

## The Rufford Foundation

### Final Report

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Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other 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. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to [jane@rufford.org](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

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Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Sonam Phuntsho
Project title	Conservation of Endangered Royal Bengal Tiger ( <i>Panthera tigris tigris</i> ) in Jigme Dorji National Park, Western Bhutan
RSG reference	19080-1
Reporting period	April 2017 – March 2018
Amount of grant	£ 5000
Your email address	<a href="mailto:soms09finso@gmail.com">soms09finso@gmail.com</a>
Date of this report	3 <sup>rd</sup> April

1. Please 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
To assess human - tiger conflict				<p>Mostly cattle and equines are lost to wild predators. Farmers lost 126 animals during the period of 2015 to 2017 to four main wild predators; tiger, dhole, Himalayan black bear and common leopard. There was significant difference in the number of livestock lost to each predator. The predation by tiger differed among livestock type and breed. The number of cattle lost was significantly higher than the number of equines lost and the indigenous breeds lost was significantly higher than the imported breeds. This is because, 68.4 % of the horses are predated by common leopard compared to tiger and most of the indigenous breeds (cattle) are left to freely graze in the forest where tiger predated (71.7 %) but the imported breeds are kept herding and feeding back at home. Majority of livestock were lost to the tiger when they were not herded in comparison to livestock that were herded.</p>
To assess the communities' perception towards conservation of Royal Bengal Tiger ( <i>Panthera tigris tigris</i> ).				<p>Majority (92.6%) of the people in the study area have not seen tiger. However, 98.7% of people believed the presence of tiger in the forest and 72.6 % of people have positive attitude towards tiger. Factors of positive attitude developed towards tiger are; (51.4%) religious belief, (34.3%) ecotourism and (14.3%) cuteness. However, 20.4 % of people are against tiger conservation; (56.1%) livestock predation, (29.5%) danger to human life and (13.6%)</p>

				unappealing. And the rest of 7 % were neutral on the perception of tiger conservation.
To raise conservation awareness among local people, institution and schools.				<p>The conservation awareness campaign was held to develop positive attitude towards conservation of endangered royal Bengal tiger.</p> <p>The campaign was held with local people engaging local leaders of the study area and urged communities to report on any livestock depredation cases to the nearest park office for further planning of the mitigation measures. Conservation awareness was also held in one of the central schools in the study area highlighting the conservation significance of Bengal tiger with important roles played by tiger in the ecology.</p>

**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).**

There was no major unforeseen difficulties arose during the project period, but farmers were reluctant and feeling uneasy to provide true information during the interview. However, being in the village for sometimes grew confidence on them and got closed to us. Thereby, the true information was sought from the farmers residing within the study area.

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

Through the generous support from RSG, the project could assess and made conservation awareness on the significance of tiger in country like Bhutan:

1. Most of the farmer lost their cattle to tiger comparing to other predators present in the forests. Cattle are mostly preferred by tiger than equines and equines are mostly predated by common leopards. Among the cattle, those indigenous cattle left in the forest for free grazing are being predated by tiger. Therefore, this project could recommend the farmers to prefer for imported breeds and to herd the cattle rather than left for free grazing in the forests.
2. Tiger is believed to be king of the jungle by almost all the population residing within the study area. However, people are carrying different thoughts on the presence of tiger in their forest areas. More than 70 % of the population are with positive attitude towards conservation of tiger however, less than a 20 %

population think otherwise and few were in neutral position on attitude towards conservation of tiger.

3. Conservation awareness was held with the local people including local leaders. Through this project, people are mostly made aware on the importance of having tiger in their forest areas. They were also informed about how human-tiger conflict comes into picture and the mitigation measures should be taken care. As scheduled, such awareness were also held with the students of one of the central schools within the study area. Students learnt environmental sciences in schools yet awareness on the importance of top predator was lacking. This project helped in educating school children on the importance of tiger as top predator and tiger playing significant role in the ecology.

#### **4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).**

Local communities were actively engaged throughout the project period. Data collection through questionnaire survey was done engaging local communities including conservation awareness programme. Local communities were the focussed group for this project. Therefore, this project made awareness regarding the importance of tiger conservation, its food habit and habitat. Though there was no direct financial and economic benefits, local communities were provided with education on conservation efforts which would help them with better incentives.

