

## Final Project Evaluation Report

---

Your Details	
Full Name	Bishnu Thapa
Project Title	Red Panda ( <i>Ailurus fulgens fulgens</i> , Cuvier 1825) status, distribution and participatory conservation initiatives in Bhojpur district of eastern Nepal.
Application ID	22491-1
Grant Amount	£ 5000
Email Address	chhetry.bishnu366@gmail.com
Date of this Report	2 August, 2018

**1. 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
Determine the status and distribution of red panda.				The study site was divided into three blocks based on the possible habitat of the species after the consultation with the local stakeholders. Grids each of size 1.6 x 1.6 km were made and line transects were overlaid in the grids. Sign survey was also done following transects.
Identify the red panda hotspot area and Creation of Geographical Information System (GIS) map.				Based on the record of species presence sign, red panda hot spot areas were identified and GIS map of species distribution was prepared.
Conduct different Awareness and environmental education activities.				We produced Various awareness materials such as brochures, posters, t-shirts, banners and hoarding board and distributed to the targeted communities. Furthermore, school based awareness event including red panda eco-club formation, arts and essay competitions were conducted in four schools of the project area. Interaction programme was made with community forest user group, local leader, forest officials, livestock herders who are directly concerned with the project.
Empower the local government bodies and community group with science based survey techniques.				Survey techniques including use of GPS, compass, binoculars and field data collection were given to the local stakeholders to develop them as citizen scientists.
Motivate the local community through bio-briquette production training				Bio-briquette training was given to the community of Tinsanje Village in order to decrease their dependency on forest resources for firewood.

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

We did not face any difficulties during the project implementation period except some climatic and topographic steepness.

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

1. This study provides the baseline information on the status and distribution of red panda and confirmed the presence of red panda for the first time in Bhojpur district with their faecal pellets and photographic evidence of the species. It was the first comprehensive scientific survey regarding the red panda exploration in Bhojpur, Nepal. Such information helps to identify the key areas of red panda for monitoring and conservation.
2. The different awareness materials including posters, brochures, leaflets, t-shirts were produced and distributed to the targeted groups (local people, livestock herders, teachers, forest officials, students, local organisations) as a means of conservation message to develop the positive attitude among them. Moreover, installation of flex board containing the detailed information on red panda ecology, need for species conservation, challenges of species conservation and its conservation status was crucial in terms of conservation aspect for public awareness. Some awareness materials were kept at information centre of district Forest Office to distribute the visitors for mass awareness. We also conducted art and essay competition programme in four different schools of Bhojpur district. Similarly, group discussions were made with the member of community forest users in two different locations (Tinsanje and Dobane).
3. Science based wildlife survey and monitoring techniques were given to the community forest members, livestock herders, students, and teachers to become citizen scientists. They gathered information on red panda and other associated wildlife in the field using survey techniques and methods including identification of red pandas sign, use of GPS, compass, quadrat sampling and field data collection procedures to ensure the species monitoring.

**4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project.**

The involvement of local communities is key to the successfully implementation of the project. So we involved local communities in all activities of the project since its beginning. The community forest users, herders, and students, local government bodies were trained with species survey and monitoring tool and techniques to develop them as citizen scientists. They were also involved in field survey, conservation and awareness programmes, social survey and consultation meetings. The local communities can be benefitted from red panda ecotourism and sustainable use of forest resources. Besides that, the local people involving in the field survey were provided with daily allowances. Moreover, through the bio-

briquette production training, people can adopt bio-briquette production as an alternative source of income generation.

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

We found lacking of detailed information regarding red panda in the adjoining region of the current project and species are facing high anthropogenic pressure as in Bhojpur. So, I have planned to continue red panda research and conservation works in such unexplored possible site outside the protected area and will keep on expanding my approach of conserving red panda in Nepal. Since this project providing positive vibe among the local people toward red panda conservation, it is necessary to continue the project along with the extension of other awareness education programmes. Furthermore, we still lack comprehensive information on its ecology and feeding habit, which are crucial for species long term conservation.

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

The results of this work were published in some local newspapers and media. I will submit report of research finding to the concerned authorities including Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), Department of Forest, District Forest office, Red Panda Network, Nepal for wide assess of information regarding species. Furthermore, we are planning for scientific publications as a contribution to increase the knowledge regarding red panda and baseline to develop collaborative conservation networks.

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

We used the RF grant throughout the project period from August, 2017 to July, 2018. Majority of the grant amount were spent for research work and different conservation activities. All the activities of the project were completed in time as designed in timescale.

