

Progress Report

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Title: Understanding pastoralist dependence on biodiverse savanna ecosystems: Exploring a land sharing framework for conservation



Application no: 37373-B

Iravatee Majgaonkar

India

My work in the state of Maharashtra, India looks at how pastoralist households use fragmented savanna habitats seasonally and how this knowledge can be used to design community-led conservation initiatives which address goals of livelihood security and habitat protection.

In the first 6 months of the project, my team and I conducted the following activities:

1. **Choosing sites within our study area where relatively intact biodiverse savanna patches remain and are used for pastoralism**

We surveyed the study area using Google satellite imagery, recently developed savanna distribution maps (Madhusudan and Vanak, 2021) and field visits along with the help of our conservation NGO based collaborations to shortlist 9 sites in the study area where our data collection can take place. We spent the initial 2 months in the study site to network, introduce our work to potential respondents and obtain consent for their participation in the study. We were able to do this in 29 settlements spread over three talukas (sub-district administrative units) and connected with 69 families from whom we collected data in the monsoon season.



Image 1: One of the chosen intact savanna sites which is used for pastoralism.

## 2. Conducting socio-economic surveys to understand pastoralist dependence on intact savanna patches

Between July to October 2023, we conducted 69 in-depth socio-economic surveys with known families which helped us quantify household characteristics regarding member composition, diversification of livelihood income sources, distance travelled for purpose of pastoralism and agricultural production of the household. We were able to capture a considerably large variation in household characteristics and it generated valuable insights on how agriculture is now the centre of income sources for many households who remain involved in pastoralism.



Image 3: Team member conducting socio-economic surveys with one of the pastoralist men.

### 3. Tracking livestock movement of different households in the monsoon season

We tracked day long livestock movements of the above 69 households in the monsoon season where we collected information on land use/land cover accessed for grazing, herding requirements, decision making behind the household's movement, dynamics of land use change, etc. Our time spent sampling was more productive than expected because our team could participate in herding activities as well as have long conversations with pastoralists- both of which have provided very useful information about savanna governance and how pastoralism is changing in its ways over time.

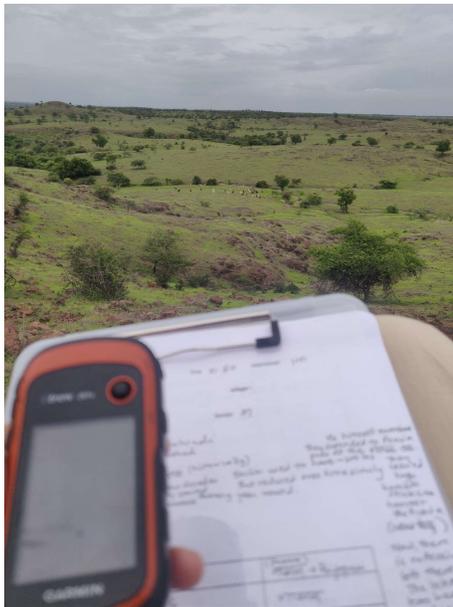


Image 4 & 5: Tracking livestock herds to obtain information on pastoralism's use of savanna habitats.

#### Upcoming activities:

In the next 7 months, we plan to conduct another 3 months of field work on livestock tracking in the dry season where it is expected that pastoralism's requirements change and their use of savannas also becomes time bound. We also plan to acquire maps of savanna governance by

the Forest and Revenue departments of the state government and use this to identify critical areas for conservation. Additionally, we will hold 2 workshops with pastoralist households to jointly identify strategies and share knowledge on how their requirements and habitat conservation can overlap.