

Project Update: July 2017

In line with the objective I and II of the project, "Habitat assessment and determination of potential anthropogenic threats of hispid hare (*Caprolagus hispidus*) in southern foothills of Bhutan", public advocacy was coordinated including school children of the vicinity community.

Before the actual field survey was initiated on the target species to identify the threats, a presentation was made to the students, public and local forestry officials. During the course of the presentation, hispid hare was introduced with photographs and identifying features to the participants.

Then, semi-structured interview with the local communities living adjacent to the project area, local forestry officials, schoolchildren (selected through drawing lots method), and local leaders was conducted in order determine the conservation threats of the target species (both anthropogenic and natural). During the survey, a majority of the students (70%) believed that anthropogenic factors like careless extraction of forestry resources and ever expanding of grazing land have played major role in sporadic distribution of the target species, while rest of the students have no adequate idea on hispid hare and its distribution.

Similarly, 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 back the target species towards the brink of existence making it difficult to spot in the project area.

However, in the next step camera trapping will be carried out to explore the existence of the target species in the project area.





