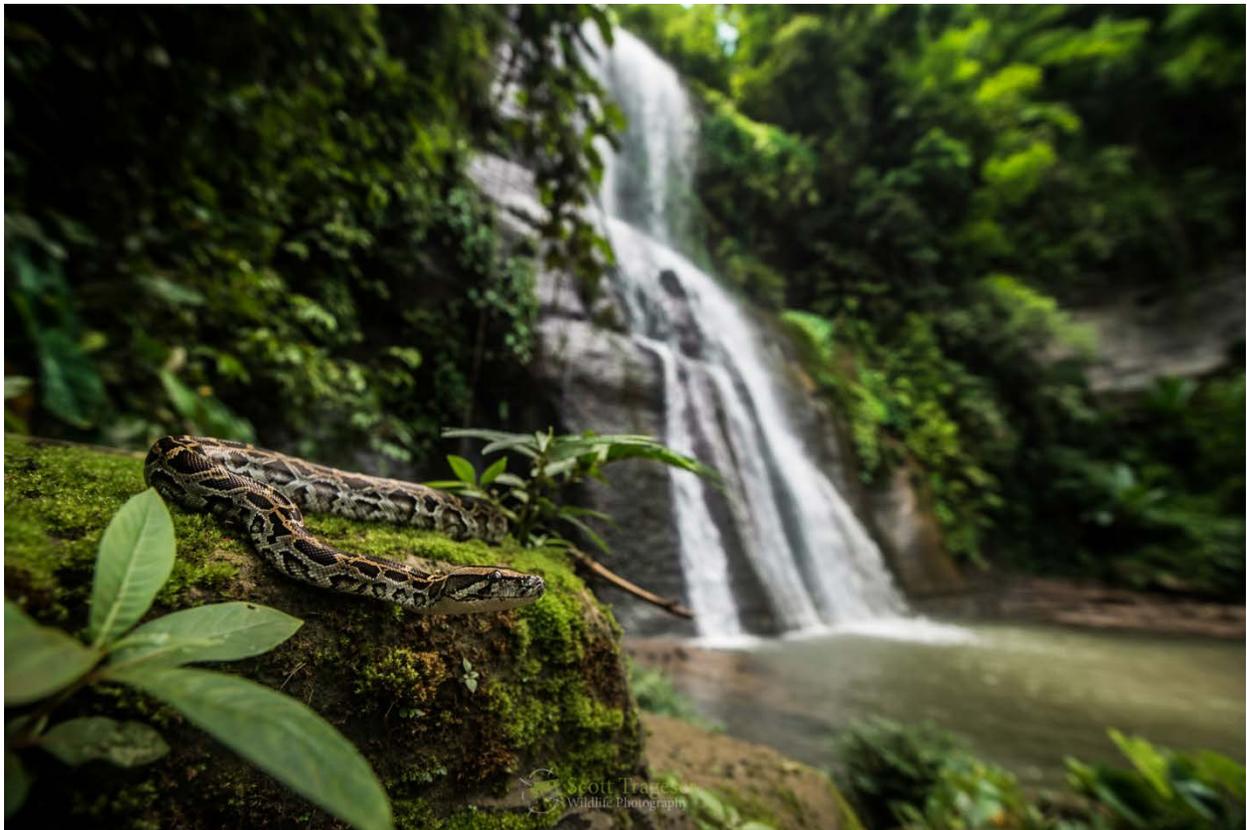




Conservation and Management of Burmese Python in Bangladesh



Interim Report

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Introduction

The Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*) is an iconic snake species that is best known through the pet trade and as an invasive species in Florida. Burmese python populations are declining across Asia, yet very little is known regarding their biology and natural history. With support from Rufford, and numerous small grants, we have conducted the first ever scientific study on Burmese pythons using radio telemetry in South Asia. We have collected key information on python home range, land use patterns, and human-python conflict in the human-dominated landscapes of the northeast Bangladesh. A Second Rufford Small Grant was awarded in February 2018 to initiate the second phase of this project. In the second phase, we plan to utilize these scientific insights to institutionalize proper conservation methodology of pythons in Bangladesh. Herein, I am pleased to present a progress report on our activities so far.

Recent Activities

- 1) A paper titled Human-python Conflict: A Radio-telemetry Study of Burmese Python in Bangladesh was presented at the Annual Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists in Rochester, New York, July 11-15. Team member Scott Trageser attended the conference and presented the paper.
- 2) Media queries were performed through Google to understand the distribution of python and the extend of human-python conflict throughout the country. These queries were carried out in English and in Bangla by utilizing the common vernacular name "Ojogor." Two queried terms were used: Ojogor Atok; pythons captured in Bangladesh. A total of 93 independent reports were found related to python capture and human-python conflicts. Pythons were reported to occur in 38 districts throughout Bangladesh. All three species of pythons were reported to occur: Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*), Reticulated Python (*Malayopython reticulatus*) and Indian Python (*Python molurus*). Only articles with photographs were considered. A subset of the news articles are presented in Appendix 1.
- 3) Current distribution maps of Burmese pythons have been produced. Dr. AHM Ali Reza produced the map with the data we provided. The map was created combining the information collected through media queries (2010-2017), my personal observations in the field and personal communication with colleagues. The maps are useful in identifying "python hotspots" in the country, determining species

distribution in relation with human population densities, and understanding the ecological partitioning between three sympatric species of pythons. Two distribution maps are presented in Appendix 2.

