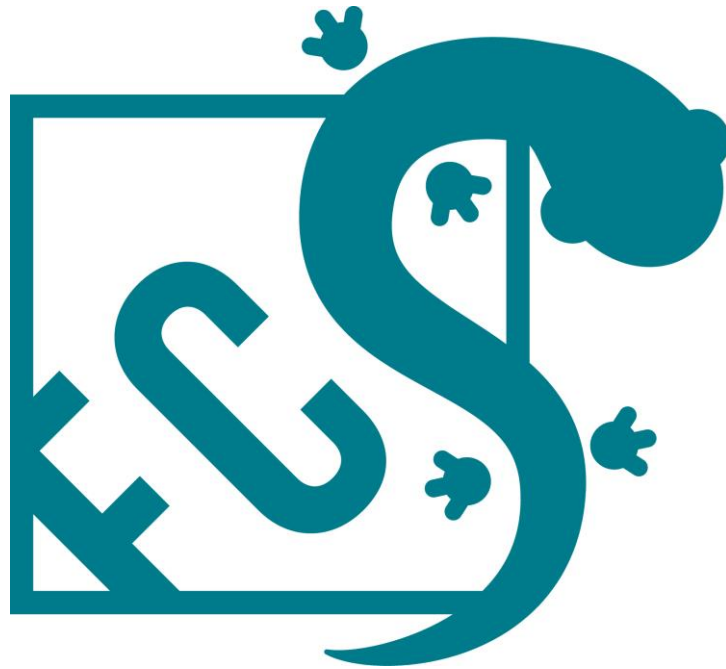


FCSal Funding Update



Grant Recipient

Dipa Rai

Wildlife Conservation and Research Endeavour Nepal

Date Funding Awarded

27/02/2024

Date of Update

14/11/2024

Photos

Please insert a few pictures of your project here, or include them as attachments when you submit this report via email. Pictures of researchers, salamanders, and/or study site are best.









Project Title:	Community-engaged research and conservation initiatives of the vulnerable Himalayan salamanders (<i>Tylototriton himalayanus</i>) in eastern Nepal
Principal Investigator (PI) name: Job title: Institution: Address: Phone: Fax number: Email address:	Dipa Rai Research fellow Wildlife Research and Conservation Endeavour (WILD CARE), Nepal (www.wildcare.org.np)
Amount of Grant Award:	\$2,455 USD
Collaborator name: Job title: Institution: Address: Phone: Fax number: Email address:	
Collaborator name: Job title: Institution: Address: Phone: Fax number: Email address:	
Collaborator name: Job title: Institution: Address: Phone: Fax number: Email address:	

Project Description

This project is dedicated to the conservation of the Himalayan salamander (*Tylotriton himalayanus*), a vulnerable species endemic to Nepal, India, and Bhutan. With its habitat continuously shrinking due to human encroachment, particularly in Nepal, the species is under threat, especially as it resides outside protected areas. Focusing on the Ilam district, an essential habitat for the salamander and the region where the species was first identified, this project seeks to bridge critical knowledge gaps and lay a foundation for targeted conservation efforts.

Key objectives include generating baseline data on salamander distribution, habitat conditions, and threats through systematic visual encounter surveys. The project will document essential habitat variables, identify key threats, and equip local communities with conservation knowledge, fostering a committed network of community stewards. By involving local communities in field surveys and organizing educational programs for students and community members, this initiative will promote local awareness and establish a community invested in the long-term conservation of the Himalayan salamander.

Through this multifaceted approach, the project aims to ensure that the Ilam district remains a stronghold for this species, helping it thrive amid growing threats in human-dominated landscapes.

Progress Report to Date

April – June 2024

Following the receipt of the grant from the Foundation for the Conservation of Salamanders, we initiated our project by applying for research permission from the Department of Forest and Soil Conservation of the Government of Nepal. Due to some unexpected changes in permit application process, there was some delay in getting our permit. The permit was finally granted on May 30.

