

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Asish M
Project Title	Community Based Conservation of the Lion-Tailed Macaques of Nilambur Forests, Kerala, India
Application ID	36291-1
Date of this Report	20/03/2023

1. 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
Improve knowledge and conservation status of the endangered Lion-Tailed Macaques				Due to the extreme terrain and bad weather conditions, a few remote forest areas could not be accessed, and we had to leave unsurveyed.
Understand indigenous community people's perception and knowledge about the Lion-Tailed Macaques				
Develop a community led conservation action plan for protection of the Lion-Tailed Macaques				

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

Initially, when the project was starting, most of the local people and even some of the forest department officials didn't know about the presence of lion-tailed macaque (LTM) in the Nilambur forests. The people in forest villages thought that LTM was not facing any threats in their forest. Also, feeding the monkeys on the roadside was a common sighting on Nadukani road. Through this project,

a). Improved the knowledge about LTM population status and threats in Nilambur: The survey identified that there are at least 14 troops of LTM in Nilambur forests and identified the important threats faced by them.

b). Improved awareness of locals in Nilambur about the LTM: After the project, most people in Nilambur and in forest villages know that the endangered and endemic primate species LTM exist in the Nilambur forest, and it is important to conserve them.

c). Reduced the threats to the LTM on Nadugani road: The tourists and local people understood that they shouldn't feed monkeys and the locations where LTMs mostly cross the road.

Through this project, 32 indigenous community members directly became part of doing the survey or doing conservation education classes. Among these, 10 indigenous members attended structured training also. Since most of the outreach programmes and conservation classes were led by the community members, the community showed ownership and commitment to the project and conserving the

LTM. The indigenous community's active participation in this project was a significant achievement. Also, the team identified 14 LTM troops through this project in the forest, confirming the presence and population of LTM in these forests. A total of eight signboards were installed with the support of community and government bodies, local panchayat and forest department on the Nadugani road to warn the passengers about the LTM habitat and to prevent them from feeding wildlife; this will help to spread awareness about LTM habitat to tourists. The team conducted outreach conservation awareness classes at 10 forest villages and other public forums and three community consultation workshops to discuss the actions the community can take to conserve the species.

3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

While developing the project proposal, the time it takes to train the team members needed to be more recognised, and because of this, we had to extend the project length. Also, during the project period, Nilambur experienced unforeseen unseasonal rain throughout the months, making it difficult and postponing the field works to later than the planned time. Since there were no permanent campsites inside the Nilambur forests, the team had to stay in temporary shelters inside the forest. Accessing a few remotest forest areas took a lot of work due to the distance from the villages, challenging terrain and wildlife movement. The team could cover as much area as possible.

4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.

Except the project leader, everyone else involved directly with the project was from the local Indigenous community. Through this project, two community members-Rajesh and Ajesh, become experts in field survey techniques and outreach activities. At least 32 indigenous community members directly became part of this project: in the forest field surveys and spreading awareness through organising outreach classes. We conducted outreach activities in 10 forest villages, and the villagers from these villages participated in these conservation awareness classes and community consultation workshops for preparing a conservation action plan.

The local communities trained by the team have expanded their knowledge and capacity. The local communities participating in our outreach activities improved their awareness about LTM species and their conservation importance.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We plan to continue the work through further research and conservation efforts. Some of the planned activities are:

- Monitoring the LTM troops near to the road and inside the forest and comparing their interactions, feeding patterns and food sources.
- Improving the habitat quality through restoration efforts.

- Continuing community engagement through conservation education programmes.
- Training more local researchers and supporting them to be part of conservation efforts.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of signboards installed as part of this project.

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

We are using our Instagram page of this project to share the results and progress of this project with a broader audience. We plan to share the results with the general public through journal articles, popular articles and YouTube videos. Also, we plan to share the results with the community through further community engagements and posters about the project.

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

It is crucial to expand the area of this project to other adjacent understudied forest areas and expand the conservation efforts. It is also important to monitor the LTM troops near the Nadugani road and inside the forest and compare their behaviour to see if there is any difference. Since LTM habitats are restricted by their food plants, we must study them further and restore the degraded habitats with native vegetation. More frequent monitoring and awareness building activities should happen at the Nadugani road to prevent the tourists from feeding the monkeys and other wildlife.

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

Our social media posts and outreach material (presentation) used the Rufford logo and acknowledged while giving public talks and outreach classes.

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.

The core team includes Asish M, Rajesh R, Ajesh M and Shyamjith PK.

Asish M: Project team Leader and Ecologist. He coordinated the overall project. Designed and managed the project and was involved in data collection and analysis.

Rajesh R: Research Assistant and Educator. His local knowledge and experience were important for the success of this research. He helped in data collection and outreach activities.

Ajesh M: Research Assistant and Educator. His local knowledge and experience were important for the success of this research. He helped in data collection and outreach activities.

Shyamjith PK: Anthropologist. Helped in designing the social aspects of the project and data collection.

Sumitra, Lakshmi, Shantha and Usha: Field Assistant for conservation awareness programs.

Karimban, Aneesh, Vishnu, Ajith, Madhavan, Shivan, Balachandran, Krishnachandran, Anil, Nidhin, Arunkumar, Chathan, Chellan, Aneesh, Sumesh, Bijumon, Kethan, Gopi, Haridas, Mohandas, Gireesh, Satheesh, Mathan, Vinod and Suresh: Field Assistants for survey in the forest.

10. Any other comments?