

Strengthening People for Pangolin Conservation in the human-dominated landscapes of Nepal



2nd Project update

Submitted To

The Rufford Foundation

UK

Submitted By

Prativa Kaspal

Women for Conservation
(WC)

6 May 2024

Preparation and publication of Pangolin conservation awareness programs

To enhance awareness and understanding of the critically endangered Chinese pangolin among local communities in Bhaktapur district, we have published 50 t-shirts featuring the pangolin sketch drawn by the first student during the celebration of World Pangolin Day 2024. In addition to the t-shirts, we have also published 100 caps and 150 cups featuring the Chinese pangolin. Furthermore, we have created 50 educational banners with illustrations and conservation messages highlighting the differences between Chinese and Indian pangolins along with our previous publication on pangolin booklets in simple Nepali language. All of these published materials are being distributed among a wide range of participants, including youths, women, support groups, students, communities, and media personnel.

These publications aim to raise awareness about the legal measures on the Chinese pangolin species in Nepal, focusing on their features, declining population status, conservation issues, reward, and penalties for illicit activities. Our goal is to educate communities and stakeholders about the local and global importance of pangolins sharing habitats, with the ultimate aim of minimizing threats to pangolins and their habitats through increased knowledge and awareness.

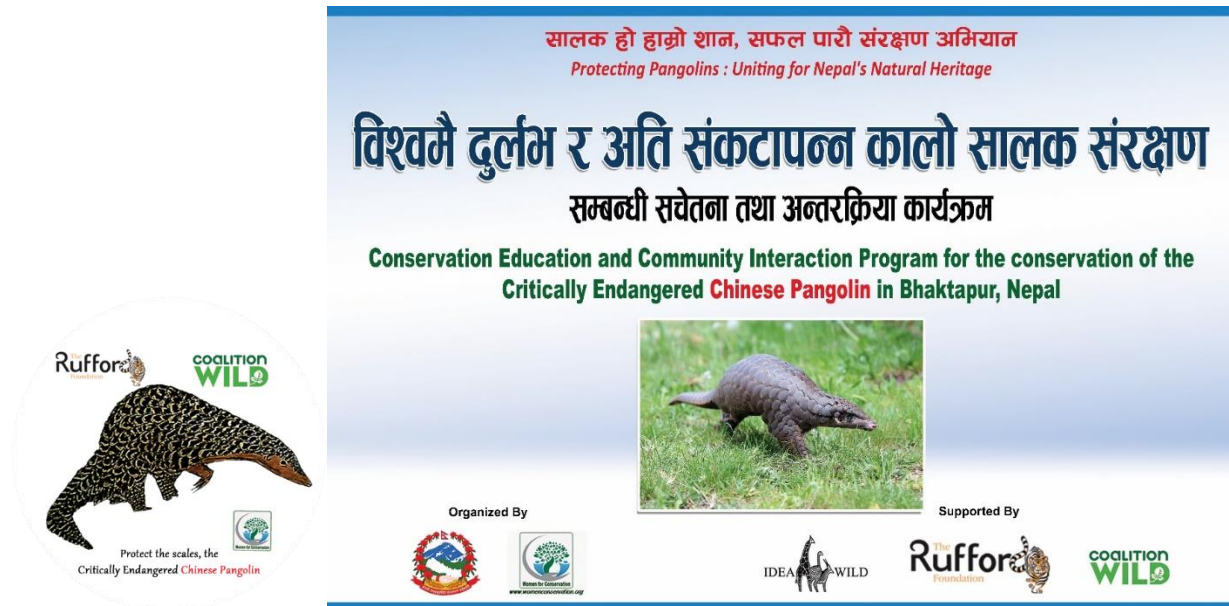


Fig: 1. Design for cap & banner for Conservation education banner

13 th World Pangolin Day Celebration

World Pangolin Day is celebrated annually on the third Saturday of February to raise awareness about these unique and endangered creatures. Pangolins are the only mammals wholly covered in scales and are often poached for their scales, which are used in traditional medicine, and their meat, which is considered a delicacy in some cultures.

To commemorate the 13th World Pangolin Day, we organized art competitions under the title "My Pangolin, My Pride." These competitions played a crucial role in nurturing creativity and talent among students, providing them with a platform to showcase their artistic expressions and raise awareness about pangolin conservation. This competition also provided students with an opportunity to delve into research about pangolins, their habitats, and the threats they face.

It was inspiring to see that all the winners of the art competition during the 38th anniversary of Ganesh School were young girls. They showed great enthusiasm and expressed a strong willingness to assist in our field-based surveys, interactions, community education, and monitoring activities for pangolin conservation.



Fig:4. Students busy in sketch



Fig: 5. With art selection judge teacher



Fig: 6. 1 st winner pangolin art



Fig: 7. 2nd sketch



Fig:8. 3rd sketch



Fig:9. Other sketches

Prize distribution and pangolin conservation sensitization program with policy makers

During the 38th anniversary of Ganesh School, a day-long formal program was held under the chairmanship of the school principal, with Honorable Parliament Member Kiran Thapa Magar as the Chief Guest. Other distinguished guests included ward presidents, head teachers from other schools, and local social activists. The event included a sensitization meeting with policymakers and ward presidents, focusing on the promotion and further improvement of the locally declared Pangolin Conservation Area within Kathmandu. The program also featured a prize distribution ceremony for an art competition held to mark the 13th World Pangolin Day 2024, where twenty-one participants showcased their talents and five winners were selected for recognition. All participants received letters of appreciation, while the winners were presented with certificates featuring their artwork, along with t-shirts and stationery items.



