

Final Project Evaluation Report

| Your Details | |
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| Full Name | Biraj Shrestha |
| Project Title | Stream Frogs' (Paha) Consumption Scenario vs. Conservation Strategy? Analyzing a catch-22 situation from the northern segments of Bhojpur district, eastern Nepal |
| Application ID | 25418-2 |
| Grant Amount | £4,980 |
| Email Address | thepristinewoods@gmail.com |
| Date of this Report | 12/31/2019 |

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 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Empower local communities of eight villages (northern Bhojpur district) in conserving paha frogs | | | | Our community engagement activities (school and community workshops) were affected by school holidays (exams) and farming season. So, we limited the workshops from two units to one in each project villages. We also dropped the idea of assessing the effectiveness of our outreach programmes because we felt it was not significant to influence the normative changes, especially in a short time frame and limited intervention. We believe this is an arduous task that would require an ample amount of time and resources before we assess the changes brought in the community. |
| Document local amphibians and paha harvest information from the region | | | | |
| Develop conservation guidelines for paha frogs from the unchecked harvest | | | | |

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

We embarked on an entirely new location and had a basic understanding of the community, lifestyle, and culture. Since we lived far away in the cities, we had limited access to the project villages, and that restricted to establish a good rapport with the stakeholders of the project and ensure their engagement to meet the overarching goal of the project. However, we managed to borrow people's time by approaching them during off-hours, in public places, and developed acquaintances during our visits, hoping people are willing to relate their experiences or share what they know about paha frogs. As expected, people were open to our queries as paha hunting is not a sensitive issue and instead considered a commonplace activity in all the hilly regions of Nepal just like fishing.

We picked up too many villages based on anecdotal evidence of paha hunting while designing the project. As the project progressed, we figured out Dobhane, and Chaukidada villages in Salpasilicho Rural Municipality needed the most attention among other locations. We then focused our effort in those two villages, which were meaningful, considering the constraints we had.

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

Outcome 1

Local communities informed about amphibians (biology, importance, threats, and protection measures) and willingness to support paha conservation and management decisions.

Outcome 2

Database prepared on local amphibians, paha harvest (quantity, use, hunting strategy, season, etc.), public's perception on the decline, its causes, and measures of protection. This information is a guiding document for drafting conservation plans, management decisions, and developing monitoring parameters for paha harvest issues.

Outcome 3

Conservation guidelines document developed for the paha frogs from unchecked harvest in the northern regions of Bhojpur district.

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

We did community engagement in the project villages in a variety of ways. We designed outreach programmes and tools targeted to educate stakeholders about paha conservation from all segments of the community, especially school children and young-aged males who constitute the hunters' group, elder groups of people from the community who possess ethnozoological knowledge about the use of frogs and local authority (Chaukidada Rural Municipality office).

In the first field visit, we carried out amphibian conservation workshops at six schools in Kulunga, Keurepani, Mulpani, Tungechha, and Nepaledada. Similarly, four community workshops/discussions were held in Nepaledada, Mulpani, Kulunga, and Dobhane to know the people's perception of amphibians and paha hunting scenario. Based on our first fieldwork, we understood that the paha hunting pressure was mostly in Dobhane and at Chaukidada villages, then we strategised paha awareness activities via community and school workshops in those villages. We interviewed 240 people from eight villages (30 respondents per community) for paha harvest information in the region.

This was the first time the community members received paha conservation education and related their knowledge (experience), which helped to draft the first conservation guideline document for paha frogs.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Based on our knowledge and experience, we laid the blueprint of paha conservation with urgent, short-term and long-term goals which need to be implemented at first to understand the challenges, strength, and constraints of paha management. So, we believe the activities outlined in the action call must be carried out to achieve the overarching goal of paha conservation, which also includes revision of the plan to evaluate the management interventions. The successful strategy could then be scaled to other regions where the unsustainable harvest is a looming danger for the survival of paha frogs. Having said, we would actively be looking out for newer locations (requiring immediate actions) to identify communities that are willing to participate in managing the aquatic resources, including paha frogs through regulatory mechanisms.

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

We have shared the tools/materials developed during the project with the target villages and nearly to all the institutions that work for biodiversity conservation in Nepal. We noticed the use of those materials by other amphibian educators in their educational workshops. SAVETHEFROGS! (amphibian conservation non-profit) have always extended their kind cooperation to us and helped to share our amphibian work for long, including this project on their web page. We have summarized the project results integrated with the conservation guideline plan, which will be shared with the broader audience through emails and websites (SAVETHEFROGS!, ResearchGate, and Resources Himalaya Foundation).

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

We delayed by 7 months from the anticipated length of the project (24 May 2018 – 23 May 2019). We had to borrow additional time to familiarise ourselves with the process of developing the conservation guideline plan by consulting other practitioners and studying successful cases around the globe.

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 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|----------|
| Outreach and Education Program (School Awareness Workshops, Community Level Workshops, and Focus Group Discussions) | 887 | 250 | -637 | |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|--|
| Conservation Materials Production (Booklet and Poster) | 476 | 900 | +424 | |
| Logistics | 62 | 150 | +88 | |
| Research Assistants per diem allowance for two people for 60 days | 831 | 1387 | +556 | |
| Transportation (two way) for three people for two visits | 333 | 450 | +117 | |
| Food + Accommodation for three people for 60 days | 1953 | 1100 | -853 | |
| Orientation to the team members (Food and Stationery) | 15 | 50 | +35 | |
| Printing (Questionnaire survey form, Amphibian survey form, Morphological datasheet, and Frog fact sheet) | 136 | 150 | +14 | |
| Field Equipment (Vernier Calipers, Digital Thermometer, pH meter, Rain gears, and Northface Duffle Bag) | 187 | 350 | +163 | |
| Report Production (Conservation Guideline) | 100 | 100 | | |
| Bank charges and courier | | 60 | +60 | |
| TOTAL | 4980 | 4947 | -33 | |

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

The next step would be the implementation of the conservation guideline document with a focus on the urgent goal outlined in the call to action section. This would entail holding community meetings (including local authority), drafting paha management regulations, review by the stakeholders from the target villages and necessary revisions, agreement of the revised regulations by the stakeholders, approval from the local authority, and dissemination of the regulations.

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, we used the Rufford Foundation logo in educational materials developed during the project, such as colour poster, booklet, educational flex, fact sheet, and in the conservation guideline document.

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

Biraj Shrestha, Principal Investigator (PI) – Biraj conceived the project, trained the research assistants and ensured the implementation, supervised the work of other

team members, evaluated the project performance, and played a crucial role in developing the project deliverable.

Binita Pandey, Research Assistant (RA) – Binita provided input during the project design, managed logistics, monitored the fieldwork, assembled information, communication with stakeholders, and helped to share project findings and tools to the wildlife conservation institutions in Kathmandu valley.

Bivek Gautam, Research Assistant (RA) – Bivek based near the project villages was active in field works (data collection, interviews, and workshops), communication with stakeholders, and supported the project team in identifying constraints.

12. Any other comments?

We are thankful to The Rufford Foundation for funding this project, which helped to lay the groundwork of paha frogs' conservation for the first time in Bhojpur district, eastern Nepal. We are hopeful that the Foundation would help to continue our effort of amphibian conservation in the next level of funding since there are very few funding opportunities for amphibian conservation in Nepal.

