

A progress Report on

Community Based Strategy for Conservation of Lesser Adjutant

Stork (*Leptoptilos Javanicus*) in Eastern Lowland of Nepal -

Updates March 2015 to September 2015 (phase 2 and 3)



Project funded by



Report prepared by

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Go Green Nepal

Supported by:

LAS conservation team

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Overview

The goal of the project is to formulate a relevant and sustainable LAS Community Based Conservation Program to protect and conserve the species of LAS in the eastern lowlands of Nepal. It is designed to ensure interventions for LAS conservation are appropriate, relevant and effective. Following the successful completion of phase 1 and achieving all the targets, the second and third phase of project in last six months (from March to September) of the project had mainly focused on intensive awareness campaign, formation of local conservation group, community and expert consultation, and installation of information board in various places. Due to the 26th April Earthquake in Nepal, (May and June, project activities could not be progressed as expected though project area was not much affected), program activities was postponed for 2 months. The project activities had been resumed after June. During this period, the project team had facilitated focused group discussions, awareness campaign in different places and with different communities such as school, local women's group, field visits and meetings with local communities, key informants and technical experts to establish in depth insights and information relevant to the project. In the last phase of the project (October to December), radio program and documentary preparation and awareness activities will be conducted.

Project Components – Phase 2 & 3

The main focus of activities in the second quarter and third quarter of the project implementation included the following

1. Awareness Campaign in various locations
2. Awareness campaign and meeting with local communities and groups
3. Awareness Program in various schools
4. Installation of information boards in four nesting colonies sites
5. Conservation group formation at local level and community consultations
6. Linking of conservation project outputs to social media platforms e.g. Facebook
7. Problems encountered and action taken
8. Quarterly Plans for Phase 4
9. Recommendations and Conclusion
10. Annexes
11. Field Experience of one of the field volunteer-Anish Karki

The expected project outputs from the above activities were realized within the project schedule and cost estimates. During project implementation, Earthquake happened in the April and project got delayed for one month and others problems were encountered and the report also provides insights to action taken in mitigating project risks. Enclosed are site photographs and brief descriptions of activities (see annexures and tables attached).

Table 1. Project Implementation Matrix 2015

Quarter 1 Completed – Phase 1			Quarter 2 Completed– Phase 2			Quarter 3 (completed) & Quarter 4 Plan - Phase 3 & 4					
December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov (extended to end of December)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formation of conservation cum research team• Training for conservation and research team• Check list and questionnaire development• Linking our conservation project with social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preliminary field visit in existing colonies of the LAS• Preliminary field visit report preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with communities• Meeting with experts• Conservation awareness material preparation• Submission of first quarter report to donor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with experts• Meeting with communities• Finalization of conservation awareness material (posters, banner, hoarding boards)• Field Visits• Conservation awareness program in eastern lowlands of Nepal (in schools, communities, community forest user groups, and other identified stakeholders)• Formation of conservation awareness group in each location<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submission of second quarter report to donor			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final research report preparation based on field visit• Radio program• Documentary preparation• Local conservation group formation• Publication Declaration of LAS conservation area and Installation of hoarding boards• Submission of quarterly report (August)• Publications news in local news paper and media				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final report submission to Rufford• Submission manuscript for the publications in journal	

Shantosh Karki, LAS Conservation Team Leader, 2015

a. Awareness Campaign, focused group discussions, field visits and meetings with stakeholders

After having first preliminary field visit and consultation with local people, consultation with experts a concrete plan for community based awareness program was developed where various awareness materials were developed and distributed in the project area. To highlights conservation issues, and portray importance of LAS, a detailed awareness program has been conducted in different places where nesting colonies of LAS were identified. Total 10 conservation awareness programs have been completed in the various places of project area. Awareness program included presenting current status of LAS, conservation & its threat, distributing posters, raising awareness through different means and open discussion with communities. More than 20,000 people have been directly observed the program, and program has been very successful to aware the local people on importance of lesser adjutant stork and benefits of conserving this globally threatened birds. Programs have been conducted in all the area where LAS nesting colonies were identified before. Also local conservation groups were formed in each places, who are committed to conserve LAS and its habitat. The participants of the programs were women's group, member of community forest user group, local forest officers, school students, local youths, member of agriculture group, people from local authorities including police personal and VDC representatives. Following photographs show the program conducted in different places.



