



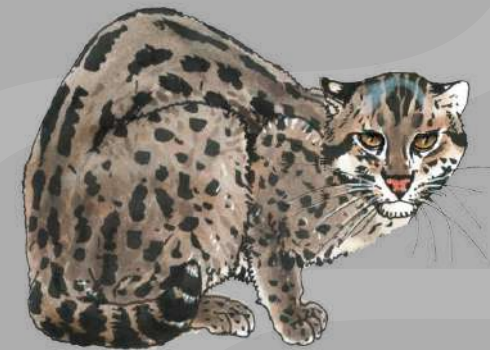
FISHING CAT
CONSERVATION
ALLIANCE

3 - YEAR REPORT 2020 - 2023

Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance 3 - Year Report 2020 - 2023 (2024)
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FISHING CAT
CONSERVATION
ALLIANCE

Table of Contents

About the Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance.....	4
Bangladesh	
Ai Suzuki.....	5
Sayam Chowdhury.....	9
Cambodia	
Vanessa Herranz Muñoz.....	11
India	
Tiasa Adhya.....	22
Giridhar Malla.....	33
Murthy Kantimahanti.....	40
Indonesia (Java)	
Erwin Wilianto.....	48
Myanmar	
Ai Suzuki.....	51
Nepal	
Ganesh Pury.....	55
Prativa Kaspal.....	59
Rama Mishra.....	63
Sagar Dahal.....	67
Swechhya Shrestha.....	73
Pakistan	
Zafeer Ahmed Shaikh.....	81
Sri Lanka	
Anya Ratnayaka.....	85
Ashan Thudugala.....	90



About the Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance (FCCA)

The Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance (FCCA) is a team of conservationists, researchers and fishing cat enthusiasts working to achieve a single dream – a world with functioning floodplains and coastal ecosystems that would ensure the survival of the fishing cat and all species with which it shares a home. Formerly the Fishing Cat Working Group, the team came together at the 2nd International Small Wild Cat Conservation Summit in Colombo, Sri Lanka in November 2019. After its inception, the working group took international cooperation in species conservation to the next level by registering the FCCA as an international NGO. This move described by Nicolas Heard, Head of Fund Management at the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund as providing “a model and hope for species conservation.”

To date, the FCCA has enabled communication and cooperation, including easing access to finance, between 15 projects within eight fishing cat range countries, from Pakistan to Cambodia. In the words of Dr Jim Sanderson, Founder and Director of the Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation and member of the FCCA’s Executive Team (ET), within the FCCA, “everyone is working to improve the lives of local people who live with fishing cats and other wildlife.” These success stories and strategies are shared between FCCA partners at quarterly coordination meetings and bi-annual symposiums where Sanderson describes a “high level of cooperation between partners that clearly played a vital role in implementing solutions to difficult problems.”

The FCCA’s progress is clear to Dr Wai-Ming Wong, Director of Small Cat Conservation Science for wild cat NGO, Panthera, and member of the ET: “The FCCA has flourished, leaving an indelible mark on the conservation of fishing cats. The unwavering dedication of the partners is truly remarkable.” said Wong.

This 3-year Report 2020 – 2023 introduces the FCCA partner projects and their background, objectives, activities and achievements since they joined the Alliance.



FISHING CAT
CONSERVATION
ALLIANCE

FCCA Executive Team



Jim Sanderson




Devan Sewell



Linda Castaneda



Wai-Ming Wong



[THE FISHING CAT](#)[WHO WE ARE](#)[PARTNER PROJECTS](#)[RESOURCES](#)[FISHING CAT FEBRUARY](#)[CONTACT US](#)[DONATE](#)

SEARCH


ABOUT

YOUTUBE

INSTAGRAM

FACEBOOK

Fishing Cat Conservation Project, Bangladesh and Myanmar



Bangladesh

Bangladesh has a significant amount of suitable fishing cat habitat with a great potential to support fishing cat populations but it is threatened by human-fishing cat conflict.

The fishing cat project in Hakaluki Haor started in 2017 under collaboration with Professor M.A. Aziz at Jahangirnagar University. The project aims to mitigate conflict and reduce the number of fishing cat killings in conflict hotspots (See the details in Chowdhury *et al.* 2015. Sayam is the member of this group, please see his project).

Project in Bangladesh initiated: 2017

Project in Myanmar initiated: 2018

Current status: Ongoing

Founder / Primary Investigator: Ai Suzuki

Ai is currently a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Tokyo Metropolitan University, and a Research Fellow at the Kyoto University, Japan. Her interests lie in conservation of small cats in Asia



Mitigating intense human-fishing cat conflict in the nation’s largest wetland, Hakaluki Haor

Project Information

Background

The project has been implemented in the inland wetland area in Northeast Bangladesh. This wetland area is identified as one of globally important habitats for the Fishing cat (Mukherjee et al., 2016), but the highest number of Fishing cat killings was reported from this region in Bangladesh (Chowdhury, 2015). In this inland wetland, we selected the nation's largest wetland, Hakaluki Haor. It covers approximately 18,000 hectares.

In the village around Hakaluki Haor, when people encounter the Fishing cat, more than 10 individuals surround and fatally beat the species using bamboo sticks. This behaviour differs from the killings of other similar-sized sympatric species such as the Jackal (*Canis aureus*) and Jungle cat (*Felis chaus*). While the villagers kill Fishing cat by a group due to the fear of being attacked, the villager kill Jackal and Jungle cat alone.

Objectives

- 1.To reduce the number of killed Fishing cats by villagers
- 2.To develop Fishing conservation plan at landscape level from an inland wetland to hilly forests on the border with India
- 3.To establish the system of evidence-based conservation by Bangladeshi youths and local communities for future



**FISHING CAT PROJECT,
BANGLADESH**



Conservation Metrics

4-years fund (tentative) is likely to support our current active learning, and further curriculum development for place-based education in the villages to shift social norm from “Killing Fishing cat is collective good for our neighbors” to “killing Fishing cat is not justifiable action”

First confirmation of Fishing cat in hilly forests and first radio-tracking of Fishing cat has been done. However, the collared individual was killed when he entered the village.

