

## Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the “Project Reporting Information Note”:  
(<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/resources/information-notes/> ).

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 20 pages** in length, excluding annexes)

**Submission Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

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### IWT Challenge Fund Project Information

Project reference	IWT091	IWT091
Project title	Control poaching and IWT by strengthening community guardianship in Chitwan	Control poaching and IWT by strengthening community guardianship in Chitwan
Country/ies	NEPAL	NEPAL
Lead Partner	National Trust for Nature Conservation	National Trust for Nature Conservation
Project partner(s)	Kalika Community Forest, Kankali Community Forest, Kalika and Rapti Municipalities and German Nepal Friendship Association	Kalika Community Forest, Kankali Community Forest, Kalika and Rapti Municipalities and German Nepal Friendship Association
IWTCF grant value		
Start/end dates of project	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2021 – 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2021 – 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
Reporting period (e.g. April 2022-Mar 2023) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	April 2021 – March 2022 and Annual Report 1 April 2022 – March 2023 Annual Report II	April 2023 – October 2023, Half Year progress report
Project Leader name	Dr. Naresh Subedi	Dr. Naresh Subedi
Project website/blog/social media	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/NTNCBC">https://www.facebook.com/NTNCBC</a> <a href="https://twitter.com/ntncbcc">https://twitter.com/ntncbcc</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/NTNCBC">https://www.facebook.com/NTNCBC</a> <a href="https://twitter.com/ntncbcc">https://twitter.com/ntncbcc</a>
Report author(s) and date	NTNC, 2022 Contributors: Rachana Shah, Ashish Gurung, Baburam Lamichhane	NTNC , 2023 Contributors: Rachana Shah, Ashish Gurung

# Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Yearly Report

## 1. Project summary

The project aims to reduce the rhino poaching threats and uplift the socio-economic status of *Chepang* tribal communities living in the northern hills of Chitwan valley. Wildlife crime syndicates often take advantage of poor economic status and jungle skills of *Chepang communities* and mobilise them in poaching. Various conservation programs in Chitwan valley have never reached these communities. With enhanced law enforcement, those involved in poaching previously have been arrested. In some families, parents are arrested and the children deprived of care, health and education. This increased resentment of these communities towards conservation. Through awareness programs, education of children, livelihood and income generation activities, it is possible to reverse the situation. Based on our experience in buffer zones and other corridor forests, community ownership of wildlife can be built by increasing awareness and livelihood support. Through this project we also intend to transform the previous wildlife poachers to wildlife protectors.

The project has been implemented in **Saipam Bansghari in Kalika Municipality** (Ward no 11), and **Kalikhola and Swamitar** settlements in Rapti municipality (Ward no. 10) (Figure 1 below). These settlements are situated on the Churia hills in northern part of Chitwan valley (~ 10 km north of Chitwan National Park). There are ~200 households with majority belonging to Chepang tribe (>100) along with few Tamang ethnic group and Kami (lower Hindu cast, so called untouchables). They are socio-economically marginalised. Wildlife crime syndicates take benefits of poor economic status and jungle skills of Chepang youths and mobilized them in killing rhinos in Chitwan valley. Thus, these three small settlements are ill-famed for their involvement in rhino poaching. Wildlife authorities and police have reached these settlements many times to arrest those involved in poaching. All the current efforts are carried out from the law-enforcement side (arresting and putting them in jail). No activities were conducted before to change the root cause – the community education and livelihood opportunities. Thus, we initiated this project to engage Chepang youths in alternative livelihood and educate kids in these settlements.