**8. Budget: 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. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.**

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Travel Expenses	370	480	-110	Travel cost increased due the blockade of road by the early start of monsoon as public vehicle

				stopped their service and hired more private vehicles.
Capacity building training events	250	250	0	
Conservation rallies and School program	155	155	0	
Awareness-raising materials production and distribution	325	370	-45	Printed more number of awareness materials and print cost was slightly higher than speculated.
Food and accommodation	1,820	1760	+60	Accommodation cost decreased as we stay days in the shed.
Stationary and Communications	100	110	-10	
Researcher allowances	1,260	1260	0	
Insurance	160	140	+20	
Dissertation support	350	350	0	
Equipment and field gears	210	240	-30	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5000</b>	<b>5115</b>	<b>-115</b>	We have requested small amount from Shadabanda Municipality in order to balance the exceeded amount of the project but still it is not confirmed.

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

In Nepal, more than 62% of red panda potential habitat remains available in outside the protected area system (PAs) but they have been receiving minimal focus in terms of research and conservation. As a result, there is scanty information regarding this species in outside the PAs of Nepal that need to be documented. Due to the lack of public awareness, many species including red panda are facing high anthropogenic pressure causing them on the verge of extinction. Therefore, conservation awareness programme should be continued in this region. The community group should be strengthened with regular monitoring training, meetings, advocacy, workshops and supply of conservation educational awareness materials etc. This will help to build sense of nature ownership among the local community toward the species and their habitat by ensuring their active participation in conservation. Furthermore, if we do not take into consideration the human component, approaches to conserve red panda would be worthless and unsuccessful. So, local's livelihood supportive programmes should be launched along with awareness activities for combating with species habitat destruction, poaching and illegal trade.

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

Yes, we used Rufford Foundation logo in all awareness materials including brochures posters, hoarding boards, banners, t-shirts, leaflets, media and other publications. I orally mentioned the RF as a financial partner during the public discussion, meeting with stakeholders and school and community based awareness programme. The Rufford Foundation logo will be also used in my upcoming publications.

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

**Mr. Basant Gyawali-** M.Sc. in Zoology 3<sup>rd</sup> semester student of Central Department of Zoology, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal. His major role was conducting field survey, scientific data collection and school based education program.

**Mr. Dajambu Sherpa:** local resident of Tinsaje, Bhojpur. He is also the president of Bhalukhola community forest. He is responsible for field survey, community based outreach program, and community group discussion.

**Mr. Temba Sherpa:** local resident of talkharka, Bhojpur. He is a livestock (*chauri*) herder, farming more than 40 *chauri* since 10 years in the forest of Bhojpur. He is part of the project as a citizen scientist to the selection of site for field survey, data collection and questionnaire survey.

Beside that some local people were also the parts of a project as a temporary team members were **Sagar Subedi**, **Nuru Sherpa**, **Dendi Sherpa** and **Dorchi Sherpa**. They also contributed during field and questionnaire survey.

**12. Any other comments?**

We have met the overall objectives of the project, so the project was successful. I would like to thanks Rufford Foundation (RF) for supporting my approach to the conservation of this charismatic endangered species. This would not have been possible without financial support from the RF. There is still a lot of work to be done for the conservation of this species. So I am expecting such type of support from RF in the future. I am also thankful to Department of Forest; Ministry of Forest and environment and District Forest office Bhojpur for providing permission to carry out this research and conservation activities. I equally appreciate the co-operation of district forest staffs, community forest users, livestock herders, local people, teacher, and students to the successfully implementation of project since its beginning. Last but not a least, I would like to thank to all who supported directly or indirectly to accomplish this project.



Left: Red Panda. Middle: Feeding sign along with faecal pellets. Right: Scratching mark on tree



Left: Cutting down of Bamboo by local at Birauta. Right: Harvesting Bamboo for household purpose



Left: Tree logging at Gurase. Right: locally made *Churpi* (traditional cheese) as a local's income source



Left: Livestock grazing near Red Panda Habitat. Right: Traditional livestock shed at Maiyum



Left: Research assistant searching red panda using Binocular. Right: Checking red panda pellets in tree



Left: Questionnaire with *Chauri* herder. Right: Illustrating the local about red panda at Tamutar



Left: Installing hoarding board at ward office at Shadananda Municipality. Right: capacity building training and meeting with local stakeholders



School awareness programs at Dobane and Kimalung



Left: Researcher with eco-club members. Right: Interaction with livestock herders near Bilbate