

Project Update: May 2018

In our previous field visit in Kaligandaki canyon we sampled the bat species in each of the identified caves, several forest areas and agricultural land farms. Recently, we have educated school teachers, students, cave management committee and local people about bats, their habitat and the roles they play on our ecosystem. Conservation posters with key messages were distributed among students, teachers, locals and cave management communities. Posters were also attached at the cave entrances of Laleshore, Gupteshore, Alpeshore and Parbati caves (highly diversified caves of the study area) as well as in hotels, tea shops and gathering points. Schools located nearer these caves were prioritized for school teaching camps. Students in class 9 and 10 were gathered together in a single room and a 1-hour teaching session was conducted. Bat images (fruit and insectivorous), bat masks and bat colour books were distributed to each individuals who each delivered short speech about bats at the end of the programme. The interaction programme with school teachers was organized and asked them to deliver bat conservation messages to all school children in their lecture sessions. As these caves already have cave management committees that's why we do not need to create eco-clubs, instead of which an interaction programme with members of the cave management committee was conducted. They were taught about bats and recommended to manage the caves in a bat friendly manner. An "Eco-tour" programme was conducted in Alpeshore and Gupteshore caves. People visiting in the caves were taught about bats and helped them to visit the caves without disturbing the bats. Additionally, mist nets and harp traps were set up for bat a capturing and handling demonstration among the members of Bat Friends Pokhara in Banpale Forest of Institute of Forestry (IOF) Pokhara in March 2018 to motivate young undergraduate students for bat research and conservation.

New records

- During the conservation camps, identified caves were revisited and mist nets were set up in forest and agricultural lands. The project has successfully recorded *Pipistrellus coromandra* and *Nyctalus noctula* in the landscape, and altogether 15 species of bats during the project period (check additional species richness in previous reports).
- Alpeshore cave was found to be more than 700 m long which is the longest among identified caves and hosts a large colony of *Rousettus leschenaulti* with an additional five species of insectivorous bats.



Interaction program with school teachers of Mangolodaya secondary school of Chuwa, Kushma, Parbat (near Laleshore cave). ©Shristee Panthee



Poster description and distribution among "aama samuha" near Alpeshore cave. ©Shristee Panthee



Interaction program with cave management committee of Alpeshore cave. ©Vandhana Subedi



School teaching camp held in Paang, Parbat (near Parbati cave). ©Vandhana Subedi



Researcher giving prize to speaker at the end of the teaching session. ©Shristee Panthee



Team attaching conservation poster. ©Basant Sharma