## **Progress Report (Saurav Lamichhane 38886-2)**

## Ecology and Conservation of Common Leopard (*Panthera Pardus*): Need for Human-Leopard Co-existence in and around Annapurna Conservation Area, Nepal.

## **Completed Activities:**

- **Reconnaissance survey**: During the month of April (2023), general survey was carried out for determining the leopard habitat preference sites, sign and prey species. During this period proper consultation with division forest offices, local herders, conservation unit offices, and community forest user groups was done to familiarize with the field area.
- Survey team preparation: In April 2023, the survey team, comprising three groups, each consisting of three members, including a project member, a local guide, and a forestry student from Institute of Forestry (IOF) underwent three days of training together. This training covered preparatory field skills, survey protocols, and wildlife sign identification to ensure data quality before commencing the survey. The training program was conducted in co-ordination with Pokhara Zoological Park.
- Occupancy survey: Firstly the grids of 5 km\* 5 km were laid on the study area. This was done to improve the existence of leopard signs and associated factors impacting their occupancy and identification. Within a grid, a 2-km long continuous random walking transect with four segments of 500 m was surveyed.



Figure 1 Field Survey

• **Scat collection:** During the occupancy survey, simultaneously the fresh scats of the leopardwere collected opportunistically in various transects. Following scat collection, a standard micro-histological method was used to identify prey species using hair samples from the common leopard's scat. The hair from the fecal sample was compared to hair samples fromeach of the potential prey species in the area to identify the prey species.



Figure 2 Scat of leopard observed during the field survey

• Lab analysis: Minimum eight scat samples from the total collected scats were mixed into composite samples. From each composite sample 50 hair samples were generated for diet analysis. Lab analysis was conducted at Institute of Forestry lab, Pokhara. Guidance and helpfrom the staff of Pokhara Zoological Park were taken for the analysis.



Figure 3 Micro-histological analysis at Institute of Forestry

• Conservation Output and solar light distribution program: After the monsoon season, an awareness campaign on conservation was initiated, marked by the preparation of a banner for awareness activities. An awareness class was organized for school children, aiming to educate them about the importance of conservation.

Similarly, 50 solar lights were distributed to the local herders in the area who had been affected by livestock depredation by leopards.



Figure 4 Banner Prepared for conservation awareness program





Figure 5 Conservation awareness program to the school children











Figure 6 Solar light distribution to the herding communities affected by common leopards

## **Remaining Activities**

- 1. Analysis of obtained data from lab analysis and occupancy survey.
- 2. Finding dissemination workshop and final report submission to division forest and conservation unit offices.
- 3. Final report preparation
- 4. Manuscript preparation from the obtained results.