

## Final Evaluation Report

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We ask all grant recipients to complete a project evaluation that helps us to gauge the success of your project. This must be sent in **MS Word and not PDF format**. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

**Please DO NOT fill in and submit this form until the project has been completed.**

Complete the form in English. Note that the information may be edited before posting on our website.

Please email this report to [jane@rufford.org](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

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Your Details	
<b>Full Name</b>	Sofiya K.C.
<b>Project Title</b>	Empowering communities for the long term conservation of pangolin in western Nepal.
<b>Application ID</b>	42730-1
<b>Date of this Report</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> May, 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 achieved	Comments
To survey five community forests in Surkhet and find out pangolin hotspot areas.				<p>We surveyed an area of 500 hectares, with 100 m X 20 m continuous belt transects (n= 500). Though we did complete transect surveys but did not detect any of the pangolin signs, our objective of finding pangolin hotspot areas was dismissed.</p> <p>With no detection of pangolin in the wild, we emphasized on questionnaire survey with the locals (n=30) to learn when was the last time they saw pangolin and why it disappeared and found past record of pangolin in Barah Taal, Surkhet district.</p> <p>Out of 30 people, 8 people reported seeing pangolins while 12 household have pangolin parts, where few claimed that the parts were from flooded pangolin and others claimed it was bought from India by their family members. All respondents mentioned of using pangolin scale for medicinal purposes such as treating stomach problems (gaano) and retained placenta.</p>
To monitor pangolin burrows with camera traps				We placed 10 camera traps in five of the community forests nearby termite mounds found).

			<p>No pangolin captured, but seven other species of wildlife detected which includes Leopard cat, Jungle cat, Large Indian Civet, Yellow throated Martin and Assam Macaque. These camera trap evidence in the landscape (first time) will further be disseminated through field blog/articles.</p> <p>Our eco envoy will collect information regarding pangolins within the district in coming days, since we do not have pangolin data in the field, our eco envoy will be responsible to visit rescue cases, cooperate with locals and DFO whenever necessary.</p>
<p>To sensitise community people and students for pangolin conservation</p>			<p>Locals including ward officials, women group actively participated in conservation awareness campaign increased their knowledge on pangolins. Conservation camp included majority of female participation (66%). Female participation in the eco envoy was null because of time constraints – we could not involve female student who lived far from study area.</p> <p>For further awareness, we were able to distribute 350 posters to ward officials, forest officials, school communities and locals. We couldn't prepare a booklet this time, but the school camps actively engaged students in learning about the ecological importance of pangolins and</p>

			<p>their conservation, followed by a quiz session and the distribution of pangolin stickers.</p>
<p>To train six local youth for pangolin surveys</p>			<p>We trained four local individuals—two university students and two forest guides—to conduct habitat surveys. Although we did not encounter any pangolin burrows during the survey, we took the opportunity to discuss potential rescue scenarios that may arise in the future. These eco envoys expressed a sense of responsibility and showed readiness to coordinate with the Division Forest Office (DFO) and other relevant stakeholders during such critical situations.</p> <p>Our two eco envoy (forest guides) weekly monitor the community forest as a part of their duty. We are informed if they encounter a pangolin or burrow.</p> <p>Our study area spanned three municipalities. For the community forests within each municipality, our plan was to train two individuals per site. However, in Gurbakot Municipality, we did not receive any records of past pangolin occurrences, and local awareness of the species was very limited. As a result, we did not conduct training for locals there. Instead, we organized school conservation education camps to help educate students about pangolin conservation.</p>

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

### a) Baseline information on past occurrence

Through key informant interviews and a community questionnaire survey, the project established a better understanding of past occurrence of pangolin in Surkhet District. Though local reported of species being seen in the past years in Barah taal community forests, we could not detect any pangolin signs in present, further possession on pangolin parts were also recorded in household, means that we can suspect this species have faced poaching and habitat destruction and their numbers declined over the years. In addition, project also explored understanding of local's knowledge and attitude toward pangolin in Barah taal.

### b) Capacity building of locals

Four locals including two university students and two forest guide gained skills in pangolin research techniques including camera trap deployment. 60 locals including women, ward officials, community forest user group members, in Barah Taal improved their understanding on ecological importance of the species and gained knowledge on pangolin conservation. Positive attitude was observed among local who believed on using people scales and claws, debunking the myths and disbeliefs. 120 students received knowledge on pangolin, their ecological importance.

