

## **Project Update: February 2013**

### **1. Preliminary Visit and stakeholder consultation:**

Preliminary visit was made from December 24th to 29th 2012. During this visit, all stakeholders at local level were coordinated and a brief meeting was conducted with each stakeholder. The stakeholders were schools, Buffer Zone Management Committees, Koshi Bird Observatory, Office of Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetland in Nepal (CSUWN), Elite persons in Mallaha Community. The activities of preliminary visit are presented briefly as follow;



### **Meeting with Key Person and selection of site**

First meeting was conducted with current and former local project staffs of Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetland in Nepal (CSUWN), Koshi Bird Observatory (KBO) and Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) and staff of Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR). Key information and local situation were analysed based on the information provided. Koshi River and its channels, lakes and marshes created by Koshi Flood during monsoon are important habitats for wetland birds. Koshi River is one of the largest rivers in Nepal which formed after combination of seven tributaries from the great Himalaya. The major part of the important habitat falls in Sunsari District. Based on key information and scientific facts on wetland bird observation,

Buffer Zone of KTWR that falls within Sunsari district (East and South of KTWR) was selected as primary target site for this programme.

### Selection of Schools

Three higher secondary schools, Prakash Higher Secondary School, Janta Secondary School and Koshi Secondary School were visited, and principals/teachers were contacted and communicated directly to select schools. Based on discussion following school were selected as target schools for the programme for students.

**Table 1: Name of school selected**

S.N.	Name of Schools	Name of Village	Districts
1.	Janata Belka H.S.S.	Tapeshwari	Udaypur
2.	Sapta Koshika S.S.	Tapeshwari	Udaypur
3.	Koshi Janta S.S.	Haripur	Sunsari
4.	Koshi S.S.	Kusaha	Sunsari
5.	Rastriya S.S.	Sovanpur,Kusaha	Sunsari
6.	Janta H. S.S.	Madhuwan	Sunsari
7.	Mohan S.S.	Sukrabare,Madhuwan	Sunsari
8.	Prakash H.S.S.	Prakashpur	Sunsari
9	Sunshine E B. S	Prakashpur	Sunsari
10	Sarsawati.S.S.	Prakashpur-5	Sunsari
11.	Basanta Ritu S.S.	Debighat, Mahendra Nagar	Sunsari
12.	Umananda H.S.	Odraha	Saptari

**SS=Secondary, HSS=Higher Secondary, LSS=Lower Secondary, EBS = English Boarding School**

### Meeting with Buffer Zone Committees

A meeting was organised with Chairperson and secretary of Buffer Zone Committees of Kushaha, Haripur and Prakashpur, and staff of KTWR and CSUWN. They were informed about programme at first and followed by discussion. Based on meeting following Buffer Zone Committees were selected as target buffer zone.

**Table 2: Name of Buffer Zone Committee**

Name of Buffer Zone Committee	VDC	District
Prakashpur User committee	Prakashpur	Sunsari
Madhuwan User committee	Madhuwan	Sunsari
W.Kushaha Laukahi User committee	Laukahi	Sunsari
Haripur Shreepur User committee	Shripur-	Sunsari

Bairwa Barmajhiya User committee	Bairwa	Saptari
Odraha Kamalpur User committee	Kamalpur	Saptari
Tapeshwary User committee	Tapeshwary	Udaypur

VDC= The smallest unit of District

### **Meeting with Elites of Mallaha People**

Mallaha Settlement (Madhuban and Kushaha) was visited and names of leaders were found out. A discussion meeting was held with leaders in their working site i.e. fishing pond. Discussion was made on following aspects.

1. What they know about wetland?
2. Have they been provided any support from the program conducted by KTWR?
3. Are they benefitting from the programme?
4. How is education status among Mallaha people?
5. What is their expectation regarding training?

Based on this question, programme for Mallaha people will be designed.

### **Observation of Koshi Bird Observatory (KBO)**

Koshi Bird Observatory has been established at north site of Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve to study wetland and grassland bird as well as extend the value of nature conservation among local people and visitors. KBO is located on the bank of Koshi River and it is on preliminary stage. A visitor centre is under preparation. Based on this observation, the following activities will be done to upgrade KBO.