Fig: 10. Felicitation to the School former Principal Mr Rabindra Thapa



Fig: 11. Pangolin certificate and gift hampers to winner artists



Fig: 12. Winners with certificates and gifts



Fig: 13. Winners with school teachers



Fig: 14. Appreciation letter to school family for their support for pangolin classes and programs and the participants

Formation of local Chinese Pangolin support group and their capacity building programs

We have established local pangolin support groups from the interested communities to engage communities in protecting pangolins. These groups' bridge conservation efforts and local knowledge, ensuring strategies are culturally relevant. They foster a sense of ownership, leading to more sustainable practices. Support groups share crucial information like pangolin sightings and threats, aiding monitoring and conservation decisions. They assist in data collection, education, and awareness programs, translating messages into local languages. They dispel myths, promoting positive attitudes towards conservation. They also take direct action, like habitat restoration and waste reduction, contributing to pangolin conservation at the grassroots level.



Fig: 15. Presenting pangolin caps to the pangolin support members



Fig: 16. Our young members

Pangolin Conservation Education Programs

Our pangolin conservation education outreach programs are going on. Recently, we have conducted an interaction program with fresh graduates to bring in new perspectives, energy, and ideas. These individuals are often eager to learn and contribute, making them valuable assets for innovative solutions. We are trying to engage with them to build their capacity and expertise, nurturing future leaders in conservation. Additionally, interacting with fresh graduates will help to expand networks within the conservation community, fostering collaboration.



College Auditorium hall

Fig: 17. Presentation in progress in Khwopa



Fig: 18. Graduate students in the pangolin conservation education program, Bhaktapur



Fig: 19. Principal of Khwopa College delivering token of love to the project leader



Fig: 20. A group photograph with all participants and lecturers

We are conducting school education and outreach programs through publications, audio, and visual kits. So far, we have visited six schools, reaching over 600 students, teachers, and volunteers.



Fig: 21. Pangolin conservation education class with demo presentation



Fig: 22. Students reading the distributed educational booklet



Fig: 23. Students and teachers watching our pangolin educational videos and folklore

Community interaction and capacity building program

During our program, we were heartened by the enthusiastic engagement of women, who were receptive to our message. We discussed the local, national, and global status of the Chinese Pangolin, highlighting the threats it faces and the conservation measures needed to combat rampant poaching and hunting. Additionally, we addressed the precautions and dangers of forest fires, drawing from recent experiences and emphasizing the impact of fires on life, the economy, wildlife, weather patterns, and the broader issue of climate change. Our interactions during three community consultations were with groups representing diverse ethnic backgrounds, enriching our understanding of local perspectives and challenges.



Fig: 24. Interaction and experience sharing with enthusiastic women forest users



Fig: 25. Interaction with ethnic members to compile their own pangolin story

Field surveys

Field-based surveys and habitat assessments were carried out, engaging local communities to collect traditional knowledge about pangolins, including their habitats, behaviors, and threats. This information was crucial for conducting subsequent field surveys and installing camera traps.



Fig: 26. Fresh burrows with tail markings of pangolin during field-based surveys



Fig: 27. Field research and camera trap installation with our interested youths

Pangolin Education and Conservation Wall

Pangolin Education and Conservation Wall is important for public education as it serves as a visual and informative platform to raise awareness about pangolins. We are spreading the pangolin conservation message through the conservation wall with highlight ecological importance, conservation status, and the threats they face, encouraging people to take action to protect these unique animals and keep eye on illicit activities.



Fig: 28. Curious visitor reading through the message

Connecting the Power of Media for Conservation Education and Outreach Initiatives

We seized valuable opportunities to leverage the power of media for conservation education and outreach initiatives aimed at protecting the critically threatened Chinese pangolin in Nepal. Recognizing the extensive reach and influence of media platforms, we utilized national televisions and FM stations to raise awareness about the challenges faced by the pangolins. Through these channels, we reached a wide audiences. Our efforts also focused on dispelling myths and misconceptions surrounding pangolins, which are often poached for their scales and meat in Nepalese cultures due to perceived medicinal properties. We emphasized the national protected status of pangolins and the legal consequences of poaching. By sharing this information, we aimed to educate the public about the true nature of pangolins and the urgent need to protect them.



Fig: 29. After the TV interview in the early morning of the third Saturday of February to mark the 13th World Pangolin Day in Kathmandu, I had the pleasure of meeting with TV presenter Ms. Manita Pokharel. The program directly reached over 170 viewers. For more details, please click on the link below. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_yc1WBV4Zg

Likewise, the principal investigator was invited for an interview to discuss the status of Nepalese pangolins and other wildlife on Nari TV, Nepal's first women's channel dedicated to amplifying women's voices and sharing their untold stories. As a women-led television, Nari TV promotes peace, freedom, and justice for women and girls. The program reached approximately 7500 viewers from diverse backgrounds. For more details about the program, please click on the following link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ULe58NHxRrI>



Fig: 30. In Naari TV office after the interview program

The principal investigator was invited for an hour-long talk on pangolins and their conservation status by Bhaktapur FM 105.4 MHz, a radio station. During these programs, funding sources were acknowledged. The radio interview was later uploaded to Bhaktapur FM's official YouTube channel, where it garnered 200 views. For more details about the program, please click on the link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsawZB4Dk14>



Fig: 31. With Radio presenter Ms Nabina Shrestha after the session

Throughout our programs, we expressed gratitude to the Rufford Grants Foundation for their financial support for this project and others. Their contribution has been instrumental in enabling us to carry out these crucial conservation initiatives.

Thank you very much!