

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Kelly Tobden Dorji Tamang
Project Title	Understanding Human-Golden Mahseer interaction and coexistence in Manas River
Application ID	37308-1
Date of this Report	6/7/23

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
1) To assess local community's attitude and perception towards the Golden Mahseer				Attitude and perception of local communities towards golden mahseer were assessed in the Manas River basin. A total of 300 individuals living in close proximity to the river were interviewed. The interviewees included local communities, local government officials and officials from natural resources enforcement agencies. Results indicate that majority of the population liked golden mahseer and supported conservation activities over those who disliked it. Further, positive attitude or support towards the species differed as per area of residency (gewogs) of the communities. And the area of residency played a major role in conservation attitude of the communities towards mahseer species conservation. Communities residing in gewogs falling under the protected area showcased more support towards species conservation.
2) To ascertain if the socio-economic status of communities has a role in Golden Mahseer's conservation success.				The study revealed that socio-economic status of the communities residing within the river basin had no impact on in golden mahseer conservation. Irrespective of their economic background, all the communities supported golden mahseer conservation in the area. However, the majority responded that the golden mahseers persecuted were for 'self-consumption' and commercial value of the species in the informal market.
3) To identify potential threats to Golden				From the primary data collected the study identified various threats to the

Mahseer population				<p>golden mahseer population in the study area. Among the threats, the respondents mentioned the following threats and ranked as per the severity (1 being the highest/major threat):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Illegal fishing. 2) River pollution. 3) Land use changes in the river basin. 4) Exotic species. 5) Water abstraction.
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2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

- a). Established baseline data on local community attitude and perception towards the golden mahseer and its conservation.
- b). The study could identify major threats to the golden mahseer population in the river basin.
- c). The study also assessed the cultural, religious and medicinal significance of the golden mahseer.

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

The local communities were reticent in sharing information about the species as it is totally protected as per the forestry laws (fearing penalty and prosecution). To this, the enumerators had to spend more time in building rapport with the respondents. This resulted in increased time in the field and more survey days were required. Eventually the entire process flowed seamlessly, and data collection was successful.

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

Local communities were directly involved as they were interviewed, and questions were asked in order to fully understand community attitude and perception towards the golden mahseer (Refer Pics). Further, in-depth interviews were also administered to document the cultural and religious significance of the species. As a part of awareness programmes, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were carried out and the local communities were made aware on its importance and the role golden mahseer plays in the ecology of the water bodies and rural livelihood through eco-tourism programmes.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, studies of this kind require long term (longitudinal data) for developing appropriate management mechanisms. While the study identified and collected baseline information, detailed in-depth studies are required to further explore the factors impacting/supporting golden mahseer conservation in the area. Similarly, such baseline studies are also required in other river basins of the country that have recorded the presence of mahseers.

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

Results from the study will be made available to the concerned stakeholders such as the Department of Forests and Park Services and local government administration for incorporating findings of this study into their long-term development plans. Further, the findings will be published in a peer-reviewed journal for making it accessible to wider audiences both home and abroad.

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

The local area development plan and the species conservation action plan for golden mahseer should include findings from this study. These findings can directly impact and help as social and environmental safeguards in any developmental activities in the river basin. Further, community-based species conservation groups need to be instituted for continued support towards to species conservation.

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?

The Rufford Foundation logo was used in the presentations made during the entire study period. Commencing from inception meeting to the training of data enumerators, Rufford foundation was duly acknowledged, and the logo was used.

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

Member	Office	Contribution
Kelly Tobden Dorji Tamang	Researcher, UWICER	Principal Investigator of the project.
Sonam Wangdi	Researcher, Centre for Bhutan and GNH studies	Design of questions and trainings for data enumerators.
Tashi Choden	Sr. ICT officer, Gov Tech.	Aided in data cleaning and analysis.
Samten Wangchuk	Chief Forestry Officer, Royal Manas National Park	Mobilized human resources during the field work.
	Forest Ranger, Royal	Organised and carried out

Pema Zangpo	Manas National Park	data collection in the field
Kinley	Forest Ranger, Royal Manas National Park	Organised and carried out data collection in the field
Ugyen	Forest Ranger, Zhemgang Territorial Division	Organised and carried out data collection in the field
Kezang Dorji	Forest Ranger, Zhemgang Territorial Division	Organised and carried out data collection in the field.
Kiran Mongar	Ranger	Aided in data collection.
Sherub Dorji	Ranger	Aided in data collection.
Chondu Dorji	Ranger	Aided in data collection.
Sha Kinley Doya	Ranger	Aided in data collection.
Thukten Yonten	Ranger	Aided in data collection.

10. Any other comments?

I would like to thank The Rufford Foundation and I remain immensely grateful for the golden opportunity provided to me to work on areas that I am passion about and committed to. And I sincerely hope for such continued support in near future.

Pictures of data collection:



