

Final Project Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Ganesh Ghimire
Project Title	Distribution and conservation status of the Red Panda (<i>Ailurus fulgens</i>) in Lamjung District, Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA), Nepal.
Application ID	23493-1
Grant Amount	£ 5000
Email Address	ganesh061nep@gmail.com
Date of this Report	October 2018

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
To gather information on the distribution and population status of <i>A. fulgens</i> in Lamjung district.				Study sites were selected on the basis of favorable habitat of the species and field surveys were conducted after consultation with local stakeholders. Sixty line transects were done. For the first time in Lamjung district, the Red panda was observed and recorded in the wild.
To distinguish current threats to <i>A. fulgens</i> and its habitat.				The reliance of local people on forest for firewood, fodder and timber products is a major cause of habitat loss. Livestock herding practices of local people are further deteriorating the habitat of the red panda. Since the main food of red panda is bamboo which is being over-exploited. Forest fire is another major challenge of that area. Poaching of wild animal from that area was mentioned by local people during informal meetings.
To raise awareness of <i>A. fulgens</i> amongst local people and to inform them by means of conservation awareness programs, and the ecological importance of the bamboo forests.				A radio program on red panda habitat and the need for its conservation was conducted on Radio Lamjung FM 91.8 MHz. Similarly, an article was published in The Himalayan Times, a national daily newspaper. A documentary was shown through a projector to the villagers and school students; similarly drawing competition was done in five different government schools in Lamjung district. Importance of bamboo was further forecasted during presentation on mass programme.

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

We didn't face any difficulties during the project implementation period except some climatic problems.

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

- This study provides baseline information on the status and distribution of the red panda and confirmed the presence of Red panda for the first time in Lamjung district using photographic evidence.
- Group discussion and awareness was done in intensive way through local radio programme. Further protection measure related talk was done with Arjun Gurung i.e. head of village executive of Marsyangdi Gaunpalika. Different awareness related materials including posters, leaflets, t-shirts were distributed to field assistants and local people in order to develop a positive attitude towards conservation of red pandas in their area.
- Identification of red panda signs i.e. droppings, scratch marks and use of GPS and compass techniques were given to the local assistants and local people so that they can gather information on a regular basis.

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

The involvement of local people contributed to the successful implementation of the project. We involved local people in all activities of the project. Local assistants along with herders were trained in survey techniques. The local people were further instructed about the importance of bamboo plants for the existence of red panda in nearby forest. Local people are now aware of the need to protect bamboo plants and to farm in areas without bamboo.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We still lack comprehensive information on the number of red pandas and details of the species' feeding habits so I have plan about camera trap and scat analysis. Furthermore till now the existence of red panda in Kaski district was unknown which is the adjoining district. So I have planned to continue red panda research and conservation work in such possible habitat in Kaski and will keep my conservation approach on red panda.

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

Radio programme was already done through local radio station i.e. Radio Lamjung FM 91.8 MHz. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_c66jLf9QE0&t=36s). A news article was published in a national newspaper i.e. *The Himalayan Times* with the title "Endangered red panda seen in Lamjung for the first time"

(<https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/endangered-red-panda-seen-in-lamjung-for-the-first-time/>). Further protection measure related talk was done with Arjun Gurung i.e. head of village executive of Marsyangdi Gaunpalika along with sharing first-hand information. The report produced from this work will be disseminated to Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), National Trust For Nature Conservation (NTNC), Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) headquarters Pokhara, Kaski, Central Department of Zoology, Tribhuvan University(CDZTU) Kathmandu, IUCN Kathmandu, IUCN SSC Small Carnivore Specialist Group, and Red Panda Network(RPN). I have prepared a draft scientific paper detailing this first record of red panda in Lamjung district, which I propose to submit to an international peer reviewed journal soon.

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

We used RF grant throughout the project period from October 2017 to October 2018. All the activities were completed on proposed timescale except drawing competition.

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
Awareness raising materials production and distribution	340	350	10	Printing cost was slightly higher than expected.
Communication and stationery	150	150		
Insurance	150	170	20	
Allowances for locals	672	710	38	Local people of related nearby forest area were taken to the field.
Equipment, materials and Landsat image	185	200	15	Extra binoculars and GPS were taken to the field.
Cost for lodging and food cost for team members	2562	2560	2	
Radio awareness program	120	80	40	Program charge was free but other charges

				were applied during the process.
School based drawing competition	500	500		
Travel cost for researcher + miscellaneous	321	280	41	
Total	5000	5000		

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

Programmes in support of local people's livelihoods should be produced so as to combat with species habitat destruction. Poaching activities can be reduced through mass awareness education. Therefore, continuation of conservation awareness programme should be done.

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?

We used RF logo in all awareness materials including drawing sheet. I mention Rufford foundation as a financial supporter in radio program (28.31 minutes) and in national daily newspaper too (<https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/endangered-red-panda-seen-in-lamjung-for-the-first-time/>).

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

Mait Bahadur Gurung, Bikaram Gurung, Ghanashyam Gurung & Raj Kumar Gurung:
Responsible for the field surveys.

Balaram Gurung:

Principal of Shree Himalayan Primary school. Helps in circulating information throughout the village for presentation program through projector and providing room for program.

Aakash Poudel:

Student of Forestry Campus Pokhara. His major role was conducting field surveys, scientific data collection and the school based education program.

Local people who helped the project team:

Budha Ram Gurung, Sujan Gurung, Monoj B.K., Shulav Nepali, Birat Nepali, Parkash Gurung, Mahendra Gurung, Dambar Nepali, Janardan Ghimire & Deepak Ghimire.
They all made a significant contribution to the field survey and questionnaire data collection throughout the Lamjung district of their respective locality.

12. Any other comments?

I would like to thank Rufford Foundation for financially supporting my idea on conservation of endangered red panda. The project was successful because we met the overall objective. I am also thankful for DNPWC, NTNC, and DOF for believing me and providing me permit to study in Lamjung district. I appreciate all the staff of the schools for successful completion of presentation and drawing competition programme. Station Manager of Radio Lamjung, Ramje Rana, for supporting our radio programme. I equally appreciate all the local people, herders, community group and those all who supported directly or indirectly to accomplish this project. I have learnt a lot from this project and it has helped me develop as a leader and as a zoologist. I now have good information on red panda habitat and valuable experience in the field and this has encouraged me to continue my research into red panda conservation.

