

Project ID: 40960-1

Project Title: Ecology and Conservation of Gaur (*Bos gaurus*)

Progress Report (1)

Project update: January 2024- August 2024

1) Preliminary Survey

Before initiating the project, a permit request was granted by the Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation and the Department of Forest and Soil Conservation to carry out our research in Chitwan-Parsa complex and Triyuga protected forest.

A preliminary survey was conducted in the Chitwan-Parsa Complex during the first week of February 2024. The major objective of preliminary survey was to understand the status of Gaur and identify the potential areas for their suitable habitat. For this purpose, a Key Informant Interview (KII) was conducted with the park officers, rangers, National Trust of Nature Conservation officials (NTNC), Buffer Zone User Committee members, wildlife technicians of NTNC, nature guides, elephant care takers, safari riders, local herders, local people. Informal discussions were also done with the community people to better understand their distribution and status. Through the KII, potential habitat sites were identified inside the Chitwan-Parsa complex. With the help of this, a field visit was planned accordingly for the data collection.



Primary habitat of Gaur in Chitwan National Park

2) Promotional materials and questionnaire preparation

All necessary promotional materials like brochures, leaflets, posters and t-shirts were designed, finalized and prepared during this phase. The sample of the poster and brochure is attached below. Similarly, we also prepared a semi structured questionnaire for the local community. The set of questionnaires was prepared with the guidance of advisor.

The questions were divided into the following categories: a) Background information of the respondents b) Identification of Gaur c) Religious and cultural values of Gaur d) Perception of the respondents towards Gaur and its conservation e) Threats for Gaur and its habitat conservation



Poster of Gaur (*Bos gaurus*) for conservation awareness



Hoof marks of Gaur observed during the field survey of Chitwan-Parsa Complex



Left: Dry dung of Gaur observed during the field survey in CNP

Right: Salt licking place with the teeth marks



Some of the photos of data collection during occupancy survey

- B. Questionnaire Survey: The questionnaire survey was primarily conducted to understand the perception of local people towards its conservation. A total of 75 households were randomly surveyed within the buffer zone area of Chitwan-Parsa complex. Firstly, the areas which were adjoining to the national parks and where the Gaur were previously sighted were selected for questionnaire survey. The questionnaire survey was conducted among households, with the eldest family member serving as the respondent. Informal interactions were also carried out with the local people and members of BZFUGs. We were accompanied by a local guide and a Biodiversity Conservation Champion in the buffer zones of CNP and by a forester and local guides in the buffer zones of PNP to identify the households and get proper information. Through the household survey, we were able to record 3 cases of Human-Gaur conflict in Chitwan National Park.

Some photos of questionnaire survey:





6. Conservation outreach programs:

For the conservation awareness programs, we firstly consulted with the officers and rangers of Chitwan and Parsa National Park as well with the members of BZUCs and designated the areas for conservation outreach programs. The conservation outreach programs were specially targeted towards the local people especially the young kids. The outreach program was carried out in two phases; in the first phase we covered the buffer zone areas of Chitwan National Park during May. In the second phase we covered the buffer zone areas of Parsa National Park during the month of June. In order to carry out the outreach programs, schools were selected within the buffer zone areas. In Chitwan, we selected Madi municipality whereas in Parsa we chose Thori rural municipality and in Bara district, we chose Amlekhgunj sub-metropolitan city.

The conservation awareness presentation was delivered to the students studying in grade 7,8 and 9. In Chitwan, 29 students from Madi Madhyamik Bidhyalaya of Madi-3 Basantapur, 61 students from Shree Someshwor Madhyamik Bidhyalaya of Baruwa ,Madi-1 and 20 students (grade 4 and 5) from Shree Rastriya Adharbhut Bidhyalaya of Pandavnagar, Madi-1 were given presentation by emphasizing on the importance of Gaur and its habitat conservation. Likewise, 61 students from Shree Nepal Uchha Madhyamik Bidhyalaya in Amlekhgunj-21 of Bara district, 40 students from Shree Gyan Batika Madhyamik Bidhyalaya in Suwarnapur-5 of Parsa district , 19 students from Barnamala English Boarding School in Thori, 56 students from Shree Madhyamik Bidhyalaya in Thori RM-8, Bijayabasti and 27 students from Shree Gyanjyoti Madhyamik Bidhyalaya in Thori RM-4, Ghyangdanda were given presentation on the conservation of gaur and its ecology. Species identification was conducted before and after the awareness program to assess participants' knowledge and understanding of the species. In total, 313 students from 8 schools were sensitized and raised awareness. Around 100 posters and 200 brochures were distributed to school students, teachers, members of the BZUC, local people, park officials and local herders in the Chitwan-Parsa Complex.

Similarly, members of 6 BZUCs were provided with the conservation awareness on Gaur through discussions, informal meetings, presentations, poster and brochures distribution. The discussions, meetings and presentations mainly focused on the identification, present status, distribution, conservation threats and the ecological importance of Gaur. The BZUCs are as follows:

- 1) Chitwan National Park
 - i. Panch Pandav Buffer Zone Users Committee
 - ii. Ayodhyapuri Buffer Zone Users Committee
- 2) Parsa National Park
 - i. Sunakhari Buffer Zone Users Committee
 - ii. Kusum Batika Buffer Zone Users Committee
 - iii. Nirmal Thori Buffer Zone Users Committee
 - iv. Banshakti Buffer Zone Community Forest Users Committee



Awareness program in Madi Madhyamik Bidhyalaya (R) and ShreeRastriya Adharbhut Bidhyalaya (L)



Right: Awareness program in Shree Gyanjyoti Madhyamik Bidhyalaya. Left: Awareness program in Shree Someshwor Madhyamik Bidhyalaya



Right: Awareness program in Shree Nepal Uchha Madhyamik Bidhyalaya. Left: Awareness program in Shree Gyan Batika Madhyamik Bidhyalaya



Right: Awareness program in Barnamala English Boarding School. Left: Awareness program in Shree Madhyamik Bidhyalaya

Some photos of awareness program in different Buffer Zone User Committees:





Some photos of poster distribution to the students, local people:





Some photos of conservation posters in the public area (Right and left):

