

## The Rufford Foundation

### Final Report

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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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

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#### Grant Recipient Details

<b>Your name</b>	Sandhya Manandhar
<b>Project title</b>	Integrating Vulture Conservation and Ecotourism promotion at Giddhabase (Vulture habitat) of Tanahun district Nepal
<b>RSG reference</b>	22205-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	June 2017 to June 2018
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£ 4979
<b>Your email address</b>	sandhya.mdr31@gmail.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	8 July 2018

**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
To determine the population status of vulture in Dhorfirdi VDC				Population counts of vulture were conducted in summer and winter.
Education on vulture conservation by using audio visual media to the schools and communities				Conservation education conducted to both at school level and community level.
To raise awareness on vulture conservation among the Local Forest Users Group (LFUG) and concerned stakeholders through capacity building training cum workshop				Training cum workshop was conducted with the support of the local community and the Women's Group at Gurdum.
Exposure visit to Vulture Safe Feeding Site for local community groups				12 participants visited Ghachowk VSFS.

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

i. Less interest on the target species

It was difficult to make people understand the importance of vultures and how they would benefit from conservation of this species. Team tried teaching them relationship between vulture and economic benefits.

ii. Difficulty on accommodation and food

The project site was not facilitated with accommodation facilities. There was no hotel or living facilities within project site. Team had travelled longer distance for accommodation. Local resident also provided space to accommodate within their house once. Despite local community were mostly farmers they did not grow vegetables and had to depend on urban city for vegetables. Due to transportation cost, vegetables price was higher that local people could not afford for their daily living.

iii. No adequate electricity

There was lack of regular electricity facility in the project site that prevented project team to conduct audio visual awareness programme as expected. Regular electricity would have made the awareness programme more effective. Team also

used alternative chart papers, meta cards and hard copies of education materials during awareness campaigns.

iv. More interested participants

Project target was to train 20 participants and conduct exposure visit to 10 participants, however the interested number increased and we had to adjust 31 participants in training workshop and 12 participants in exposure visit.

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

The major outcomes of the project were as following.

- A. Identify the status of vulture.
- B. Nesting behaviour.
- C. Awareness and training.

#### A. Identify the status of vulture

During the field survey along Millennium Trekking Route (MTR), in November 2017, three white-rumped vultures were sighted at Gurdum, one white-rumped vulture, three Eurasian griffon and two Egyptian vultures were sighted at Bajasthala. All vultures were observed flying in the sky.

Maximum population of vulture along MTR in Dhorfirdi was noted to be 30 and minimum six. Altogether, six species of vultures were observed during the transect survey in March 2018 i.e. red headed vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*), Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), white-rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*), Himalayan griffon (*Gyps himalayensis*), Eurasian griffon (*Gyps fulvus*) and slender-billed vulture (*Gyps tenuirostris*).



Left: Egyptian vulture. Right: Himalayan Griffon.

#### B. Nesting behaviour

Nesting site of red-headed vultures were found in the nest at Kharbari (Kafaldanda-Bhardanda Community Forest, initially named as Tinkhole Ban by the local people

before it was declared as community forest). Their nesting behaviour was observed and noted down. An egg was found to be incubated by a pair of vultures alternately one after another. The juvenile of red-headed vulture was successfully hatched from egg in the nest and it was ready to fly in the first week of June 2018.



Male Red-headed vulture protecting egg in the nest.



Male and female Red-headed vultures during incubation period in the nest.



Juvenile Red-haded vulture at nest.

### **C. Awareness and training**

#### **Awareness**

Three awareness programmes were conducted in two schools for school kids and one for the local community (Women Group). Those awareness programmes included various activities in location of Shree Rajasthal Primary School, Sharada Primary School and homestay at Dhorfirdi of Millennium Trekking Route (MTR).

#### **i. School awareness**

School awareness was conducted in two schools in November 2017 at Dhorfirdi in Shree Rajasthal Primary School and Sharada Primary School. All students and teachers from both school participated in the presentation and documentary on vulture conservation activities. Among them, 20 students from each school participated in colouring competition in the sketch of vulture.

Information on the surrounding area was obtained through FGD from the teachers. Top four competitors from each school were selected and awarded with prizes with logo of Rufford Small Grant. The schools were provided with a Token of Love with RF logo and pamphlets on vulture conservation. The awareness activities developed the concept that vultures should be conserved.



School awareness program 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. Altogether 50 people participated in the community awareness. Although participants were well known about vulture existence they were unaware about their conservation.