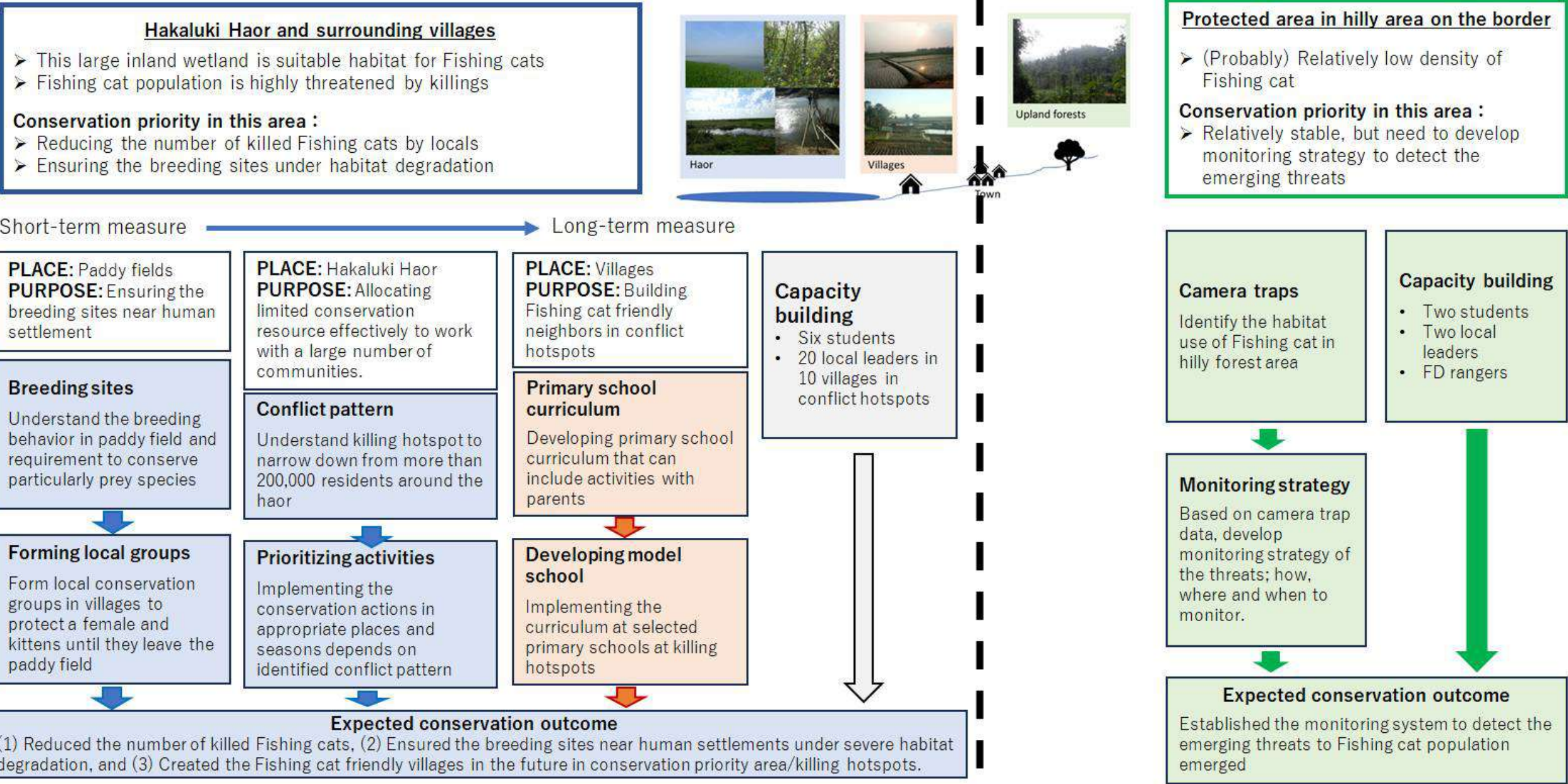
1 Master student has completed his master for Fishing cat camera trap project

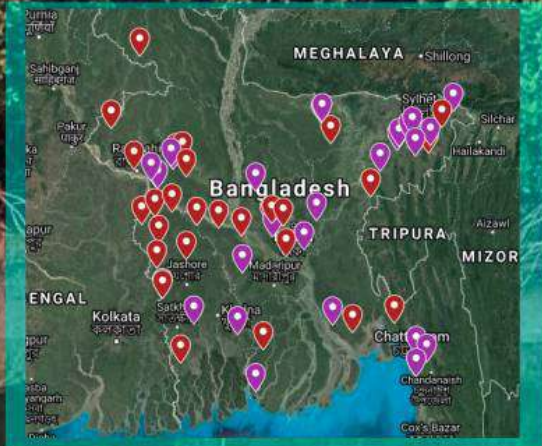
2 PhD students have working on human dimension of Fishing cat killing to seek effective way to reduce the number of killing



Next Steps

PROJECT FRAMEWORK AND ACTIVITIES (until 2027)





BANGLADESH

SAYAM CHOWDHURY

Working with local communities in order to understand conflicts and implementing mitigation measures.

SAYAM U. CHOWDHURY¹, ABIDA R. CHOWDHURY², SAKIB AHMED³ AND SABIR BIN MUZAFFAR¹

Human-fishing cat conflicts and conservation needs of fishing cats in Bangladesh



Fig. 3. Fishing cats killed by indigenous hunters in Khokha upazila, February 2012 (Photo The Daily Star)



Fig. 4. Distribution of fishing cats in Bangladesh, based on records reported between January 2012 and March 2013



Project Information

On-going Activities

1. Mitigating human-cat conflict at Hail Haor in NE Bangladesh
2. Working with local communities to ensure long-term protection of FC and habitat improvement at Hail Haor in NE Bangladesh
3. Outreach targeting school children, duck-farmers, fishers

Updates

1. New duck keeping enclosures were provided to local duck-farmers at Hail Haor
2. New billboards were installed with FC conservation messages
3. A total of 500 local community members including 300 school children were reached out with FC conservation messages
4. Habitat restoration: 200 native wetland trees were planted to improve FC daytime roosting sites



CAMBODIA

VANESSA HERRANZ MUÑOZ

We are the first project dedicated to conservation of fishing cat in Cambodia. We found their last remaining stronghold in the coastal mangroves where we work with local rangers and communities to stop poaching and habitat destruction.



Project Information

Background

In South-east Asia, Vulnerable fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) populations are in sharp decline (Mukherjee et al., 2016). Its status and distribution is very poorly understood and it could be approaching extinction in this region (Duckworth, 2016). Fishing cats are probably extinct in most of Vietnam (Willcox et al., 2014), very scarce in Lao PDR -if the species even occurs there at all - and Java (Mukherjee et al., 2016) and confirmed from only three sites in Thailand (Tantipisanuh et al., 2014). Our photographs were the first camera-trap records of fishing cats in Cambodia since the single picture taken from northern Cambodia in 2003 (Rainey & Kong, 2010). Mangroves can be an important refuge for rare and threatened species (Nowak, 2013). We found Cambodia's coastal mangroves are critical for fishing cat survival (Thaung et al., 2018) and we have been monitoring the population of fishing cat and working with local MoE rangers and local communities in their protection since 2017. In 2020, we extended our activities to the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, completed a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) of Stung Sen Ramsar Site for IUCN, and in October 2022, a local ranger photographed a fishing cat near another Ramsar site. In 2022, we started monitoring Fishing Cats in Sihanouk province, and searching for the species in Stung Treng Ramsar Site, where we completed another CCVA report for IUCN, published in 2023.

In 2021, Kla Trey | Cambodian Fishing Cat Project officially registered as Fishing Cat Ecological Enterprise Co. Ltd., with the following Vision, Mission and Objectives:

Vision

Cambodian wetland ecosystems are biodiversity rich, healthy, resilient to climate change and support the harmonious co-existence of Nature and People

Mission

To Investigate, Protect, restore and Rewild Cambodian wetland Ecosystems, ensure Conservation of threatened Species within them and Empower local communities to be their Guardians.

