

**Report on**

**Cheer Pheasant (*Catreus wallichii*) and Demoiselle Crane  
(*Grus Virgo*) Conservation Programme in Lower  
Mustang of Nepal**

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## Project Summary

### Project Name

Cheer Pheasant (*Catreus wallichii*) and Demoiselle Crane (*Grus virgo*) Conservation Awareness programme in Lower Mustang of Nepal

### Date

20<sup>th</sup> September to 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2005 (six days)

### Place

Kowang, Lete and Kunjo VDC of Lower Mustang

### Organizer

Friends of Nature, New Baneshwor , Kathmandu, Nepal

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Annapurna Conservation Area Project

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### Local institutions involvement

Conservation Area Management Committees (CAMCs), Mother Groups, Local Youth Groups, Forest Management Sub committee and Local Schools.

### Major Achievements

- Total number of Awareness camp 15 (School awareness programme-5, village level conservation camp-10)
- Cheer Pheasant and Demoiselle Crane conservation committee formation-11
- Banner display (Let's protect Cheer and Crane for tourism development) in 5 settlements
- Leaflet distribution with information about the species in Nepali language
- Nature hiking to student of Jan Adarsha High School, Kowang (sowing Cheers habitat)

### Fund Raising

To conduct awareness programme focusing on Cheer FON Nepal has generated the funds through selling of T-shirt. Picture of Cheer Pheasant was placed on the T-shirt. Altogether 350 T-shirt were sold in the market and most buyers were students. During the selling of T-shirt FON, Nepal has organized presentation program in different school of Kathmandu valley.

## **Acknowledgements**

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I am highly grateful to the Roshan Sherchan, Programme Coordinator of ACAP and Lizan Maskey, Officers in charge of ACAP, Jomsom for the encouragement they provided.

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## Abstract

Study carried out by the Annapurna Conservation Area Project, World Pheasant Association and Bird Conservation Nepal in 2004 recommended to conduct the awareness program in Kaligandaki valley for the conservation of Cheer Pheasant. So that Friend of Nature and Annapurna Conservation Area Project conducted awareness programme. Altogether 15 awareness programmes were carried out in three village development committee. Out of them, five school programmes were conducted to aware the member of green force club and primary level students. A one day nature hiking was organized for the students of Kowang School in the area of the Cheer's habitat. Nature hiking programme was able to convey information about status and distribution of Cheer Pheasant and student's role for the conservation of the species. In total 11 Cheer and Crane conservation and monitoring committees were formed. Each committee has decided to evade the use of catapult, ban the forest fire, agree to conduct extension programme locally on the importance of the Cheer etc. Five cloth banners were placed in the different settlement. Capacity building of committee, permanent sign posting, and preparation of extension materials were recommended.

### 1.0 Background and justification

Cheer Pheasant is protected bird of Nepal under the National Park and Wildlife Protection Act 1973 and is enlisted among the vulnerable species of IUCN Red Data Book. The potential habitat area for the Cheer Pheasant is the Kaligandaki valley, within about 22.16 km<sup>2</sup>. Total population size of the species in the valley (covers three Village Development Committees (VDCs) of Kaligandaki watershed i.e. Kowang, Kunjo and Lete VDC) is estimated to be 85 to 111 birds in number. The bird is in threat mostly in the area by the forest fire, snaring, grazing pressure and hunting (by catapult). Survey carried out by Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), World Pheasant (WPA) and Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) has recommended to conduct awareness programme in the area and similar recommendation were found from the other part of Nepal where this specie was surveyed.

Demoiselle crane is migratory bird for the Mustang District. They come from the Siberia and Mongolia and reached to mid and southern India. Crane Migrate from last September to second week of October using this corridor. According to Rajendra Suwal about 20000 Demoiselle cranes migrated last year through this corridor. During their stay in Mustang, they were killed and injured by the people. Hence Awareness programmes were organized here before they migrate.

### 2.0 Objectives

- To aware local people and students for the birds conservation and its importance specially focusing on Cheer Pheasant and Demoiselle Crane
- To form Cheer and Crane Conservation and monitoring Committee
- To prepare local people for the habitat management of Cheer Pheasant

### 3.0 Methods

#### 3.1 Community Meeting

Village meeting were organized in each settlement of Kowang, Lete and Kunjo VDC. Lecture and dual discussion process were applied. Due to harvesting period of agricultural product meeting were organized in morning and evening as far as possible. Various Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques were applied to identify the perception of local people about the bird conservation. Different decisions were made by the Local committee to conserve Cheer and Crane.