Photo 1 (Awareness campaign with local women's group in Damak, Jhapa) Photo 2 (Community meeting and awareness program in Sarnamati VDC, Jhapa)

b. Dissemination of posters

Total 10,000 posters have been distributed to circulate key conservation message of LAS to local people. Particularly, posters were distributed among women's group, member of community forest user group, local forest officers, school students, local youths, members of agriculture group, people from local authorities including police personnel and VDC representatives. Also these posters were placed in various organization including local schools, forest office, police office, local youth and women club and many other places to make aware about the conservation effort taking place in the area and make people aware about the importance of LAS.

Photos (1-4) : Distribution of posters in various places

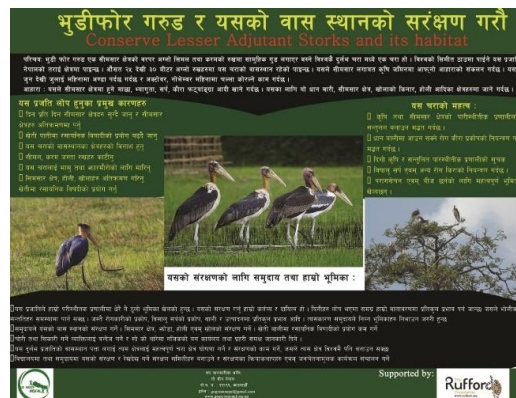


Installation of Information Board

In the four places where number of LAS observed high, information boards have been installed. The information board consists the information of importance of Lesser Adjutant Stork in nature, people and whole ecosystem. Some facts and figure about the LAS and also it includes how community can help to conserve it and what strategy should be adopted.



Information board installed in Site K



Sample Information board and pamphlet



Information board installed in Site D



Information board installed in Site C

a) Site Photographs of LAS Conservation Project, 2015



Conservation program held in Sunbarsi, Morang-Site K



Awareness Program in School Site C, Sarnamati



Distributing information materials to local farmers



Conservation team in the field



Interview with local herders about threat



Conservation awareness Program



Awareness Program in Site K, Sunbarsi,



With local school students at Site G & H (Utlabari, Morang)



Awareness Program in Site C, Sarnamati, Jhapa



Awareness Program and Community meeting at Site C



Awareness Program in Site F, Tarahara, Sunsari

Results of field visit:

A total of 180 LAS were recorded during field visits from July to September, which is higher than the population recorded in Feb to March field visit where only 133 LAS were recorded from Feb to March's field visit. Two new nesting sites were observed in July to September field. The increased number of LAS would be one of the positive impacts of conservation activities being carried out in the eastern lowlands of Nepal.

Table 2. Total current population of LAS in eastern lowlands of Nepal (In breeding season) and map of colonies is shown in figure 1 and figure 2.

Location	No. of Nest	No. of Chicks	No. of Adult birds	Names of Nest Trees	Current Total Population (July to September)	Total Population (Feb-Mar)	Previous population	GPS coordinates	Conservation Threat(s)/ Remarks
Site A	0	0	0		0	0	2	26°41'35.36"N 87°40'38.78"E	No population recorded this time
Site B	0	0	0		0	0	2	26°37'28.69"N 87°40'19.39"E	No population recorded this time
Site C (Sarna Mati VDC)	11	10	22	<i>Bombax ceiba</i>	36	32	54 (16 Nests, 32 Adults and 22 Chicks)	26°31'28.20"N 87°52'57.96"E (T1)	Population has been decreased significantly
								26°31'21.81"N 87°52'59.64"E (T2)	
								26°31'30.00"N 87°52'59.64"E (T3)	
Site C1	2	0	4	<i>Bombax ceiba</i>	6	4	Newly Identified Location	26°40'14.88"N 87°53'20.88"E	
Site C2	18	0	36	<i>Bombax Ceiba</i>	36		Newly Identified Location in July		
Site C3	2	0	4	<i>Bombax Ceiba</i>	4		Newly Identified		Inside Kankai Community Forest, Surunga

