

# Final Evaluation Report

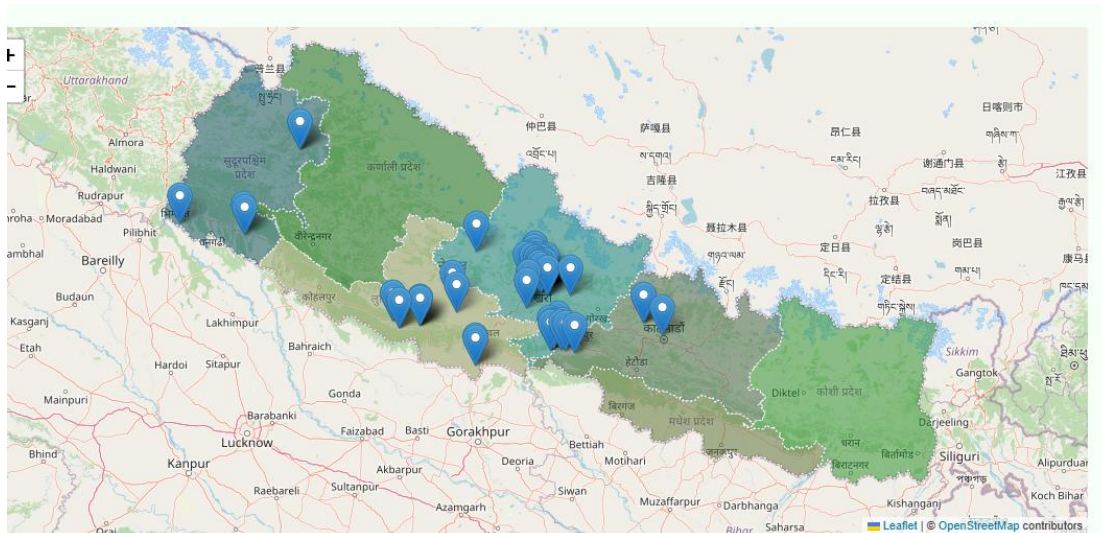
Your Details	
Full Name	Hemanta Dhakal
Project Title	Boosting nationwide vulture conservation by connecting people, government and development projects through monitoring and awareness workshops.
Application ID	41641-B
Date of this Report	April 26, 2025

1. Indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully	Comments
<i>Participatory conservation awareness workshop: Province level and National Level</i>				Total 5 Workshops were conducted among Government authorities of Ministry of Forest and Environment, Division forest offices, Nepal Electricity Authorities, Community Forest Users Groups, Local Stakeholders, Civil Aviation Department -Pokhara Regional International Airport and Gautam Buddha International Airport, University and School Students, Road Department representatives, Protected areas representatives, Local government representatives, Community Forest Users Groups, Nepal Police department representatives, Nepal Army representatives and local farmers.
<i>Extensive Monitoring of the Vulture and their nest</i>				-New mobile application for Vulture monitoring was launched and Vulture monitoring was done extensively from 126 places of Nepal by using mobile application Wing Watchers. We hope to have more users in future and More users will make more information in upcoming days. Total 184 downloads till June 5. Wing watchers and Chhimeki Chara (developed by Bird Conservation Nepal) are application both for birds, but Wing watchers only focus on 9 species of vultures in South East Asia with their clear images. So, this application will make people only record vulture information

			<p>without any confusion. This application is more easy to use than Chhimeki Chara as it is easy to proceed(*Fig 1)</p> <p>Together with Bird conservation Nepal and Pokhara Bird Society. We also monitored nesting sites of vultures by revisiting the previous and new nesting sites of Vultures . Probable sites were also visited with no extra record of vulture nest.</p> <p>126 individuals (bird watchers, students and government officials) from 3 provinces of Nepal, were trained to use mobile application Wing Watchers and record the encounters of Vultures in different parts of Nepal Total 9 species were recorded all over Nepal from 123 places from September 2024- Jan 2025. Egyptain vulture was recorded.</p> <p>Together with their and their organization help we fulfill our target and this will continue in upcoming days. At least twice a year we aim to compare the population of residential and migratory vultures during i.e winter and residential vulture during any one non migratory season i.e could be summer. Just to compare the variation in residential, migratory and overall population of vulture.</p> <p>Total Nest of different species recorded as active nest  Egyptian Vulture- 16+  White-rumped Vulture-400 +</p>
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				<p>Himalayan Vulture-32+</p> <p>Red headed Vulture- 3</p> <p>Slender-billed Vulture- 5</p> <p>(+ expected to be more, need more survey)</p> <p>(Source- Our survey, BCN and PBS record)</p>
NSAIDs monitoring				<p>No use of Diclofenac as NSAIDs were found used for veterinary purpose. The questionnaire survey was informal. We went to Vet shops as a farmer or customers and ask for medicine. Questions asked to vet persons were general and informal. In total we visited 140 vets. All were aware about the impact NSAIDs on vultures.</p>
Publication (Book) And Journal Article				<p>Instead of Book Vultures of Nepal We publish a book "Birds Of Millenium Trek" . This book also provide the details about vultures found in the Trekking trail and need of conservation of birds.</p> <p>Book Vulture of Nepal will also be publish in upcoming days.</p> <p>One of our article related with this project is under review at International Peer-review Journal, Environmental Monitoring and Assessment.</p>



