

Final Project Evaluation Report

We ask all grant recipients to complete a project evaluation that helps us to gauge the success of your project. This must be sent in **MS Word and not PDF format**. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Complete the form in English and be as concise as you can. Note that the information may be edited before posting on our website.

Please email this report to jane@rufford.org.

Your Details	
Full Name	Athar Noor
Project Title	Status and behaviour of blackbuck in agriculture dominated landscape with special reference to human-blackbuck interaction in a North Indian district, India.
Application ID	18903-1
Grant Amount	£5000
Email Address	atharscorp@gmail.com
Date of this Report	22.06.2017

1. Indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
<p>1. To determine the present status and distribution of blackbuck in and around Aligarh district.</p>				<p>Information pertaining to presence of blackbuck (<i>Antelope cervicapra</i>) across the villages in the Aligarh district and adjoining areas was gathered from the State Forest Department. Consequently, sites (or villages) were visited based on the past and present records available with the Forest Department. While visiting a site, local people were also enquired about possible blackbuck presence in nearby areas. Data pertaining to blackbuck counts and group composition was obtained by recording number of individuals of the species and categorising the individuals into sex and age classes. Depending upon the feasibility in the agricultural landscape and clumped distribution of the species, the total count approach was found better than the line transect method therefore, total count method was used to estimate the blackbuck abundance.</p> <p>In total 19 sites (villages) were found to hold small to large blackbuck populations. The results show an increment of ~76% in the previous record of ~420 blackbuck heads in the district. A good indication of healthy and growing population of the blackbuck in the landscape. Highest population of ~210 individuals was recorded in Sikandrara area which falls under Hathras district. No other place, in Aligarh district range, matches this in terms of supporting these many blackbucks.</p>

<p>2. To determine the activity patterns and time budgets of blackbuck.</p>			<p>Since, the study was based in agricultural lands so the disturbance in agricultural fields could neither be ignored nor stopped. Therefore, in order to fulfil the objective of collecting data on activity pattern by the blackbuck, I tried to select a few sites (two to three) with anthropogenic disturbances as minimum as possible. Even at these sites irregular activity of farmers caused disturbance due to which animals used to run away hampering data collection. Therefore, I decided to pool all data into two periodic categories viz. pre-monsoon and post-monsoon. The results show that adult males devoted more time in foraging during pre-monsoon than the post monsoon. Adult males and females differed significantly during the pre-monsoon forage times. Adult males and females spent similar times in foraging during post monsoon. Adult females spent more time in resting than the males.</p>
<p>3. To assess the human-blackbuck conflict and perception of local farmers towards blackbuck conservation.</p>			<p>In order to assess the human-blackbuck conflict and people's attitude towards blackbuck and its conservation, questionnaire survey were conducted. A systematic survey was conducted by dividing the whole of district into 5 x 5 km grids and in each grid a minimum of three households was interviewed. In total 260 households were interviewed. A substantial number of respondents (~52%) recognised nilgai (<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>) as the main crop damaging species followed by wild pig (~27%) (<i>Sus scrofa</i>), feral livestock/cattle (~11%). Only a small number of farmers (~5%) attributed crop damage to the blackbuck. Considerably high number of respondents (~61%) considered wildlife as important and</p>

				<p>~37% had negative opinion towards wildlife owing to the crop damage caused by the wildlife. About 41% of the respondents were affirmative in blackbuck conservation, whereas ~13% of the respondents were not in favour of blackbuck conservation. A large number of respondents (~45%) were not aware enough to understand blackbuck conservation. Almost all (~93%) respondents agreed upon increase in blackbuck population over the last two decades.</p>
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

Not relevant.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

- a) The first and the foremost important outcome of my study was that I could be able to pin point those areas clearly where blackbuck are present earlier forest department staff was not sure of all those areas owing to limited staff and resources. A few new sites have been added in the list by this study where blackbuck is distributed.
- b) Secondly, I could manage to study the activity pattern of the blackbuck which was otherwise not studied earlier in the agricultural landscapes. Studies are there which have studied activity patterns of blackbuck but they are mostly from protected areas or from adjoining areas of protected forests. In this scenario, where human pressure is too much and blackbuck have no particular area or forest of protection this becomes very important to study the people's attitude towards them and the conflict arising when these two (humans and blackbuck) share the resources.
- c) So, the third outcome of my study was to look into this aspect of human-blackbuck conflict and human perception about blackbuck.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.

Though this component was not part of my study but whenever I interacted with people during the questionnaire surveys and while doing counts I made them aware of the wildlife and its conservation especially the blackbuck and its conservation value. Many times local youths accompanied me in counting process and the questionnaire survey. This way I had several sessions with the forest staff and local

youths where I educated them to inculcate a sense of pride in the natural heritage and created an urge to seek more knowledge about the forests, birds, large mammals which are often considered nuisance or pests.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, I got many ideas during the course of the project. This project was just a baseline and further work is to be done in future.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

I am in the process of writing scientific as well as popular articles to make people aware about this area in particular.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the grant used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The grant was used over a period of 1 year between February 2016 and February 2017, a duration consistent with the approved length of the project.

8. Budget: Provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Salary of a Researcher @ £ 141.6 per month	1700	1700	0	
Field Assistant @ £ 3 per day x 250 days	750	750	0	
Field Equipment (GPS, Spotting scope, Range finder, Compass, etc.)	500	500	0	
Travel expenses (including vehicle hiring if required) @ £ 5 per day x 250 days	1250	1250	0	
Lodging and boarding wherever required	300	300	0	
Consumables & Stationery (including report production)	300	300	0	
Contingency Expenses	200	200	0	
Total	5000	5000	0	

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

During the course of this project it was found that villagers collect fuelwood and many a time instead of collecting the dried fallen branches they chop down green

trees also - I am planning to urge the people to protect trees as they are very less in numbers in this semi-arid landscape. There are no forest patches in the area so cutting a tree is going to worsen the situation further. Therefore, it is very important to highlight the significance of trees to the locals.

10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?

I used the RF logo on the certificates that were given to the volunteers who helped me in the time to time during the project. During the course of the project the DFO was pleased with the support that RF is providing to budding conservationist. In fact, this inspired him to go out of his way on several occasions. It is owing to RF that the director agreed to provide all support required for my project. This made my work a smooth ride.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

12. Any other comments?

Besides providing funds and opportunity to work for conservation, this project has helped me develop as a person. This year has been a journey that I can never forget. It has boosted my confidence to carry out individual project, to take on challenges, overcome difficulties. The project, most importantly, has laid a very strong foundation for my future. This project has also helped me gain so many contacts and widen my network of people. I cannot thank The Rufford Foundation enough for this opportunity.

