

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	Sunita Rai
Project title	Habitat assessment and determination of potential anthropogenic threats of Hispid hare (<i>Caprolagus hispidus</i>) in southern foothills of Bhutan
RSG reference	Application ID: 21018-1
Reporting period	2016-2017
Amount of grant	£5,000
Your email address	sunitazz2013@gmail.com
Date of this report	18/12/2017

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
<p>I. Habitat assessment of the Globally endangered Hispid Hare (<i>Caprolagus hispidus</i>)</p>				<p>The potential habitat of the hispid hare was assessed in close collaboration with communities located within the close vicinity of the study area. Wildfires and cattle grazing are identified as the major factors leading to the habitat degradation of the target species.</p>
<p>II. Determination of the potential conservation threats of Hispid hare (<i>Caprolagus hispidus</i>)</p>				<p>Similar to the objective I, most of the people from the project locality, forestry officials, and local leaders stated that anthropogenic agents like frequent occurrence of wildfires, grazing and unchecked exploitation of the forest resources have pushed the target species towards the brink of existence, making them difficult to spot in the project area.</p>
<p>III. Formulation of appropriate conservation strategies of Hispid Hare through the involvement of various stakeholders</p>				<p>Through the involvement of stakeholders like local forestry officials, local government, and local communities, the study area has been recognised as the region of conservation importance. Basic strategies like restriction of cattle grazing, forest resource collection, and burning of agricultural debris has been implemented at the local level.</p>

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

The notable constraints faced during the study were:

- a) Involvement of local communities during the process of the project implementation. All most all the community members were not aware of the target species and were reluctant to be the part of the project. However, after the awareness meeting, the communities participated and functioned as the core agent in identification of various anthropogenic stressors, threatening the target species.
- b) Support from the Local Government (LG) was not felt during the initial phase of the project. Restriction of cattle grazing, and collection of forest resources from the project area was not accepted by the LG. Following the awareness meeting on the target species, LG too complied with project proposal.

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

The three important results of the project are:

- a) Through the project, communities and, even the local forestry and LG officials came to realise that species of conservation importance like hispid hare exist amidst habitat fragmentation and anthropogenic disturbances. They also gained the knowledge on the potential habitat of the target species
- b) The potential habitats of the target species were identified within the project area.
- c) Conservation strategies of the target species were identified, proposed and accepted at the local level.

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

The local communities at the project site were fully engaged during the entire course of the study. They were present during the awareness training and extended full cooperation during the data collection in the field. Communities were also proactively involved during the site visit to identify the potential habitat of the target species. The local communities benefitted through receiving the incentives when the relevant officials made visit to the field related to the project.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Although the potential habitat of the target species has been identified, the species could not be recorded despite the setting of camera trapping. Thus, further exploration needs to be made to confirm the existence of the species in the project area. And given the conducive environment to take up the study in the future,

similar project has to be propagated along the entire southern foothills of the country to confirm the presence of the species.

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

The periodic results of the project have been disseminated to the stakeholders after every phase of the study. Further, information on the potential habitat of the target species will be shared with the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of the project area, and LG falling within the immediate vicinity of the project site. Similarly, the findings of the project will be displayed on the district webpage.

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

1. Literature review – Referring papers and publications, determining methodologies, and framing sampling designs: November to mid-December, 2016.
2. Obtaining approval to commence the project from the Department and other relevant agencies: December, 2016.
3. Design and develop the format and questionnaires to collect data: January, 2017.
4. Imparting training to the stakeholders involved in the project to conduct the data collection, using formats and questionnaires developed: February, 2017.
5. Data collection on the assessment of habitat of Hispid hare, and conduct advocacies-December, 2016.
6. Conduct of habitat assessment survey: March, 2017.
7. Compilation and analysis of the data: April, 2017.
8. Creation of awareness on status and conservation importance of hispid hare to School children, local communities, local leaders, field level forestry officials, and policy makers: May, 2017.
9. Advocacies on the importance of conservation of hispid hare: June, 2017.
10. Submit 1st quarterly progress report to the funding agency: July, 2017.
11. Conduct of social survey using semi-structured questionnaire-interview with the local communities, local forestry officials, and other relevant stakeholders on the threats of conservation of hispid hare: August, 2017.
12. Submission of 2nd quarterly progress report to the funding agency: September, 2016.
13. Final data analysis and result interpretation: October, 2017.
14. Final report submission to Donor agencies and applying paper for publications in various Journals: December, 2017.

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
Purchase of a pair of Binoculars, gumboot, Torches, knives, and other kitchen utensils for the field trips and jungle camp	400	400		
Purchase of overheads for advocacies and awareness creating programs. Purchase of field survey tents and field gears	300	300		
Purchase of GPS (Map60 CSX), digital camera, guide books, and camera lens	400	400		
Purchase of printer for printing of survey forms, questionnaires, pamphlets, and other advocacy materials	300	300		
Habitat assessment survey and conservation awareness program (3 days X 5 staffs X£5.37)	81	81		
Field survey, empirical observations, and data collection for assessing the factors degrading the natural habitat (15 days X 10 staffs X £5.37)	806	806		
Charges for potters and ponies while shifting camps and stations in study area in absence of road worthy roads	350	350		
Training of field staffs on survey methods, survey protocols, and research objective presentations	150	150		
Purchase of training materials (Charts, White Boards, Markers, and other materials)	250	250		
Group catering (Lunch and refreshment) during the field survey and advocacies/awareness creating programs (10 days x 20 heads x £ 3.95)	790	790		
Vehicle rental and hiring charge (during the entire course of the project travelling from one place to another)	500	500		
Posters/Banners on Hispid hare information to be displayed and distributed to the participants and other agencies (7 nos. X £ 30)	210	210		
Pamphlets, badges, brochures and stickers for	100	100		

awareness creating programs				
Airing/publication in media	100	100		
Data compilation/analysis, report writing and presentation on findings to the stakeholders involved in the project, and exit meetings (Working Lunch)	100	100		
Payment for report publication(10 copies X £ 16.3) for distribution to relevant institutions/organization, or individuals	163	163		
Grand Total Expenditure:	5000 £			

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

The next important step could be the exploration of the presence of the target species through more extensive camera trapping along the entire region of the southern foothills of the country.

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

Yes. The Rufford Foundation logo was used during every correspondence made with the various stakeholders involved in the project. The logo was also used for the information sharing of the project on the district website of the project site. Yes, the Rufford Foundation did receive the publicity at the district level during the course of conducting the study.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

The following individuals and institutions played vital roles in the commencement/completion of the project:

- a) Referees (**Dr Kurt A. Johnson, Dr M Firoz Ahmed, and Mr Jambay**): assisted during the entire course of the project by providing guidance and necessary supports
- b) Divisional Forest Officers (Samtse and Samdrupjongkhar Districts): granted the permission to commence the project and provided the forestry officials for field guidance and support
- c) Foresters: forestry officials of Pemathang, Samdrupjongkhar, particularly, **Mr Wangchuk**, helped me in making logistics arrangement and advocacies

d) **Mr Pemathinley**: assisted me in commencement of the project at Sipsu, Samtse

12. Any other comments?

To initiate such project was a great opportunity and I learnt many essential aspects of the hispid hare which demands much of the conservationists' attention. I will be taking-up more extensive study on the target species in the near future. I am really grateful to The Rufford Foundation for financial support.

