

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Prakash Singh Thapa
Project title	Conservation of Bats in the local (peripheral) communities around Caves of Pokhara Valley, Nepal through education and awareness programmes.
RSG reference	51.07.09
Reporting period	December 2009 – May, 2011
Amount of grant	£4,885
Your email address	seasoniof@gmail.com
Date of this report	June, 2011

1. Please 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
A. Creation of awareness and knowledge amongst local people.				Awareness and knowledge amongst local people about the importance of bat conservation was enhanced using educational methods.
1. Conservation related education			Fully achieved	School students have been educated about bat and habitat management to increase their interest on bat conservation and for long term conservation of bats.
2. Displaying cards among kids and farmers			Fully achieved	Cards and leaflets were distributed among kids, youths and farmers to enhance knowledge for saving bats.
3. Pamphlets			Fully achieved	Pamphlets were published and distributed to create knowledge and awareness to protect bats.
4. Radio programme			Fully achieved	Radio programme was conducted for one year through Annapurna FM 93.4 MHz, at 6:45 pm on every 2 nd and 4 th Tuesday of each month, since January 2010 to December 2010. Different information, facts and knowledge about condition of bats was broadcasted through radio programme. People related to Natural Resource Management, Cave guides, Cave Management Committees, Experts from forestry field were interviewed and broadcasted through radio programme.
5. Habitat conservation			Fully achieved	Local people near roosting sites were taught about importance of bats and different techniques of habitat conservation.
B. Promoting and strengthening Bat conservation activities.				Different types of motivational activities among students and youths were conducted to encourage, promote and strengthen community-based conservation programs.
1. Youth awareness		Partially achieved		Youths from different VDCs (Village Development Committees) were educated about the importance of bats and encouraged to perform

				community-based bat conservation activities.
2. Website creation			Fully achieved	Website named www.nepalbats.org created. Different conservation activities, facts, photographs were displayed specially focusing students and youths and progress about bat activities were kept on website.
3. Conservation club		Partially achieved		One school club (Bindubasini school club) was formed at Bindubasini Secondary School and One Aama Samuha (Mothers' group) was reformed at Chinnedanda.
4. Quiz and Essay competition among schools			Fully achieved	Inter School quiz and essay competition was conducted, and prizes were also distributed.
5. Conservation boards			Fully achieved	Conservation boards have been installed at 10 different roosting sites.
6. School teaching programme on importance of bats			Fully achieved	One hour of school teaching programme about importance of bats was conducted at various schools.
7. Seminar, Talk programme			Fully achieved	Seminar talk programme and trainings were conducted at Institute of Forestry, Pokhara. Discussions were made about present situation of bats and what can be done to save and increase bat population in Pokhara valley.

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

The major difficulty arose during the project was insufficient equipment while visiting inside the caves and due to expertise problem, many bat species could not be identified which we supposed new species of bats.

We faced some misunderstandings while visiting the roosting sites, for e.g. When we were conducting our board installation activities at Chinnedanda area of Pokhara valley, they revealed the misconception that bats damaged their crops as well as fodder tree species (by spreading guano on tree leaves-which cattle don't prefer) and asked for compensation and alternative options for their cattle and crops. They showed little negative attitude and they said they will cut all the trees from the area as they didn't like the bats. They were also doubtful on the outcomes of our mission. This was because of experience from past projects where their expectations have not been met. Their main concern was how they would be benefited from the project sustainably. After mother's group was reformed in this area with our support and also due to our motivation activities, they are now convinced about the importance of the bats. The formation of mother's group helped a lot to form a platform to save bats at local level and created a network to share the problems and benefits of bats within their community.