Objectives

- To identify priority wetland sites and investigate the conservation status of threatened species and habitats
- To implement conservation, restoration and rewilding actions for threatened wetland species and habitats to achieve a favorable conservation status in line with climate change adaptation.
- To fully integrate local communities and their needs within wetland ecosystems through conservation-focused social actions, livelihoods and sustainable enterprises
- To empower local communities through raised awareness, technical knowledge, stakeholder collaboration and sustainable financial resources to become wetland ecosystem guardians.



Target Areas 2020 -2023

1. Peam Krasop Wildlife Sanctuary & Koh Kapik Ramsar Site
(coastal mangroves, Koh Kong province)

2. Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve

2.1. Stung Sen Ramsar Site

2.2. Boeung Chhmar Ramsar Site

3. Stung Treng Ramsar Site (Mekong River)

4. Prey Nup mangroves (coastal mangroves, Preah Sihanouk
province)



Activities 2020 -2023

1. Peam Krasop Wildlife Sanctuary (coastal mangroves)

- Fishing cat, EN Hairy-nosed otter monitoring + patrolling since 2017
- Raising awareness and promoting participation among local communities, including children. Socio-economic surveys.
- Mangrove nurseries and mangrove forest restoration
- Threat mitigation with Ministry of Environment rangers and Community Protected Area Committees (CPAs)
- Livelihood interventions – FCEE is building capacity for ecotourism
- Collaborating on the establishment of a new Marine Protected Area
- Provided input and reports for PKWS & KKRS Management Plans
- Projects funded by: FCCA, IUCN CEPF, FFI (2021 – 2026)



Activities 2020 -2023

2. Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve

2.1. Stung Sen Ramsar Site

- Conducted FC survey 2020 – 2023
- Published [Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment for IUCN](#)
- Built a fire/bird watching tower
- Built an acclimatization enclosure and rescued and released two leopard cats.
- Funded by FCCA, IUCN IBRI. Collaborating with BirdLife.

2.2. Boeung Chhmar Ramsar Site

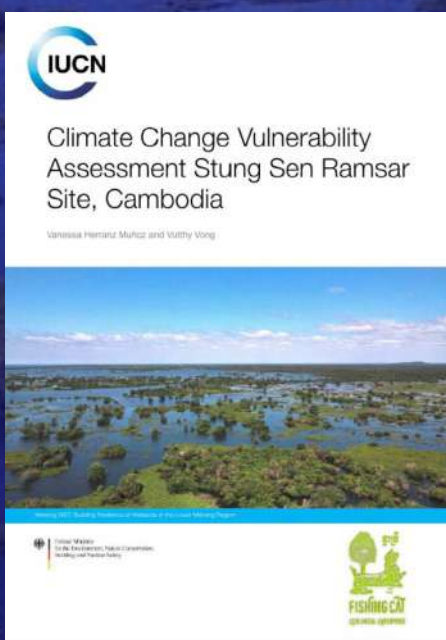
- Fishing cat was photographed for the first time in the Tonle Sap in October 2022 by MoE ranger Mr. Chan Phalla
- FCEE set up cameras and started collaborating with local rangers to monitor Fishing Cat.
- *Applying to US Fish & Wildlife Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Fund*



Photo credit: Chan Phalla, MoE, Balot



30°C 29.78inHg HT0222----- 01 JAN 2016 11:19 pm



Activities 2020 -2023

3. Stung Treng Ramsar Site (Mekong River)

- On-going FC survey with MoE
- Published Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment for IUCN.
- Funded by IUCN IBRI.
- Possible upcoming collaborations to continue.



Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Stung Treng Ramsar Site, Cambodia

Vanessa Herrero Muñoz, Ham Sodans, Mon Pichayneang, Song Det, Sochart Reaksiney, Pablo Pedraza Indeguy, Sara Fernandez Sales and Vong Vorthy



Figure 3.1. A large tree in the forest of the Stung Treng Ramsar Site.

Ministry of the Environment, Urban Planning and Construction



Activities 2020 -2023

4. Prey Nup mangroves (Sihanouk province):

- FC monitoring since 2021: First footage of fishing cat kittens in the country. By 2023, we documented 3 litters and 5 adults.
- Current project: Ramsar designation proposal. Support expressed by the Minister of Environment.
- Working with Green Collar on feasibility studies to set up a carbon credit initiative.
- Confirmed 2024 funds from ICF.



Conservation Impact Metrics

Continuous monitoring of fishing cats in the PKWS mangroves for **7** years at over **300** camera-trap locations.

Checked and patrolled regularly, gathering data for over **25.000** camera-trap nights, used to guide **2** new PA Management Plans

Surveys and monitoring at **5** PAs over **20.000** camera-trap nights and more than **900** km² of wetlands

Removal of over **300** poaching devices including snares, civet traps, bird nets, turtle traps, illegal fishing



Conservation Impact Metrics

Engagement with local communities through
19 Community Protected Area and
Community Fisheries committees

Collaborating with MoE rangers at **5**
Protected Areas, encompassing **23** villages

FCEE held over **400** meetings, workshops,
and individual interviews with over **1500**
participants

12.000 seedlings are ready to start our
restoration of **600** ha of mangrove forest





3RD INTERNATIONAL FISHING CAT SYMPOSIUM

BRIDGING KNOWLEDGE. CONSERVATION AND GLOBAL STRATEGY



Symposium Summary

The 3rd International Fishing Cat Symposium 2023 (3rd IFCS) took place over five days from 28 October to 2 November 2023 in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The 3rd IFCS saw the coming together of partner organisations and individuals working across 8 range countries and committed to conserving the Fishing Cat. Delegates from other small wild cat species groups were also invited to the symposium as were international donors, adding up to over 40 participants in total. The purpose of the 3rd IFCS was to enable knowledge-sharing and capacity building between organisations including range-wide and country-specific species conservation planning that included discussion on thematic action areas, scales of interventions and relevant stakeholders.

The event was organized by the Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance (FCCA) and hosted by Cambodia-based Fishing Cat Ecological Enterprise (FCEE). FCCA was founded during the 2nd International Small Wild Cat Conservation Summit in Colombo, Sri Lanka in November 2019. FCCA took international cooperation in species conservation to the next level by registering as international NGO. In its first three years of life, the FCCA has enabled communication and cooperation between 15 projects, within 8 countries of the fishing cat range, including easing financial assistance.

During the 3rd IFCS, FCCA partners have shared information and formulated the following conclusions:

- FCCA partner projects have successfully mitigated threats to Fishing Cats across their range, such as poaching, habitat destruction and conversion, roadkills, retaliatory killings and killings due to fear psychosis.
- To mitigate these threats, FCCA partner projects have implemented a suite of strategies, including raising awareness, collaborating with local communities and authorities, rescue and rehabilitation of fishing cats, livestock protection, support for livelihoods, ecotourism and habitat restoration.
- Another key ingredient of the success of FCCA is the extensive network of collaborators cultivated by each project, which allows them to gather information on a national scale and take prompt actions as needed.

