Project Update: September 2015

The very first task for the research title "Effect of electric fences as a mitigation measure to Human-Bear Conflict and Bear ecology" started on 5th September, 2015 with the sign surveys and setting up of camera traps to study the behaviour of the Himalayan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*). The survey and installation of camera traps were carried out by a team of six forestry staffs including myself leading the team. The team took 6 days to carry out the activities at the study area 1, Zongkha. The works at the second study area will commence soon. Since this is the monsoon season which is the peak season for the black bears, it is very crucial to carry out the surveys to study the behaviour of the black bears. The black bears according to the literature make more movement for food and other activities during this season.

Sign survey and setting up of camera traps.

Based on the information availed through the park staffs and through my own field experience of managing the human-bear conflict for the last 5 years, a sign survey was conducted using randomly selected animal and human trails throughout the study area 1. This survey not only provided information on the tentative distribution of black bears but also allowed identification of potential camera trap locations. Locations were marked using GPS.

The locations for the camera traps were chosen based on the following factors:

- Signs of animal usage (scats/scratch marks/footprints/feeding signs).
- Proximity to water sources.
- Overall coverage of the area.

Scats are collected to analyse the seasonal diet of the black bears.

Left: Black bear den (*Quercus semicarpifolia*). Right: Measuring a scratch mark. © Chimmi Dorji.

Left: Scat collection. Right: Setting camera traps. © Chimmi Dorji.