After awareness activities, people got insight on importance of vulture conservation. Feedback collected at the end of programme among the participants showed that

the programme was fruitful which made them aware about status and importance of vulture and they were also interested in vulture conservation and ecotourism promotion in their area.



Community awareness activities.

## **Training cum workshop and exposure visit to Ghachowk Vulture Restaurant for local community groups**

### **i. Training cum workshop**

A 2-day training cum workshop was conducted on Integrating Vulture Conservation and Ecotourism promotion at Giddhabase, Dhorfirdi of Tanahun district Nepal at Sharada Primary School, ward number 9, Gurdum, Dhorfirdi.

Training cum workshop was conducted with 31 participants at Gurdum, Tanahun. During the training cum workshop, participants were divided into three groups. Each group was provided with a separate topic for discussion i.e. potential and challenges of ecotourism in MTR, programs that can be conducted for ecotourism development at Dhorfirdi and steps that shall be taken for establishing informal vulture safe feeding site in the area. The participants discussed in group on the topics and a representative from each group presented among other participants by using meta card.

According to the participants, MTR has possibility of physiographic, natural, religious and historical importance. However, the MTR has challenges in conservation, homestay establishment and operation, vulture restaurant, lack of awareness programs and information dissemination on vulture conservation. Management of homestay with emphasis on sanitation, protection of traditional dress, culture, use of sign boards in different places with information of tourist attractions and use of locally available resources are necessary for development of ecotourism in Dhorfirdi. For establishing informal vulture safe feeding site in the area, diclofenac should be replaced by meloxicam for the treatment of sick animals. Weak and disabled cattle should be kept in the safe place and discarded in the safe and open place after death, conserve tall trees in the forest, silence should be maintained in vulture's

habitat, regular monitoring on the vulture habitat should be conducted and awareness should be spread for conservation.

After the training cum workshop, the participants realised that, although the area has high potential of ecotourism, they were unaware of it. The perception of people on vulture conservation was found to be positive. Also, the knowledge level among the participants increased on vulture conservation and ecotourism promotion.







Training cum workshop activities.

**ii. Exposure visit to Ghachowk Vulture Restaurant for local community**

12 participants were selected from training cum workshop for exposure visit to Ghachowk Vulture Restaurant. The objective of exposure visit to vulture restaurant was to educate people on vulture conservation and enhance the local community to form an informal vulture safe feeding site in Dhorfirdi.

Participants observed vultures and the vulture restaurant at Ghachowk, tree species in and around the vulture restaurant. The participants were told about the vulture species in vulture restaurant, management of vulture restaurant, homestay around vulture restaurant by Khusi Man Gurung, care taker of vulture restaurant at Ghachowk.

Most of the participants were unaware of the vulture restaurant and its management. However, after the exposure visit to vulture restaurant at Ghachowk, they were clear about the concept on vulture restaurant and its management. The local ward representative committed that he will approach for allocating budget in vulture conservation in Dhorfirdi. The community have committed to establish a homestay for promoting ecotourism with good sanitation facilities.

Group photo was captured with participants along with banner. Token of appreciation was provided to BCN field biologist and the ward representative of Gurdum, Dil Bahadur Thapa.





Activities during exposure visit to Ghachwok Vulture Restaurant.

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

Awareness on vulture conservation was conducted within 20 students each in Shree Rajasthal Primary School and Sharada Primary School at Dhorfirdi. Community awareness was conducted among 50 participants along MTR in a homestay at Rastal, Dhorfirdi. The programme was conducted among Women's Groups in the community.

Training cum workshop was conducted with 31 participants at Gurdum, Tanahun. 12 participants from the training cum workshop were selected for exposure visit to Ghachowk Vulture Restaurant. Training cum workshop was conducted with the support of Women's Groups at Gurdum.

From the overall activities, people got clear insight on the importance of vulture conservation and ecotourism activities in the area. They were interested in vulture conservation and the Women's Group at Kharbari has committed to start a homestay to promote ecotourism. Also, they were interested to form an informal vulture safe feeding site in the area.

#### 5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Although the project site has high potential of ecotourism it is lacking the hotels or homestay, technical manpower for vegetable farming and livelihood promotion activities, sign boards and hoarding boards about the important tourist spots, etc. During awareness and training cum workshop activities, more number of people were found to be interested which concludes that the awareness activities will be more effective in other parts of MTR as well. Therefore, the further planning of the work will be based considering these issues.

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

Results of the research viz population status, behaviour, etc. were shared with the local community and stakeholders during training cum workshop and consultation. I am working on manuscript of this research finding with additional information in behaviour study, and looking forward to publish in peer reviewed journal.