Site D (Tarahara Forest 1)	7	9	12	<i>Bombax ceiba</i>	18	20	35	26°42'40.51"N 87°16'47.15"E Site D	
Site E (Tarahara Forest 2)	5	8	8	<i>Bombax ceiba</i>	16	17	17	26°42'43.42"N 87°16'40.31"E Site E	
Site E1	1	0	2	<i>Bombax ceiba</i>	2	2	New Nest Tree	26°42'39.45"N 87°16'36.08"E	
Site F (Barampur Community Forest)	0	0	0	<i>Bombax ceiba</i>	0	0	18	26°42'58.75"N 87°15'59.83"E	No population recorded this time, Lack of conservation awareness
Site G (Urlabari Forest grove 1)	0	0	0	<i>Adina Cardofolia</i>	0	0	52	26°39'37.99"N 87°35'49.71"E	This colony was biggest colony in 2010/11, but now no LAS were recorded, The LAS population moved from this place because of thunder storm hit the tree as said by local. But it can also be observed that continuous habitat encroachment from local people due to lack of awareness.
Site H Urlabari Forest Grove 2	7	7	5	<i>Adina cardofolia</i>	20	26	6	26°39'44.72"N 87°36'2.83"E (T1)	Its been three years that they migrated to Urlabari Forest Grove 2.
	6	7	7	<i>Adina cardofolia</i>				26°39'43.22"N 87°36'3.36"E (T2)	
Site I (Bhaunne 1)	0	0	0		0	0	6		
Site J (Bhaunne 2)	0	0	0		0	0	8		
Site K (sunabarsi T1)	3	5	4	<i>Bombax ceiba</i>	14	9	35	26°30'55.45"N	
								87°34'27.27"E	
Site K1 (Sunabarsi T2)	8	12	9	<i>Bombax ceiba</i>	26	21	(New Location Identified)	26°31'23.58"N 87°34'9.33"E	

Site K2(sunbarsi T3)	1	0	2	<i>Bombax ceiba</i>	2	2	(New Location Identified)	26°31'26.48"N 87°34'10.05"E	
Site L (Koshi Tappu WR)	0	0	0		No population recorded (But previously it was believed to have LAS colonies in these places)				
Site M (Kechana)	0	0	0						
Site N (MahendraNagar)	0	0	0						
Site O (Rangeli)	0	0	0						

Shantosh Karki, LAS Conservation Project- Team Leader, 2015

Distribution of Lesser Adjutant Storks Nesting Colonies:

Based on the information collected from field, the following distribution map has been prepared to show the nesting colonies of lesser adjutant storks in eastern lowlands of Nepal.

Distribution of Lesser Adjutant Storks(LAS) Colonies in Eastern Lowlands of Nepal

