

Promoting Community Based Conservation Efforts in Lower Humla Nepal

In the Sarkegad region of Humla, we previously identified the prevalence of human-wildlife conflicts involving predators like black bears, leopards, and jackals, leading to livestock and poultry losses and associated risk of retaliatory killings. To quantify these losses, we aim to conduct a household-level survey using semi-structured questionnaires. Additionally, the region faces conservation challenges such as deforestation, forest fires, climate change, and lack of awareness. To address these issues, community-based conservation programs and local empowerment are essential.

Till date, following activities have been accomplished:

1. Project Inception and consultation:

Before commencing field activities, we held a meeting with representatives from the Sarkegad Rural Municipality, the Division Forest Office Humla, locals, and the Project UKALI team. During the meeting, we discussed the outcomes of the previous project and emphasized the objectives of the recent project to ensure a cohesive and effective implementation strategy.

2. Installation of Conservation Billboards:

As proposed, three conservation billboards were installed at three strategic locations: one at the Sarkegad Rural Municipality office, one at Theli, and another at Seltadi. These boards are designed to disseminate conservation knowledge to the public. Two of the boards illustrate the message about protected mammals of Humla district, their conservation significance, and the fines and punishments for violators. The third board shares information about wildlife conservation, illegal hunting and trade, forest fires, and biodiversity conservation. Some figures related to these installations are shared below.



Fig: Installing a conservation billboard in Seltadi, Sarkegad RM involved engaging local people, who were delighted to participate and committed to its upkeep.



Fig: Illustrating the conservation billboard to the Mayor of Sarkegad Rural Municipality, Mr. Than Bahadur Rokaya, and the Health In-Charge, Mr. Kiran Budhathoki.



Fig: Group photo after completing the installation of conservation billboards. The left side **(A)** shows the billboard in Seltadi, which provides a similar message to the one installed near the Sarkegad RM office. The right side **(B)** shows the billboard in Theli, located between Dulli village and Sarkegad, which addresses issues such as illegal hunting and trade, forest fires, deforestation, and promotes biodiversity conservation.

3. Household Surveys:

We have conducted 40% of the household surveys within the Sarkegad Rural Municipality, aiming to assess the nature and extent of human-wildlife conflict, including the economic losses incurred. The remaining interviews will be conducted in the coming months.



Fig: Project lead, Mr. Vidyaman Thapa, conducting household survey with the local of Sarkegad Humla.

Activities Remaining

- Documentary Making
- Eco-clubs Formation
- Household Surveys (60%)

Photos credit: Anup Raj Shahi