Favorite Fishing Cat Image and Why (3rd IFCS, 2023)



This image is part of recent videos taken at a mangrove site in Preah Sihanouk province, Cambodia. At this site we recorded a mother and kittens for the first time ever in the country, during 2023, but what really inspires me is that this image is from the third litter recorded from two different mothers! There is still hope for Fishing Cats in Cambodia, even if it's hidden in mysterious places!

Vanessa Herranz Muñoz, Fishing Cat Ecological Enterprise (Cambodia)



INDIA

TIASA ADHYA



The
Fishing Cat
Project

Founded in 2010, is India's longest running conservation and research project on the Fishing Cat.

Through the 'Know thy neighbours' initiative enthusiastic locals were given camera traps to monitor fishing cats in their surroundings. Formed a community-owned and managed "goat bank"



Five fishing cat poachers arrested

Krishnendu Mukherjee
@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: Five villagers, including the main accused, were arrested from a Howrah village on Wednesday for allegedly killing five fishing cats on June 5.

A source said the village from where the accused, all local tribal people, were arrested is located within 3km of Munsirhat in Uluberia, where the incident took place. A fishing cat, which is the state animal, falls



helped us identify the accused," he said. The accused, booked under the Wildlife Protection Act, will be produced in court on Thursday.

Ecologist Tiasa Adhya, who has been working on fishing cats in the marshland of Howrah and Hooghly said, "This is the first step towards achieving our bigger goal of ensuring protection to the state animal. The next step should be the formation of fishing cat protection committees at the village level to ensure such

Project Information

Background

The Fishing Cat Project is a platform established in 2010 and is the world's longest running research and conservation project on the cat. It started working outside protected areas in the state of West Bengal. In 2012, the Fishing Cat was declared as the State Animal of West Bengal. In 2016, co-founder Tiasa Adhya received the highest civilian award for women in India from the then President of India and was conferred the award by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, GoI in recognition of the conservation work.

