

Project Update: August 2012

Field expedition was made from 16th April to 17th May 2012 to address the activity 1.

Inception meeting with park staffs and local user group

An inception meeting with park staffs, buffer zone committee user group and local people was held on 19th April 2012 at park headquarters. Brief introduction was presented about the cheer pheasant and the project. After that, discussion was done on importance of cheer pheasant, their present knowledge on cheer pheasant and its possible distribution in and around Rara National Park. This meeting nominated two people who will be involved in this project. This meeting was also helpful to select the potential survey sites. Total 20 individuals were present in this event.

Capacity building of local people and park staffs

Tul Bahadur Malla, Senior Game Scout and Surya Bahadur Karki, local people nominated by the meeting were trained on selection of cheer pheasant survey stations and the survey techniques. Theoretical session was held at park office and field based training was done at Nigale and Phuli. Mr. Malla, Karki and I were permanent team member. Along with us 12 other local peoples were selected and trained at respective survey sites who also involved in survey of cheer pheasant.

Cheer Pheasant survey

Pachhya, Nigale, Phuli, Aasidhara, Kachhya, Romo, Nuwakot, Murma, Pahadipani, Gorusinga, Bhadgaun were surveyed. Dawn call count method (Gaston1980) was used which involves the positioning of an observer at a predetermined station and calling birds were recorded from the centre of the calling site at a radius of 300 m. But birds heard outside the 300 m were also recorded. Each site was visited two consecutive mornings. Total 33 calls were from inside the national park / buffer zone and three calls were heard from outside the buffer zone. Cheer pheasant was absent at Murma, Gorusingha and Bhadgaun.

Tul Bahadur Malla and Surya Karki will continue data collection up to May-June 2012 on record of cheer pheasant during their patrolling and biodiversity monitoring activities within national park.

Questionnaire survey

Random Questionnaire survey was done among the park staffs and local peoples to assess their perception on cheer pheasant and threats. Total 75 samples are taken. Detail result of questionnaire survey will be presented in detail final report.

Data analysis

Data analysis will be done to calculate population density and breeding population which will be presented in final detail report. Similarly, distributional map will also be presented in final report.

Other birds

Including cheer pheasant total 118 bird species representing nine orders and 29 families were recorded. Some notable birds are russet sparrow *Passer rutilans* and white-tailed rubythroat *Luscinia pectoralis*, new species to Rara National Park and Egyptian vulture *Neophron percnopterus* listed as Endangered in IUCN Red List. Other Galliformes were chukar *Alectoris chukar*, black francolin *Francolinus francolinus*, koklass pheasant *Pucrasia macrolopha*, Himalayan monal *Lophophorus impejanus* and Kalij pheasant *Lophura leucomelanos*.

Next field visit is scheduled on October/November 2012.

