

Project Update: March 2021

Activity 1: Ecological assessment (species inventory)

A total of nine species of snakes belonging to three families and nine genera were recorded in different habitats and around the human habitations of Trashigang Forest Division. Recorded families were Colubridae, Elapidae, and Viperidae.

Table 1: Checklist snakes recorded during field survey (Nov 2020 - Mar 2021)

SL.No	Scientific name	Common name	Venom profile	IUCN status
1	<i>Ophiophagus hannah</i> *	King cobra	Medicinally significant	VU
2	<i>Sinomicrurus maccllellandi</i> *	Coral snake	Medicinally significant	NE
3	<i>Naja kaouthia</i> *	Monocled cobra	Medicinally significant	LC
4	<i>Pseudoxenodon macrops</i>	False cobra	Mildly venomous	LC
5	<i>Ovophis monticola</i> *	Montane pit viper	Medicinally significant	LC
6	<i>Protobothrops jerdonii</i> *	Jerdon's pit viper	Medicinally significant	LC
7	<i>Trimeresurus albolabris</i> *	White lipped pit viper	Medicinally significant	LC
8	<i>Bungarus niger</i> *	Greater black krait	Medicinally significant	NE
9	<i>Rhadobphis subminiatus</i> *	Red-necked keelback	Medicinally significant	LC

LC=Least concern, NE= Not evaluated, DD= Data deficient, VU=Vulnerable, (* Medically significant species)

Photos of some of the medically significant species found during field inventory



Left: Monocled cobra. Right: Greater black Krait.



King cobra

Activity 2: Field inventory of King cobra

A total of eight king cobras were recorded from different locations of Trashigang Forest Division of which five records were obtained from Trashigang district and three from Trashiyangtse district between November 2020 to March 2021. The occurrence of king cobras were confirmed from nine geogs (sub-districts) of Trashigang Forest Division. The species was recorded from eight geogs, viz. Samkhar, Kanglung, Bartsham, Lumang, Thrimshing, Udorong, Shongphu, and Radi under Trashigang district and from one geog viz. Yangtse under Trashiyangtse district. Of the eight records, six were recorded through direct sightings and two were documented based on photographic evidence along with geo-spatial locations communicated through social media. One nesting site, actively guarded by mother king cobra has been recorded in Lumang forest area, under Trashigang district the species is found to be distributed from Yantse geog (Trasiyangtse district) in the north to Thrimshing geog (Trashigang district) in the south. The altitudinal distribution of king cobra in study area ranged from 650 to 2057m.



Left: King cobra guarding its nest. Right: Eggshells of king cobra after hatching successfully.

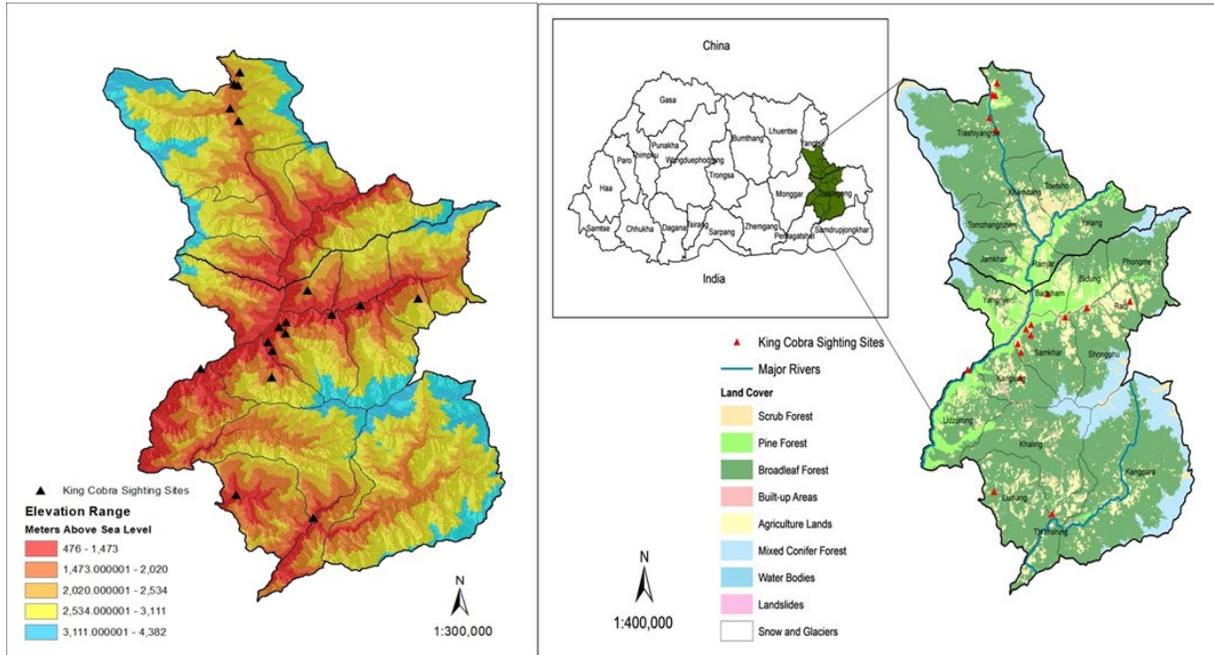
Activity 3: Dissemination of project results & education awareness program conducted

Considering the current scenario of Covid-19 in the country, we could not communicate our project findings to the general public. However, we successfully disseminated our project findings to staff of Trashigang Forest Division. A 2-day programme was organised in Trashigang Forest Division where project findings and education awareness on snake conservation including snake bite management was presented to field staff working different range offices under division including the staff of division head office. For this category of audience, the project results were disseminated through producing technical report, power point presentation, posters display, and distribution information brochures



Disseminating of project results and education awareness program to Division staff.

Activity 4: Mapping of Potential habitats of King cobra in Trashignag Forest Division



Map: (A): distribution of king cobra based on elevation (B) distribution of king cobra based on land used.