Objective

To link Fishing Cat conservation with healthy wetlands and human sustenance

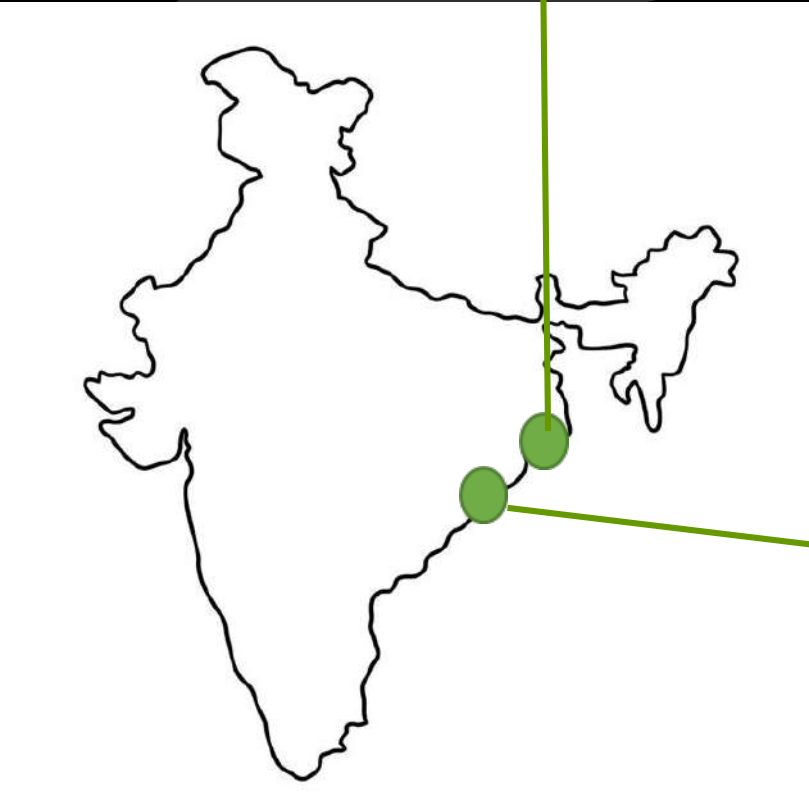


The
Fishing Cat
Project

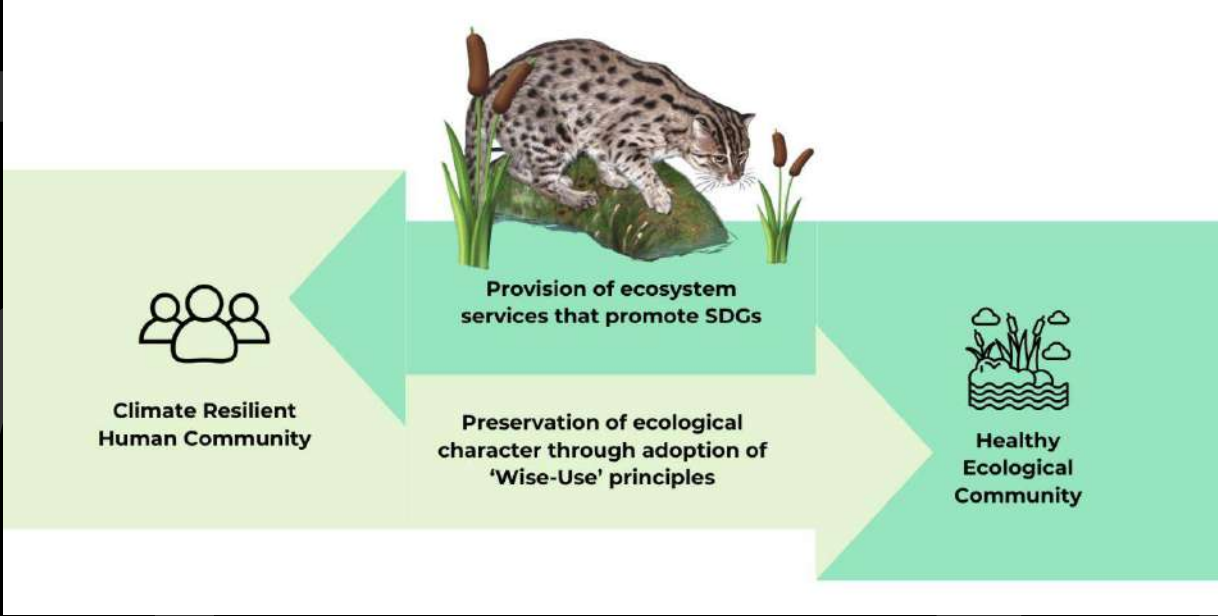
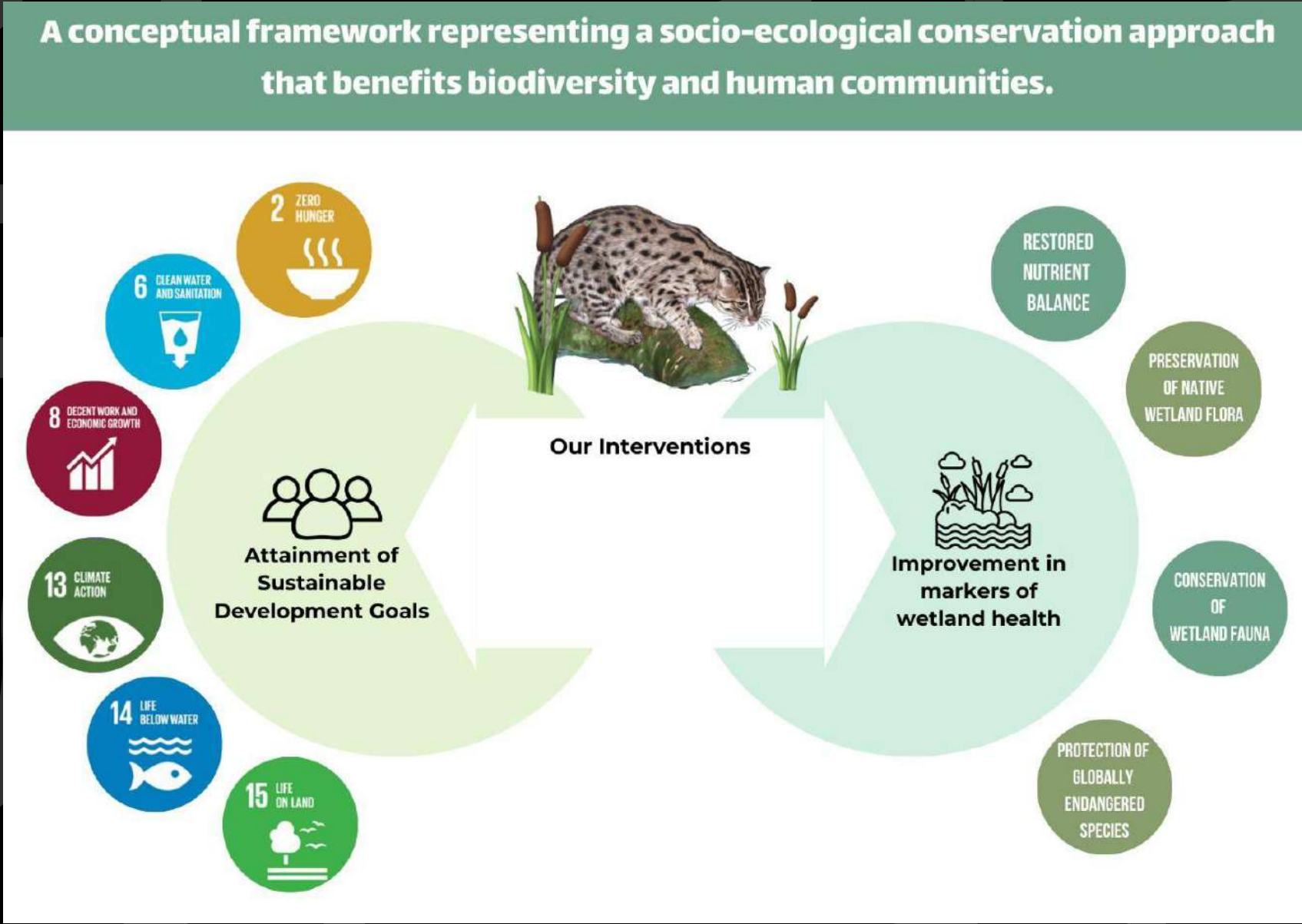


Project Sites

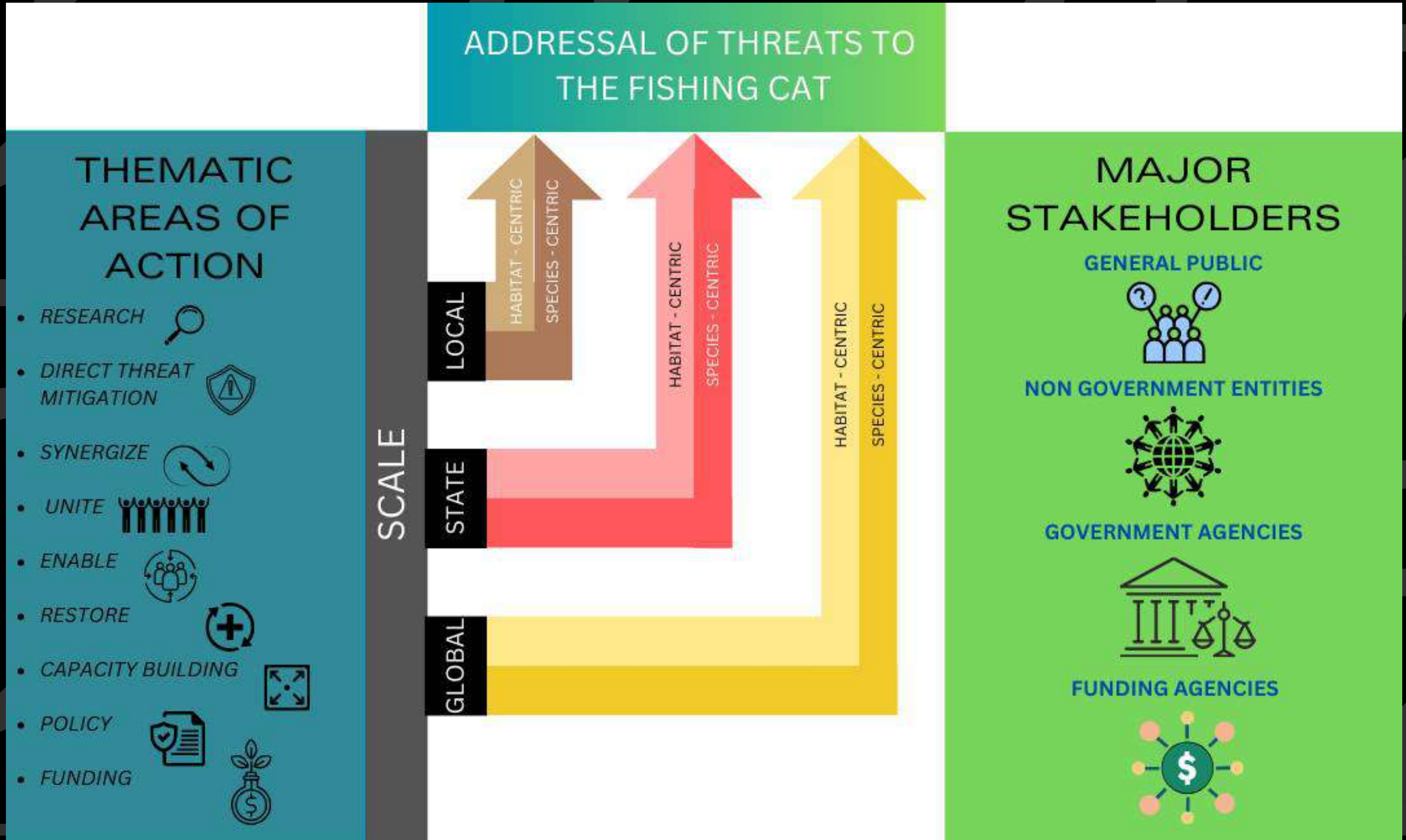
- 1. State of West Bengal
- 2. Chilika Lagoon of Odisha