A delay arose in sending the final report within 18 months from the start of this project as I was sent to one of the remote areas of Nepal to work for Government of Nepal in forestry sector. But I am happy to inform you that all the activities related to this project have been completed successfully.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

The awareness creation, knowledge enhancement and conservation education programmes were very successful and useful activities for educating, convincing and making people aware about the ecological importance of bats. The main purpose behind bat and their habitat conservation is to save bats in their natural environment. The outcomes can be described as following three points:

1. Awareness and knowledge creation about the bats and different facts related with them.

Through the commencement of different conservation activities, we became able to educate people from the local level to graduate level. The website created was especially focused towards educating the youths and the students who were unaware of the bats. Brochures, pamphlets and cards were distributed among farmers, youths, teachers, researchers, students of Pokhara Valley. The pamphlets mainly focused on educating the people about the habitat and behaviour of bats, the myths we have and the hidden truth against those myths and different conservation activities that can be conducted to conserve bats. The school teaching activity was really valuable method to distribute the knowledge about bats and their declining condition due to various threats. Conduction of inter school quiz contest and essay competition promoted the knowledge and interest about bats. Regular conduction of the talk programs and the seminar helped to discuss and share different information about bats. These activities helped to create awareness as well as to boost the knowledge about bats.

2. Sensitization of people at local level about what will happen to human beings and our ecosystems if bats disappear.

Every roosting site was visited, and present condition of bat habitat was identified. The direct interaction with the local people was one of the community-based bat programs to aware those people about the bats and to make the local people dedicated in the bat conservation project. The local people were also familiarised and sensitised about the habitat of the bats. They were educated about the importance of bats and different ways of habitat conservation. We also made them aware what adverse effect shall we face if the bats happen to disappear from our surroundings. They were satisfied with the reasons to save bats. Local people have now become more interested in bat conservation unlike before. They become more sensitised on the importance of bats and its role to conserve ecosystems.

3. Scaling-up bat conservation and management programmes

Cave management committees formed at various caves, for instance Mahendra cave, Birendra cave and Chamere cave have scaled-up their bat conservation and management programme. They are stopping the cemented structure development activities near caves and allocating more concentration to save bats. They have made a commitment that they will make a provision to stop noise pollution inside the caves. The conservation boards kept at 10 different roosting sites encouraged the people and the committee members for bats conservation. The informative materials related to bat conservation activities were also distributed in various schools so that they could themselves conduct various bats conservation activities in upcoming days. The project team members together with Annapurna FM 93.4 MHz broadcasted various programs related to the bat and its habitat conservation which increased a kind of positive sentiment of local communities

towards bat conservation. The follow-up workshop at Institute Of Forestry, Pokhara was successful since it brought together various groups of people, mother's club, students, teachers, forestry professionals and organisations together to discuss on several issues. The result from discussions showed that the bat conservation activities are in progress and scaled up as compared to past.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

People at local level have shown their keen involvement in the programmes conducted at their places. They joined our questionnaire activities and provided lots of information about local effort to conserve bats and bats habitat. Many villagers were delighted when we reached their village with conservation boards and education materials. They behaved respectfully with our team members and were happy to know that RSGF is helping for conserving bats through different students. They helped us to install conservation boards and assured us that they will protect the boards and the bats habitat.

The elderly people were quite familiar with bats and the caves. They suggested us that the conservation programmes should be conducted at least annually, and it will be better to conduct the awareness programmes monthly. Local people are now motivated to conserve bats and share their knowledge about importance of bats. The conservation activities at local level couldn't be achieved until and unless the people at local level do not show their active participation and are self interested in the conservation works. So local people are now assured that bat conservation works were for their own benefit and thus every conservation works will be beneficial to whole society. Monitoring and evaluation work of my project is still running at the local level and the assumed result i.e. changing positive attitude of local people toward bat conservation is known to develop.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Through the help of RSGF our team became able to conduct bat conservation and awareness programs in the Pokhara Valley which is a very successful project. Our team was very happy that whatever we have performed and achieved with RSG funding is very rewarding for conservation of bats and its habitat. It's misery to know that bats habitat is in crucial situation so before worsening the condition we have to do many possible actions to protect bats as soon as possible.

We are planning to make a library about bats in the Pokhara valley in near future. Similarly, a documentary film about bats depicting how its habitat is decreasing and how bats are struggling for its survival and what will be our efforts to save the bats will be recorded and released.

