

NOVEMBER
2021

**UNCOVERING ILLEGAL BIRD TRADE IN KATHMANDU VALLEY AND
STRENGTHENING PUBLIC AWARENESS**



Photo Credit: Prabesh Shrestha

First Quarterly Report
September – November
2021

QUARTERLY UPDATES

The project started on September 2021. So far, we have completed four activities as proposed.

ACTIVITIES ACCOMPLISHED

1. COORDINATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS
2. SEIZURE DATA COLLECTION
3. VIDEO DOCUMENTATION
4. SOCIAL MEDIA SURVEY



Photo Credit: Kushal Shrestha

1. Coordination with stakeholders

We conducted a series of meetings with stakeholders for possible coordination and permission for the project. The project got permission from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and Social Welfare Council (SWC) on 16 August 2021 and 18 October 2021 respectively. We visited the Division Forest Offices (DFOs) in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur, the authorized government agency working on illegal wildlife trade in the project site. We shared the project objective; they were very positive and agreed to support throughout the project and beyond. Likewise, Greenhood Nepal, the project host, and Bird Conservation Nepal (BirdLife partner in Nepal) assured their support throughout the project. We also consulted (through emails, in-person meetings, telephone, etc.) with project advisors, bird researchers, and wildlife trade experts which we will continue to do throughout the project as and when required.

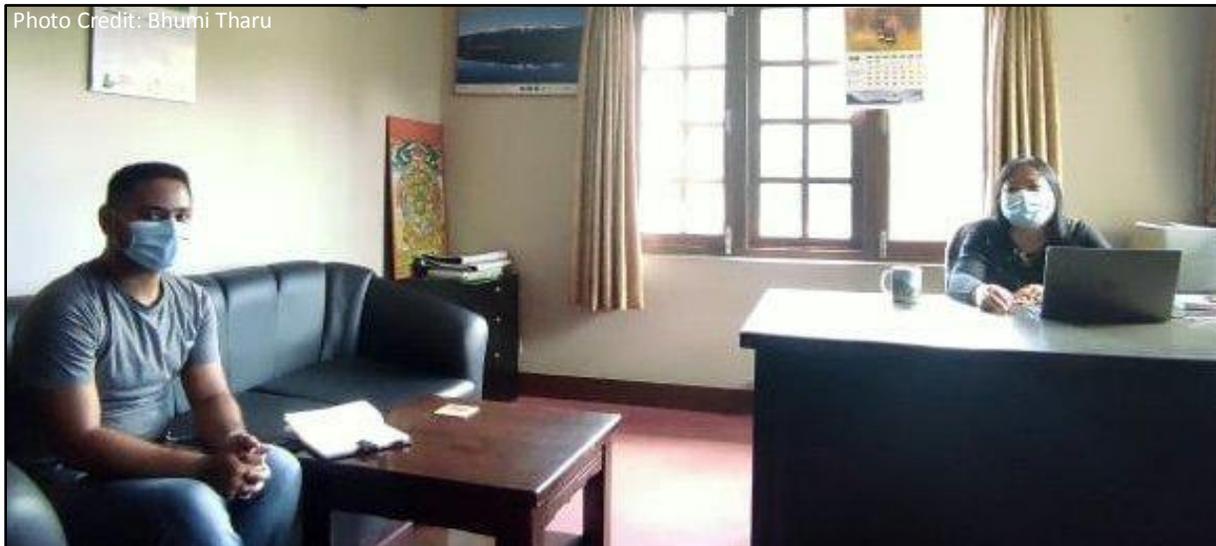


Photo: Our Team Leader (Mr. Kushal Shrestha) with Chief Executive Officer of Bird Conservation Nepal (Ms. Ishana Thapa)

2. Seizure data collection

Division Forest Offices are the legal authority that confiscates and document the illegal wildlife trade seizure records from outside the protected area in Nepal. It further prepares the case with details on the seized specimens and submits it to the court. Therefore, we reached out to the DFOs to obtain seizure records. From these detailed databases, we extracted the seizure records of birds. We collected species information, trader information, and market information from the

record. Further, online published newspaper reports and Nepal Police - Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) press releases (that are available online) were explored to make sure no duplication and no cases are missed in our record.



Photo – Seizure record databases of DFO – Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur (from left to right)

3. Video documentation

We started our video shooting from Krishna temple of Patan Durbar Square, Lalitpur on the auspicious occasion of Krishna Janmashthami. Krishna Janmashthami (mid-August to early September), the birthday of Lord Krishna is celebrated joyfully by Hindus. Thousands of people in Nepal visit Krishna Temple, Lalitpur on this occasion. In Hindu mythology, Lord Krishna is typically portrayed with dark skin wearing Indian Peafowl's feather on his long black hair. Depicting his wearing, the Peafowl's feather is largely traded in and around Krishna temple on that day. The large volume of this trade is questionable and often illicit that, a majority of people do not know that it is illegal. This made us to start our video documentation on this day and we will continue this during the market survey (proposed on January 2022), as well as in other instances as applicable.