Conceptual Framework



Areas of Action



Activities

A) RESEARCH

- a) Established presence of Fishing Cat in Chilika
- b) Mapped distribution of Fishing Cat in Chilika
- c) Estimated Fishing Cat density in Chilika
- d) Examined status and function of a wetland in West Bengal using oral testimonies

B) DIRECT THREAT MITIGATION

- e) Conducted 30 conservation programs targeted to reduce fear psychosis driven killing of Fishing Cats in West Bengal
- f) Provided evidence to back litigation to safeguard Fishing Cat habitat in West Bengal
- g) Started year round patrolling and monitoring of Fishing Cats in Chilika to reduce threats like reed fires, incidental snaring etc.

C) SYNERGIZE

- h) Promoted wetland rice as a 'wise use product' that also provides seasonal habitat to the Fishing Cat



Activities



D) UNITE

- a) Established collaboration with West Bengal Zoo Authority
- b) Established collaboration with Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad
- c) Established collaboration with Chilika Development Authority and Chilika Wildlife Division
- d) Established collaboration with IUCN Species Survival Commission's Freshwater Conservation Committee
- e) Established collaboration with Future For Nature Academy, the Netherlands
- f) Established collaboration with Centre for Environmental Studies (A Govt of India education agency)

E) ENABLE

- g) Started a 6 months stewardship program for eco clubs around Chilika
- h) Started a 6 months course on Wetland Ecology Biodiversity and Conservation to create national wetland stewards
- i) Conducted awareness and outreach programs in several colleges in West Bengal
- j) Delivered several online lectures and talks on Fishing Cats

Activities

F) RESTORE

- a) We have successfully reintroduced 'problem Fishing Cats' back to their habitat with local resident's support

G) CAPACITY BUILDING

- b) Created a trained local conservation manpower in Chilika
- c) Training local residents in Chilika to initiate an educative nature tourism in Chilika

H) POLICY MAKING

- d) The Fishing Cat was declared as Chilika's official envoy in 2020.
- e) We supported a litigation by partner organisation, Human and Environment Alliance League (HEAL) which resulted in a positive court directive to protect all wetlands above 2.5 hectares

I) Funding

- f) Received the Future For Nature award
- g) Received The Habitat's Trust Grant
- h) Received a donation from Stichting Spots



EXCITING NEWS

TFCP co-founder Tiasa Adhya received the Future For Nature award, an international award bestowed upon 3 conservationists globally



Conservation Impact Metrics

A) RESEARCH

Three publications in peer-reviewed international journals

B) DIRECT THREAT MITIGATION

One favourable court order benefitting all wetlands in West Bengal

117 fire incidents controlled since 2021

C) SYNERGIZE

400 kilograms of wetland rice being promoted for marketing in 2024

D) UNITE

4 new collaborations with government agencies initiated and maturing over time

2 new collaborations with international conservation agencies

E) ENABLE

200+ school and college students reached

15000+ village stakeholders reached

10 talks delivered online

4 eco-clubs, **40** students undergoing stewardship program in Chilika



Conservation Impact Metrics

F) RESTORE

3 problem Fishing Cats released back to their habitat

G) CAPACITY BUILDING

15 national and international wetland stewards being trained

6 local trainer-of-the-trainers created (with research, education and conservation skills developed)

H) POLICY MAKING

At least **two** positive policy breakthroughs for Fishing Cats

I) FUNDING

85000 USD raised additionally



Favorite Fishing Cat Image and Why (3rd IFCS, 2023)



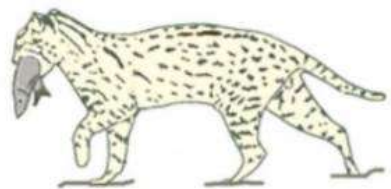
This seems like a dream pic...nothing short. Made us feel that the Fishing Cat was pleased with us.

Tiasa Adhya, The Fishing Cat Project (India)



The
Fishing Cat
Project



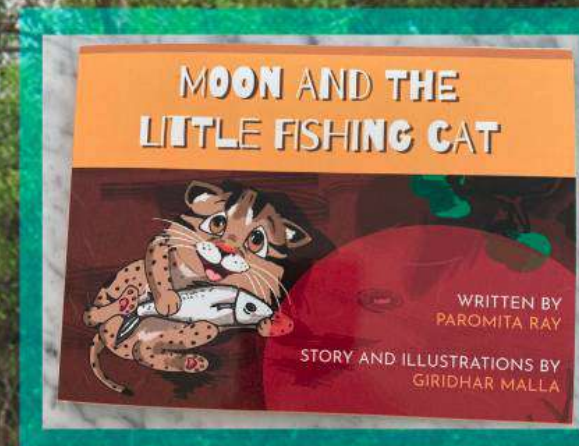
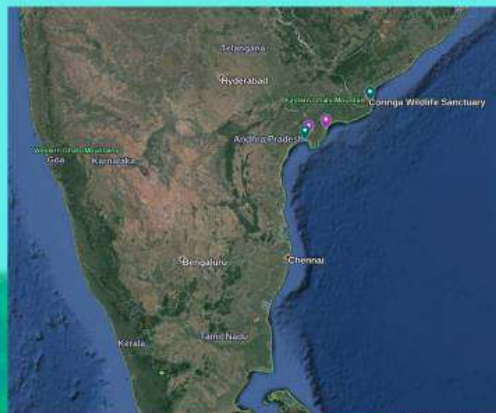


GODAVARI FISHING CAT PROJECT®

INDIA

GIRIDHAR MALLA

Working to conserve Fishing Cat populations in Godavari delta, India. Initiated a pilot project on the vocalization of Fishing Cats. Creating awareness through an initiative called "Children for Fishing Cats"

