

REPORT



With the aim of expanding our work on fireflies in the Himalayas, this project in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve (NDBR), Chamoli, Uttarakhand plays a pivotal role. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, NDBR encompasses several villages and supports a rich diversity of flora and fauna. It attracts a large number of tourists every year due to iconic destinations such as the sacred Badrinath Temple, the Valley of Flowers, and Nanda Devi National Park. However, the surge in tourism has led to significant changes in the landscape. The development of broad roads, hotels, and restaurants has enhanced convenience for visitors, but it has come at a cost to the region's biodiversity, impacting both plant and animal life. Fireflies commonly known as nature's lantern have been affected by these activities, therefore with this project we have started the escalation of awareness among local communities residing in the area.

We have identified and marked sampling locations in six villages within the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve (NDBR) region: Joshimath, Parsari (Auli), Mana, Pandukeshwar, Malari,

and Ghamshali (Fig.1). So far, we have conducted several awareness workshops across these locations (Fig. 2 & 3). The assessment of firefly diversity has also commenced; however, no fireflies have been observed yet. According to local residents, fireflies are usually seen during the monsoon season in this region and to monitor that small group of students have been formed in Joshimath and Pandukeshwar, and the contact details have been exchanged to facilitate communication. These students will help inform us about potential firefly habitats during our upcoming visits.

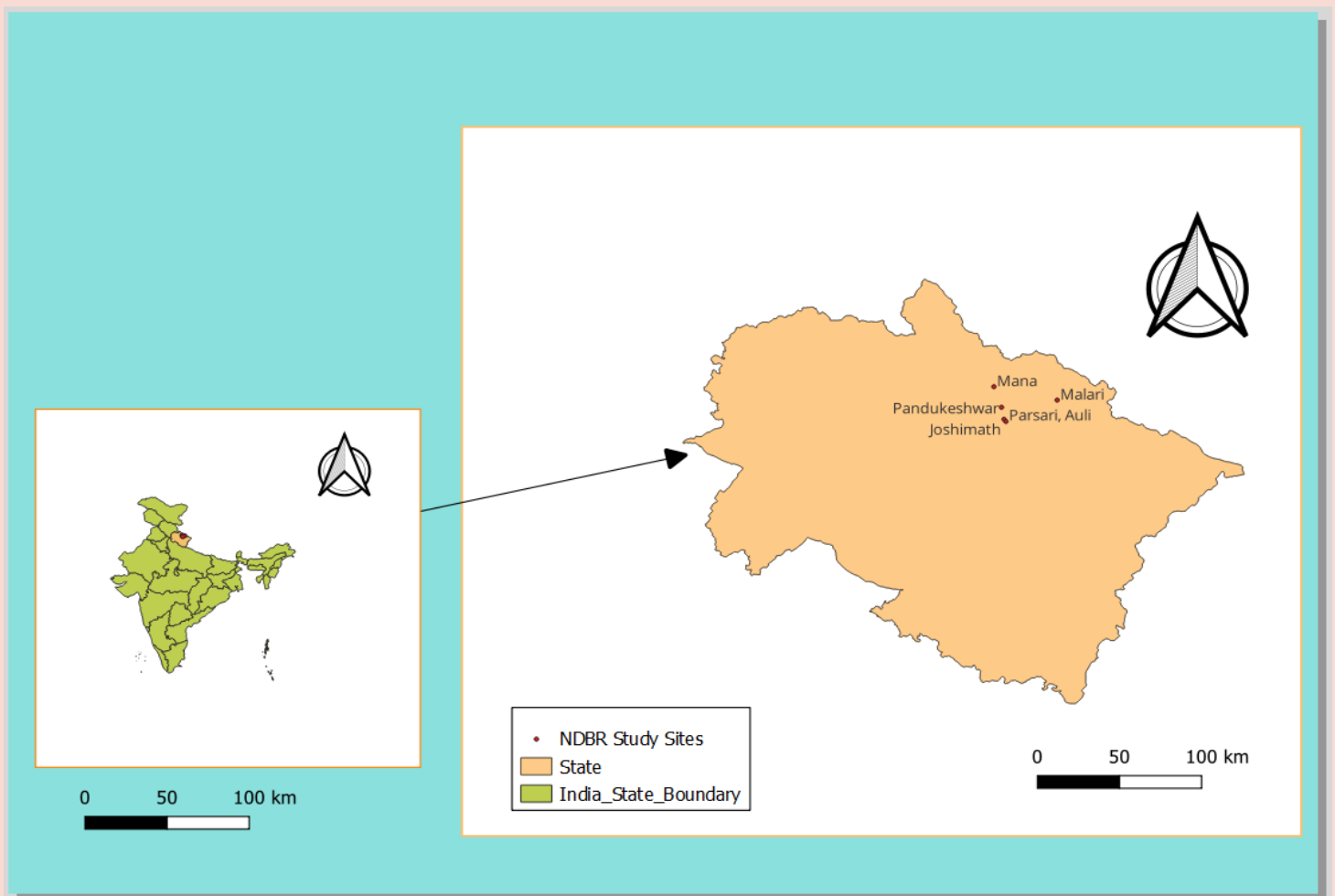


Fig.1 Map showing different villages in NDBR region, Chamoli, Uttarakhand, India.



Fig.2. Conducted awareness programs for students and local people in different areas of NDBR region.



Fig.3. Some more awareness workshops for students in different areas of NDBR region.



Fig.4. Article on fireflies studies in Himalayas and the cause of their decline.

In addition to conducting awareness workshops, media outreach was also utilized to highlight the decline of fireflies in the region. Information was shared with media outlets, leading to publications in widely read newspapers (Fig.4). This significantly contributed to raising awareness among a broader audience.