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

The Rufford Foundation grant has been used from July 2017 to June 2018.

**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
Food for Research assistants	541	530	11	
Food for principal Investigator & Co-Investigator	361	350	11	
Accommodation for research assistants	812	800	12	
Accommodation for PI & CI	541	530	11	
Food for two days training workshop	361	360	1	
Food for three days capacity building training & exposure visit	180	180	0	
Accommodation for two days training workshop	541	540	1	
Accommodation for three days capacity building training cum workshop & exposure visit	271	400	-129	T-shirts, Token of appreciation was not in actual budget. Nature First had financial support.
Training materials	90	90	0	
Participants travel cost	180	200	-20	Due to lack of public vehicle, team had to hire Jeep from highway to project site
Exposure visit vehicle hire	150	200	-50	Cost underestimated in actual budget
Travel cost to and from Kathmandu for the project team	150	240	-90	Cost underestimated in actual budget

Snacks for 50 participants for school awareness activities	94	90	4	
Prize for winners for school awareness activities	75	75	0	
Banners	30	30	0	
Consultation workshop (Half day planning - two times)	301	250	51	
Sharing workshop mid & final two times	301	250	51	
	4979	5115	-136	Difference in budget was supported by Nature First Nepal

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

To provide the training and financial support for livelihood promotion activities such as establishment of homestay, technical support for vegetable farming activities, use of sign boards and hoarding boards in the MTR.

### 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?

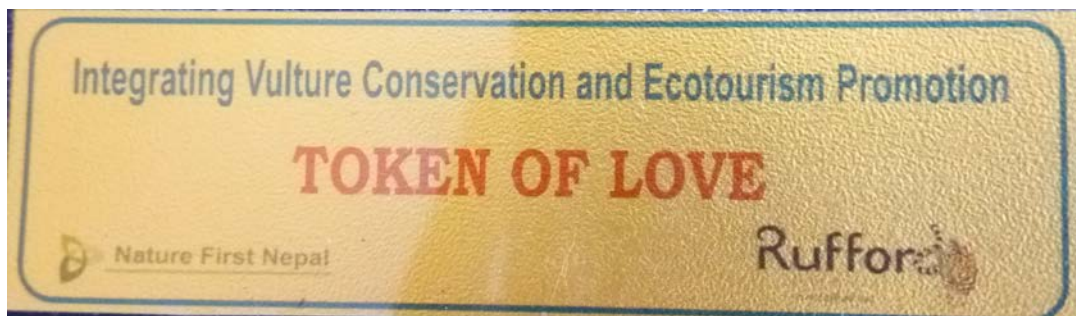
The Rufford Foundation logo was used in prize distribution for the students at school, token of appreciation for the schools, community and Bird Conservation Nepal, banner for the training cum workshop and exposure visit, questionnaires and t-shirts were designed with the logo. Local community and stakeholders highly appreciated the financial support of The Rufford Foundation and expected similar support in future.



Token of appreciation and T-shirt with the logo of vulture and map of MTR.



Banner used for awareness, training cum workshop and exposure visit.



Sticker used in the prize distribution in school and community awareness activities.

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

The project was run with the support of the members that included

**Sandhya Manandhar** is a team leader of the project. She worked to achieve the goals set and coordinate with the team members, local community, local bodies associated to the project area and other related stakeholders.

**Mr. Tej Kumar Shrestha** provided an advisory role in the entire project.

**Mr. Anish Parajuli** worked as tourism expert. He supported in the activities related to eco-tourism in the project.

**Miss Anju Koirala, Mr. Arjun Subedi, Mr. Bijay Maharjan** and **Miss Sarita Lawaju** worked as research assistant. They supported in the entire field work by data

collection, attending consultation meetings, training and awareness activities and support in analyzing and preparing the draft report.

**Mr. Saroj Koirala** provided advice in GIS and remote sensing issues.

**Mr. Ankit Bilas Joshi** provided a technical support in the training cum workshop and exposure visit to Ghachowk Vulture Restaurant.

**Mrs. Wendy Wright, Mr. Bishnu Prasad Shrestha** and **Dr. Achyut Aryal** supported and provided guidance in the entire project.

## **12. Any other comments?**

For vulture conservation, training on management of VSFS to the local community and CFUG shall be effective. Also, the human disturbance near the nesting site of vulture should be prohibited. The livelihood improvement activities shall be conducted in the trekking route through ecotourism development, use of locally available resources rather than depending on the urban market through vegetable farming and other activities.