- Single hoarding board will be displayed.
- Mounted photographs and poster of threatened wetland will be displayed inside and outside centre.
- Biological information of wetland bird with their value will be displayed.
- Plant species will be named and displayed.
- Seedlings of ornamental and fruit trees will be planted in courtyard.
- Stationeries to KBO for recording, notice board and set for projector display (screen sheet and stand) will be supported.
- Signs and arrows will be established to guide visitors.
- Poster published by this project and other free materials will be distributed freely to the visitors from KBO.

## **2. Programme Activities**

### **Poster Publication**

A total of 15 wildlife photographers were requested to contribute their photographs of wetland birds for this awareness project. Many of them replied with their photographs. After collection of photographs, a designer was consulted, and poster was prepared illustrating message "Save

the threatened wetland bird". A total of 1000 copies of poster were published. The photographs that are included in poster were Baer's pochard and lesser adjutant (globally threatened birds) and comb duck, black headed ibis, black stork, darter, water cock, water rail and Asian open bill (nationally threatened birds).

### **Wetland Day Celebration**

2<sup>nd</sup> February 2013 has been celebrating as the World Wetland Day around the world. The theme of world wetland day for this year 2013 was "Wetlands take care of water". With aforementioned theme, the wetland day was celebrated in Nepal. Similarly, the World Wetland Day was celebrated in Kushaha, Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve in partial support of this project in coordination with Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve and CSUWN. In preparatory stage, two meetings were held in Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve among partners to celebrate the World Wetland Day. Following activities were conducted during world wetland day as per the decision of the meeting. However, cycle rally has replaced by cultural show and football tournament, the meeting was concluded on impact of rally in the village could be insignificant.

- i. Identified stakeholders such as Buffer Zone Committee, Schools, local political leaders and birdwatchers were invited by preparing formal letter
- ii. Wetland Day Warm Up Bird Watching Program

To warm up for wetland day celebration, bird watching programme was conducted around KBO a day before the World Wetland Day. The programme started with awareness regarding the importance of wetland and species of birds. Students from the schools around KBO, KBO staffs and local guide were participated. At beginning, basic knowledge and education about the birds watching were presented. Later, students and local guide were taken for bird watching. The equipment and guidebooks required for bird watching was supported by KBO. The birdwatching programme enhanced the practical knowledge about birds and their live-in relation to wetland. At the same time, the participants also got opportunity to interact with the bird experts. The bird watching programme lasted for 2 hours in the morning. Broadly, this programme highlighted the interrelation between the wetlands and bird's species.

Amazing fact was that globally threatened Baer's pochard was recorded during the bird watching programme. Before departure to home, various pamphlets, newsletters related to bird species and wetlands collected from various organisations, such as Bird conservation of Nepal, Department of Wildlife and National Park Conservation were distributed to raise the awareness among the students and people.

- iii. Programme activities for wetland day celebration
  - a. Opening Ceremony
  - b. Speech Deliberation
  - c. Cultural Show
  - d. Quiz Contest
  - e. Football tournament

Many experts of different fields, local political leaders, members of buffer zone committees, teachers and students, members of youth club and other local people were presented in the programme. Chief Warden of KTWR, local political leaders and teachers expressed their views regarding the important of wetlands areas and birds to human beings. They urged all concerned people to join hands for the conservation of wetland areas. Along with this cultural show were performed to raise the awareness. The tourists who were visiting KTWR had also participated in the programme.

Students of eight schools were participated in the quiz contest out of 14 schools invited. Football tournament between the members of Buffer Zone Committee and reserve staff was organised. Prakash Higher Secondary School, Sunsari, Janata Belka Higher Secondary, Udayapur and Rastriya Secondary School, Sunsari respectively were first, second and third in quiz contest. The team of Buffer Zone Committee won football tournament. The winners of the quiz context and football tournament were awarded certificates and medals. The entire programme was closed with the commitment of working together for the wetland and bird conservation.