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Biodiversity and Protected Areas (PA) can best be conserved when local people are motivated to do so. There is an urgent need for effective, community-based conservation frameworks to safeguard biodiversity. Our goal is to develop a major participatory monitoring program in PA of the Brazilian Amazon to improve people engagement in PA conservation and their management. We created a four-step framework for the monitoring program. 1) Articulation and Mobilization: We selected eight Protected Areas to implement the project and realized 37 meetings and workshops to engage local NGOs, PA managers and local communities. 2) Construction of the monitoring protocols: Biome monitoring protocols were designed jointly by policy makers and researchers, implemented in seven PAs, and focus on biological groups that may show changes at an ecosystem level – birds, mammals, butterflies and woody plants. For seven PA, managers and local people chose locally-specific targets, focusing on PA and resource management – Brazilian nuts, aquatic turtles, peacock bass fishery, sustainable hunting and mammal in sustainable logging areas. The data collection protocol was designed by specialists and validated by local people and PA managers in meetings and workshop with 836 participations. 3) Capacity-building: We held 16 training courses for local people on participatory monitoring, with 475 participations, in which 209 people participated as biodiversity monitors. 4) Data collection: Thus far the program has recorded 2729 birds and mammals, 6394 butterflies and 1756 woody-plants, 54 Brazil nut trees, 775 aquatic turtles, 4442 peacock bass fished, 1351 records of sustainable hunting and 882 mammals in sustainable logging areas. Community-based conservation is a promising idea, deeply rooted in participation. Over time we believe that application of the proposed framework will lead to an enhancement of biodiversity knowledge and local participation in management and conservation of the Amazon.

CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY STATUS OF OPHIOCORDYCEPS SINENSIS IN THE HIMALAYA, INDIA

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The caterpillar fungus (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*) is a flagship species of the Himalaya and is one of the world's most expensive natural medicinal resources. This study assessed harvesters' perception on abundance, sustainability, ease of harvesting, and challenges regarding collection in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve. The annual harvest (number of caterpillar fungus per household) varied from 300 to 1150 (mean 599.31, SE ±10.19) in 2011; in 2015 it dramatically fell down to 200-710 (mean 405.93, SE ±6.06). On the other hand, average daily collection per person was 11.51 (SE ±0.37) in 2011 and it dramatically decreased to 3.57 (SE ±0.09) in 2015. With the gradual increase in the market value of caterpillar fungus since 2006 to 2015, the dependency of local communities is becoming more prominent on the income generated through its collection, whose livelihoods were earlier based on pastoral and agricultural activities. The harvesters' perception concluded that abundance (~82 per cent) and sustainability (~68 per cent) of the harvest of the species have decreased and the ease of harvesting (~78 per cent) has become difficult in the last five years. Unsustainable and rampant harvesting practices are causing threats to long term survival of this caterpillar-fungus parasitic complex along with the destruction of its habitats which support many rare, endangered and threatened Himalayan species. The fungus population and per-capita harvest are decreasing continuously. It is also found that abundance and sustainability of the harvest have decreased, and ease of harvesting has become difficult in last five years in the study area. The reasons may be over harvesting and ecological threats due to anthropogenic pressure. The regulation of rampant exploitation and implementation of scientific sustainable harvesting should be carried out for the survival of the species and to conserve pristine alpine meadows

CONSERVATION BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF URBAN SACRED NATURAL SITES

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