

Project Update: December 2023

This report offers an overview of the progress made during the second phase of the project entitled "Conservation of Hog deer (*Axis porcinus*) via Community Outreach Programs and Field Surveys in Far-Western Nepal". This phase involved conducting interviews within households located in the buffer zone (especially Beldadi and Piparia) surrounding Shuklaphanta National Park, Nepal. Prior to conducting these interviews, approval was obtained from research ethics board of University of Northern British Columbia, Canada. Around 30 households in total were randomly selected for interviews from two buffer zones. To collect a representative sample of the diverse community, local people of all genders, representative of age groups above 18 years, ethnicities, and a variety of educational backgrounds were interviewed on each randomly selected household. Semi-structured questionnaires which provide the flexibility to deviate and explore more about the certain situation based on the interactions made during the interview were used. Before conducting the interviews, the questionnaires were pre-tested with 5-10 local people. Each interviewee was shown photographs of hog deer, spotted deer, swamp deer, sambar, barking deer and wild boar to determine the effectiveness of the questionnaire. The interview was conducted in Nepali upon obtaining verbal consent from each respondent after briefing them the aims and objectives of the project. The interview was recorded using an audio device; also, questionnaires were printed on paper and data were collected manually during the time of interview. Each interview took approximately 30-40 minutes.



Figure 1: Field assistant along with local people holding banner on conservation of hog deer and their habitat.

Three research questions were addressed during interviews, including: 1) What demographic factors influence people's attitudes towards hog deer 2) What

demographic factors influence people's knowledge of hog deer and 3) What are people's opinions on hog deer conservation. To address these research questions, the interview questions focus on socio- demographic characteristics of the respondents (gender, age, household size, education, occupation, income, livestock holding, ethnicity), past experience of the respondents with hog deer, and opinions about conservation strategies adopted for the conservation and management of hog deer.



Figure 2 & 3: Field assistants interviewing local people of Beldadi buffer zone.



Figure 4 & 5: Field assistants interviewing local people of Piparia buffer zone.