

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Kul Bahadur Thapa
Project Title	Conservation of the King Cobra <i>Ophiophagus hannah</i> (Cantor 1836) in Palpa, a western mid hill district of Nepal
Application ID	23184-1
Grant Amount	£4978
Email Address	Kbthapa26@gmail.com
Date of this Report	6 May 2019

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
Produce promotional materials and conduct awareness raising programmes				The objective was fully achieved with active participation of students, teachers, military personnel, social workers, local leaders, conservationists, and local government authorities. 1500 posters (proposed 1000), 3000 brochures (proposed 1000), 50 t-shirts, 10 mounted posters, 1000 visiting cards (not proposed) and five signs were produced and distributed/installed. Awareness raising programmes were organised in 20 schools/collages, five communities and one army barracks. It may not be 100% due to our campaign only but we have received not a single king cobra killing case in last 18 months, instead we are being informed about live king cobra sightings.
Broadcast/telecast interviews and publicise King Cobra conservation campaign through local media				The objective was fully achieved by broadcasting interviews through a local television and a FM radio. Activities of the conservation campaign were covered by various newspapers, online portals, FM radio and television.
Formation of small volunteer groups 'The King Cobra Rescue and Conservation Group' (at least three groups) and train them on 'Identification of the King Cobra and basic techniques of snake handling'				Five 'King Cobra Rescue and Conservation Groups' were formed comprising 15 local interested youths and were trained on 'Identification of the king cobra and basic techniques of snake handling'. They rescue king cobra when needed and inform the principal researcher about each rescue or sighting.

Understand the distribution of King Cobra in Palpa district				Distribution of king cobra in the study area was understood following Visual Encounter Survey, opportunistic active searches and interaction with local people.
Identification of threats to survival of King Cobra				Threats to survival of king cobra was identified through field study and questionnaire survey with community
Understanding perception of people towards King Cobra and human-King Cobra				People's perception towards king cobra and conflict with this snake were understood through informal
Assessing the population status of King Cobra				Originally the assessment of population of king cobra in the study area was proposed. However, due

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

There was no major unforeseen difficulty during the project period. However, government authorities and few local people had to be convinced in the initial stage to acquire research permission and organise awareness raising programmes.

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

1. Better understanding on distribution, threats to survival, human-king cobra conflict and people's perception towards king cobra in the study area were developed.
2. Awareness raising materials like brochures, posters, mounted posters, t-shirts and signage were produced and distributed among government authorities, conservationists, journalists, social workers, leaders, students, teachers and general public. Signage and mounted posters were installed at different strategic locations where people regularly gather and can read the conservation message. King cobra related interviews were broadcasted/telecasted through local FM stations and television.
3. Five 'King Cobra Rescue and Conservation Groups' comprising 15 self-motivated local youths were formed. They were trained on '*Identification of king cobra and basic techniques of snake handling*'. The volunteers have been provided with simple but important datasheet. They rescue king cobra when necessary and possible, and also they compulsorily document the records of all king cobra sightings and related information in the given datasheet which they pass onto the principal researcher.

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

Members of the local communities (government authorities, conservationists,

journalists, social workers, leaders, students, teachers and general public) actively participated in awareness raising programmes held in different schools, colleges and villages during the project period. The presentation included various important topics such as importance of king cobra and other snakes, identification of king cobra and other venomous and non-venomous snakes, general behaviour (feeding, breeding, offensive, defensive, etc.) of king cobra, threats to its survival, conflict situation with humans, people's perception, methods of preventing possible snakebites, snakebite and its early management (first aid – LCPI, PIB and transportation), dos and don'ts during snakebite, information on nearby snakebite treatment centers, Nepal Government's provision of free anti-venom serum, availability and cost of anti-venom serum in private hospitals, etc. with pictures, data and illustrations in local language. Many topics were directly related to public health which someday may prove lifesaving. Thus, these programmes helped them to acquire knowledge on such important topics which they had never got the opportunity to participate in. More importantly, it can be said that the project has significantly contributed in the reduction of human-king cobra conflict by increasing harmony and promoting human-king cobra co-existence i.e., *living with king cobra*.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. This was the first ever king cobra dedicated project implemented in Nepal and of course needs continuation. People, including researchers and conservationists themselves were not very much convinced when this researcher at first shared the idea to work on king cobra research and conservation because available information indicated that the project would be tough and the target species, being the world's largest venomous snake with fearsome reputation. The researcher faced some difficulties during some phase of the project implementation basically to convince the government authorities to provide permission to work on such a snake which is dangerous and if any mishap happens, it can kill the victim within an hour. Moreover, few local people were also initially reluctant to support in organising awareness programmes in their places. But after all the research findings from other king cobra range countries and this researcher's own experience of working with this species were explained to them, they were convinced and let the researcher move ahead. Not only this, since then they have been actively supporting the researcher in propagating conservation message and maintaining the sighting records. Thus, now local people have started showing positive attitude towards king cobra and they need to be given with such programmes regularly.

Grant support from RSG 1 proved to be very useful to study king cobra and raise awareness in the northern part of Palpa district only. The researcher plans to extend the study to other parts of the district and also to cover other important areas of the country as identified by the researcher's recent article on distribution of king cobra in Nepal.