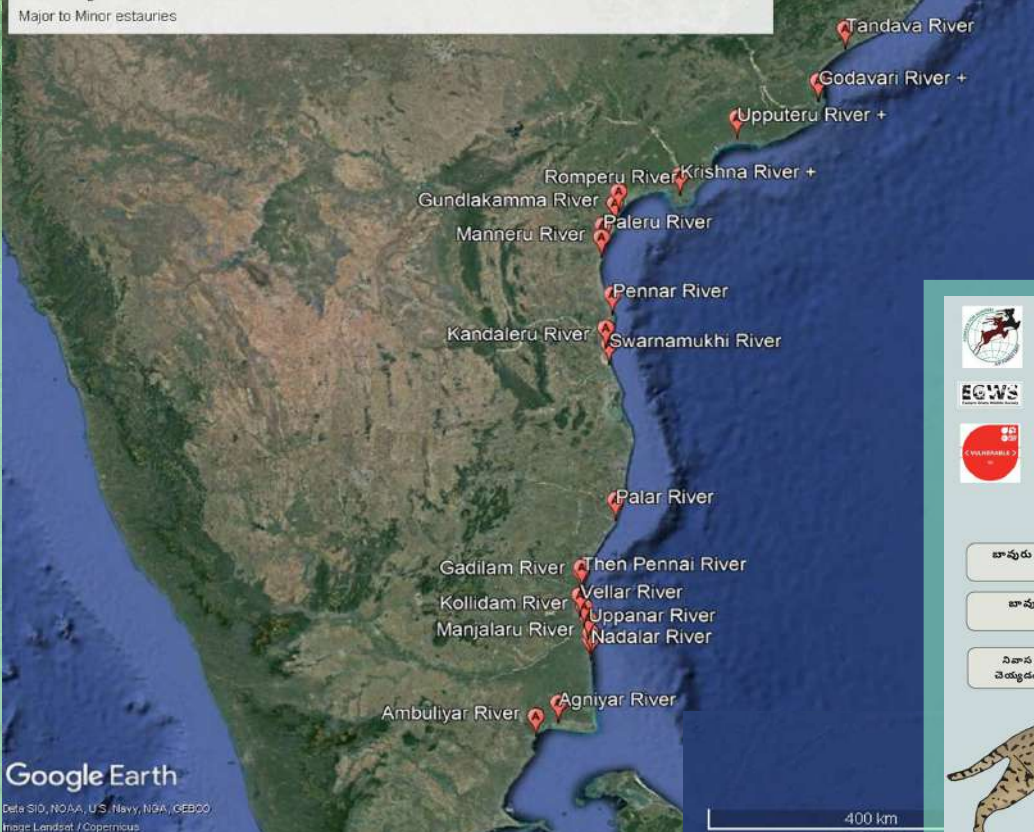


Project Information

Background

The Godavari Fishing Cat Project was started in 2014. Long-term goals for the project include 1) strengthening the conservation efforts along with improving habitat management, so that to ensure the long-term survival of fishing cats in the state b) restoring corridor connectivity by sustainable mangrove regeneration in the lost patches in the Godavari and other deltaic regions of Andhra Pradesh.

Surveyed riverine estuaries in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu



Key activities and outcomes

- In collaboration with the Eastern Ghats Wildlife Society, we have commenced a camera trapping exercise to monitor fishing cats in the Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary in the year 2023.
- To facilitate camera trapping efforts, we initiated a workshop for the frontline staff of the forest department in the Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Our monitoring activities encompass both the Godavari and Krishna mangrove areas, aiming to identify and address potential threats. Additionally, we have initiated the distribution of chicken coops in non-protected areas.
- We are actively identifying significant non-protected mangrove regions between Krishna and Godavari and engaging in discussions with local communities and politicians to reduce threats and mitigate retaliatory killings arising from predation on aqua ponds and poultry.
- As part of our project, we have launched an awareness program called "Children for Fishing Cat," targeting the younger children of the local fishing community residing near the mangrove forests in the Godavari region. The program seeks to enhance fishing cat conservation by raising awareness and educating children about its global importance and its habitat in mangroves.
- To support our awareness program, we have developed a comic book on fishing cats in the local language and are distributing it to children from fishing communities.


**GODAVARI
FISHING CAT
PROJECT**



Conservation Impact Metrics

Identified **2000 ha** non-protected mangrove regions between Godavari & Krishna Deltas and camera trapping is being done to monitor fishing cat populations.

Identifying the specific threats in this region.
Removed or converted **100** wild cat traps in the villages close to mangrove areas.

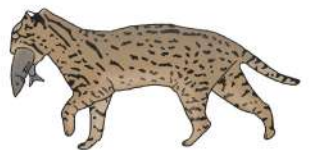
Engaging in discussions with local communities in **74** mangrove & coastal villages to reduce threats and mitigate retaliatory killings arising from predation on aqua ponds and poultry.



Conservation Impact Metrics

Around **14** deltaic mangroves covering an area of 450 sq.kms of mangroves and coastal habitats were surveyed for presence of fishing cat in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu

132 mangrove-dependent villages in selected estuarine areas in Andhra Pradesh & Tamil Nadu – **1560** households surveyed



GODAVARI
FISHING CAT
PROJECT



Conservation Impact Metrics

Covered over **45** village schools (belonging to fishing communities).

Formation of eco-clubs in these schools.

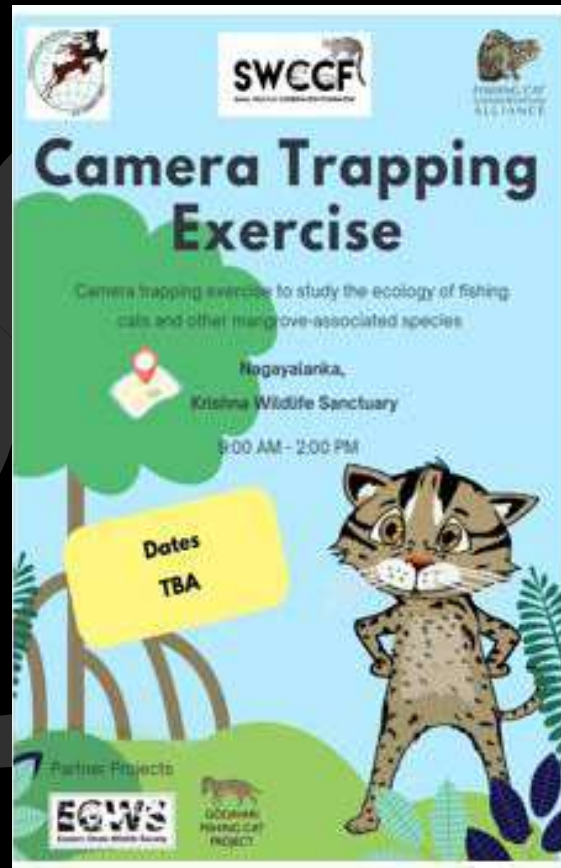
Addition of mangroves, associated threatened species in the curriculum of schools



Challenges - Threats to fishing cats & jungle cats



Average 3 wild cats/week



Favorite Fishing Cat Image and Why (3rd IFCS, 2023)



This female fishing cat holds a special place in my heart, as I dedicated over four years to studying her within the Godavari mangroves. The photograph in question was taken while she peacefully slumbered on an intertidal mudflat amidst the mangroves.

Giridhar Malla. Godavari Fishing Cat Project (India)



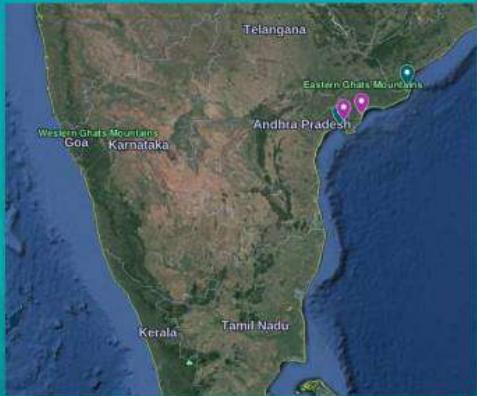


FISHING CAT CONSERVATION IN
THE EASTERN GHATS

INDIA

MURTHY KANTIMAHANTI

Work closely with communities throughout the Eastern Ghats, especially outside the protected areas where human-wildlife conflict occurs, monitoring wildlife and providing education and intervention strategies.