4) Two parabiologists are currently being employed in the Northeast and Southeast of the country to collect information on human-python conflicts, hunting, and threats.

In Lawachara National Park (LNP) one parabiologist is currently conducting a road kill survey to obtain information on the impact of roads and railway on pythons and other snake species. From March 2018 to September 2018 a total of 50 days were surveyed in a 7 km stretch of roads and rail line intersecting LNP. While no road killed pythons were observed so far, were observed on road killed snakes belonging to 15 species.

In Sangu-Matamuhuri Reserve Forest (SMRF) one parabiologist has conduct regular village visits within the Sangu-Matamuhuri and adjacent areas to collect information on python and other wildlife hunting. Since March 2018 we have obtained 4 observations of python hunting in the area. These data would be very useful for understanding the impact of wildlife hunting in the area. The information has been shared with the Bangladesh Forest Department. Photos are presented in appendix 3.

Based on data collected previously on hunting, we have a prepared a publication on wildlife hunting/human-wildlife conflict in the area.

5) We have completed the analysis of the radio-telemetry data from 10 study pythons. The data are being utilized to create a Best Practical Manual for python management in Bangladesh, and beyond. Once the Best Practice Manual is created, it will be reviewed by experts including IUCN/SSC Boa & Python Specialist Group, and we will conduct outreach session and training workshop involving Bangladesh Forest Department. The data were analyzed by Dr. Steven Spears, Director of Wildlife Ecology, Columbus Zoo.

There were some delays analyzing the data due to schedule conflicts of our experts and as a result the anticipated timeline of our activities of Best Practice Manual printing and distribution will be pushed back to end of this year. Some of the graphical representation of the data analyses are presented in Appendix 4.

Appendix 1. News articles on human-python conflict

Home / Bangladesh / Nation

Food crisis forcing pythons to migrate to human habitats

Anwar Hussain, Chittagong

Published at 12:46 pm August 23rd, 2017
Last updated at 01:15 am August 24th, 2017



Home » Country

06:21 PM, July 07, 2018 / LAST MODIFIED: 07:50 PM, July 07, 2018

Locals rescue 2 pythons in Faridpur, Sylhet

Star Online Report

Locals today rescued two pythons, a species of large non-venomous snakes, in Faridpur's Madhukhali and Sylhet's Gowainghat upazilas.