We utilized the time delayed for research permission by visiting the communities and doing consultation for field surveys. For places we were unable to visit physically, we did consultations through phone calls. During this time, we also purchased field equipment and made all necessary preparations for field work.

July – August 2024

Field work for salamander surveys was carried out in this time. The survey was carried out in different parts of Ilam district in eastern Nepal based on the information obtained from local communities and our previous knowledge on its distribution. A total of 30 sites were surveyed and salamanders were recorded in 20 sites. Ten sites where salamanders were historically found were not recorded during this survey period. There are 5 additional sites which we plan

to visit during December as locals have informed that salamanders are found in these areas and they can be observed even outside the breeding season. We are currently analyzing the data to understand the habitat characteristics of the surveyed salamander habitats.

This year Nepal experienced significant amount of rainfall compared to past years and our project area was also very impacted by it. There were massive floods and landslides throughout. This made us limit our surveys and prevented us from reaching some remote sites as most of the roads connecting these areas were damaged, and the overall travel situation was very hazardous.

During salamander habitat surveys, we engaged 5 local people in field work. Before the surveys, they were taught on survey protocols, noting GPS coordinates and measuring habitat features like canopy and ground cover. All people engaged in the field work demonstrated great enthusiasm towards the survey work and participated actively. Many of these local people are still sending photos of salamanders that they are encountering in their neighborhood, showcasing the positive impact of ongoing project work on them.

September 2024 – Present

During September and October, we dedicated our time in the preparation of educational materials for the community outreach programs on Himalayan salamanders. We prepared an informative poster that contained information on the ecology, threats and conservation measures necessary for Himalayan salamanders. We also designed powerpoint presentations to showcase during the conservation outreach programs. A total of 500 posters were printed in A4 size.

We have now started our conservation outreach programs. Till now one community-level and one school-level program have been conducted. A school conservation program at Shree Fikkal Higher Secondary School involving 40 students and a community conservation program at Teenkhatte village with 14 participants were successfully done. We plan to continue engaging more schools and communities in the coming weeks. Despite challenges such as weather conditions and logistical complexities, we are making good progress and are committed to the successful completion of our project.

Budget description

Budget Category	Amount granted	Amount spent	Monies remaining
Travel (Lalitpur to/from project site) x 2 persons x 3 roundtrips @ \$40/roundtrip/person	240	230	10
Travel (within field site) x 40 days @ \$7/day	280	250	30
Lodging x 2 persons x 40 days @	560	400	160

\$7/day/person			
Food x 2 persons x 40 days @ \$6/day/person	480	500	(-20)
Stipends for community members in field surveys x 12 person @ \$20/person	240	280	(-40)
Snacks for participants in education programs x 150 participants @ \$1.5/person	225	85	140
Posters printing cost x 300 pieces @ \$0.5/piece	150	120	30
Stationery items cost (data collection forms, pens, pencils, maps, notebooks)	80	50	30
Field gears (4 pieces of raincoats, 4 pairs of plastic boots, 4 pieces of rechargeable headlamp, 2 packet of non-powered vinyl gloves, 1 piece of 50m long measuring tape, 1 piece of 1m x 1m wooden quadrat)	200	150	50
Total	\$2455	\$2065	\$390

Next Steps and Future Directions

Building on the progress made so far, our immediate next steps involve completing the remaining salamander surveys in the targeted areas to ensure comprehensive data collection. We will continue to actively engage local community members in the survey process, fostering their involvement and commitment to conservation efforts. Additionally, we aim to expand our educational outreach by organizing more conservation programs in schools and communities, targeting both youth and adults to broaden awareness and understanding of salamander conservation.

Looking ahead, we plan to finish analyzing the data collected from our surveys to assess the status of salamander populations and identify critical habitats and their characteristics. This analysis will inform future conservation strategies and actions. Furthermore, we aim to establish long-term partnerships with local stakeholders, including schools, community groups, and government agencies, to ensure sustained conservation impact.