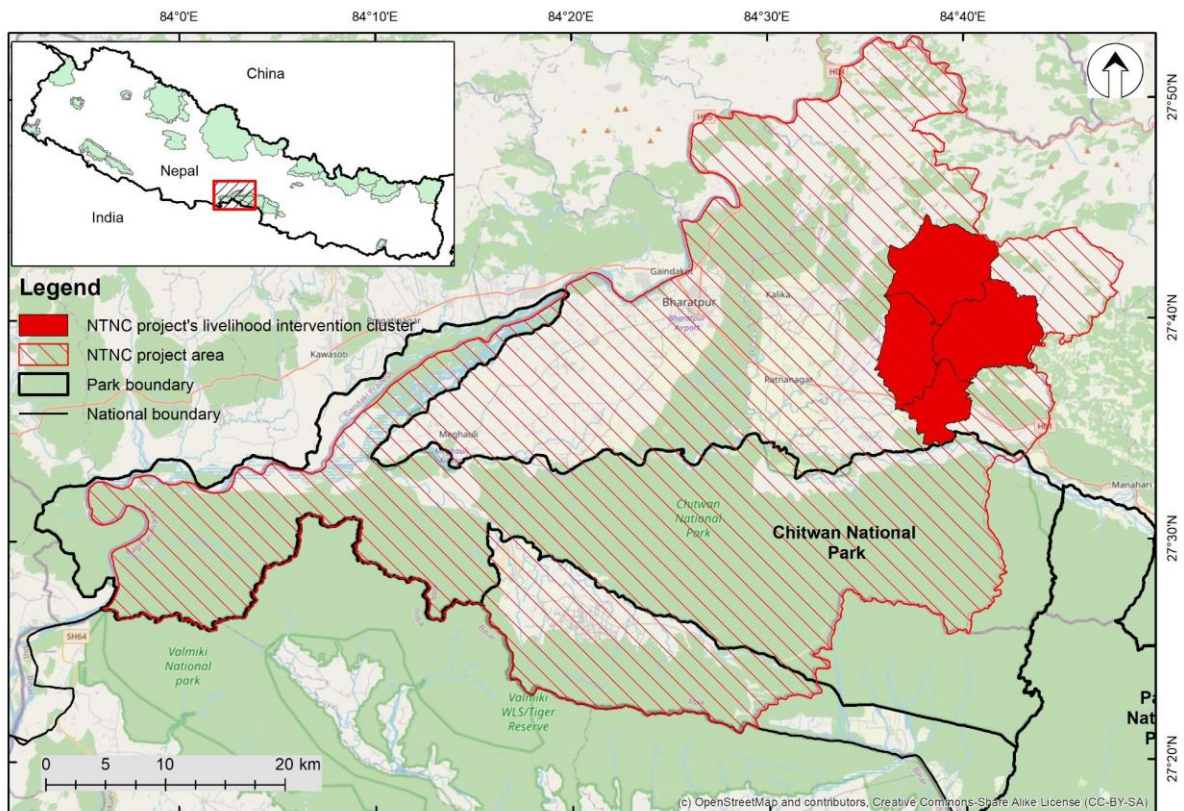


Figure 1. Project location. The livelihood intervention was focused in the red filled area.

## 2. Project stakeholders/ partners

NTNC (previously known as KMTNC) has been working in collaboration with Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation since its establishment in 1982. NTNC focuses on science based wildlife management and participatory wildlife conservation. NTNC leads in wildlife research and monitoring in Nepal while providing a much needed technical support for the park and the government. Similarly, it works closely with the local communities for developing ownership for biodiversity conservation and enhancing their capacity. NTNC carries out its activities in close collaboration with the national park authorities, local government and community institutions. This project has further enhanced the relation between the partner organizations as it attempts to address the issue of poaching and illegal wildlife trade at the root level i.e. to uplift the livelihood of local people and decrease their dependency on forests and activities related to IWT. The project was implemented in close coordination with the Chitwan National Park (CNP) and Divisional Forest Office Chitwan. The CNP office keeps a detailed record of wildlife (especially rhino and tiger) poaching in and around CNP including our project area. The park also helped in identifying key people from the villages in the project area who were the target groups of our project. The park has also been helping in widespread delivery of conservation education sessions and legal provisions for wildlife conservation. Similarly, the Divisional Forest Office, Chitwan provided technical support for the CBAPU formation and mobilization. The local government bodies - Rapti and Kalika municipalities and the local community organisations (Community Forest User Groups, Community Based Anti-Poaching Units) also collaborated in this project through their participation as well as technical and financial contributions where possible. The Kalika municipality provided additional support for the livelihood (NRs. 500,000 for goat farming). The community forest user groups also leveraged additional support for wildlife conservation and livelihood activities (cow farming, goat farming, vegetable farming etc). In collaboration with the Chitwan National Park, Divisional Forest Office Chitwan, Rapti Municipality, Kalika Municipality, Kalika and other community forest user group and other

local community, NTNC successfully completed the first year of the project. This collaboration will be continued for the remaining project period as well.

