

## The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

### Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other 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. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to [jane@rufford.org](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

Grant Recipient Details	
<b>Your name</b>	Dr. Mohammad Shaheed Hossain Chowdhury
<b>Project title</b>	Status and impact of traditional forest fauna harvesting by the Mro tribe in the hill forests of Bangladesh: Policy implications for biodiversity conservation
<b>RSG reference</b>	8744-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	June 2011-February 2012
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£6000
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:shaheedfeni@yahoo.com">shaheedfeni@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	15.02.2012

1. Please 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 record the list of the wild fauna harvested by the <i>Mro</i>			√	To meet their protein need, the <i>Mro</i> use to hunt a number of wild fauna from the forest. But due to population pressure and destruction of habitats, the diversity and abundance of wildlife have been decreasing day by day. Our interview with the local community and transect survey revealed that 18 mammals and 11 birds are found in the study area and the <i>Mro</i> community harvest them all.
To explore the status of the wild fauna			√	To explore the status of the wild fauna in this region, the respondents were asked to tell which wildlife is found nowadays and which were found 5-10 years ago. Our study revealed that, along with the 18 mammals and 11 birds, 4 more species of mammals and birds were found 5-10 years ago which are not usually seen presently.
To explore the preference (if any) for the specific wild fauna by the community			√	These findings are really interesting. Among the <i>Mro</i> community there are small clans which are named after a specific wildlife and that community does not take the meat of that wildlife. For example: ' <i>Valluk gosthi</i> ' (Bear clan) does not take the meat of bear and they consider it as a sacred animal.
To explore the indigenous knowledge of various uses of wild fauna by the <i>Mro</i> tribe			√	<i>Mro</i> people consider hunting as a pride and after taking the bushmeat, they hang the skull of that animal in front of their house. They believe that it also add some decorative and spiritual values to their residence. Beside this, they also use horn, hoof, bone, feather, and skin for decorative purposes, making ornaments and other household utensils. Moreover, they use parts of some animals for getting cured against some diseases.
To find out the perception of the community on wildlife			√	Throughout questionnaire survey and consecutive focus group discussion, we have tried our level best to assess the true perception of the <i>Mro</i> community

<p>conservation and their suggestion and choice for alternative protein sources</p>				<p>regarding the conservation of wildlife. The outcome is that they only want to conserve wildlife for their thrust of hunt and need for bushmeat. Whatever their motive is, they want to conserve wildlife and want to take part in conservation programmes. As an alternative source of protein they prefer pigs and hens. We have visited six villages consisting of a few numbers of people. We could manage the local government chairman Mr. Mangshai Mro with us. In the six villages we have arranged six awareness programmes to make the local people understand that conserving wildlife will not only meet their protein need but also it will help to keep their environment balance. We also have visited two schools and talked to the school teachers and requested them to tell their students about the importance of conserving of wild fauna. We also have arranged a half-day long workshop chaired by Mr. Mangshai. In this workshop we have suggested them to rear domestic animals like (goat, pig, hens etc.) for meat to reduce dependency on the wild animals.</p>
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**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).**

The most challenging part of this research work was to collect information from the *Mro* people. Due to the political commotion between mainland *Bangalee* and the tribal people in different parts of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, there is a lack of trust between both the parties. The tribal people usually do not want to talk to the *Bangalee* people. To overcome this situation we took the help from local administration. The local administration has good relationship with the local leaders of the community. They helped to make us credible to the local leaders (e.g., local government chairman and commissioner). We shared our motto of the research and they were satisfied. Though the process was time-consuming but with their cordial help we have collected authentic data finally.

**3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.**

**i. Documentation of the status of wildlife in and around Thanchi, and wild fauna harvested by the *Mro* Community**

It is a common scenario of a developing country that the forests are decreasing day by day. The reasons are also very common. Population pressure and lack of awareness are in the leading rank. The present study documents the current status of wildlife found in the area and the list of animals harvested by the *Mro* community. It is found that the number and abundance of species is

decreasing day by day. This documentation can be used as baseline information for restructuring conservation plan.

#### **ii. Documentation of indigenous knowledge of using wild fauna except for food**

Harvesting wild fauna for meat is very common worldwide. But the specialized knowledge of any community in using wild fauna demands scientific attention. This study records that the *Mro* community use the animal parts for different decorative, medicinal and jewellery purposes. They use horn, hoof, bone, feather, skin, and skull for these purposes. On the basis of the wildlife, the community is divided into a number of clans. The clans are named after a specific wildlife and the people of that clan do not take the meat of that wildlife. It could be an important clue for the policy makers during formulation of region-specific and ethnicity-specific conservation policies. From the study, it is conceived that wildlife is intricately related to their life and culture. It is an indispensable part of their tribal life.

#### **iii. Awareness on conservation and opinion for alternative protein sources**

This is one of the major achievements of the project. Through this project we have tried to raise awareness amongst the older and young generations about the necessity of conservation of wild fauna by involving the local leaders. We have also found out their perception of wildlife conservation and choice for alternative protein source. This outcome will also help to introduce the new dimensional protein source for the destitute tribal community and formulate the biodiversity conservation policy for the hilly region of Bangladesh.

#### **4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).**

The project was linked with local communities from its' very early stage. One of the main objectives of our study was to document the wild fauna harvested by the *Mro* community. We had involved the local leaders in the workshops and awareness raising programmes. Besides, I had included six local young people as the guides and translators in six hamlets/villages of the *Mro*. In the workshop, awareness programs and meetings with local leaders I entertained the participants with foods that I bought from the local shops and restaurants of the *Mro* community. I paid honorarium to the local government Chairman and commissioners, hamlet heads and other representatives as an incentive to their assistance and time to my team. I provided the school students with snacks and soft drinks while conducting the awareness program in the only government primary school in the study area. Besides, in all the 67 households surveyed and interviewed, I distributed money (@ £20 per household) to buy two pairs of hens as a start of the small-scale poultry as an alternative protein source. This project finally aims in suggesting the formulation of wildlife conservation policy that would also be for the betterment of the local community.

