

Project Update: December 2017

The activities that were conducted in the first half of the year included:

1. Consultation meeting.
2. Field survey.
3. Education and awareness.

1. Consultation meeting

At the beginning of the project in July 2017, a consultation meeting was conducted with the locals at Gurdum, Dhorfirdi, (the adjoining area of Giddhabase, ward number 9) in which people were educated about the importance of vultures and their conservation, the possibility of developing and promoting the site to raise ecotourism by homestay facilities and improving the local peoples' livelihood by selling their agricultural products, thereby creating employment opportunities for the locals.

Consultation was conducted with the central level experts from Department of Forest (DoF), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Nepal, Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) and Zoological Society of London (ZSL) which included sharing of field experience and collection of their views and suggestions for further planning of the project in August 2017.

2. Field survey

In July 2017, the survey of vultures was conducted along the Millennium Trekking Route in the forest at Kharbari Arkhudi, Gurdum and Dhorbarahi. Field survey was conducted using binoculars cameras, GPS, checklist and questionnaire forms.

Also, a field survey was conducted in f November 2017 from Rastal, Giddhabase, Bajasthala, Dhorbarahi temple to Dulegaunda. GPS coordinates of the MTR were noted. Also, the GPS coordinates of Kot Durbar, Dhorbarahi and other temples, vulture sighted areas, etc. along the MTR were noted. During the survey, a questionnaire was circulated amongst the local people in the MTR based on history of vulture's existence, species of vultures, trends of population change, habitat, feeding and ecotourism. The population of vulture were counted along the MTR from Gurdum to Dhorbarahi temple.

3. Education and awareness

i. School awareness

Awareness programmes for school kids were conducted in two schools. The programs included various activities in Shree Rajasthal Primary School at Rastal and Sharada Primary School at Gurdum along the Millennium Trekking Route (MTR). Altogether, 40 students participated in the awareness activities.

ii. Community awareness

Community awareness was conducted along the Millennium Trekking Route (MTR) in a homestay at Rastal, Dhorfirdi (near Gurdum). The programme was conducted

amongst Women's Groups in the community. 35 people participated in the awareness program in the community.

A 2-day training workshop and 3-day training and exposure visit to Vulture Safe Feeding Site will be conducted in the next 6 months.