4. Social media survey

Birds are massively traded on social media. We did a thorough literature review and screened the social media pages, notably Facebook and Instagram, to compile a list of keywords used to trade birds over social media. We discussed these keywords within the team and conducted a pilot survey with selected words. During this, we took the reference of Roberts et al. (2020) - which describes the systematic survey protocol of the online wildlife trade. After the pilot survey, we finalized keywords checking redundancy.

In November 2021 we systematically reviewed the social media and extracted illegal bird trade information from social media (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram). Here we collected species information, trader information, price information, and market information.

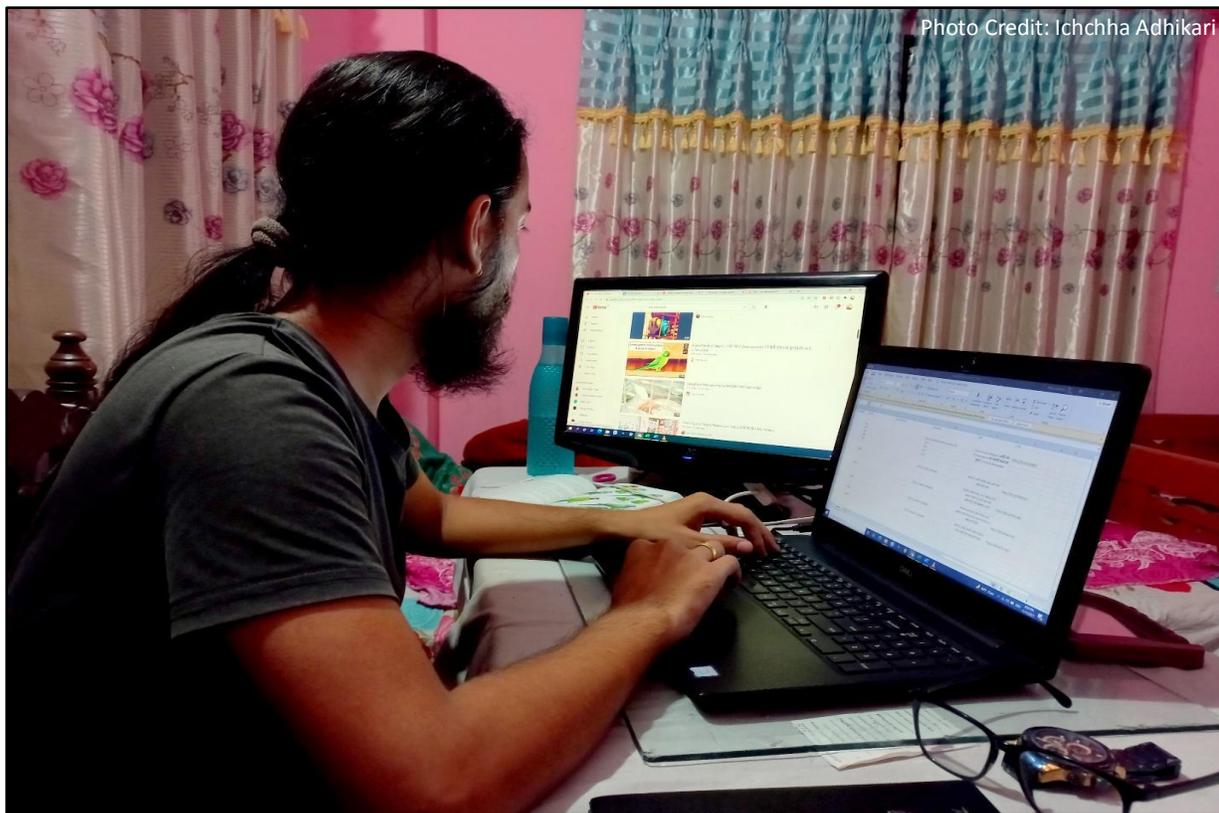


Photo – Our team member (Mr. Bharat Adhikari) performing a social media survey.

CHALLENGES

- This project was accepted on 7 May 2021 amidst the second lockdown (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) in Nepal. We had no choice rather than to wait for cases to fall significantly. This led us to execute the project only after five months of confirmation. However, processing virtually, we could manage to get approval in August from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation.
- We faced a filter bubble problem while piloting the social media survey. First, we discussed within our team a possible solution. Then our team member (Ms. Reshu Bashyal) reached out to the main author of Roberts et al. (2020) – Dr. David Roberts. Concerning all the suggestions, the team concluded to proceed by browsing in an incognito window and clearing all histories and cookies before starting the survey.
- Video shooting amidst the pandemic was a bit challenging but as this was a significant and most overlooked case, we did not want to miss the opportunity to take the shot.

FURTHER PLAN

In second quarter of the project following activities are proposed

- Stakeholder Meeting
- Market Survey
- Video Documentation