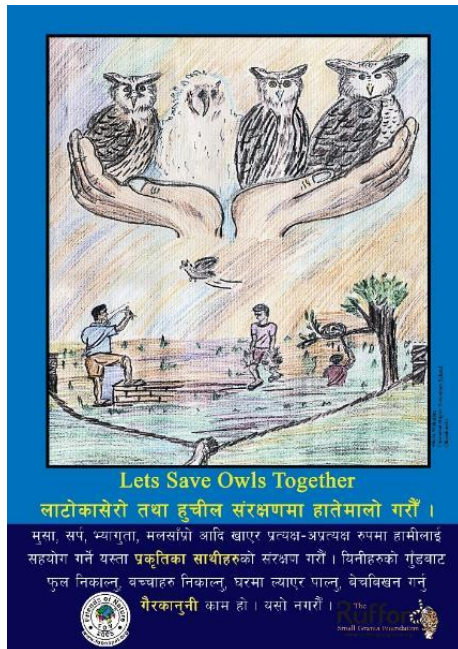
3.3. Owl conservation materials:

Owl conservation posters were designed and printed (500 pcs). It contained a short message of owl conservation and attractive drawing by Hishila Maharjan. It was made during our first owl conservation art competition in 2008. Approximately 200 pcs have been already distributed during our conservation camps, radio programmes and conservation workshops. More will be distributed in our various other programmes in other part of the country.

Owl brochure contained information about owl ecology, its threats, importance and conservation issues. We have distributed more than 400 owl conservation brochures during our project period.

Owl conservation radio program "Voice of Owls" was aired through three different FM stations in three different districts of eastern Nepal. Total of 12 episodes were aired respectively by Sahayatri FM, Rupakot FM and Radio Bhojpur FM.

The first comprehensive book on owls of Nepal has been published with the title "Latokosero ki Batokosero" (Owls: dumb or clever) in Nepali language. The book has been authored by Raju Acharya and Yadav Ghimirey. Overall information about owls, threats, conservation, hunting and trade, cultural knowledge, medicinal value, story, government policies and so on have been included in the book. The price of this book has been set as NPR 350 (USD 3.5) which will be used for "Nepal Owl Festival".



पुस्तक मूल्य: रु ३५०/-

यो पुस्तक विक्रीबाट प्राप्त रकम नेपाल लाटोकोसेरो तथा हुचील उत्सवका लागि प्रयोग गरिने छ ।

Left: Owl conservation poster. Right: First comprehensive book on owl conservation in Nepal



Field guide (back and front cover) on the owls of Nepal

3.4 Additional output:

Another book on owls of Nepal "Nepalka Latokoseroharu" has also been published. Som GC, Raju Acharya and Yadav Ghimirey have co-authored this field guide for all 23 species of owls found in Nepal. The book contains detailed information about identification and distribution of these owls along with colorful photographs. It is free and will distributed to organizations and individuals working on owls and birds in Nepal.

Designer Mr Bishal Gautam is working on its digital version in pdf format which will be made free download and compatible with smart phone, so that Nepalese researchers and bird watchers will be assisted in owl identification. This will be done shortly.

Both books were launched (13 Oct. 2017) by Prof. Karan Bahadur Shah (renowned wildlife biologist of Nepal) and Dr Hem Sagar Baral (Pioneer Ornithologist and Country Manager of ZSL program Nepal) in capital city. Altogether 25 participants (mostly journalists) attended the programme. Free copies were provided to the journalists and other participants.

Nepalese media has highlighted the book. Some links are mention as below (all in local language)

<http://www.pahilopost.com/content/-40492.html>

<http://www.newsofnepal.com/2017/10/13/59730/>

<http://www.everesttimesnews.com/owl-books/#sthash.gWnWqObe.dpbs>



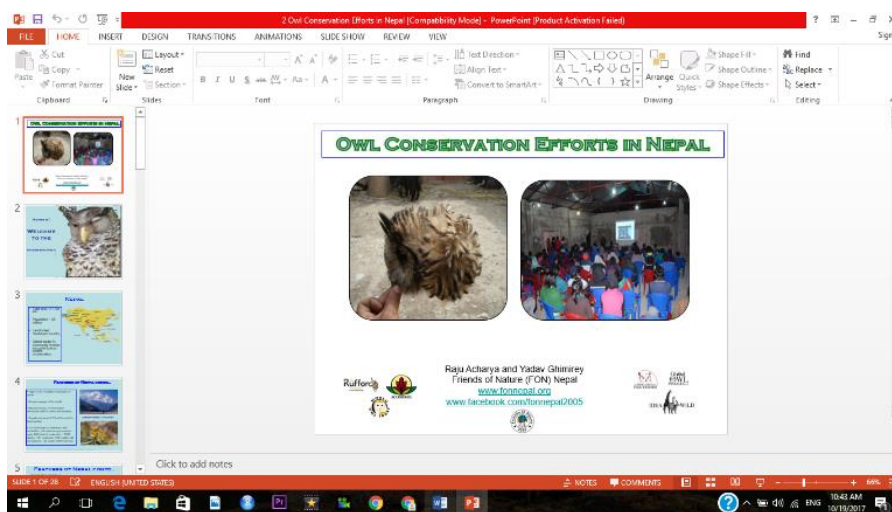
Prof. Karan Bahadur Shah with Dr Hem Sagar Baral, highlighting the features of book during the book launch program in Kathmandu

