

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Mr. Tilak Thapamagar
Project Title	Enhancing the Local Community for Musk Deer Conservation in Khaptad National Park, Western Nepal
Application ID	33203-2
Date of this Report	February, 2024

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 understand the activity patterns and distribution of musk deer in Khaptad National Park.				The activity patterns of the musk deer were determined and revealed the primarily crepuscular behaviours, exhibiting two peaks in the early morning and evening. The distribution of the species was recorded through the presence of latrine sites in the various areas of Khaptad National Park including Triveni, Seleko lek, Tilak lagne dada, Buddhadhunga, Khaptad daha, and Nagdhunga.
To establish the Musk Deer Information Centre (MDIC) in the Buffer Zone of the Park.				We established the MDIC in the Bajhang and Bajura districts of the Buffer Zone of the park. We established the three MDICs along the trekking routes of the park and renewed the previously existing, in total six MDICs were formed. We selected the members of MDICs from the Buffer Zone User Committee, hoteliers, herders, and the homestay owner. They have been working to convey the conservation messages to the visitors as well as the local community.
To promote the musk deer-based ecotourism in the Khaptad National Park				We promoted the homestays of the Darugaun villages, buffer zone of the KNP in Bajhang district. We distributed the photo frame of the musk deer, posters, t-shirts, and brochures highlighting the conservation messages of musk deer.
To educate the local community and school students of the buffer zone area of the park.				The conservation awareness programme was conducted in Darugaun villages of bajhang district and Kanda villages of Bajura district among local people and school students. As part of this programme, we distributed the outreach materials including t-shirts, brochures, and notebooks to the participants. The

			objective of the programme was to educate the local people and students about musk deer conservation.
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2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

- a) The activity patterns and distribution of the musk deer in Khaptad National Park were determined through the camera trap survey and direct field observation. Based on this information we also prepared the distribution map of the musk deer and provided it to the Musk Deer Information Centre (MDIC) and homestay owners.

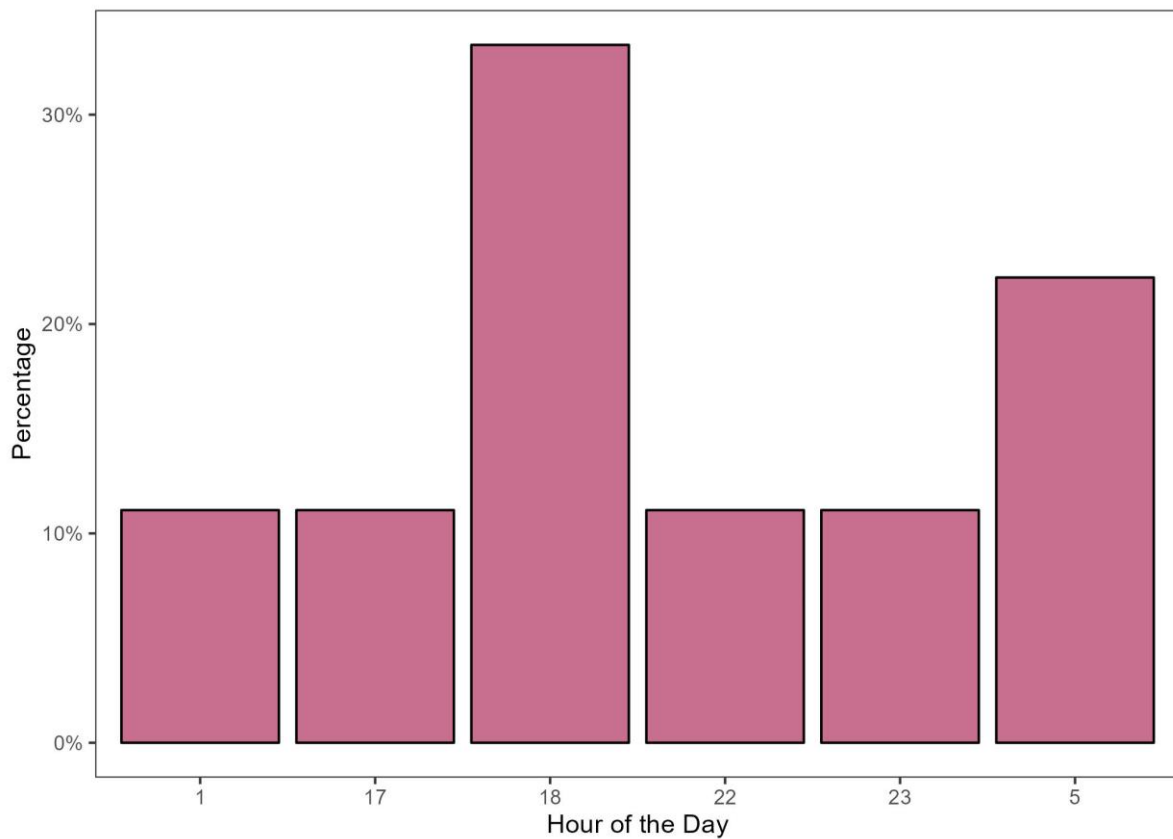


Figure 1: Activity patterns of musk deer in KNP.



