

Project Update: February 2018

Field surveys of Sarus crane *Grus antigone* were carried out from July to November 2017 in the Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur (B, B, K and K) districts of western Nepal using line transects and direct observation methods in the monsoon and winter seasons. Population size was found to vary between seasons, with maximum numbers of individuals observed during the monsoon, which is also the breeding season for Sarus crane. The



numbers of Sarus crane detected in 2017 in the monsoon in B, B, K and K districts were 23, 2, 6 and 8 individuals respectively, and in the winter 11, 2, 2 and 5 respectively. Two breeding pairs were observed in Banke (with 2 and 1 chicks), one pair in Kailali (no successful breeding) and two pairs in Kanchanpur district (with 2 and 1 chicks).

A total of 50 local people responded to semi-structured questionnaire surveys in the Banke district, of which 49% knew of Sarus crane. Of these 39% had seen nests, and 21% reported seeing eggs. Respondents identified major threats to Sarus crane as illegal collection of eggs, harassment, construction activities, eucalyptus tree plantations and free ranging dogs. The historical distribution of Sarus crane was outlined. In addition, a checklist of birds accounting 209 species was prepared from the project site.

Two types of posters were developed and 1000 copies were distributed mainly in Sarus crane observed areas. The poster and audio-visual presentations were given to school students, farmers, teachers and local youth club members. For the conservation message to spread rapidly, a talk radio programme about Sarus crane was broadcast by the local radio Sunaulo F.M. In each presentation, the focus was on Sarus crane ecology and behaviour, their population trends and conservation status in Nepal, reasons for population decline, and conservation measures.

The information was shared during RSG Conference-2018 in Nepal and the article (compiled from 1st and 2nd grant) is published in Bird Conservation Nepal (Partner Organization of Birdlife International) Newsletter-Munal-2018. <http://birdlifenepal.org/newsletters>.

