

Project Updates: January 2023

A preliminary visit to Chitwan National Park was carried out from 9-11 November 2022. The reason for the visit was to obtain the local permission for the field and carry out meetings with the officials from National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) and Chitwan National Park. This visit gave an idea on the tentative date to start the habitat survey and also clarified the complexity of survey in the Chitwan National Park. The habitat survey was planned accordingly.

Habitat Survey: The habitat survey for the project started on December 9, 2022 and lasted for 15 days. The field researchers were appointed. The original plan was to deploy three field researchers, but the complexity of the terrain as well as the existing danger of tigers and wild elephants doubled. So, six field researchers were deployed. However, the cost was adjusted accordingly to maintain the original amount. Currently, data mining is undergoing.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview (KII): Two FGDs have been carried out in two sections of the park. The FGD in eastern part was carried out in Kumroj Buffer Zone Community Forest, whereas discussion in the western part was carried out in Panch Pandav Buffer Zone Community Forest in Madi. As for the KII, six of the stakeholders have been interviewed. I would like to mention that I am planning on adding one more FGD and at least one more KII if necessary.

Visit to floodplain: The major floodplains of Chitwan National Park were visited. The floodplain of East Rapti River and Narayani river was observed. Since the dry period has started, the river was seen in its natural channel and floodplain was visible clearly.

Also, in order to involve students in the research activities to make them familiar about the research concepts and field activities, an undergraduate student, Mr. Ranjan Raj Dahal studying in final year of Bachelor's was engaged part-time in the project. He was involved in supporting the project activities including FGD and KII.

Some pictures from the field visit have been attached along with this document. Interestingly, I encountered a rhino inside the park when I went along with the field researchers while transporting them to the field location. I have included the picture in the attachment. The description of the pictures are as follows.

Currently, I am working on mining data from habitat survey. The activities for the upcoming weeks will be working on habitat modelling, collection of required data for flood modelling and creation of flood models including the review of literatures.



East Rapti River in Sauraha.



East Rapti River floodplain consisting of dykes.



A group photo of FGD in Kumroj (Since some participants had to leave a little early, only the remaining participants are included in the picture).



Field orientation to researchers given by technical advisor.



Floodplain of Narayani River.



Rhino encountered in the park.