

Project Update: August 2018

Reporting Period		Name of the Programme/Project	Date of progress reporting
From	To		
March 2018	July 2018	Subspecies status and Distribution of leopard in Pakistan	30 th July 2018

1. Objectives of the project/programme:

- Conduct scientific research into leopard presence/absence and distribution (using track surveys and camera traps).
- Create awareness and build enthusiasm among school children and local communities for protecting 'their' resident leopards and improve co-existence of human and leopards in the region.
- Create strong Liaison between the stakeholders, i.e. wildlife department, NGOs and local community for protecting leopards.

2. Targets of the last quarter:

- Identification of leopard trails/hotspot.
- Organise meeting with the stakeholders.
- Design awareness material, i.e. brochures, poster in their local language.
- Conduct awareness sessions to build capacity in school children and the local community understanding leopard behavior.
- Improve knowledge and skills of the wildlife staff and community members to become effective custodians of leopards.

Key achievements:

(1) Identification of Leopard trails: At the beginning of the project, a regular 27 leopard trails were identified with the help of interviews (with the local community and wildlife department) followed by trails surveys and camera trapping. The trails will be regularly monitored by the trained wildlife staff member and selected community members for leopard movement.



Creating liaison between community and wildlife staff for protecting their resident leopard.



(2) Capacity Building of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department Staff and community members: A 2-day training of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department Staff and selected community members was conducted at the beginning of the project (April 2018). This training was led by Principal Investigator Muhammad Asad. Six members of the community and wildlife staff were trained and are now capable of monitoring their resident leopard and can raise awareness in their local community. The training included track visits, identifying leopard territorial marking, tree scratches and the use of camera traps to understand leopard ecology and behaviour. The trained members will be working together in achieving conservation goals and will improve the co-existence of humans and leopards in an area.

(3) Camera trapping: The project acquired sixteen camera traps and established the presence/absence of leopards in a 41,000 ha area (Sawat, Dir, ANP, Margala Hills and Machiara National Park). This was the first time camera traps have been used to monitor the movement and assess the number of leopards by individual differences in the study area. Data on leopards' unique patterns will be analysed which will allow leopards to be monitored in the future for long term survival, movement and other life history traits relevant to conservation by the local wildlife departments. The unique pattern of leopard will also be used in awareness campaign to build enthusiasm among the school children for protecting 'their' resident leopards.



Creating liaison between community and wildlife staff for protecting their resident leopard.



Two leopard photographed by camera trap at different station.

Data on other species: Camera traps have also helped in recording various other species in the study area, such as foxes, porcupine, yellow-throated marten, civet, pheasant and leopard cat.

(4) Awareness sessions: A total of 16 awareness raising sessions were conducted for school children during the reporting period, with approximately 600 students.

Five community awareness sessions were organised with the help of a trained community member and wildlife ranger in villages in close proximity to the observation areas, general information was shared, such as avoiding specific trails at specific times (dawn and dusk), and leopard ecological importance were highlighted.



Sixteen awareness raising sessions were organized during the reporting period in schools closed to the vicinity of leopard habitat.



A presentation session was also organized for the young professionals of Islamabad Behria University on the leopard's ecological importance.



Presentation session was organized for students from Behria University.

Another Awareness session was organized for the *Kuldana* community because of recent human-leopard conflict where two community members were attacked and injured by a leopard at dusk. The session aimed to protect leopards from retaliation and raise awareness among the community about the leopard's ecological importance.



An emergency session was organised after the report that leopard attacked and injured two community members in our study area.

(5) GIS Analysis: GPS points were collected from different hotspots and will be analyzed in Arc GIS to provide information on the local population demographics as an important step in conserving species.

(6) Major risks faced during the reporting period: During our fieldwork, a leopard attack was reported in Kuldana where two men were badly injured by a leopard. In response, the community demanded the removal of leopards from the area. Both communities and line departments were difficult to deal with especially when it came to protecting leopards. The Wildlife Department was continuously installing cages for leopard capture because of the community demands which is highly risky both for leopard and communities. To address this problem a special awareness session was organised in that area. With the help of community members along with wildlife staff who were trained by our project the ecological importance of the common leopard was highlighted and human-leopard conflict was addressed. In response the community ensured leopard protection against retaliation. All members of the community will be notified of leopard tracks and mitigation measures will be taken, such as avoiding specific trails at specific times (dawn and dusk), and moving through some areas in groups.

(7) Education material: The majority of the local community and students do not understand the behavior of leopard and, even more, they do not recognise the leopard and cannot distinguish between leopards, lions, and tigers. They called it a cheetah in their local language. We designed a bilingual brochure and poster not only highlighting the importance of leopards in the ecosystem but also to help communities to understand the different species. The brochure include a quiz which created interest in readers and built huge enthusiasm among the school children to know their resident leopard species.



Leopard brochure designed for Awareness raising.

