

Progress Report

Project Title: Conserving Small Carnivores in the Tinjure-Milke-Jaljale Landscape of Nepal

Project ID: 39719-2

Reporting Period: 2023-07-13 to 2024-02-26

Overview:

In our ongoing efforts for small carnivore conservation in the Tinjure-Milke-Jaljale (TMJ) landscape, we've recently achieved key milestones.

Our recent activities focused on empowering local communities in TMJ to take leadership roles in small carnivore conservation. We held introductory meetings with the Mayor, Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs), and Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN) representatives across three municipalities of our project area- Laligurans, Dharmadevi, and Myanglung- introducing our team and our project.

We conducted wildlife monitoring training sessions across these three municipalities with CFUGs members. A total of 45 participants were trained in common mammals of their locality and their ecological roles, and camera trap deployment. Working closely with trained CFUG members, we have deployed camera traps in 12 sites identified as optimal by the trained CFUG members.

Achievements:

Objective	Achievement	Challenges
1. Detailed study of Asiatic Golden Cat, Red Panda, and Asiatic Wild Dog in Tinjure-Milke-Jaljale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have collected the required permits from the Department of Forest and Soil Conservation (DoFSC) for the study and from the Social Welfare Council (SWC) for the project. - We have deployed camera traps at 12 sites identified by trained CFUG members to date. Although we have not caught our focus species, we have captured 5 mammal species including Leopard Cat in a short span of 15 days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delay in permit approval due to various reasons. - Harsh weather during winter made the field survey difficult.

2. Focused Conservation Projects for School Students	NA	NA
3. Making the communities leaders of conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our project empowered 45 CFUG members with wildlife monitoring training where they gained knowledge and skills on their local wildlife and wildlife monitoring using camera traps. - The project achieved a significant increase in community participation in conservation activities. CFUG members actively engaged in making decisions and were the main organizers of our wildlife monitoring training. They also dictated the optimal sites for camera trapping. This has led to their increased interest and ownership of the conservation of their local wildlife. - We were able to strengthen partnership with 22 local CFUGs, and three municipalities, as we have engaged them from the initial phase of our project. This has led us to facilitate knowledge-sharing, resource mobilization, and collective action toward shared conservation objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time management and scheduling conflict with the local communities for the training. - Limitation of our camera trap units with reliable security.

Activities Conducted:

Activity	Description	Outcomes and feedback
1. Introductory meetings with the communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From December 2nd to 4th, we held introductory meetings with key stakeholders in the project area, including CFUGs, Mayors, and FECOFUN representatives (national network of CFUGs) from Laligurans, Dharmadevi, and Myanglung municipalities. - A total of 21 local stakeholders were present during these meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The response from local stakeholders was highly positive. - Specifically, the stakeholders expressed interest in 1. Wildlife monitoring training, 2. Awareness campaigns, and 3. Collaboration with the project team.
2. Wildlife Monitoring training to CFUG members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We conducted wildlife monitoring training to local CFUGs in the three municipalities on February 1, 3 and 4. The training session involved discussing the theoretical aspects of mammal species found in TMJ. A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The participants gained knowledge on the common mammals that could be potentially living in the area and understanding their habitats, behaviors, and ecological roles.

	total of 45 CFUG members from 22 CFUGs were trained in the session.	They also learned the skill for camera trap deployment for wildlife monitoring.
3. Deployment of camera traps in optimal sites identified by trained CFUG members.	- We worked closely with trained CFUG members to identify optimal locations for camera trap placement within their respective community forests. Utilizing their extensive local knowledge and insights into local wildlife and terrain, we strategically selected sites for camera deployment. We have deployed camera traps at 12 of these identified sites after the training.	- We have successfully retrieved camera trap images from 6 sites and were able to capture 5 mammal species, including Leopard Cat, within the 15 days of deployment.

