

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Sachet Timilsina
Project Title	Ecology of Snow Leopard and Strengthening Community Engagement for its Conservation in Manaslu Conservation Area, Nepal
Application ID	38795-1
Date of this Report	12.28.2023

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
Snow leopard and its wild prey survey				A total of 60 camera traps were employed in Chum Valley.
Conservation education program for school students and local people				Two interaction programmes were conducted on 9 th December 2022 and 1 st January 2023 with the participation of local representatives and local government staff at the Chumnubri Rural Municipality (CNRM) office, Philim, Gorkha. A mass meeting with local people was organised on 16 th December with the presence of local representatives, government staff, and local people. Intra-school essay, poem, and drawing competition of grades 6 to 10 was conducted along with an education seminar in Manaslu Conservation Area (MCA) on the topic "Snow Leopard Conservation in MCA". PowerPoint presentation was given to school students.
Habitat suitability modelling				It was carried out using maxent modelling.
Diet study of snow leopard				We trained two university master's students (Mr. Ramesh Kathariya and Mr. Binaya Ghimire) and conducted the diet analysis at Central Department of Environmental Science, Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

a). The population status of snow leopards and their wild prey was determined in Chum Valley of MCA including the suitable habitat of this adorable species in a conservation area.

b). Workshops on awareness about snow leopard conservation were conducted for local people and school students. Two school programmes were conducted where students from grades 6 to 10 took part in essay, poem, and drawing competitions. A news article has been published regarding the awareness workshop at the national

newspaper. Two interaction programs with CNRM were conducted in the presence of staff and all ward members. A mass meeting for local people and a police interaction program were also conducted to disseminate the message of the conservation importance of snow leopards. 100 pcs of posters and 500 pcs of pamphlets were distributed at both the Chum and Nubri Valleys of the MCA.

c). The diet pattern of snow leopards was analysed.

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

We conducted the camera trap survey, prey species survey, workshops, and intra-school competition at the conservation area. During the camera trap survey, we lost two camera traps.

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

Two interaction programmes were organised at the CNRM office. The first interaction programme was attended by 11 people (two local representatives, eight local government staff, and one wildlife biologist). The people interacted with the importance of snow leopards and their existence in the MCA. Similarly, the second interaction programme was attended by 19 people (14 local representatives, three local government staff, one Conservation Officer of Manaslu Conservation Area Project (MCAP)-Philim, and one Wildlife Biologist). The participants were enlightened with topics such as spiritual values and local beliefs toward snow leopards, the reason for caring about snow leopards, and the way local people help to save snow leopards.

One mass meeting programme was organised to raise snow leopard conservation awareness. A total of 18 participants attended the programmes where 13 were local people, three were local representatives and two were local government officers. The local people were educated about snow leopard habitat range, human snow leopard conflict, and the ways to mitigate the conflict.

We trained seven local people who gained knowledge of camera trapping, prey count, and scat sample collection.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We have strong plans to continue this work. We worked in coordination with the MCAP-Philim office and local people to gather information about the population and habitat of snow leopards along their main wild prey. The data will be shared with MCAP and Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) to develop new programmes for villagers such as homestay improvement training, veterinary training, medicinal herbs processing training, and other income-generating activities to compensate for the livestock loss of local people. Along with this, camera trapping survey in adjacent areas of existing areas can be done. Similarly, after providing some conservation encouragement to school students,

some further programs can be launched such as eco-club formation and mobilise them in snow leopard conservation programs, plastic pollution reduction campaigns, etc.

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

The data obtained from the camera trap survey, wild prey survey, and dietary and habitat suitability study will be shared with MCAP-NTNC and DNPWC by providing a final report. Moreover, the data obtained from the project will be published in peer-reviewed journals. The final results will also be published in daily local and national newspapers, online media, and the personal Facebook platform of PI. It will inform the audience on snow leopard conservation and lessons learned.

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

To advance our conservation efforts, we must first conduct camera trap surveys in existing and new areas, gathering crucial data on snow leopard presence and behaviour. Simultaneously, we need to develop climate resilience strategies that specifically target reducing human-snow leopard interactions, mitigating potential conflicts. Another key aspect is involving school students in conservation activities, fostering awareness and a sense of responsibility among the younger generation. By actively engaging communities and schools, we aim to build a sustainable environment that safeguards both human well-being and the delicate balance of the snow leopard habitat.

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, we used the logo in flex print for workshop and interaction programs, PowerPoint presentations, posters and pamphlets distributed to villagers, tokens of love provided to schools and rural municipality, and certificates that were provided to school students.

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

Sachet Timilsina: Worked as Principal Investigator, managed all project activities, conducted field surveys, lab analysis, and data analysis, writing reports and papers.

Dr. Bikram Shrestha: Served as a co-supervisor for Sachet Timilsina's master's thesis, providing field training in camera trapping, prey count, and sample collection. Actively participated in data analysis and also contributed to the writing of the research paper.

Ramesh Kathariya and Binaya Ghimire: Assisted diet analysis in the lab.

10. Any other comments?

We would like to thank The Rufford Foundation for the support through grants, DNPWC for providing project permission, MCAP-NTNC for providing project permission, and MCAP-Philim office for coordination to conduct the overall project activities in MCA. Similarly, we are thankful to the CNRM and its staff, local representatives, local people, schoolteachers, and students from MCA for helping to run the project activities.



Some photos during laboratory work.