

Project Update: January 2023

Project permission

After the release of the grant the permissions for the project from different authorities were submitted. On 14 October 2022, I got the permission from Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), on 5 December 2022 from Social Welfare Council (SWC), on 22 December 2022 from Manaslu Conservation Area - National Trust for Nature Conservation (MCA-NTNC) and on 29 December 2022 from local government of Chumnumbri Rural Municipality.

After getting permission from MCA-NTNC our team headed towards the MCA for the project activities and during the field we got the project permission from the local government body.

Habitat survey

For the first survey our team surveyed the two main habitats of musk deer in MCA, that is Kaltal area of Prok and Mugumba area of Tsum valley. We analysed the condition of the habitat and the threats to the musk deer in that area. Compared to the previous survey, there was less snow present in the area; this may be due to the climate change's effect, which somehow has affected the musk deer.

In the next field visit we will conduct habitat survey to the new potential habitat of the musk deer.



Forest fire mitigation awareness programme

We conducted a forest fire mitigation awareness programme with the local people, mostly women's youth groups who are actively involved in the conservation and other activities in their area. Besides these groups we also educated the guides, porters and herders about forest fire and the small input from their sides which can help in mitigation of the forest fire.

The guides, porters and herders are always moving from place to place and it is difficult to gather them as a whole and conduct an awareness programme in a group. We talked to them individually when we met in the field on the way or in a resting place. During the next field trip we will conduct an awareness and group discussion programme about forest fire mitigation with the people of other places too.



Video capture

During the field visit we captured the video of musk deer, its habitat, views of the local people and local government about the conservation of musk deer, threats and forest fire. We will combine these videos and will make an informative video of musk deer and will publish online as well.

We will also show that video to the school children and local people of Manaslu Conservation Area.



School awareness programme

We conducted a school awareness programme about the musk deer for the school children of Manaslu Conservation Area (MCA). The school programme was conducted in the previous school (1st RSG programme conducted school). As some of the schools of MCA were on winter vacation, we will conduct the school programme in those schools on our next visit. Besides the schools of MCA and Gorkha district we also conducted a school awareness programme with the schools of Bhaktapur district. Altogether, we have conducted school programmes in nine schools.

Some of the schools (Gorkha and Bhaktapur) were beyond the area of musk deer occurrence but we conducted school programmes because we thought not only the children of musk deer habitat area but the outside of the habitat area should also know the information and importance of the musk deer and other wild animals. The small input from their side can help in mitigation of the illegal activities relating to the musk deer and other wild animals.

We distributed posters and brochures about musk deer to the students. Besides that, we also distributed the booklets of different wild animals which were published by SMCRF a few years back. The booklets content the information of different wild animals in Nepali and English language with digital photograph of the species.



Besides the school awareness programme, we instructed them and encouraged them to write some content that may be essay, story or poem about the musk deer. After submission of the contents by the students we will digitalise and edit the contents and will publish them as a book. We will also give stationary items as a prize to all the content writers instead of giving direct wages to the students as an encouragement for their effort in writing the contents.





Questionnaire survey

Pre- and post-knowledge assessment about musk deer was done before and after the awareness programme. A forest fire questionnaire was conducted with the local people, herders, porters and guides to present the information about the occurrence of forest fires, management by the local people and the impact of forest fires in their area.

Plan for replacement of the flex of information board

The frame of the information board which was previously installed during the first project was in good condition but the flex was discolored due to the rain and sun. In next visit we planned to replace the flex with the new one.

