

## **Project Update: June 2022**

### **Permission, Inception meeting and Reconnaissance Survey:**

After gaining permission from Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and Chitwan National Park (CNP), we started an inception meeting with CNP staff, briefing about our project. Next, we started preliminary survey in the core and buffer zone area of CNP. We visited most of the area of project site where wild dog potentially exists. As a reconnaissance survey, we confirmed their presence in the sites through signs - scat and pugmarks. We also conceptualised the detailed field survey and community level work. The initial meeting with Buffer Zone Users Committees (BZUCs) and other stakeholders for coordination and support were also conducted.



*Figure 1: Potential habitat inside Chitwan National Park*





Figure 2: Wild dog's scat inside CNP during preliminary survey





*Figure 3: Wild dog's pugmark during preliminary survey of study area*

### **Community Level Work:**

#### **Semi-structured questionnaires:**

After that, we were started to visit national park authority people, buffer zone user committees, frontline staff at range posts around CNP, conservation professionals (nature guides, forest guards and community-based anti-poaching unit - CBAPU) and community people for the semi-structured questionnaire interviews. The key informants for questionnaire survey represented conservation stakeholders such as national park, National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), BZUCs, forest guards, CBAPU, communities holding livestock and nature guides. In addition to key informants, we also felt the need of household level semi-structured questionnaire interviews to generate baseline information to meet our objective of establish spatial-temporal pattern of conflict/interactions and community attitude towards dhole and other wildlife around CNP. We were supported by field enumerators for conducting these questionnaire survey. Field enumerators from local community were selected and briefed about procedure to be followed during interview process and filling the questionnaire. The field enumerators helped us with both key informant survey and household survey. We have already reached most of the buffer zone of CNP. We found that most of the people who's lived close to park and dependent on the national park resources could easily recognise wild dog. Interviews helped us understand community dimension of

status and prejudice of dhole conservation around CNP. Through these preliminary conversations and discussions, it was evident that dhole are found around most of the peripheral areas (some core areas while some in buffer zones) of CNP. We had productive meetings with stakeholders in the area to assess whether communities would be interested in participating and learning about dhole and other wildlife issues that are important to them. From the questionnaire survey, the conflict potential settlement has been roughly identified where our community conservation efforts will now be initiated through community outreach programme.



*Figure 4: Sharing Dhole's picture with local community for discussion and confirmation*





Figure 5: Conducting key informant interview through semi structured questionnaire

### **Conservation Materials publication and plan for next phase:**

Dhole conservation materials (brochure and posters) were also published in simple, informative, and local understandable language. In the next phase, with these prepared materials, orientation programme for park frontline staff will be conducted in four administrative sectors of CNP Eastern (Sauraha), Northern (Kasara), Southern (Madi), and Western (Amaltari). Similarly, orientation to nature guides, forest guards and CBAPUs will be organised in four sectors. Conservation awareness school programmes for eco-clubs would be conducted around schools of CNP buffer zone areas. Likewise, local conservation workshop will be conducted with support from 22 Buffer Zone User's Committee. The workshop will be organised in four clusters of buffer zones and participation from local representatives, NTNC, WWF, local conservation organisations, communities holding livestock, indigenous/marginalised communities, and other stakeholders will be highly encouraged. Data compilation and preliminary analysis of the questionnaire survey will also be conducted in next quarter.

### **Outreach activity:**

On the occasion of World Dhole Day (28th May 2022), a newspaper article entitled, ([https://www.himalkhabar.com/news/130119?fbclid=IwAR0i6gHmKkJLAeZ1sR7d-EhG0H4oQEWPT16TjPBE8n\\_ktvGct2xmakpBXQc](https://www.himalkhabar.com/news/130119?fbclid=IwAR0i6gHmKkJLAeZ1sR7d-EhG0H4oQEWPT16TjPBE8n_ktvGct2xmakpBXQc)) "Why are wild dogs at risk?" was published in national daily – Himalkhabar. The article was published in local language – Nepali to ensure maximum outreach impact. The article has already been shared more than 850 plus times.