

Project Update: December 2009

Here back in the field, (Little Rann of Kachchh, India) it is “pleasant weather” and “happy people” since this is the crop harvesting season in this dry arid landscape. After collecting dry and hot summer data I resumed the field activity following monsoon rains. During post-monsoon season we have managed to get ecological data on population distribution of wild ass well as sampling for indirect evidences of the wild ass in the crop field with respect to the distance from the Rann area to identify the conflict intensive area. Besides, we had a rapid questionnaire survey in the villages for which we already had similar survey during summer. We also attempted to record crop raiding incidences in these villages to understand which crops and areas are more vulnerable to wild ass crop raiding. To understand the nutritional implication of crop raiding issues, wild ass dung samples have been collected and will be analysed soon for macro elements and crude protein.

Simultaneously, I organised eight workshops (four in village schools and four in villages for farmers and graziers). The workshops with elderly people in these villages provided an opportunity to understand the conflict issues and peoples opinion on how to conserve this critically endangered species. While school children participated in drawing and writing competitions related to wildlife and nature conservation which provided a window to assess the understanding of the importance of wildlife and nature at their level. For the community awareness and information dissemination small stickers were distributed and several posters highlighting the conservation importance and current issues were posted in schools and public places. A total of 100 t-shirts were distributed with the logo of RSG, image of wild ass and conservation message.

Currently field data are being entered and analysed. Simultaneously laboratory analysis for the dung samples is also underway. I am hopeful to get results within a month to submit the final report. I am sure the result of this study would help initiate some more ecological studies and conservation measures for this endangered species.



Left: Intensive damage to pulsefield. Right: Wildass dung cropfield.



School awareness.