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

Some results produced during the project period were shared during poster presentation in Nepal Owl Festival 2018 at Jiri, various wildlife training programs and awareness raising programs. Parts of the results have been shared through

researcher's organisation's website www.himalayannature.org, Instagram and Facebook page and personal Facebook page. The distribution information derived from this research has been included in the scientific article published by this researcher which gives the most detailed information on distribution of king cobra in Nepal since first recorded in 1974. The paper can be accessed from following links:

Citation: Thapa, K.B., Rana, N. and Shah, K.B. (2019). Distribution of King Cobra in Nepal. *The Himalayan Naturalist* 2(1). Pp 26-33.

[http://fonnepal.org/userfiles/3Distribution%20of%20King%20Cobra%20in%20Nepal theHimalayanNaturalist_Volume2Issue1April2019.pdf](http://fonnepal.org/userfiles/3Distribution%20of%20King%20Cobra%20in%20Nepal%20theHimalayanNaturalist_Volume2Issue1April2019.pdf)

OR

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332464570_Distribution_of_King_Cobra_in_Nepal

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 for one year September 2017 to August 2018 which is the anticipated time duration. However, the research was continued for another 6 months i.e. till February 2019 covering the second winter season as well. Support for additional field visits was provided by the researcher's organisation, Himalayan Nature.

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
Batteries for GPS	8	8		Spent as budgeted
First aid kit	40	40		Spent as budgeted
King Cobra record sheet + diary + pen + clear bags for members of 'King Cobra Rescue and Conservation Groups'	45	45		Spent as budgeted
Key Informant Interview questionnaire sets printing	3	3		Spent as budgeted
General questionnaire sets print	30	30		Spent as budgeted
King Cobra conservation signage with steel frames	68	68		Spent as budgeted
T-Shirts + printing	383	383		Spent as budgeted
Poster mount on frame	76	76		Spent as budgeted
Poster design + printing	382	382		Spent as budgeted
Brochure design + printing	382	382		Spent as budgeted

Travel allowance to participants of 'King Cobra Rescue and Conservation Groups'	114	114		Spent as budgeted
Projector rent for training and awareness raising programmes	16	16		Spent as budgeted
Hall charge for training	23	23		Spent as budgeted
Stationery for training to 'King Cobra Rescue and Conservation Groups'	17	17		Spent as budgeted
Banner flex for training	7	7		Spent as budgeted
Lunch for trainees and resources persons	45	45		Spent as budgeted
Tea + snacks for trainees and resource persons	45	45		Spent as budgeted
DA to resource persons	191	191		Spent as budgeted
Projector rent for training and awareness raising programmes	80	80		Spent as budgeted
Hall charge for awareness raising programmes	76	76		Spent as budgeted
Stationery for awareness raising programmes	287	287		Spent as budgeted
Banner flex for awareness raising programmes	36	36		Spent as budgeted
Tea + snacks for awareness raising programmes	383	383		Spent as budgeted
Food for principal researcher, assistant researcher, field assistant and resource persons	574	574		Spent as budgeted
Accommodation for principal researcher,	459	459		Spent as budgeted
Local travel for principal researcher,	229	229		Spent as budgeted
Kathmandu to field round trip for principal	137	137		Spent as budgeted
Stipend to local field assistant	306	306		Spent as budgeted
Stipend to research assistant	536	536		Spent as budgeted
Total	4,978	4,978		Spent as budgeted

Note: Visiting cards printing cost and extra expenses occurred during additional field visit was borne by Himalayan Nature.

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

After the implementation of this project, people have started showing positive perception and harmony towards king cobra in the study area, having no killing case in our knowledge after November 2017. However, people need to be boosted on a regular basis and expand awareness raising programmes to larger audiences of the adjoining areas as well. Motivate locals to live in harmony with wildlife and nature.

Major threats identified during this research need to be seriously taken into consideration and actions to mitigate where possible and if not to minimize should be undertaken. The researcher feels that the next important step should be towards mitigation and minimisation of threats.

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?

Yes, The Rufford Foundation was acknowledged and the logo was used in every material developed during this project viz. posters, brochures, t-shirts, visiting cards, mounted posters, signage, flex prints, news articles, scientific article, radio and television interviews, poster presentations, training materials and awareness programmes. Hence, The Rufford Foundation was publicised to the fullest possible.

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

Mr. Sharad Singh (Director – Himalayan Nature): Supervise and monitor all activities of Himalayan Nature including this project.

Mr. Kul Bahadur Thapa – MSc (Research Officer - Himalayan Nature and Project Leader): Overall coordination and implementation of the project activities including research and conservation awareness programmes.

Mr. Sriram Poudel – MSc (Research Assistant): Assist Project Leader in planning and carrying out research activities in the field and on the desk.

Mr. Sagar Pandey – (Field Assistant): Assist Project leader in organising awareness raising activities including the distribution of promotional materials.

Mr. Lokendra Somai – (Field Assistant): Assist Project leader in organising awareness raising activities including the distribution of promotional materials.

Ms. Srijana Maharjan – MBS (Accounts Officer): She is the Accounts Officer at Himalayan Nature. She is responsible for keeping and maintaining accounting records up to date of all projects. She looked after all accounts records of this project as well.

12. Any other comments?

We would like to duly acknowledge The Rufford Foundation for their generous support to successfully implement this first ever project on king cobra in Nepal and also expect for continued support in the future as well. This project is an example that the projects on much neglected group of animals are possible.