One more important step to be taken is to request local government for legal protection of bats. So our team will collaborate with local government to publish a guideline of norms to regulate the entry of people inside caves.

More activities will focus on conservation education programmes about bats by coordinating with various schools, clubs and other NGOs. Research will be done on bat activities and human interferences with bat habitat.

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

1. I agree to publish the final report of this project on the website of RSG, so other people can download this paper. I will also share this research work with my colleagues and students at the Institute of Forestry Pokhara, Nepal and Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Singhdurbar, Kathmandu, Nepal.
2. The results so obtained from my project will be shared and disseminated through web, publication (national and international journals), interactions, talk programmes and presentations.
3. We will conduct an hour programme in FM radio about the result of bat conservation works and RSG grant.
4. Our knowledge of handling bats and species identification will be shared through adult teaching programme.
5. I will always distribute the knowledge and experiences about bats with friends, family, staffs and everyone whom I know and wherever I go.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

RSG was used as proposed schedule during the period December 2009 - November 2010. But I am sorry to say that the final report couldn't be completed during the previously stated timeframe. But all the works have been completed with success.

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Website creation	£250	£250	0	No comments
Awareness programs	£2300	£2300	0	"
Conservation action	£250	£250	0	"
Field visit, Accommodation and Transportation	£500	£500	0	"
Equipment's	£1185	£1185	0	"
Monitoring and Evaluation	£150	£150	0	"
Reporting	£250	£250	0	"
Total	£4885	£4885	0	"

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

Working in the field of Natural Resource Management, I came to know that awareness creation among the people is the most challenging job to conserve wildlife species. We should give our full effort to conserve bats to save our future. I think the next few steps should be:

- The bat caves should not be modified with cemented structure. It will cause loss in habitat. So, this type of works should be minimised or banned with the help of local government.
- Only certain number of people should be allowed to enter the caves with strict rules and regulations. Otherwise bats will not be able to survive with such disturbances of human beings. People should be sensitised with this fact.

- Local people awareness is the most important requisite for preserving bats. Conservation information sharing programmes should be regularly conducted.
- School teaching programmes about importance of bats is also utmost necessary for all time.
- Government should show its active participation for conserving bats and at least legal provision should be developed especially focusing on conservation of bats.

10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Obviously, RSGF received lots of publicity during the course of my conservation work. I used the RSGF logo on the website, school teaching materials, conservation boards, pamphlets, banners, school teaching material, quiz and essay competition programmes, youth awareness programme, adult conservation action programme etc. RSGF also received its publicity through appreciation certificate distributed during quiz contest programme. RSGF also received verbal publicity in the FM radio programmes and various workshops, seminars and school teaching programmes.

11. Any other comments?

We are very grateful for the opportunity to carry out bat conservation activities through the resources provided by Rufford Small Grants. We appreciate the Rufford Small Grant Fund which enabled us to implement the project. Through this, the local community have changed their perception of bats and appreciated the benefits they derived from conservation of bat and its habitat. Even the school's children now know a lot about bats.

We look forward to working with you on bat conservation issues in changing livelihood. We hope to continue our partnership with RSG to work on protecting bats in the Valley.

I am hoping to meet Josh Cole (Grants Director) at Institute of Forestry, Pokhara, Nepal. I am planning to present my project activities to him, and field visit will be arranged for him to monitor our activities.

Last but not least I owe deep gratitude to my referees (B.A. Daniel, Dr. Keshab D. Awasthi, and Santosh Mani Nepal) for their incredible support during the project and suggestion for next steps. Due to their support, I felt so comfortable while implementing the project activities. It is a matter of honour for me to express my profound respect and sincere thanks to Paul A. Racey, Chair, IUCN SSC Chiroptera Specialist group for the scholastic enthusiasm, consistent advice, constructive criticism and kind supervision throughout conducting the project till the completion of this project which generated the vigor of excellence in its work.

I am looking forward to getting same kind of support from all in coming days and hopeful on it. I also like to appeal everyone and concerned agencies to support conservation activities what is possible from your side.