

## 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	
Your name	Tshering Wangchuk
Project title	Assessment of population status, distribution and Conservation of two critically endangered vultures in Royal Manas national park
RSG reference	25722-1
Reporting period	12 months
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	tsheringwangchuk@moaf.gov.bt
Date of this report	16/12/2019

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 assess population status of two vulture species				A total of 6 months was spent in the Royal Manas National Park (RMNP) covering the distance of 11-21 km and villages under the park jurisdiction. During each visit, 8-9 hours were spent in collection of data from the field. The population status of the vultures was recorded based on the encounter rate in the study area. During our entire study in the park we could observed and recorded only the four white-rumped vultures in four different colonies.
Conservation status, Conservation attitudes, awareness and ethno-vulture relationship				Through the questionnaire survey in the RMNP with local people we found that people have favourable attitudes towards vulture conservation. Most of the respondents told us they were in favour of vulture conservation. More than 500 local people and stakeholders residing in the park were also made aware of the importance of conserving the biodiversity and particularly the two endangered vulture species through audio-visual means. Similarly, schoolchildren also advocated the same.

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

Since the study was in the southern region with less motorable road connections, the team had difficulty in accessing and lodging in some of the areas due to lack of road connectivity and settlements. The camping in the study area was difficult sometimes as this area receives plenty of rainfall almost all year. Especially during the peak season, we had difficulty getting in the field for data collection. However, with help of local people we could access difficult areas. The other difficulty was the risk of wild animal encounter and attack. Wild elephant attacks on people are common and there were past incidences in the study area. However, the team successfully ventured into areas with help of local people and the forestry officials. Another problem was the difficulty in observing vultures in the entire study area. We could have not found birds without the help of the local people.

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

1. Population status of the vulture

With around 6 months in the field covering the wide range of the area, we observed and recorded only four white-rumped vultures in the study area. The red-headed vulture was not recorded in all our targeted areas.

2. Conservation status known

The conservation attitudes of locals are positive and encouraging with almost 90% of respondents neither killing nor having seen people persecuting vultures.

3. Awareness programme for local people

The public awareness programme for local people and stakeholders were carried out to educate people on the conservation of the vulture with help of informal education methods like awareness and interactions through household and questionnaire surveys. Most of the people were not aware of the importance of vulture species and the important role they play in the ecosystem.

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

The people residing in the park are the most important component role playing in the conservation and management of the forest ecosystem. The local people from the different villages in the park were involved during the research study and have benefitted during the project. Local guides were used and involved during the field survey and paid charges on the daily wage system. The bolero vehicle also hired during the camp shift from the one village to another and similarly we paid the vehicle hiring charges. We also paid charges for logging in the apartment used in the villages during our survey. This might have benefitted the local people in earning some cash and help them earning income for their household.

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

Since it was first kind of study on these bird species in the country, no study was done so far on these vulture species. We thought such a study would help in maintaining the baseline data and also ultimately help in conservation of the endangered vulture species. I have plans to continue this project and to carry out similar projects in the future which will help in conservation of other important flagship species. I would like to thank Rufford Foundation for supporting this project and looking forward for similar support in near future.

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

The findings from the research work will be shared with the wider audience through publication in regional or international peer reviewed journals. The findings also will be shared with the policy makers, stakeholders and law enforcing agencies. The copy of the paper will be shared with the Department of Forest and Park Services (DoFPS), RMNP, Ugyen Wangchuk Institute for Conservation and Environmental Research (UWICER), Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN), College of Natural Resources (CNR) and the other interested institutes.

**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 was planned for 12 months right from the availing of the research permit, pre-visit to the study area. However, the actual project work could start only from the November 2018 and continued till October 2019. As my study species was a migratory bird and it only arrived in the winter season in this area. The funds received from the Rufford Foundation were used judiciously in carrying out the fieldwork and in conducting the awareness campaigns.

**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
Daily allowance for field assistant	1080	900	-180	The expenditure for daily allowance incurred less because of the days spent in field was minimized.
Accommodation	820	720	-100	The expenses on logistic was lesser than budgeted allocated due to the low rent charges in the remote areas.
Capacity building	250	350	+100	The expenditure for capacity building incurred high as the commodity items in the market increased.
Awareness campaign	700	800	+100	The expenses for the awareness campaign increased due to the inflation in the market
Transportation	570	630	+60	The transportation charges increased due to increase in the increased of transportation rate.
Field gears	350	400	+50	The cost of field gear incurred high due to the increase of field gears cost
Purchase of equipment	450	500	+50	The expenditure for equipments incurred high due to increase of cost of equipments.
Printing cost	600	500	-100	The expenses for the printing cost decreased due to less printing of the posters and pamphlets.
Report preparation and dissemination	130	130		The expenses was rightly met

Miscellaneous	50	50		The miscellaneous expense was used for wherever it is necessary.
<b>Total</b>	5000	4980	-20	

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

The funding from the Rufford Foundation has immensely benefited and given me a greater experience and opportunity to study further other aspects on this species. Sightings of this bird species are rare in the entire area. Therefore, the study of the conservation threats on the vulture needs to be carried out as to why these vulture species are declining in this area.

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

During the course of my project survey and data collection in the field. Since one of my project objectives was to educate the farmers, local leaders and stakeholders in the vulture conservation area. The presentation was also done to them where the logo of the Rufford Foundation was used in each and every presentation slide. Further, I will be using the Rufford logo in my reports and papers which I'm going to publish. So far, the Rufford Foundation has received good publicity during the course of the project.

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

Supervisor	Dr. Phuntsho Thinley	Dr. Phuntsho Thinley who is currently wild life conservationist in Bhutan is overall supervisor of my project. He guided me right from project planning, data collection and data interpretation.
	Chhimi Dorji (M.sc)	Mr. Chhimi was one of my core supervisor .he helped me in giving idea about the project and guided me from proposal writing till end of the final report writing.
Field working team	Kinley	Since he has done research on Hornbill, he has experience in carrying out the field works on birds. He helped in field data collection and also in the report writing.
	Leki Tshedup	He is Sr. Forest ranger in this park, and he has vast knowledge about the flora and fauna under this area. He was also one who has got knowledge about this endangered species and about the Park.
	Dorji and Raju	They are our local guide in different places where they worked hard and helped us fulfilling our project goals on time.

**12. Any other comments?**

The project was completed successfully because of the good team I had and of course due to financial support from Rufford Foundation. This project has also given me an ample experience in carrying out the research in Bhutan.