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

Yes, I have the plans to continue this work as a new project of introducing alternative protein source with a view to diverting the poorest tribal community towards livestock farming from hunting in the wild. The goal of the proposed project will be a reduction in pressure on local wild fauna and thereby conservation of the regional biodiversity.



Household ethno-zoological survey (using semi-structured questionnaire)									
Transect survey in the forest									
Designing participatory action plan and workshop with local community, NGO & Forest Dept.									
Data input and analysis									
Preparation and submission of final project report & scientific article/s									

**8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.**

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
<b>Pre-project works</b>				
Purchasing secondary literatures (books, journals, videos, photocopies, stationeries etc.)	150£	275£	-125£	I bought some books on 'tribals and forests of Bangladesh' published by Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) and Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
Contacts and insurances	80£	80£	0£	As anticipated.
<b>Total</b>	<b>230£</b>	<b>355£</b>	<b>-125£</b>	Overall expenditure was higher than expected.
<b>Travel</b>				
From stay to study site	400£	250£	+150£	The number of trips to research site was less than expected as the surrounding factors were not in favour of making frequent visit there.
Intra-transportation (within the study site)	100£	125£	-25£	It was a little higher than anticipated.
<b>Total</b>	<b>500£</b>	<b>375£</b>	<b>+125£</b>	The cost was lower than anticipated as the number of visit was less.
<b>Subsistence</b>				
Accommodation & food	820£	600£	+220£	The cost was lower than anticipated as the number of visit was less.
<b>Total</b>	<b>820£</b>	<b>600£</b>	<b>+220£</b>	
<b>Remuneration</b>				
Graduate field assistant (@150£ per visit)	750£	900£	-150	2 persons' total 3 times visit @ 150£ per visit.
Remuneration for local guide (@70£ per visit)	1000£	1260£	-260£	6 persons' total 3 times visit @ 70£ per person.
<b>Total</b>	<b>1750£</b>	<b>2160£</b>	<b>-410£</b>	This is higher than the anticipated.
<b>Equipments</b>				

Hand-held GPS	200£	200£	0£	As anticipated.
Binocular	200£	100£	+100£	Bought a second-hand one with lower price than anticipated.
Digital camera (Canon IXY digital) and tripod	280£	345£	-65£	Price was a bit higher than the anticipated budget.
Voice recorder & batteries	45£	35£	+10£	
Others (e.g. raincoat, water-proof bags for equipments, plastic mats etc.)	20£	30£	-10£	Purchasing some additional equipment incurred the extra cost.
<b>Total</b>	<b>745£</b>	<b>700£</b>	<b>+45£</b>	
<b>Health and safety</b>				
Health and safety allowances	20£	20£	0£	As anticipated.
<b>Total</b>	<b>20£</b>	<b>20£</b>	<b>0£</b>	
<b>Post-project activities</b>				
Purchase of statistical software/s for data analysis, maps and images	180£	150£	+30£	Some analytical software was found as complementary items and it reduced the expenditure accordingly.
Publication of brochures/awareness folders & reports, and pamphlets etc.	450£	400£	+100£	The total cost was reduced by minimising the quantity and item of publications, and bargaining for discounts from the merchants.
Dissemination of project results locally by arranging workshops and extending support for alternative protein sources for the community	800£	1340£	-540£	In all the 67 households interviewed, I distributed 20£ per household to buy two pairs of hens as a start of the small-scale poultry as an alternative protein source.
<b>Total</b>	<b>1430£</b>	<b>1890£</b>	<b>-460£</b>	Total cost was much higher than as expected.
<b>Miscellaneous</b>				
Contingency allowances and others	410£	100£	+300£	Miscellaneous cost was used to cover the extra costs incurred for paying lump sum honorarium to local government representatives and entertainment purposes for school students.
<b>Total</b>	<b>410£</b>	<b>100£</b>	<b>+300£</b>	Actual cost was much lesser than the anticipated cost.
<b>Total</b>	<b>5905 £</b>	<b>6,010 £</b>	<b>- 105 £</b>	This amount was covered from the extra fund as RSG allocated a round figure of amount 6000£

				against the anticipated demand of 5905 £. The remaining 10£ was covered from the personal fund.
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**9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?**

Firstly, drawing the attention of both the scientific community and the policy makers regarding the diminishing trend of faunal diversity in hill forests of Bangladesh is the most important step. As hunting wildlife by the *Mro* is the crucial reason behind this diminishing trend steps for creating alternative protein source for the local community are to be taken with a view to ensuring twofold purposes: improvement of health condition of the marginal tribal group in one hand, and conservation of hill forest biodiversity on the other.

**10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?**

The RSGF logo was used extensively during the project. The logo and name of the foundation were used in the banners and other printed materials (for distribution among the students) during the workshop, meetings and community awareness campaign. I also used the logo in the poster that I displayed in my volunteer organization “Anti-Bushmeat Movement Bangladesh”, and also in my workplace Dhaka District Administration. I will acknowledge the Rufford Small Grants Foundation in the scientific article during its submission and publication in international peer reviewed journal.

**11. Any other comments?**

I do strongly believe that research on various aspects of the neglected indigenous communities living inside the forests of developing countries can be augmented by the assistance and financial supports of this kind. This type of support is vital for the younger researchers of the developing world to build up their career in academic and professional arena.