\*Fig 1 : Wing Watchers checklist received sites

## 2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

a) . After vulture awareness workshops at different Provinces, Government officials were convinced with the need of monitoring of linear development projects that may cause threats to vultures. Province Government representatives were convinced to allocate some budget for vulture conservation in upcoming years. In total there were 240 participants in provincial workshops program. Among them 80% were government representatives from different department like ministry of forest and environment, forest, protected areas, electricity authority, aviation department and road department. 20 % were representatives from local stakeholders like Community Forest Users groups, vet persons, Vulture Safe feeding sites, University students and teachers and Local government.

Meanwhile in other awareness program during my project targeted for local people and students, there were in total 1450 participants. 80% participants were students and local club members, political representatives, social workers, nature lovers, birdwatchers, tour guides and other stakeholders and 20% local government representatives.

During the participation in Nepal Owl Festival 2024 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Nepal Bird Fair 2024 my team was able to aware more than 10000 local people and participants about the importance of vulture in Nepal.

Total 17 schools, 2 Universities, 7 local clubs, and 14 government department.

b). A research paper has been accepted by Environmental Monitoring and Assessment an International Journal. I participated in one International and two national conferences and presented my papers related to this project. Asian Ornithological Symposium 2024, Nepal Zoological Conference, **Conference on Recent Trends in Science, Technology and Innovation. 19 to 21 March 2025.** I presented my works of this project in all those conferences.

Pokhara Regional International Airport officials are now coordinating us to design the proper way to address the issues of collision of Vultures with airplanes. We conducted two programs with Airport officials. We are regularly monitoring the movement of vultures and other birds by using mobile application, Wing watcher. They are also now aware of the status of vultures and the need of their conservation. Good news is in 2024 and 2025 the bird strike with airplane at Pokhara International Airport have reduced as far as the information relayed by Airport officials last week in International Civil Aviation Organization organized at Pokhara, Nepal. This justifies that our coordination somehow, we have helped to reduced bird strike. They followed our suggestions to reduce bird strike which was submitted in previous workshops. In 2024 there was 13 bird strike and in 2025 till May there were 3 bird strike. Major precaution they have used is Bird Scaring Device-Bird Zon Gun, siren, physical chasing by vehicle during flight, waste management and habitat management.

### **3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.**

There were difficulties to gather all government representatives from concerned department. The efforts from local green organization and partners of Pokhara Bird Society make it happen. We postponed the workshops in other provinces (Lumbini and Sudhur Paschim) two times to make it happen.

### **4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.**

Public participation was quite impressive. We distributed some posters-of vultures (about 1000 in all places), we did some multimedia presentation about vultures. The participants answer before and after the program expressed in our questionnaire justifies that they came to know a lot about the need of conservation of vultures. They also highlighted the needs of such works in future too. Government representatives also make commitment that they will develop some programs with public participation in future for vulture conservation.

Vulture Safe feeding sites (Vulture Restaurants in Ghachowk, Kaski and other places) in Nepal are lacking funding to make it run properly. These workshops had also highlighted the need of Government support and In Gandaki and Lumbini province Secretary at ministry of Forest and Environment participated as chief guest in vulture conservation workshop, and agreed to support local communities and Vulture Safe Feeding Sites run by those communities financially and technically.

A good example was, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nepal Bird Fair Feb 2024 was organized in place near to Vulture Safe Feeding Site together with the communities running the Vulture safe feeding site at Nawalpur, Gandaki Province. About 10 thousand people (Local, visitors, bird lovers, students, volunteers, government officials) 38 green organization representatives visited the Bird Fair and Vulture Safe feeding sites. This also promoted the local tourism in that place.