### c) Strengthen efforts through consultation with stakeholders

We engaged with key stakeholders, including the DFO, sub-division, CFUG, and ward officials, to enhance awareness and support for pangolin conservation. Their attention was drawn to the species' protection needs, particularly in Surkhet valley, where three pangolin cases have been recorded in the past three years.

During a key informant interview in Gurbakot, a known pangolin rescue site, we held discussions with police officers stationed near the highway. They expressed interest in pangolin conservation, and we explored the risks of pangolin trafficking along the highway. The discussion highlighted potential trade routes and the need for vigilance to prevent illegal wildlife trade.

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

One of the difficulties we faced during our project was to get information from local people during our questionnaire survey. They were reserved because of their self-awareness for possessing pangolin body parts that we later came to know.

Other problem we faced was losing one of our camera traps for a time, as its strap was cut down and only after searching for 30 minutes within the thicket, we found it.

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

Our project directly involved four individuals including two forest guide and two university zoology students who developed skills in pangolin survey techniques. Two students received exposure in camera trapping will be essential for their upcoming projects. Moreover, they also gained experience and knowledge in field survey including interaction with key informant and locals. Forest guides who received knowledge would show interest and be responsible if pangolin rescue cases occur in future.

As we found misconception and disbeliefs among the locals for pangolin possession later discussed in conservation camp, increased their knowledge and awareness among communities. School officials and students gained their knowledge of pangolin, on its distribution, ecological importance and threats.

We stayed at the homestays during our field days which contributed toward local livelihood.



Figure: Students learning setting up camera trap, forest guides and students gaining knowledge on pangolin research techniques.

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

Yes, I plan to continue this work as the distribution of the Indian pangolin in Nepal's lower south-western region has not been studied well. Understanding its historical range, current distribution and threats in this area is crucial for developing site-specific conservation strategies. I am committed to explore Indian Pangolin in Nepal's west region and support its conservation.

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

The results will be shared through:

Short video: A short video documentary, as part of the project, will be shared on Facebook wildlife groups (e.g., Voice of Nature) and Friends of Nature (FON) Nepal's YouTube channel. **Web link to the video:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDhs4Myn3zU>

Publications and Blogs: Field experiences and findings will be published on the Friends of Nature website and a local newspaper. The results may also be shared through short communication or contribute to a research article in future studies.

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

Looking ahead, the important steps that I feel is expand the project area in West Nepal and conduct rigorous status surveys and identify threats. I also urge to further study Indian pangolin occurrence through camera traps, genetic analysis to gather more detailed evidence of Indian pangolin in the region. These steps will help build data on habitat occurrence of the species including the habitat characteristics which will help understand the status of distribution of the species and contribute to focusing on building/ discussing site specific conservation strategies involving key stakeholders and locals.

Another important step that I feel necessary is to increase capacity of law enforcement agencies. Developing a training module for police and forest officers on pangolin identification, handling of live rescues, evidence gathering and legal procedures is necessary. These steps will help contribute to long term conservation of species in western Nepal.

### **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, Rufford Foundation Logo was used in all of the project activities through print in banner and t-shirt, presentation, poster.

The foundation received publicity through presentations and awareness programs, key informant interview, field survey wherever needed.

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

**Sofiya K.C.:** I prepared all the project materials, planned the field logistics, executed field activities, overall project management, stakeholder coordination, reporting.

**Raju Acharya:** He voluntarily supervised the project timeline and activities, playing a crucial role in overseeing the project's progress.

**Neeta Pokhreal:** She contributed during the preliminary field visit coordinating with stakeholders and locals.

**Binaya Ghimire:** He played a crucial role in project execution and coordination. He assisted in the field activities including camera trap installation and questionnaire survey.

**Local resource person:** There were two local university students namely Bikram Singh Mandir and Dinesh Rajmali, our eco envoy who supported us in field research and conservation awareness program.

#### **10. Any other comments?**

We are grateful to the Rufford Foundation for their support. We are pleased to have collected baseline information on pangolins in Surkhet district, which plays an important role in planning effective conservation programs. A heartfelt thanks to all the team members, office colleagues including Raju Acharya and Suman Sapkota for overall support and guidance, and local stakeholders for the successful project implementation, also thanks to Kumar Paudel for the guidance on this research and field methods.

**ANNEX – Financial Report**  
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