Challenges:

Challenge	Description	Steps taken
1. Delay in permit approval due to various reasons.	- Our permit for the camera trap study was delayed for a few months. A primary reason for this was the changed requirements for camera trap study application from our previous permit application time. - Our permit from SWC was delayed due to misplacement of our application file during the legal process at SWC office.	- We had to wait for our permits to be approved and discussed by the technical committee, which was beyond our control. - We showed the source of our camera traps for the project which facilitated the permit approval swiftly. - We resubmitted our documents to SWC and our application was put on the fast track to make up for the time lost.
2. Harsh weather during winter made the field survey difficult.	- Although we conducted the wildlife monitoring training in February, which is the end of winter, the weather was still harsh. We also got rain/snow in one of our training and camera trap placement days.	- We worked with the CFUGs to conduct the training in appropriate venues and placement of camera traps. Since the locals are aware of and used to the weather, this has made our work a lot easier.
3. Time management and scheduling conflict with the local communities for the	- We had some scheduling conflict with the community which resulted in the delayed start of the program. In rural areas, participants are often	- We communicated with local CFUG organizers and rescheduled our training to fit their schedule.

training.	busy with their work and tend to arrive late to the program sessions, reducing the available time for field surveys.	- We frequently communicated with the organizer CFUGs to ensure that our training and camera trapping went smoothly.
4. Limitation of our camera trap units with reliable security.	- The trained CFUG members were eager to put more camera traps in their corresponding community forests. But as we could free only six camera traps that had reliable security boxes, we could not fulfill the demands of the CFUGs now.	- We used all our available camera traps with reliable security boxes (n=6). We then rotated these camera traps in other interested CFUGs.

Upcoming Plans:

Objective	Description	Timeline
1. Detailed study of Asiatic Golden Cat, Red Panda, and Asiatic Wild Dog in Tinjure-Milke-Jaljale	- We will be conducting an extensive camera trapping at randomly selected grids (n>=75, 1km by 1km) to collect data on focus species in TMJ landscapes.	March - July 2024
	- The collected data will be for occupancy modelling to generate predictive map for small carnivores, especially our focus species.	July-August 2024
2. Focused Conservation Projects for School Students	- We will be publishing a booklet on small carnivores with updated checklist in Nepali. - We will also conduct 20 small carnivore awareness camps at schools, distributing the booklets as well.	July-August 2024
3. Making the communities leaders of conservation	- Our six camera traps will be rotated in at least 6 other sites identified by the trained CFUG members.	March 2024
	- We will share our results as well as distribute the booklets to CFUGs and local communities at four awareness camps after we gather data from our camera traps. This will be a great opportunity for us to discuss the future and develop a shared vision with communities for small carnivore conservation.	July-August 2024

Media and Outreach:

1. Media Coverage:

- We have updated all our project updates on our official website page (<https://ncsc.org.np/conserving-small-carnivores-in-eastern-nepal>).

2. Public Outreach:

- We conducted 3 introductory meetings to introduce our project and our team to the local community reaching at least 21 local stakeholders including Mayors, CFUG and FECOFUN representatives.

- We conducted 3 wildlife monitoring training courses to raise awareness about local wildlife and empower local communities with wildlife monitoring skills, especially camera trapping, reaching 45 local CFUG members from 22 CFUG.

Acknowledgments:

We express our sincere gratitude to Rufford Small Grants for their crucial support. Special thanks to DOFSC and SWC for granting us the necessary permits. Heartfelt appreciation to our interns, Tujin Rai and Rohan Tuladhar, for their dedicated contributions. We extend our thanks to the mayors of Dharamdevi, Laligurans, and Myanglung Municipality, as well as all the CFUGs and FECOFUN representatives for their vital collaboration and support. Your partnership has been integral to our conservation and community empowerment efforts.

Attachments:



(From left to right) Top row: Introductory meeting at Laligurans and Myanglung Municipality, Second row: Wildlife Monitoring training for CFUG members, Third row: Trained CFUG members putting camera traps at selected sites on their respective CFUGs.

NCSC

Nature Conservation and Study Centre

Nature Conservation and Study Centre (NCSC)

Contact no: +977-9851324343

Email: info@ncsc.org.np

Website: www.ncsc.org.np

Date: 26 February 2024