



**JAN-MARCH
2020**

**Assessing Distribution, Habitat, and
Threats to Chinese Pangolin in Kamala
River Basin, Central Nepal**

THIRD QUARTERLY REPORT

The project team has managed to complete important activities of this quarter though we had to postpone a few activities due to the COVID 19. The details of the activities completed and postponed in this quarter (Jan-March, 2020) are described below.

ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

• Coordination with Stakeholders:

The concerned agencies like local government, enforcement agency, community people, local leader, local schools, conservationist, and researcher were coordinated for the celebration of the world pangolin day and other tasks. The relation that was built among the stakeholders in the first two quarter of this project was continued.



• Celebration of World Pangolin Day, 2020

World Pangolin day is considered as the special day to unite pangolin enthusiasts for building momentum to conserve this species in trouble. With the similar cause this year, we celebrated the World Pangolin Day with the people of Lekhani of Udayapur district. This district lies around the center of Nepal and considered to have favorable habitats for both the species of pangolin found in Nepal; Indian and Chinese pangolins. Having done research in the Kamalamai River Basin, Pangolin day was done to share the findings of the research among the local people and develop awareness among them.

The event was organized in Lekhani Secondary School of Katari municipality with the active participation of the local people. All together 75 people were present in the event including the representative from local government, Nepal Police, community forestry user groups, school principals, teachers, local leaders, elders, students and businessmen. The half day event was divided into three session where first session focused on the dissemination of the information regarding pangolin and circulating the result of the research we have done in this area. Second session focused on the formation of the local pangolin conservation committee. Whereas, the third session focused on the art competition, awards and discussion.





First Session: Dissemination of pangolin related information

Celebrating World Pangolin Day was one of prime aim to aware local community regarding pangolin conservation. Thus, in this session with the means of different visual (photos, graphic and videos) presentation the local people were sensitized about the importance of this species to people and the ecosystem. The findings of our ongoing pangolin's research in Kamalamai River Basin was also shared which sensitized them how this river basin is suitable habitat for the pangolin and why is it important to conserve.

Second session: Community Level Pangolin Conservation Committee Formation

Acknowledging the fact that without the participation of local people the conservation is not effective, thus we formed "Local Pangolin Conservation Committee" with the same purpose. Many local residents showed their interest and were very excited to be a part of this team. Under the presidency of elected ward governmental official, a team of 11 people were formed which included representatives from police force, teachers, women's group and local leaders. The committee promised to play a vital role in the conservation of pangolin at the local level and also motivate nearby community to do the same.



Third Session: Art Competition

Art competition was also organized on this day to pass the message about pangolin conservation to children and young people. Altogether 16 students from 4 schools of class 3-9 took part in this competition where six among them were awarded based on their performance and grade. With the help of art competition, the students mentioned that they got the opportunity to learn more about it and they will also help their community in the conservation of this species.



• Published an article

To circulate message of pangolin conservation among larger mass, our team member Ms. Sabitri Rai published an op-ed article entitled Save the pangolins in myRepublica (one of the reputed national daily of Nepal). The article was based on the field anecdote of this project and was very successful in mass awareness regarding the threats and challenges to pangolin conservation. Link of the article:

<https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/save-the-pangolins/>

SAVE THE PANGOLINS

Pangolins are on the verge of extinction. They need to be saved



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Pangolin, the world's most trafficked mammal, is shy and nocturnal in nature. It curls-up and becomes stationary when it sees other animals, humans or any objects. Usually at dark, because of its peculiar behaviors, there have been increased incidents of pangolins being stumped by heavy vehicles like trucks, where these vehicles travel round the clock to and from Katari through Lekhani of Udayapur district.

Once, a container ran over a pangolin on the way to Ghurmi Bazaar. Nearby locals promptly

lies were dug all around the burrows in order to trap and capture pangolins. All these indicate the level of threat to this species. Some locals said the meat of pangolins tastes delicious.

Hearing them, it seemed that many have eaten it without prior knowledge that pangolins are enlisted as "protected species" by the government of Nepal. Out of eight species only Chinese pangolin, listed as "critically endangered" and Indian pangolin listed as "endangered" are found in Nepal.

According to International Union for Conservation of Nature



Republica

example, its meat is consumed as delicacy in many parts of China and Vietnam. But now pangolin is also being linked as intermediate host of new zoonotic disease called novel coronavirus. Zoonotic diseases are such diseases which get transmitted from animals to humans. It is pandemic

which constitutes inactive substance/s but is given/used in the belief that it exhibits effective treatment). For instance, pangolins' scales are believed to cure many ailments like rheumatism and epilepsy. These "hearsays" are widely believed.

Likewise, many believe that its

the stringent laws. For instance, according to Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Act (2017), committing wildlife crimes like killing, poaching, possessing, transporting, buying, selling pangolin and its scales will result in up-to 15 years imprisonment or one million rupees of fine or both. But such illegal activities are going on unabated. Various reports of pangolin smuggling substantiate this.

In Udayapur, scales of pangolins are the source of lucrative income for poachers and buyers. Besides, many of the locals are not aware of the fact that killing wildlife is illegal. Thus they need to be educated on this matter as well.

Pangolins are on the verge of extinction. They need to be saved. But for this, there should be stringent punishment for those who are involved in killing and smuggling of pangolins. Awareness

CHALLENGES

As the COVID19 was very active in this quarter, the lockdown affected some of the activities. We were supposed to complete our field work in Dhanusha district during third quarter but due to lockdown we were compelled to postpone it to the final quarter.

FURTHER PLANS FOR FOURTH QUARTER

• Data collection and workshop in Dhanusha

As the lockdown get lifted and the pandemic emergency settles down the remaining field works and final workshop planned for Dhanusha district will be done.

• Write an article in relation to COVID-19 and pangolins

With the speculations of pangolin could be the host for the COVID19, team have planned to write and an op-ed article on this topic. With the help of this article people will be aware about the relation of COVID19 and pangolin and guide what we can do to help its conservation.

• Final Report

After completing all the tasks mentioned in the proposal. Team will prepare and submit detailed final report in this quarter. A manuscript will also be drafted.