### 3. Project progress

#### 3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

**Output 1: Communities stopped poaching and supported in wildlife conservation as a result of diversified livelihoods opportunities**

##### 1.1. Engage IWT affected families in vegetable farming

Two days long vegetable farming training was conducted at Khairahani Municipality ward no. 9, Chitwan on 13<sup>rd</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> May 2023. On the vegetable farming training 34 people (1 person from one household) from Kalika CFUG were participated. The training involved sessions such as identification of different vegetable species that are suitable for the locality, vegetable species and their favourable seasons, methods of farming vegetables off-season, identification and treatment of various diseases, controlling pest infestations, and so on. Training was conducted in field practice and theory classes. At the end of the training, vegetable seeds, fertilizer and equipment were provided to the farmers from this project.

The vegetable species such as cucumber, bitter gourd, sponge gourd, beans, snake gourd, pumpkin, capsicum, ladies finger, bottle gourd and other species were supported from this project. These species readily grow in the locality and are regularly on high demand in the local market. This activity is expected to help farmers of the local communities to earn more benefits from increased as well as off-season vegetable production. The farmers have already started growing vegetables this summer season.



##### 1.2. Support skill-based training for the local youths

This activity was completed during the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the project.

##### 1.3. Nature guide training

This activity was completed during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the project.

#### 1.4. Goat farming

Partial activity was completed in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year. For this project year we have already signed an agreement with Kalika CFUG. We will distribute them in coordination with Kalika Municipality.

#### 1.5 Cow farming

Partial activity was completed in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year. For this project year we have already signed an agreement with Kalika CFUG. We will distribute them in coordination with Kalika Municipality.

#### 1.6 Establish one cooperative with at least 50% of women members

Kalika Multipurpose Cooperative Limited was registered on 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 under the cooperative rules and regulation of the Government of Nepal. For the smooth running of cooperative, two day long cooperative management training was conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2023. Five representatives of each group participated in the training on how to run and manage the cooperative. The details of the participants are attached in annex – 1.



### **Output 2: Increased community awareness on social and economic consequences of the poaching**

#### 2.1. Community education sessions

NTNC conducted a total of 7 sessions of conservation awareness programs (3 different communities and 4 different schools/colleges) with the support from this project. There were

94 participants at community level and 147 students from different schools. A total of 241 individuals were reached through this awareness program. The awareness program included interactive sessions focusing on the importance of biodiversity, opportunities and challenges of biodiversity conservation, their roles and responsibilities, human wildlife conflict, etc. The project targets reaching a total of 300 persons in these education sessions, remaining will be completed in the next reporting period.

**Table-1 Conservation awareness programs at different schools/colleges/community**

Name of School/Collage/Community	Date						
	18 <sup>th</sup> July 2023	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2023	9 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 2023	20 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 2023	22 <sup>nd</sup> Aug. 2023	4 <sup>th</sup> Sep. 2023	7 <sup>th</sup> Sep. 2023
IOF, Hetauda	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sky Rider Secondary School	0	77	0	0	0	0	0
IAAS, TU	0	0	33	0	0	0	0
Kankali CFUG	0	0		35	0	0	0
AFU-Faculty of Forestry Hetauda	0	0	0	0	28	0	0
CFUG, Eastern part of Nepal	0	0	0	0	0	30	0
Kalika CFUG	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>

2.2. Scholarship for children from IWT affected families

This activity was completed during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the project.

2.3. Installing Hoarding boards about wildlife conservation, penalties against IWT at strategic locations

We have installed 20 informative hoarding boards at various location of Kalika, Bhimwali and Amritdharapani Community Forests in the project area of IWT in this project year. The hoarding boards were constructed by local manufacturers and local painters. The boards contain information about rare and endangered wildlife species. They also contain attractive paintings of those species as people are often unaware about these species. Many people cannot identify the protected species so these boards can help to address the awareness gap among the public. In order to make it available to larger mass, the boards are installed in strategic locations along major roads in the study area. It is expected that the information on the hoarding board will increase public awareness and help in the protection of forests and wildlife.



- 2.4. Publishing a booklet (1000 booklets published and distributed to IWT affected communities, local school libraries, municipal offices, Divisional Forest Offices, Chitwan and Parsa National Parks and nature guides)

Booklets are currently under designing phase. We are also exploring further for a professional designers. This activity will be completed in the final project year.

- 2.5. Developing and broadcasting a documentary covering the story of those involved in the poaching in the past and adopted sustainable livelihood

NTNC has already signed an agreement with documentary developers. The team also visited the project sites collecting information from key personnels as well as community members regarding the benefits and issues brought on by this project. The documentary video will be broadcasted on Nepal television after post processing and compilation with narratives.