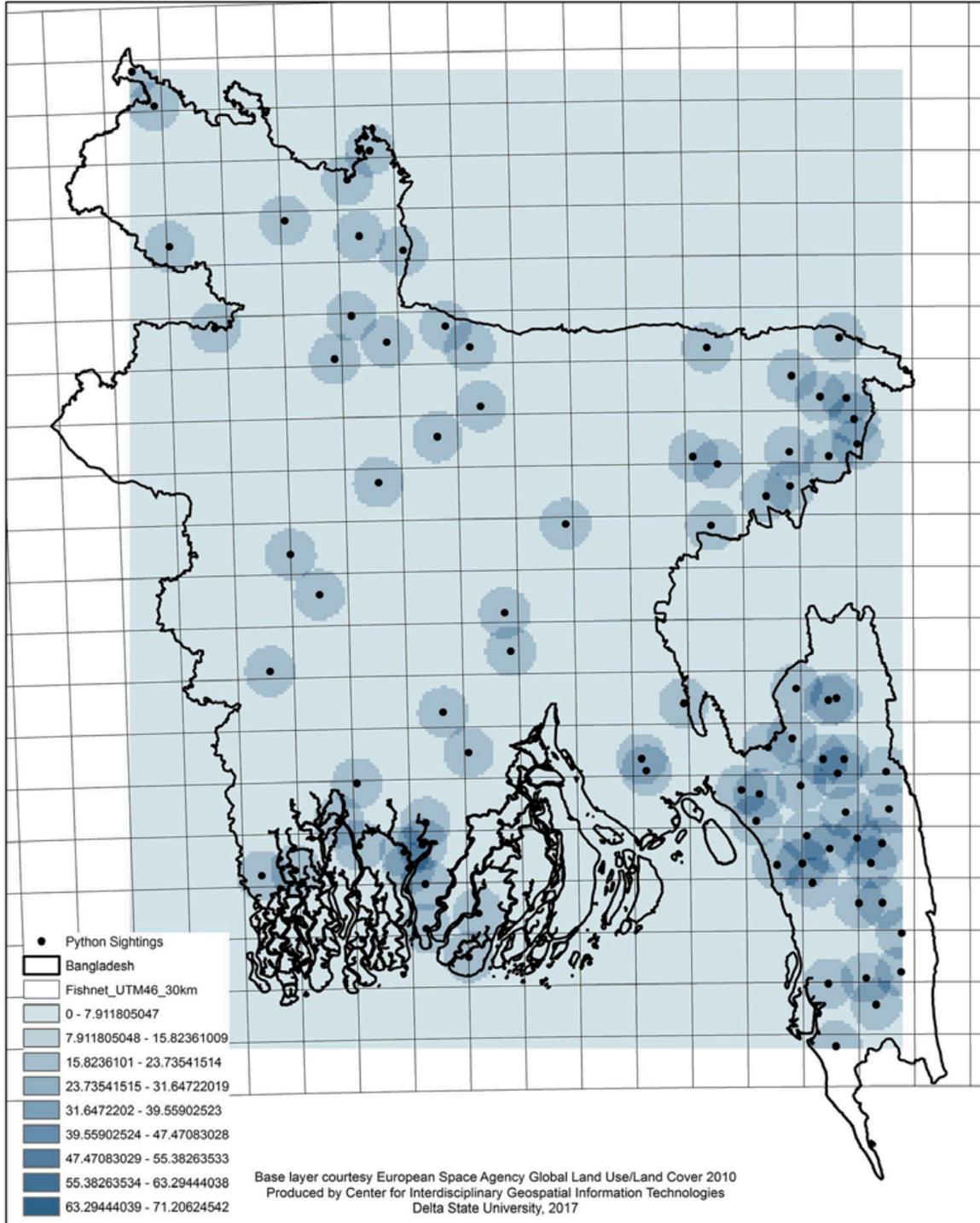
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TOP NEWS

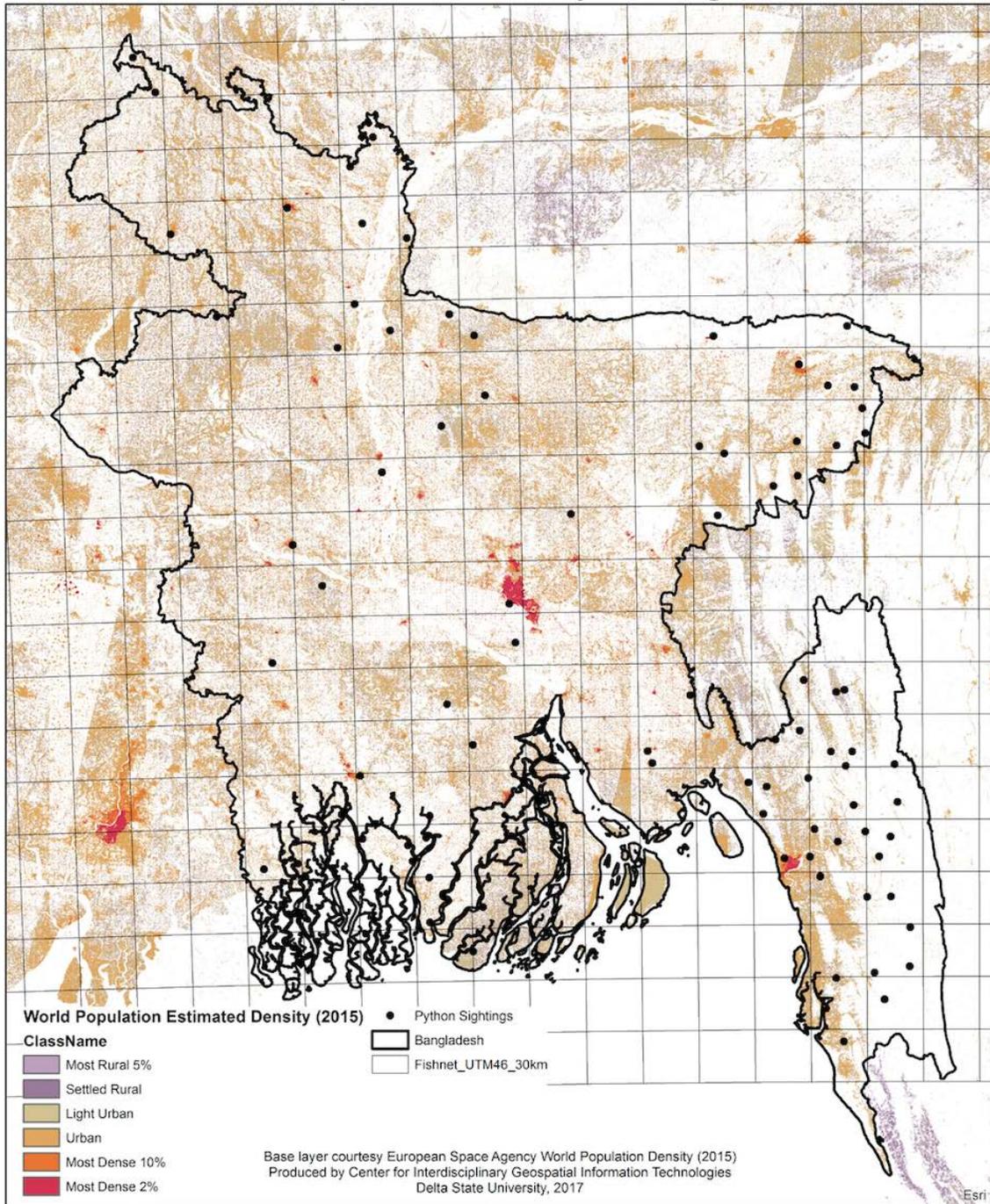
- Invest in Myanmar as well for Rohingya children's education: PM
- Bus services from Mohakhali terminal suspended
- 22 dead as heavy rain triggers flash floods, landslides in India