3.5 World Owl Congress

Three oral presentations titled 'owl conservation efforts in Nepal', 'Hunting and trade dynamics of owls in Nepal' and 'Effective owl conservation methods in Nepal' were presented at World Owl Congress held in Portugal (26th-30th September, 2017). All the conservation efforts adopted and implemented by Nepal was appreciated by researchers and conservationists from all over the world. Rufford Logo was used in all three presentations. During this conference, owl conservation poster were put in a display which were made since 2008 in Nepal.



Principal researcher Mr. Raju Acharya presenting owl conservation issues to the global audience at Portugal



Rufford small Grant's logo was used in all presentation

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

Local communities including students and local people were actively involved in the conservation awareness camps. They were able to learn various owl related information like importance of owls, local threats to owls and their role to conserve owls.

People from local communities also actively participated during distribution of posters and brochures that contained information about the importance of owls and ways to conserve owls. Radio programme also highlighted the issues of local threats, people's role in conservation, basic rehabilitation methods. Local communities got a chance to know owls better in how they control mice population and help in regulating ecosystem. Most people were unaware about the issues of legal sanctions in case of hunting and trade of owls. Thus the current trend in local hunting and trade might decrease after these conservations camps.

Students and local people also shared their idea on owl and the probable threats they have seen locally. This mutual sharing of owl issues will conserve the species in long run and both the owls and local people will be benefit directly and indirectly.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Based on the available information species action plan of owls in Nepal is essential. This documents will guide policy maker, law enforcement agency and researcher the way forward. However, for its legacy and proper implementation, the document needs to be prepared in coordination with government and other stakeholders. It is also important that the document thus prepared be validated from the government for the long term governmental support.

Since the Rufford has funded three projects in Nepal and they have covered different geographical location. Conservation camps could be accommodated with annual 'Nepal Owl Festival' which is one of the largest conservation festival in country outside the capital city. Including with local level conservation workshop/camps, national level workshop including all policy level stakeholder, environment journalist and including with enforcement agency is planned for future.

Friends of Nature has been collecting information (hunting and trade, ethno-zoology of owl and other conservation issues) even before the Rufford Foundation funded this work and will continue to do so. Preliminary information collected has been compiled in the book. However this book should be translated in English so the conservation stakeholders in India and China can also get to know these issues. Since, owl hunting and trade in trans-boundary in nature, it is really important that the three countries work together.

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

We have been sharing our work through result dissemination workshops, popular media and scientific publications. The use of wide public media such as and Facebook and Youtube has also been used to upload our results and conservation messages. Owl conservation workshop was used to disseminate our results during previous owl projects and this owl project to stakeholders. Our work has also been getting the attention of national and local print and online news portals.

We have published a book where we have tried to include important results from the beginning to current projects on owl conservation. Similarly, we will also share the results of our work at the "Nepal Owl Festival" where we put media coverage of our work along with owl issues and our publication on owls in display for the public. Similarly, guide book on owls of Nepal "Nepal ka Latokoseroharu" aims to help ornithologists and general public to identify different species of owls in Nepal.

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

Majority of the fund was used for book publication. The publication of book took throughout the project period since it included writing manuscripts, editing, collecting photographs, designing and sending it to the press. Grant was used at the first phase for printing of conservation materials and to buy air time for the radio programmes. During this phase, the grant was also used to conduct more than 65 school-based owl conservation camps. Remaining budget was used over time in various programmes until the second week of October 2017. Various programmes and their respective budget were used at the allocated 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
Owl conservation workshops (2 units)	1230	1150	(+70)	
School and public awareness Camps	2950	2500	(+450)	
Owl conservation radio program	1680	1600	(+80)	

Owl conservation materials production and distribution	7110	7500	(-390)	Two booklet were printed instead of one
Total	12970	12750	(+220)	
Amount received from Rufford	10000			
Amount used from FON Nepal	2750			
Budget remaining	+ 220			Its Internal budget so remaining budget will be used in other owl related conservation

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

Species (overall owl) action plan is an important step for species conservation in Nepal in the long run. This will be more effective when prepared and endorsed by the government of Nepal.

Recently published book on owl conservation needs to be translated in English so that it will have international impact especially in India and China.

Detailed scientific study specifically targeted on hunting and trade of owl must be conducted and the probable trade routes of owls must be identified.

National owl conservation workshop is more important to share information with policy maker.

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?

The logo of the Rufford Foundation was used in owl conservation posters (500 pcs), brochures (1000 pcs), owl book (1000), and guide book (500). The logo was also displayed during the owl conservation workshop presentation, and in banners prepared for school based owl conservation camps. The foundation's name and activities were also posted in our organisation's Facebook group/page which has more than 12800 members (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/fonnepal/?ref=bookmarks>). The logo was also used in three presentation made during the Global Owl Congress in Portugal.

11. Any other comments?