

Final Project Evaluation Report

Full Name	Abhijit Boruah
Project Title	Reviving White-Winged Duck from Extinction in Dehing Patkai wildlife-Sanctuary, Assam, India
Application ID	22592-1
Grant Amount	£5000
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1. 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 assess the population status and distribution of White-winged wood duck by occupancy method.				During the study period we identified fifteen water bodies in and around Dehing-Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary where white winged wood ducks were sighted. A total of 25 sightings were made from November 2017 to June 2018. During our survey we recorded the habitat characteristics and identified the roosting and nesting tree species. We also generated a distribution map of white-winged wood duck in Dehing-Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary based on our sighting records.
To promote White-winged Duck as iconic species of Dehing - Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary.				Four interactive meetings were conducted with different stakeholders like the Forest Department, local NGOs, representatives of government (member of Legislative Assembly) and local media personnel. Thirty outreach programmes were conducted in local schools and villages to raise awareness on the bird and its current conservation status. In total 20 programmes were held in school and 10 in fringe villages. A leaflet was developed in local language, depicting the importance of the bird, its habitat and conservation issues. The leaflets were distributed during the awareness programme and approximately 3000 copies were distributed.
To build capacity of local youths for regular monitoring and as tourist guide.				Seventy youths from fringe villages were selected and trained in two different capacity building workshops. During the workshops various activities like bird watching and identification were conducted.

To outreach local community against pesticides and oil pollution.				A meeting was arranged with the higher officials of Oil India Limited (OIL) and Forest Department to find out solutions regarding oil pollution at nearby water bodies. Also, the researchers interacted with the locals describing the harmful effects of the pesticide on the habitat and encouraged them to avoid the use of pesticides.
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled

There were hardly any difficulties in conducting the project activities during our study period. But the unexpected rain, did delayed our field data collection exercise. Therefore, the team had to take an extension of 2 months that overshoot the planned timeline.

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

Current population status of white winged wood duck.

A baseline information on the population status of the white-winged wood duck was generated. Grid-based occupancy survey was conducted and areas with white-winged wood duck presence was identified. A distribution map based on the sighting record was generated. Habitat characteristics like the status of the water bodies, presence of roosting and nesting trees, water quality etc., were recorded.

Our study will serve as the baseline data and will help in future monitoring of the species.

To promote white-winged duck as iconic species of Dehing-Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary.

Maximum number of awareness programmes were conducted in different fringe villages including schools and college. Almost 3500 people came to know about the status of this bird and eagerly participated at workshops and programmes. Leaflets were also distributed among the people who attended the programmes. Also permanent hoardings were displayed in the range offices describing the conservation needs of the birds.

To aware local community on pesticides and oil pollution.

Making the people aware of using pesticides that polluted the water body was an achievement for us and a meeting with the OIL officials resulted in understanding the issue and minimise it. The officials were also alerted on illegal and uncontrolled drilling of oil pumps by miscreants in the area and the officials assured of providing with high security.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.

Two local youths were directly benefitted from the project as they were hired as field assistants and provided with honoraria. Local youths were hired as they are well versed with the terrain, field conditions and have knowledge on the overall habitat condition. In the process they were also trained in bird watching and identifying animal signs, which will further help them in developing ecotourism ventures. Moreover, workshops were conducted to train the seventy local youths as tourist guides from fringe villages and grassroots-level NGOs and a team was also formed after the workshop. Dehing-Patkai is a potential tourist destination, but due to lack of proper infrastructure for tourists and skillful guides the, the sanctuary is visited by local tourists. Our training has helped the local youths to hone their skills. The awareness programmes were conducted in many fringe villages where conservation of white-winged duck was explained and a team was also formed in order to record if anyone in the village sights this bird at future.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, we plan to continue our study on white-winged wood duck. Very little information is available on this bird and there is a scarcity of ecological studies on this species. The present study generated a baseline information on the current status of the bird in the sanctuary. We are planning to develop a landscape-wide survey to estimate the current population status in future. As white-winged wood duck is a habitat specialist, information on its habitat status, extant threats will also be documented in our future studies. The rampant use of pesticide can affect the bird negatively. Hence, we would like to encourage people to minimise the use of the pesticide and identify an alternative to this. Our aim is to understand how different habitat and anthropogenic activities might affect the white-winged wood duck population in northeast India, Based, on our study we would like to develop a conservation action plan for the species. During our study, we identified that there is very less awareness regarding the conservation status and importance of the species among the people. In future we would target more people for outreach programme which will help in long term conservation of the species.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

Our study findings will be shared with different stakeholders in form of reports, audio-visual presentation and publications. The initial study results were already shared during the Rufford conference held in Goa, India from 18th to 20th September 2018. Furthermore, the results will also be presented in research seminars to larger audience of wildlife researchers, conservationists and managers. We also plan to publish our results in peer reviewed journal.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the grant used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The Rufford Small Grant was used from September, 2017 and was fully utilised by mid-November 2018. Due to incessant rain during the study period, the field data collection exercise got delayed. The team had taken an extension from the Rufford

Foundation to submit the final report.

8. Budget: 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. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Honorarium	550	550		
Field Equipment	120	110	-10	
Accommodation	600	530	-70	
Food	2400	2370	-30	
Travel	550	550		
Workshops and Meeting	360	420	+60	
Publication	100	260	+160	
GIS lab	100	100		
Communication	220	110	-110	
Total	5000	5000		

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

It is very important to understand the current population and habitat status of the white-winged wood duck and to link the habitat and anthropogenic covariates with the population abundance of the species. These will help in identifying the conservation needs of the bird. Long-term study on white-winged wood duck is essential to identify the extant threats and measures to minimise them.

Extensive outreach programmes involving different stakeholders are necessary to raise awareness on the species which will eventually help in its conservation.

Conservation of the waterbodies inside the forest is an utmost necessity for conservation of the white-winged wood duck.

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

Yes, Rufford Foundation logo was used in all oral presentations at awareness programmes and it was also used in poster and leaflet that was printed and distributed among the people.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Abhijit Boruah, was the principal investigator of the project. He was responsible for the overall project activities like data collection, data compilation and analyses, report writing and conducting meetings with the officials, organising the awareness programmes and capacity building of the local youths.

Rubul Tanti, is a wildlife researcher and helped in data collection and organising various activities like awareness campaigns, workshops etc.

Ankita Thakuria, volunteered with the project and assisted in all the project activities.

Bijoy Panika and **Sunu Bhumij**, the youth from a fringe village and they assisted in data collection in the field.

12. Any other comments?

The study on white-winged wood duck in northeast India is very scanty and this grant from Rufford Foundation helped in generating baseline information on the species from one of its potential habitats. We are grateful for the financial aid from the foundation and we plan to continue our work on the species.



Left: White-winged wood duck. Right: Awareness programme in village.



Field survey in different habitat of WWWD.



Various activity in fringe villages and schools on awareness and promotion of white winged wood duck as iconic species and distributed WWWD leaflet.

Workshop on Eco-Tourism.

Leaflet of White-winged wood duck

