**Project Update: October 2008**

During the monsoon mostly indoor activities were carried out in the project area. A project area map was produced with the help of GPS data collected at the initial phase of the project. Along with this study area maps for distribution of otters in the area have also been produced. These areas were identified in consultations with the local communities who have ample knowledge on otter distribution in the area.

Orientations and discussions were held with students during this period when outdoor activities were not possible. Posters and recently published booklets on otters and the freshwater ecosystem were distributed to school children and detail orientations were conducted on the subject matter and content of the booklet. This event was carried out at 8 different locations within the project area and also included children who did not attend school. Major reasons of including "out of school" children was to generate interest for conservation among them and to share the information they have on various aspects of freshwater ecosystem as they spend more time in close proximity with rivers fishing and as cattle herders. A total of around 300 students between the ages of 9-17 participated actively in these discussions. They were asked to share their understanding on the freshwater ecosystem and the major species therein. The students also shared their knowledge on perceived threats to the aquatic biodiversity in the area at present and discussed their possible roles in conservation and management of the resources.

After the end of monsoon, a new set of project activities was planned. This comprises field orientations to students on basic otter survey methods which will include identifying otter footprints, spraints and dens. This final phase of the project will also include a detail survey of otters to map their habitat and distribution areas. This survey has already been started from the first week of October as water levels in the rivers have already started to decrease considerably.

Legend

- Protected Area
- Project Area
- Settlement
- Cultivated Land
- Forest
- Grassland
- Shrubland
- Sand/gravel
- Waterbody

Bardia National Park
NEPAL

Katarniaghat
Wildlife Sanctuary
INDIA

CHINA

INDIA

Karnali River

Khauraha River

Orai River

3     0     3   Kilometers