Appendix 2. Distribution maps of Burmese pythons in Bangladesh

Distribution of *Python bivittatus bivittatus* in Bangladesh



Distribution of *Python bivittatus bivittatus* and Human Population Density in Bangladesh



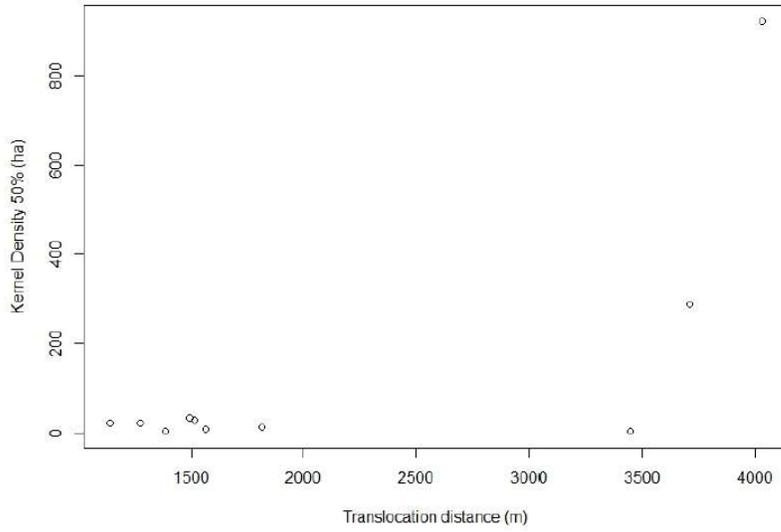
Appendix 3. Pythons hunted by local communities in the Sangu-Matamuhuri



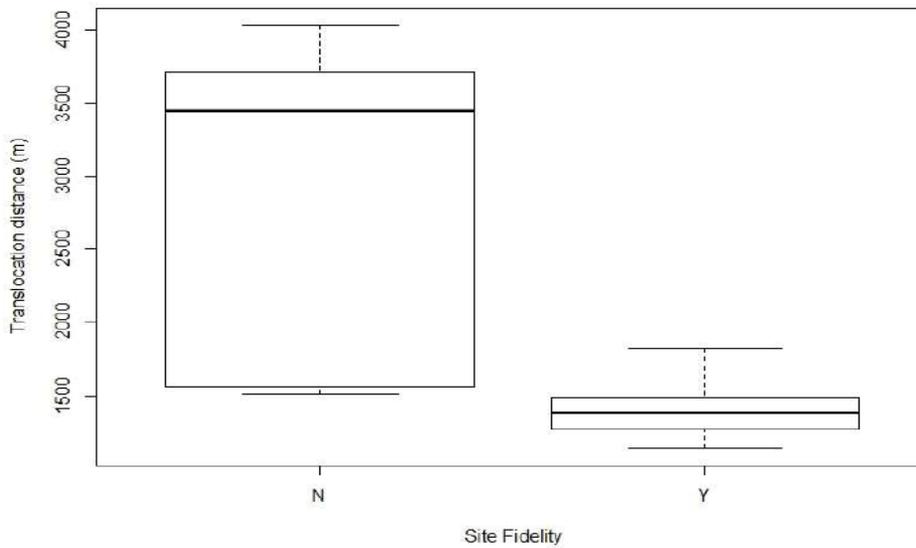


Appendix 4. Graphical representation of radio-telemetry data from our study

Effect of translocation distance on core area in hectares



Greater site fidelity with shorter translocations



Below are the graphical representation of home range of 10 Burmese pythons we radio tracked