#### **5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Working on this project have gather much knowledge and insight on this particular field of study with generous support from RSG. In future, there is an opportunity to replicate in the south-central Bhutan, where there is more number of tiger being recorded as per the National Tiger Survey of Bhutan.

The current project have been implemented but could not evaluate its effectiveness due to limited time. However, this work can be continued for monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the project implemented. This study also lacks the adoption of remedial measures on the human-tiger conflict where, this work can be continued in future seeking additional funding and resources from Bhutan government and other funding agencies.

This project is being planned to replicate with wider objectives in the south-central Bhutan as it is possible that, the situation is much similar to the current study.

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

The preliminary findings and results with recommendations were presented to the concerned divisional offices, national park office (JDNP) and local government of the study site. Moreover, with acknowledging Rufford Small Grant (RSG), the findings will be published in the national and international peer reviewed journals to reach to maximum audiences.

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

The project timeline in the proposal was from February 2017 to January 2018 but I have secured funding at the end of March 2018. Therefore, the project was started from April 2018 where actual grant was used until the end of the mid of March 2018. The project was successfully completed within one year of the stipulated time and the allocated grant was well spent without dropping any activities.

**8. Budget: Please 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.**

Item	Budgeted Amount £	Actual Amount £	Difference £	Comments
Purchase/arrangement of field equipment (GPS, Tents, Pen and pencil etc.) printing questionnaire survey format	400	456	- 56	Most of the equipment were not available and were expensive which incurred more than the proposed amount
Field staff training on survey method using data sheet, survey protocol and research objectives presentation	800	800	0	
Design, production and printing of posters and models for conservation awareness program	300	300	0	
Social interview survey (Transportation of materials and team, food and lodging, Daily substance Allowances for interview	1500	1500	0	
Creation of conservation awareness program (includes, public lunch, Daily Substance Allowances, transportation of the team, necessary arrangements etc.)	900	900	0	
Creation of conservation awareness program to the students of selected school (includes tea and snacks,	900	900	0	

transportation of the team, necessary arrangements etc.,				
Installation of sign boards to serve as advocacy to the general public	200	144	+ 56	Since the installation charge was bit cheaper to proposed budget. It is adjusted to buy equipment
<b>Total</b>	<b>5000</b>	<b>5000</b>	<b>0</b>	

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

The important next step would be to adopt mitigation measures on the human-tiger conflict. Moreover, the next step for this current project is to monitor and evaluate the knowledge and awareness imparted to the local community on the attitude towards conservation of tiger in Bhutan. With securing additional funding support, such project can be executed in the other regions of the country.

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

Yes, I did use the Rufford Foundation logo in the materials printout and in every presentation and awareness materials. Owing to the generous support from RSG, all the research crew, local communities and school children were inspired by the foundation's support in funding conservational supports and the Rufford Foundation has gained much popularity. Researchers, especially in Bhutan would remain indebted to the Rufford Foundation for providing generous support in funding.

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

Many people have played important role in successfully completing this project including local leaders. Following are the name and their respective roles that were played during the project period:

- Sonam Phuntsho** (Coordinator/Implementer)
- Dr Om Katel** (Supervision of the work and guidance)
- Tshering Dorji** (Forest Ranger, Social surveyor and awareness campaigner)
- Phub Dorji** (Forestry Officer, Social surveyor and awareness campaigner)
- Thinley Wangchuk** (Sr. Forester, Social surveyor)
- Bishnu Kumar Ghalley** (Sr. Forester, Social surveyor)
- Passang Gurung** (Forest Ranger, Social surveyor and awareness campaigner)
- Thinley Dorji** (Forest Guard, Helper)
- Yeshi Dorji** (Local leader, helped in gathering local communities)
- Thinley** (Yorbu village head, helped in gathering local people for awareness program)
- Wangdi** (Khailo village head, helped in gathering local people for awareness program)

**12. Any other comments?**

I would like to sincerely acknowledge your esteemed Rufford Foundation for continued support in term of financial assistance for conservation of biodiversity in Bhutan. Moreover, I would thank RSG for providing financial support in successful completion of this project. To strengthen tiger conservation study in Bhutan, it is important to know other competitive predators and their habitat overlap. For this I look forward the similar support from RSG to conduct the mentioned study that would contribute to conservation programmes.