### **Output 3: Poaching threats reduced through active community participation**

- 3.1. CBAPUs equipped (GPS, camera, field gears – field jacket, cap, water bottle, torch, field boot)

Community Based Anti-Poaching Unit (CBAPU) is an innovative concept in Nepal to engage local youths in management and protection of wildlife in community forests around National Parks. They play an important role in controlling poaching through various anti-poaching activities including regular patrols, surveillance and information sharing. They also provide vital support in other conservation activities such as human-wildlife conflict management and raising awareness in communities. Through this project, additional 12 CBAPUs have been formed and mobilised in their respective areas. The CBAPU members were trained on different aspects of biodiversity conservation and illegal activities control. They were also trained on using GPS, digital cameras and other equipment for forest patrolling. Each CBAPU (Ayodhapuri, Bagauda, Rewa, Panchpandav, Mirgaunja, Barandabhar, Kerunga, Lamichaur, Sishuwar, Amaltari, Nandabhauju and Sunakhari BZUC) were provided with GPS receivers, digital cameras and necessary field gears (details provided in Annex). With the supported equipment and modern technologies, the CBAPUs will be able to collect and document data gathered during the regular patrols in a systematic way. The field gears will provide comfort and safety for the patrolling team.

- 3.2. Four training events (30 members/event) for three days conducted and CBAPU mobilized

As part of the Community Based Anti-Poaching (CBAPU) strengthening, two days long Community Based Anti-Poaching Training on wildlife techniques was organized from 2nd to 3rd November 2023 at NTNC/BCC Office premises in Chitwan district. The training included both lectures and on the field sessions. The participants were informed about the introduction and role of NTNC and CNP focusing on anti-poaching. The training also delivered sessions on wildlife conservation activities in Division Forest Office area including Barandabhar corridor forest, rules regulations related to forests and wildlife conservation and the role of CBAPU. Similarly techniques on identification of major carnivores, herbivores and herpetofauna of Nepal, responsibility of community in wildlife rescue, behaviour of major wildlife and safety measures, wildlife signs identification, importance of behaviour change through conservation campaigns for human-wildlife coexistence, relief guidelines, how to use camera traps for wildlife survey and surveillance of the illegal activities, GPS handling – basic knowledge, data collection and documentation were discussed. The sessions included interactive activities such as group works, presentations on key topics and learning games with themes to raise knowledge and awareness on conservation. The participants visited Kumrose Buffer Zone Community Forest and Wildlife Museum and they practiced camera trapping at Kumrose BZCF. . [REDACTED]



The details of this year's CBAPU mobilization are mentioned below:

Sn.	Name of Organization	No. of program	Remarks
1.0	CBAPU of Lothar and Lothar BZUC	1	One-day long awareness program on human-wildlife co-existence and human behaviour change was conducted at 1 locations targeting the local residents living in the border area of forest. The program was conducted on 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 at Piple, Chitwan. In total 40 local residents were participated in the program.
2.0	CBAPU of Aayodhapur and Aayodhapur BZUC	1	One-day long interaction program on human-wildlife co-existence and human behaviour change was conducted at 1 locations targeting the local residents living in the border area of forest. The program was conducted on 17 <sup>th</sup> October 2023 at Madi-8, Kharkhatta, Chitwan. In total 53 local residents were participated in the program.

### 3.3. Pilot GSM enabled surveillance camera (20 cameras) in coordination with CBAPUs

The cameras were operational in this project year. The data access was also shared with Nepal Army for providing necessary information to conduct patrols in and around Chitwan NP. So far 16 units of cameras were lost due to human misbehaviour. The data are being documented at NTNC-BCC. We will also report on the wildlife diversity recorded from our survey area in the final report.



Realizing the benefits of these types of cameras, Division Forest Office of Chitwan requested for 5 units of cameras for their surveillance. The DFO has deployed the GSM cameras to monitor wildlife movement around the highways of Ramnagar as well as to gather information on any illegal activities.

3.4. Support 30 Community Forest User Groups (including Buffer Zone) for controlling IWT activities (mobilize 2 forest guards/community forest)

On project's first year, a total of 60 community forest guards were trained and equipped for regular forest patrolling and they started regular forest patrolling in their respective areas. This activity has continued through the second year and will be continued in the final year as well. Their information relay and reporting is on going.