

## 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Dipesh Joshi
Project title	Assessing the status and distribution of top predators in lowland Karnali River for enhanced conservation and management of the aquatic ecosystem
RSG reference	9410-2
Reporting period	January 2011- January 2013
Amount of grant	£5425.
Your email address	Joshi_dr77@yahoo.com
Date of this report	March 15 2013.

**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
Assess status and distribution of Gharials and Dolphins in Karnali			√	Repeated surveys were carried in the initially identified project and were later extended into new habitats developed as a result of on-going water development projects in the area.
Awareness raising in the river basin		√		Major focus was shifted to the new area which was identified later during local consultations and awareness is always an on-going process.
Development of Survey manual	√			The objective was dropped following the need to expanding awareness and surveys into new areas which is much larger than the initially proposed project area. Time and resource limitations were vital in dropping this objective.
Recommendations for conservation and management		√		Literature reviews and consultations with experts resulted in achievement of this objective but it is also realized that more in-depth study and review of existing practices in India and Nepal could be undertaken at a wider scale to conclude and recommend.
Formation of local level networks for awareness and as sharing platforms			√	Local natural resource user groups were mobilized and connected for the purpose and this will expand into the future in a sustainable manner.

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

After the grant was awarded, there was a major change in the flow of the river due to water development and bridge construction projects which both required diversion of large volumes of water into the western channel of Karnali River. This resulted in a wide scale movement of aquatic species into western channel which is least protected (as it falls entirely outside protected areas). To deal with the new scenario, one of the objectives was dropped and awareness activities were scaled-out into the new area focussing on the key species for the project along with conservation of freshwater ecosystem. Awareness raising in the area was chosen based on its urgency as well as importance as the area became a new home to key species such as Ganges river dolphin and Gharial and a case of death of a mature female dolphin in the area ignited the need to focus on awareness in the area as compared to developing a standard survey manual.

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

- Awareness on key endangered freshwater in the new area was the most important output of the project. This area was never targeted for awareness raising but has become home to the focus species and needed immediate attention;
- Status and survey of dolphins and Gharials in the Karnali at a time when the river course has greatly changed is also a key outcome of the project because this will provide data for future assessments during a period of rapid change in local ecosystem;

- c. Formation of local level networks and linking them among each other in the form of Citizen scientists (exploiting the concept and initiatives of WWF Nepal) and community based anti-poaching youth groups was also a key outcome which will motivate youth into conservation.

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

Local communities have formed the backbone of the initiative. They have been capacitated as local surveyors and can be used for similar purposes in future as well. They have also contributed immensely through local consultations by providing information on species distribution, abundance and threats in the past and present. They have now formed a part of network for sharing key information on species in the area.

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

The efforts to continuously compile information of abundance and distribution of the key species of Karnali River will be carried on through local youth groups such as Community-based anti-poaching groups and community forestry groups. As this is a key period for the area in the light of on-going construction projects (two separate ones within less than 30km of river stretch), data collection is believed to be vital for the future. Further application will be made to continue the appreciative interest and efforts of local communities.

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

The study reports will be shared by local youth groups among their network and also with key stakeholders such as community-forest groups, Bardia National park and government offices. At the national level, the reports and findings of this study will be communicated through e-mails and briefs to major agencies such as WWF Nepal, Department of National Parks and Wildlife conservation. It will also be shared with key experts for these species across Nepal and India.

**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 from March 2011 till February 2013 when the project was concluded with the celebration of World Wetlands Day.

**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
Lead Researcher	168	255	-87	Involvement days were higher due to the new area identified.
Local Assistants	391	768	-377	Activities in new area meant involvement on more local assistants
Surveys	1,071	1,248	-177	Operating costs raised
Local Travels	357	440	-83	Travel costs raised twice due to price hikes
Field Gears	223	240	-17	Increased due to involvement of more assistants
Communication	89	64	25	Lower as more assistants meant closer direct

				communication
Field Consultations	268	360	-92	Greater number of events in wider area
Awareness education	1,116	1,600	-484	Significant raise due to coverage of large area initially unplanned for
Survey Report preparation	223	240	-17	Slight increase for mapping and review
Manual preparation	625	0	625	Not done
Manual publication	625	0	625	Not done
Dissemination	268	160	108	Number of events reduced but wider coverage of audience.
	<b>5,425</b>	<b>5,375</b>	<b>50</b>	

£1 =Rs 112 (October 10, 2010 as mentioned in proposal)

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

The issue of freshwater conservation will need to be taken up by local community based and non-government organizations in with support of international NGOs working in the area. It also needs to be scaled up to the national level through various discussions and policy formulations. The new areas of movement of dolphins and Gharials will need further focus for long-term conservation. At the same time, close monitoring of infrastructure development in the area and its impacts on the species will also be crucial for conservation strategy formulation in the future.

It is crucial to extrapolate this effort into larger arenas and areas meaning that bigger funding organizations also need to focus and there is also a need to focus on larger areas. Furthermore, more integrated approaches in research and conservation are required in this sector. The issues need to be linked up with livelihood issues and thus it requires an integrated effort. A certain level of coordination has already been established as the local partners of the project were also the implementers of Terai Arc Landscape program. Thus in a nutshell, a continuation and a higher level of coordination are necessary.

### 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?

Yes, the poster had an appropriate, clearly visible logo following the RSGF guidelines and was used widely for awareness on key focal species of the project. Images of the poster are available in images of the project available on the website and it was also made public during interactions and consultations that the project was financially supported by RSGF.