### **3.2 School Programme**

As describe by the previous report on Cheer, student are found involving in the hunting of birds by using catapult so that, five Schools were selected and awareness programme were organized. Green Force Clubs operated by the ACAP were trained on the issue of birds.

### **3.3 Cheer and Crane Conservation Committee Formation**

To regulate and monitor the habitat of Cheer and Crane, local committees were formed. Mukhiya (Traditional leader change in annual basis) are the chairman of the respective committee. Democratically three to eleven member were elected by the community decision for each committee.

### **3.4 Leaflet Distribution**

The one pages leaflet in native (Nepali) language containing introduction, important, management issues, role of local people for the protection of Cheer and Crane were distributed among different stockholders like local people, visitors, and schools to increase the level of awareness among them.

### **3.5 Nature Hiking**

A one day nature hiking was organized for the Students of Kowang School (Jan Adarsha High School). They were taken to habitat area of the Cheer Pheasant and were aware on the habitat requirement of Cheer Pheasant. Question and answer session was organized in the field to clarify query of the students.

### **3.6 Banner Display**

Altogether 5 locally made cloth banners were displayed in the publicly access places of the five settlement areas.

## **4.0 Results**

### **4.1 Community Awareness Programme**

In total 10, village awareness programme were carried out in the different settlements. Local people in the area were aware on the issues related to the Cheer and Crane. It was informed there on about the specific habitat of Cheer. The issues like why they are declining? Who are responsible for the conservation? What are the opportunities if conserving these species? How can they contribute for the conservation? How species conservation is important for the tourism industries? etc. were discussed. The local people agreed during their discussion for the conservation of these species. Detail about the village meeting is given below:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name of the Village</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
20/9/2005	Kowang	32	
21/9/2005	Khanti	21	
21/9/2005	Kokhetanti	11	
21/9/2005	Titi	16	
22/9/2005	Taklung	30	
22/9/2005	Jhipra Deurali	19	
23/9/2005	Chayo	22	
24/10/2005	Lete	57	
24/10/2005	Dhampu	20	
25/10/2005	Ghansa	51	



Attention of the Local people in the conservation Camp: Jhipra Deurali village of Kunjo VDC

#### 4.2 School Programme

All together five schools, located in the Cheer habitat areas were selected. During the camp, primary and secondary level schools students were aware on the issues of Cheer and Crane. Students agreed to prohibit the use of catapult (in their village). The impacts of forest fire to the population of Cheer were briefed and they positively responded for not taking any action which destroyed the Cheers habitat. Green force club of school were also aware on the impact of heavy grazing and avoiding use of catapult for the management of Cheers habitat. Detail is given below;

Name of the School	Village	Number of Participants	Major decision made by students
Jan Adarsh High School	Kowang	38	Monitoring of Cheers habitat during forest fire season, Prohibit the use of catapult
Gyan Jyoti Primary School	Titi	17	Agree to avoid the use of catapult
Taklung Secondary High School	Taklung	20	Agree to avoid the use of catapult, collection and deposition of catapult with the help of Head sir or traditional leader (Mukhiya)
Gyanodaya High School	Lete	38	Agree to avoid the use of catapult
Janta Secondary school	Ghansa	28	Agree to avoid the use of catapult



Students participating in the awareness programme: Kowang VDC

#### 4.3 Cheer and Crane Conservation Committee formation

Within the leadership of traditional leader, Mukhiya, 11 Cheer and Crane conservation and monitoring committee were formed. The local committee nominated three to eleven members by their own decision for one year. The chairman of committee will be changed annually and the committee will be reformed from next time on the basis of their performance. The table below contains the details of the committees:

Name of the village	Name of the committee members	Major decision made by the committee
Kowang	Coordinator-Chetralal Bhattachan Member- Shanta Thakali Member-Govinda Sherchan	To conduct informal extension programme for other villagers, monitoring of Crane during migration period
	Coordinator-Dipesh Sherchan Member- Jyandra Thakali Member-Amar Biswokarma	
	Coordinator-Bhim Prasad Thakali Member- Basanta Gauchan Member-Somat Tulachan	
Khanti	Coordinator-Somat Bhattachan Member- Som Bahadur Thapa Member-Kubin Nepali Member-Prem Prasad Paudyal Member- Raj Kumar Thakali Member-Ganesh Thapa Member-Om Bikash Gauchan	Unified for Cheer conservation, prohibit the use of catapult
Kokhetanti	Coordinator-Dhan Bahadur Sherchan Member- Prawin Sherchan Member-Robin Sherchan	To conduct informal extension programme for other villagers ,unified for Cheer conservation
Taglung	Conservation Area Management	Prohibit the forest fire, prohibit the use of