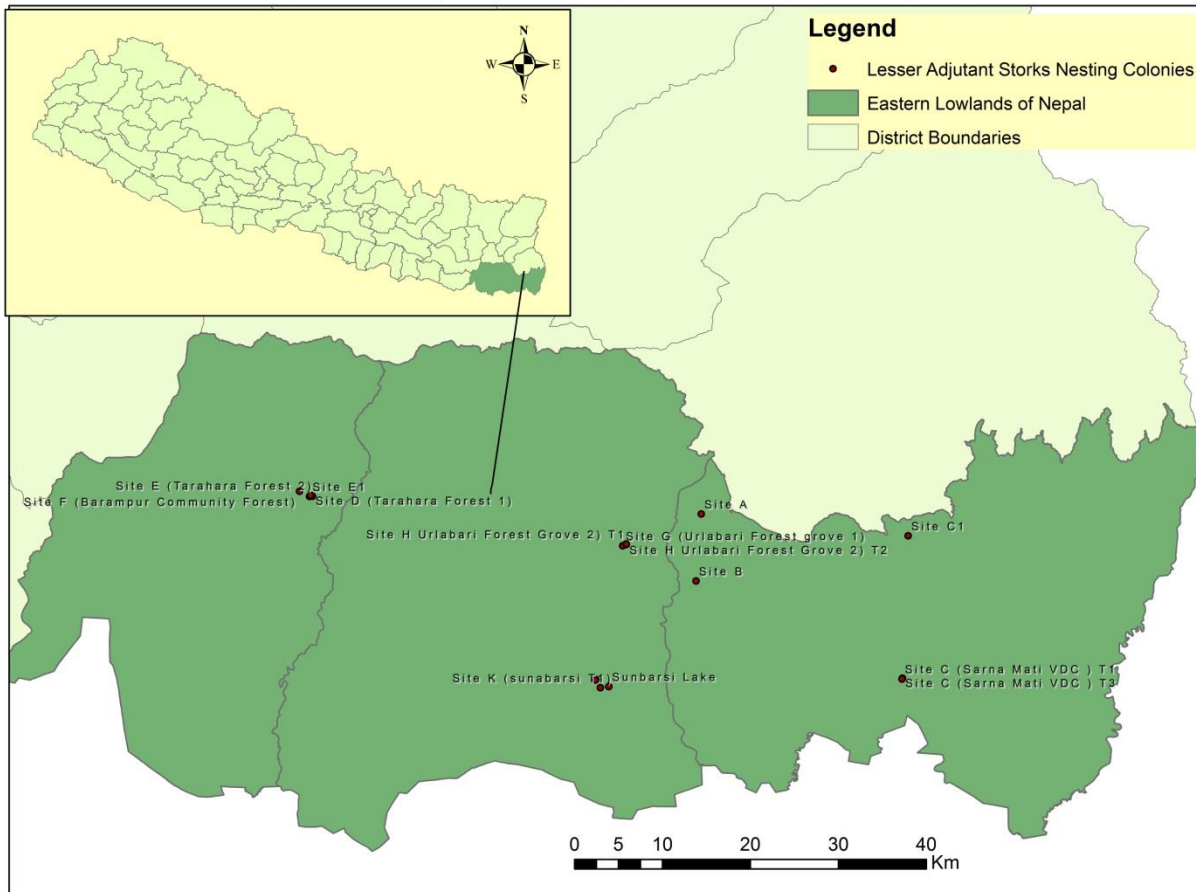


Figure 1: Distribution of Map of LAS colonies in Eastern Lowlands of Nepal

c. Linking conservation activities with Social Media

To visualize and aware wider audiences and stakeholders, a Facebook group and a Facebook page on Conservation of lesser adjutant storks have been developed. And all the conservation activities have been posted.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-Lesser-Adjutant-Stork-and-its-habitat-in-Nepal/335708713281733>

Similarly, preparation for a documentary is underway by the team which will be published on Youtube shortly.

d. Problems encountered and action taken

The challenges encounter in phase 1 were- collecting information from community about conservation threats of LAS as community people are not aware about the conservation of LAS, identification of new colonies remained difficult because of lack of available information about these birds and low conservation level of local people etc.

e. Quarterly Plans for Phase 4

As per the project design, going forward the team will conduct activities stated in the project implementation matrix – phase4 (see table 1). The key objectives include completion of awareness campaign materials, rolling out of awareness campaigns and formulation of community groups as key conservationists of the LAS and protectors of its habitats. Further details are as follow:

- **Designing of Radio program**

Similarly content for the radio program on conservation of lesser adjutant stork is being prepared, basically this radio program will raise the conservation issues from the field, these activity will be carried in October to December.

