

Project Update: May 2018

1. Consultation and sharing about the project with District forest Office-Kailali, local NGOs, schools and stakeholders: On 22nd January 2018, DFO's permit for carrying out the project in Ghodaghodi Lake Complex (GLC) was taken. A meeting, sharing about the project activities, was held with the officials of Pahalmanpur Sector office. They showed their keen enthusiasm and support for the small mammal survey and conservation awareness campaign in the Ghodaghodi municipality. Second meeting was held on 28th January 2018 with working committee of Ghodaghodi Area Conservation and Public Awareness Forum, a local NGO, for sharing the project activities and knowing the status of small mammals in the area after the gap of 2 years. Altogether, 14 participants were present for the meeting. The meeting also discussed about marking up of World Wetlands Day 2018. An interschool debate competition on "Importance of wetlands" was decided to be organised and the official letters were sent to seven schools for the participation of students in the event.
2. Marking World Wetlands Day 2018: On 2nd February 2018, with the theme, "Wetlands for a sustainable urban future", the team celebrated World Wetlands Day 2018 in collaboration with District Forest Office- Kailali, Sector forest office- Pahalmanpur, Bird Conservation Nepal, Bird conservation Network-Sukhad, Ghodaghodi area conservation and Awareness Forum, Basanta Protected Forest Council, Community Forest Users Group (CFUG), CFCC-Pahalmanpur and five schools in the premises of GLC. Altogether 109 participants, including government officials, conservationists, stakeholders, journalists, teachers, students and other locals attended the event.
3. First phase data collection (25th January – 27th February 2018): 30 live traps (10 Sherman and 20 tube traps) and eight camera traps were deployed in the identified sites following the research design made for small mammal survey. The live traps and camera traps were regularly monitored by the team. Transect walk was done for visual encounter and indirect sign survey. Different anthropogenic threats (logging, use of chemical fertilisers, habitat degradation, livestock grazing, etc.) were also observed. The identification of recorded species is yet to be done (will be sent to the experts once the second phase is completed). Questionnaire survey (semi structured) was carried out at household level for determining local people's perception on small mammal's conservation.
4. Recruited 10 Citizen Scientists: Two members from five Forest User Groups were approached and recruited as citizen scientists on 22nd February 2018. A training on small mammal survey and monitoring techniques was given to them. They were taught about small mammals (their habit and habitat), survey and monitoring techniques (transects, how to use GPS, camera traps, Sherman traps and tube traps).
5. Media involvement: A talk on status and need of small mammal's conservation was aired on local FM - Mann ko Manjheri throughout the last week of February 2018.



Left: Prize distribution by Mayor of Ghodaghodi Municipality to the winner of speech contest on World wetlands day 2018. Right: Participants on World wetlands day.



Left: Forest surrounding GLC. Right: Croplands near GLC.



Left: Transect walk by researcher. Right: Camera trapping by team.



Left: Small Indian Civet recorded by Camera trap. Right: Indian Hare recorded by Camera trap.



Left: A dead jungle cat found on the bank of river nearby GLC. Right: Questionnaire survey by researcher.



Left: Training on Small mammal's survey and monitoring techniques to citizen scientists. Right: Citizen Scientists observing Sherman traps.



Citizen Scientists after the training session

Work in progress:

- Preparations for second phase field survey.
- Preparations of IEC materials.
- Awareness campaign at community level.