	committee would be the responsible	catapult, forest patrolling
Jhipra Deurali	Coordinator-Tul Bahadur B.K. Member- Bhim Lal B.K. Member-Ran Prasad Chantel	Prohibit the use of Catapult and sanction of Rs.100/catapult in case use by any person
Chayo	Coordinator-Phram Bahadur Sherchan Member- Shankar Tulachan Member-Sun Bahadur B.K.	Prohibit the forest fire, prohibit the use of catapult and sanction of Rs.100/ catapult in case use by any person
Lete	Coordinator- Chandra Bahadur Sherchan Member- Santi Tulachan Member-Krishana Kumari Tulachan Member-Parwat Sherchan Member- Nanda Prasad Tulachan Member-Bel Bahadur Tulachan Member-Purna Prasad Gauchan	To conduct informal extension programme for other villagers, prohibit the use of catapult and sanction of Rs.100/ catapult in case use by any person
Dhampu	Coordinator-Siddhilal Sherchan Member- Man Prasad Sherchan Member-Sete Nepali	To conduct informal extension programme for other villagers, prohibit the forest fire, forest patrolling for snare checking, prohibit the use and selling of catapult in the village
Ghansa	Coordinator- Rajan Gauchan Member- Bishal Sherchan Member-Nabin Bhattachan Member-Suwarna Paija Member- Bikram Gaucahn Member-Biju Pun Member-Krishan Sherchan Member-Bhim Prasad Khadka Member-Nabin Nepali Member- Puni Gaucahn	prohibit the use and selling of catapult in the village ,to conduct informal extension programme for other villagers



**Cheer and Carne Conservation Committee: Chayao village**

#### **4.4 Leaflet distribution:**

One page leaflets of each species was made in a Nepali language. ACAP prepared the leaflet of the Crane and Friends of Nature prepared for the Cheer. The whole leaflets were distributed in the meetings, schools, and visitors. Introductions, status, their behaviors, importance, their relation with tourist, local efforts for the conservation were covered in the leaflet. Conversion text of the leaflet is stated below:

### **Let's hold our Hands for the Cheer Conservation**

Nepal is home for six types of Himalayan Pheasant and all are found in the Kaligandaki valley. Out of them Cheer Pheasant found in the three village development committee (VDC) i.e. Kowang, Lete and Kowang VDC. This bird is endemic to Indian Sub-continental (India, Nepal and Pakistan). Their wild population has been estimated about 6000 individuals. In Kaligandaki Valley its population has been estimated about 85 to 111. Study was jointly carried out by ACAP, BCN and WPA in 2004 in Kaligandaki valley. It is a protected bird of Nepal under the National Park and Wildlife Protection Act 1973 and is listed among the vulnerable species of IUCN Red Data Book. Government has made sanction of Rs.500-10000 or 3 month-2 years imprison or both, if found any involvement in killing or injuring of a single Cheer Pheasant.

Cheer prefers the steep land or grass land with scattered tree. In the dawn and dusk period they produce their call. They breed in Chaitra-Baishak and care their chicks in Jeshta-Asad. They are residential birds and some time found to be altitudinal migratory in case of severe cold. They frequently fly from uphill to down hill area. Morphologically, it has long broadly barred tail, pronounced crest and red facial skin. Male is clearly and strongly marked than female with pronounced barring on mantle, unmarked neck and broader barring across the tail

They are in threat in the Mustang due to forest fire, using of catapult, snaring around the habitat, hunting etc. In result, the local people have observed decreasing Cheer than before.

Tourists who visit Nepal for Bird watching (nature tourist) are estimated to be 5 percent. Mustang only provide destination for the 15000-20000 tourist (up and down) annually. Out of them many tourist come to Ghansa for Cheer watching. Tourist knows only the Ghansa area for Cheer watching however there are about 9 other places where Cheer can be observed easily, in Mustang. These habitats were identified by the study (2004) team lead by Mr. Raju Acharya (Sharma)

If you want to balance the ecosystem and increase the number of tourist; let's hold our hand for the Cheer Pheasant Conservation. Let's controlled the hunting, let's prohibit the use of catapult, let's regulate the grazing practice and avoid livestock entrance during the hatching period of Cheer. Please inform the visitors about the Cheer who stay in your area/inn, so that they will come again and publish others for watching Cheer in your village.

Thank You.

### **Let's help for Demoiselle Crane Conservation**

Demoiselle Crane is the migratory birds. Locally it is know as "Malchhari". During the winter season they migrate to lowland and return back to highland in summer season. During the September and October, they pass through the Mustang valley. They depart from the Magnolia and Siberia, and finally reached to Southern and middle part of India. It takes about 7-8 days to reach Mustang from the Magnolia and Siberia.