- **Documentary preparation**

Documentary on the Lesser Adjutant Storks will be prepared in the third quarter of the year and will be broadcasted on social media and if possible on local radio and television.

f. Recommendations and Conclusions

The initial phase of the project had tremendous results in terms of verifying the empirical evidence on the decline of the LAS population. The field survey revealed significant decrease of number of LAS birds from 240 in October 2010 to 133 in December 2014. It confirms that the LAS species is facing tremendous conservation threats. The lack of conservation awareness, excessive use of pesticides, continuous

degradation and encroachment of its habitat, lack of conservation efforts poses as major threat to its survival. Consultations with community and experts have been important steps towards formulation of proper conservation strategy and have helped to effective implementation of bottom up approach.

Annex 1: Name of Research/Conservation Team

Project Leader: Shantosh Karki

Conservation Committee- Member

1. Shova Limbu
2. Hari Thapa
3. Rajan Niraula
4. Pratima Karki
5. Pratikshya Neupane
6. Rasila Khadka
7. Bikash Adhikari
8. Anish Karki
9. Poonam Upreti
10. Prakriti Bhattarai
11. Namita Pathak
12. Anjana Kadariya
13. Rejina Bista
14. Ranjita Thapa

Contact Address:

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Active LAS Conservation committee formed in Sunbarsi:-

1. Laxman budathoki 9842113930/ 9800949540
2. Bishnu kandel (school principal) 9842247451/ 9802744791
3. Suraj rai 9811091909
4. Deudhan rai 9819324680
5. Hari Karki 9814327408

Active LAS Conservation committee formed in Sarnamati along with their contact number:-

1. Suraj niroula 9845783702 (Ranger, Forest Office)
2. Ram Karki (President- Raniban Community Forest-Sarnamati)

Field Experience of Anish Chettri during conservation program- Member of LAS conservation team

With an aim to create awareness among locals about how beneficial lesser adjutant stork commonly called bhadifor garud or tangrange is to us, we- group of six, headed to Sunbarsi- 13km north from Pathari, morang. Our main objective was to count its population, know more about distribution, to know conservation threats, and conducting awareness programme along with public interaction. Early in the morning, we started our journey from Damak for 4 days field visit to Site K (Sunbarsi, Morang). We reached there after two and a half hour drive and walk. After reaching there, we tried to contact key personal of the area, teachers and VDC officials and other stakeholders who could help us to conduct this program. Before coming to the field we contacted some of the people and briefed them about our program in the field, which helped us getting key contacts and make our program a success.



During our stay in the field in Sunbarsi we conducted conservation program in various places including schools, local women's group and youth club. Also we counted the population of lesser adjutant storks and identified their threats using questionnaire survey with 20 peoples.

After successful completion of research work and meeting with various groups. The main program in community was held with the presence of all stakeholders invited. We started our programme with an interactive session and everyone was actively participated and contributed during the program. Most of them were so keen about its conservation, and were a bit worried because the number of LAS has been getting significantly decreased. In terms of raising awareness, the programme went very well. All of them actively participated during the program and they also shared their knowledge about what can be done to conserve and to minimize threats. They seemed positive about its conservation and were directly or indirectly benefited from the bird. They shared about how they are getting benefited from LAS in reducing number of snake bites and poisonous snake etc. Also questionnaire survey were done by local people, farmers, teachers and etc. Locals were happy to know that this bird could attract the different researcher and tourists from different places and fields to their place and, they were very excited.

In terms of conservation of this birds they suggested to bring plantation of Simal (*Bambox ceiba*) and Karam (*Adina cardofolia*) which would help to protect nesting habitat of LAS in the future. Also strict rules for the poachers and making a group among locals for the birds' safety is what people suggested and eventually local conservation group has been formed.