Another success was an Itinerary to promote Eco Tourism was also prepared and submitted to Nepal Tourism Board in a program organized by Nepal Tourism Council and Pokhara Bird Society. This was aimed to promote ecotourism conserving vultures. This type of program will generate job for locals as well as sustainable conservation of vultures in that locality through local people participation.

### **5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

To continue this work, I am planning to develop some seed funding from Government side and develop a nature guard team in each province. These teams will monitor vulture hot spots detected during our visit, vulture nests and also help local government to develop vulture conservation programs in future.

For scientific monitoring of vulture, we will do yearly monitoring of vulture by using the mobile application Wing Watchers twice a year (once during Vulture Awareness Day and another at end of November).

I will continue my work for scientific monitoring of vulture. I have joined to University of Oviedo as PhD Student and I will be studying, "Moving forward in the conservation of the Critically Endangered Slender-billed vulture *Gyps tenuirostris*"

### **6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?**

Soon I will present my results in a scientific journal and one of my papers related to vultures is already being accepted. I will again organize a national level workshop where all my results will be shared and presented among related stakeholders and policy makers. Few news had already been published in newspapers and online news. My results will also be disseminated in international news and journals.

I represented the IUCN National Conservation Forum as the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) National Focal Point for Nepal. As a speaker, I emphasized the critical role of the IUCN and the IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group in vulture conservation, presenting several key points on behalf of all group members. I also underscored the urgent need for the effective implementation of the Vulture Conservation Action Plan to ensure the long-term survival of vulture populations in the region.

During the Rufford E-learning Event, I had the opportunity to present the detailed progress of my Rufford-funded project focused on vulture conservation in Nepal. I shared the steps undertaken, the challenges faced, and the successes achieved to date. The event also served as an excellent platform to receive constructive feedback and suggestions from fellow grantees and experts in the field, which will be invaluable in refining and strengthening the project as it progresses.

Few weeks ago I applied for the permission of tagging Slender-billed vulture as a part of my PhD work which just started. During that time I had an opportunity to share my findings in detail during my meeting with high level government officials of Ministry of Forest and Environment. I also suggested that my findings could be constructive to Vulture Conservation Action Plan of Nepal in upcoming years.

### **7. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?**

Another important next step will be sharing my results at local, national and international level. Full fill the major objectives of the conservation action plan. Monitoring the loopholes and addressing the threats to vultures that are recently growing. These kinds of workshop with Government officials will be continued in upcoming days also. I just started my PhD where I will be studying the movement ecology of Slender-billed vulture. Recently I am also able to get permit from Nepal Government to tag 10 individuals. This will be helpful in conservation of vultures. This will be my best next step after this 1<sup>st</sup> Rufford Booster.

**8. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?**

Yes The Rufford Foundation Logo was used in program banners of each workshops and awareness programs( Nepal Bird Fair 2024, 5 workshops and 6 school programs and 3 with local communities), Posters of Vulture(1000 printed and all distributed ) and book( 1000 printed and soon will be distributed). All of the posters were distributed in different programs.

**9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.**

- Hemanta Dhakal- Leader
- Manshanta Ghimire- Field supporter as bird expert from Pokhara Bird Society, Coordination with local representatives
- Hathan Chaudhary- Bird Expert, President, Nepal Ornithological Society, Coordination in workshop and awareness program
- Aman Sunar- Field Assistant, Vulture, nest and NSAIDs monitoring
- Amrit Subedi- Veterinary Student , Field Assistant, NSAIDs monitoring
- Suna Bhandari- University Student, Field Assistant, Vulture and Nest monitoring
- Deu Bahadur Rana- Vulture Expert, supporting member from Partner organization, Bird Conservation Nepal. He helped in Vulture monitoring and Coordination with local representatives and stakeholders.

**10. Any other comments?**

During my workshops with Government representatives, a lot of gap was expected to be filled regarding the conservation awareness of vultures at officers at planning level. This was justified by our questionnaires answered by the participants. A level of awareness was assimilated and much information was shared that will boost the concept of vulture conservation into action. These workshops are supposed to be consistently organized in future. The Province level Government representatives, Secretary from Ministry of Forest and Environment have also committed to organize such program and workshops in future too. A level of work had also been done to make local business entrepreneurs and business houses to develop a seed money to organize such workshop every year. This program will be led by Pokhara Bird Society.