Figure 2: Camera trap images of musk deer in KNP.

- b)** Musk Deer Information Centres (MDICs) were established in the Bajhang and Bajura districts of Khaptad National Park. We established a total of six MDICs in the adjacent villages of the buffer zone area. MDICs have been working and collecting information regarding musk deer threats and sharing it with the Himalayan Biodiversity Network Nepal. Furthermore, they have been advocating musk deer conservation as well as wildlife conservation.
- c)** Conservation education programmes were conducted in the villages of Kada in Bajura and Darugaun in Bajhang district. During the conservation programme, we distributed the conservation outreach materials such as t-shirts, brochures, and notebooks which effectively contributed to educating the local people and school students. To understand the participant's conservation knowledge before and after the classes, we performed the questionnaire survey and observed a significant improvement in their knowledge.

3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

Due to significant landslides during the project periods, most of the roads were disrupted, causing considerable difficulty in traveling. Additionally, numerous houses and schools were destroyed, as well as a loss of livestock, and unfortunately, the local population also experienced casualties. The project was impacted by these bad conditions, leading us to postpone our project activities.

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

The local people from the villages of Darugaun in Bajhang and Kada in Bajura district participated in a conservation awareness programme. Furthermore, there was also the active participation of the buffer zone user committee, local youths, hoteliers, homestay owners, and school students in the awareness programme. They gained conservation knowledge, an understanding of legal status, wildlife crime, and their values in the ecosystem. Additionally, we hired local guides and porters for project management and implementation. The park staff played a crucial role in carrying out the field survey, camera trap installation, and executing the conservation awareness programme. Daily allowances were provided to those involved in the project execution. Furthermore, the musk deer photo frames were distributed to the homestay owner to promote the musk deer-based ecotourism in Khaptad National Park. Moreover, conservation outreach materials such as t-shirts, brochures, and notebooks were disseminated in the conservation awareness programme.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, I have planned to continue this work in Khaptad National Park. Additionally, the species found in KNP is still controversial, is it *Moschus chrysogaster* or *Moschus leucogaster*, or *Moschus cupreus*? Therefore, I have a plan to work on the molecular aspects to confirm the species as well as the genetic variation of the species.

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

The project result will be shared through social sites, like Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and online news. Additionally, the scientific results will be disseminated through peer-reviewed scientific journals. The manuscript has been prepared which will be submitted shortly.

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

The conservation awareness programme is always necessary to aware the local community and school students. Additionally, musk deer-based ecotourism should be promoted that can contribute to musk deer conservation. Furthermore, the species of musk deer found in KNP is controversial, therefore, a molecular study is essential to confirm the species.

8. 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 logo of The Rufford Foundation was used in the conservation outreach materials such as t-shirts, brochures, and photo frames. The foundation was also acknowledged in interactions and conservation awareness programmes. The programme activities were published in online news for the publicity of the

foundation. Moreover, the foundation will be acknowledged in the scientific papers which provides the more publicity of the foundation.

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.

Mr. Tilak Thapamagar (Principal Investigator)

Role: Overall project design and management, field survey, data analysis, and report preparation.

Mr. Bimal Raj Shrestha (Field Assistant)

Role: Photography, camera trap installation, and field survey

Mr. Niroj Khadka (Game scout, KNP)

Role: Camera trap installation, field survey, and execute conservation awareness programme.

Mr. Ghanashyam Bohora (Ranger, KNP)

Role: Camera trap installation

Mr. Ramesh Khadka (MDIC member)

Role: Local guide, and equipment carrier.

Mr. Hirendra Rawal (MDIC coordinator, homestay owner)

Role: Project management

10. Any other comments?

We extend our thanks to The Rufford Foundation, UK, for their financial support in the execution of this project in Khaptad National Park. We are also grateful to the Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) for providing permission to conduct the project. Furthermore, special thanks go to the Himalayan Biodiversity Network Nepal and the Natural Science Society for supporting the camera traps and GPS.



Left: Conservation awareness programme in Darugaun Bajhang. Right: Project leader with local communities and school students.



Left: Musk Deer photo frame provided to the homestay owner. Right: Project leader providing t-shirts and brochures to the staff of National Park.



Left: Conservation awareness programme in Kanda village of Bajura district. Right: Interaction with local communities of Kanda village.



Left: Project leader providing the brochure to the Officer of Nepal Army, KNP. Right: Project leader providing the T-shirts to the hotelier of KNP.



Left: Livestock grazing in KNP. Right: Camera trapped image of musk deer in KNP.