Mustang is well known area in Nepal for the crane migration. According to the Rajendra Narshing Suwal about 20000 cranes migrated in 2004 by using this corridor. Due to this reason many trekker, bird watcher, institution, photographic group, visit mustang during 1<sup>st</sup> week of September to second week of October.

During their migration flight they fly with V shape. When the weather is bad they lodge to the river bank and agriculture land near to the Kaligandaki river. In case of heavy fog they rest more days because they can not detect their path in a right way. Most of the agriculture crops are ripens at the migration period. So they destroy the agriculture products due to their stay in agricultural land. People use long stick, catapult, and stone to chase them and kill them as well.

Due to its migratory nature, local people may think that this is not our birds. In addition, it destroy agricultural product during their stay in this valley. But actually they benefit us more than they destroy. They feed on insects which harms the field. Tourist, researcher, photographers visit this area during the migration period. Directly tourist or visitors invest for their stay. Beside its benefit, it is also illegal to kill this bird. So we can chase them from our field by producing loud sound, by banging tin box instead of hitting by stone and long stick at night.

This area is under the jurisdiction of Annapurna Conservation Area. The major role of ACAP and Conservation Area Management Committee is to protect birds, whether residential or migratory. Without local support, any institutions efforts become useless. So let's protect the Crane during their stay in our area.

Thank you.

#### **4.5 Nature Hiking**

There are few people who saw the Cheer and most of the people who are professionally associated with pasture/livestock have heard only the call. We found most of the students have little knowledge about the Cheer and its habitat. A one day programme was organized for 38 students from the Jan Adarsha High school, Kowang, in the field (Tangje), where Cheer has been confirmed last year by the study team. Information related to the Cheers habitat i.e. requirement of Cheers habitat, local threats to Cheer etc were discussed thoroughly. During the trip students were found to be very active and asked very relevant question i.e. How can we conserve the Cheer Pheasant? Is its conservation beneficial to human being? Student were agree to avoid the use of catapult and monitoring of Cheers habitat, at least once in a year.



**Students on the Nature Hiking around the Cheer habitat: Tangje**

#### 4.6 Banner Display

Five cloth banners were prepared in the field and placed in the publicly access area. Banner were placed with the slogan “Conserving Cheer Pheasant and Demoiselle Crane to increase the number of tourist” Banner were placed in the Kowang, Lete, Kokhethanti, Kunjo and Ghansa area.



Banner displayed in publicly access area: Lete VDC

#### 5.0 Recommendations

Awareness camps were carried out to different stakeholders, though extension materials were insufficient. To increase the awareness of stakeholders different posters and brochures of Cheer Pheasant and Crane are recommended to be produced and distributed for the conservation of species. Permanent sign posting instead of cloth banner are also recommended. Code of conduct should be placed on the sign posting. Training and capacity building of recently formed committee on the information and conservation of bird is required. i.e. Bird conservation training, habitat patrolling training, distribution of stationery materials, organize nature trekking guide training to local youth etc. Committee should be reformed on the basis of their performance i.e. by comparing the area of forest fire (about 80 hector forest and grassland were fired last year), monitoring of use of catapult by local, management of grazing system etc. Endowment fund is required to be raise for Cheer and Crane conservation committee to monitor the Cheer habitat and hiring of guard. Sheep and cow herder were found to be involved in the forest fire so that specific awareness programme for them is essential.

## Campaign Representing by the Photographs



Villagers during camp in Khanti village



Student avoiding the use of Catapult



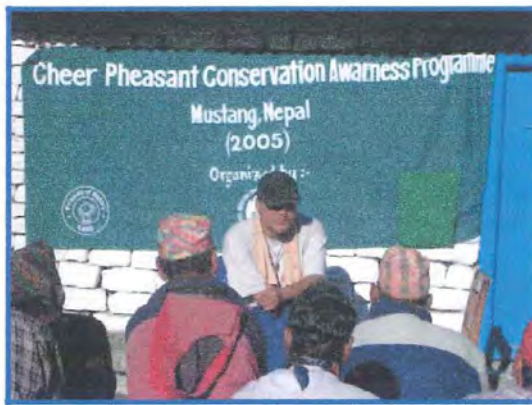
Presentation by FON member in Kathmandu for selling of T-Shirt



Students during the Nature hiking in Tangje area of Kunjo VDC



Primary level students, during the camp in Titi Village



Briefing on the importance of Cheer in Chayo of Kunjo VDC

