

Project Update: August 2012

OBJECTIVE 1.

1.1 Establish baseline information on the primate distribution, conservation status, human-Langur conflicts.

1.2 Map distribution and conflict zones.

Activities so far:

- i. Field surveys: Field surveys were conducted in five sites so far namely Bhandal, Jot, Gajnoi, Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary and Tundha Wildlife Sanctuary. Of the five sites surveyed, the langurs were sighted in only two, Gajnoi and Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary.
- ii. Community surveys: Informal interviews to gain information on langur presence were done in 16 sites around the Chamba district namely Kiri, Lagga, Chula, Dalhousie, Bhandhal, Sangini, Gajnoi, Jot, Lakkarmandi, Kalatope, Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary, Madrani, Manni, Borkha, Kolka, and Holi.
- iii. Questionnaires to evaluate people's perception of the langur, other wildlife and their attitude towards the langur activity such as crop raiding, and map langur presence/absence was conducted in two sites, Tundha Wildlife Sanctuary and Rotha Village in Chamba.
- iv. During field surveys, interviews and questionnaire surveys GPS coordinates, altitude, and other mapping details were collected to use in mapping Langur distribution and conflict zone mapping.

OBJECTIVE 2.

2.1 Background research on community and the environment

2.2 Understand the community's relationship and evaluate their degree of dependence on the environment.

Activities so far:

- i. Background research: The local library and the Bhuri Singh Museum in Chamba were visited twice to gain insight into the history of the region, communities, wildlife in the region, people's relationship to the natural environment and other anecdotal information.
- ii. Informal interviews and questionnaires helped gain an understanding and evaluate people's attitude and perceptions of wildlife, their natural environment and their impact on the environment.

OBJECTIVE

3.1 Stakeholder involved participatory conservation initiative.

- i. Stakeholder Analysis and Networking: Stakeholders of community conservation were identified and communication has been established with the State Forest Department, Local wildlife researchers and NGOs. This will make road for more such collaboration and will aid in implementing and establishing an entirely stakeholder involved and run conservation initiative in Chamba.

Forthcoming activities:

1. Chalk out probable sites of langur presence and conduct field and community surveys in the region to aid in mapping langur distribution and conflict zones.
2. Widen out and conduct in-depth background research of the region, its history, wildlife, the community's relationship to their natural environment, historical and current relationship of communities with wildlife, people's perception of wildlife and conflicts.
3. Identify and collaborate with other important stakeholders in the regions such as social scientists, wildlife biologists, Conservation NGOs, community development oriented NGOs, and other wildlife enthusiasts to establish a participatory conservation initiative and conservation monitoring.



Left: Community survey in the heights-team speaks to Gadhhi shepherds at Kugti. Right: *Semnopithecus ajax* in Gajnoi, Chamba. © Bipan Chand Rathore.