Project Information



Background

This project envisages developing a comprehensive understanding of metapopulation dynamics of the fishing cat in the Eastern Ghats region of South India and the implications of various human-induced activities. Another major component of the project involves promoting awareness among local people living in towns/villages near fishing cat habitats and positively engaging them in conservation efforts by capacity-building measures not only to monitor fishing cat populations but also document any threats to their survival in unclassified forest areas and human-dominated landscapes.

Activities

The on-going conservation program includes activities like camera trapping, conservation outreach, engaging private landowners in fishing cat conservation and wetland protection, corridor mapping, institutional capacity building, conflict mitigation strategies and development of a regional conservation plan for long term survival of fishing cats in the region.



Conservation Impact Metrics

Over **400** personnel from the forest department were trained

Over **1 Million** people were connected through conservation outreach programs

Around **300** square kilometers of wetlands is being currently monitored using camera traps

Over **100** square kilometers area of unprotected fishing cat habitat is conserved by local community engagement.

83 villages across the landscape were reached out with conflict mitigation interventions

Over **200** local youth were trained in camera trap monitoring and field surveys

Over **150** Square kilometers of potential new habitat identified



A Story of Conflict and Co-existence

In 2023, our team was reached out by the state forest department as well as the local communities to help them identify a predator which has been targeting especially young goat and sheep rampantly in the area. The fishing cat was the prime suspect and everyone believed that the species was responsible for the killing spree. Tensions were escalating between local communities and the forest department personnel when we chipped in with a strategy to not only authentically identify the predator responsible but also to sensitise the communities on how to secure their livestock during such incidents.

Camera traps were installed at the carcass without disturbing it as earlier the carcasses were disposed immediately by the authorities after the kill was reported by locals encouraging the unidentified predator to kill again erratically. The team found a pair of Golden Jackals regularly visiting the carcass to feed. No kills were reported during those days when the carcass was left undisposed and the installed camera traps continually recorded golden jackals scavenging at night followed by stray dogs during the day. As the predator was identified, the appropriate interventions were planned by educating the communities on how to safeguard their livestock from jackal attacks.

Humans don't venture out at night as the area is regularly frequented by sloth bears which are known for their notorious nature to attack unprovoked. The team also fixed camera traps at the watering holes in and around the conflict hotspots and captured fishing cats catching fish at night. The data collected is a testament that fishing cat do not engage in such erratic killing behaviour of livestock. The locals accepted these facts and learned to coexist with predators. Our team also guided the locals who lost their livestock in procedures for compensation schemes to the government



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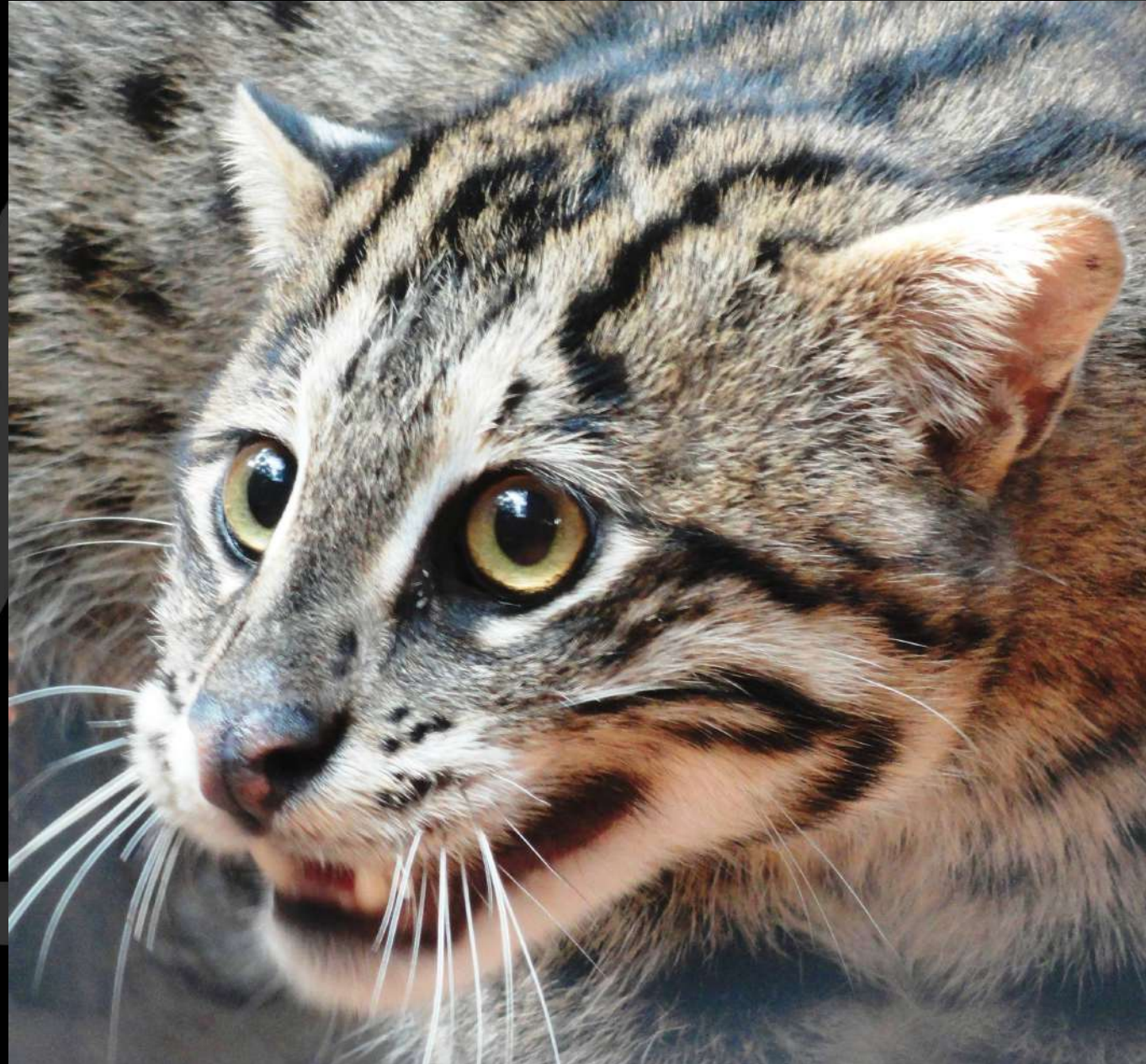
CAMERA1

Next Steps...

- Engagement of more private landowners in fishing cat conservation.
- Formation of fishing cat protection committees at village level
- Alternate income generation programs for marginalized communities sharing habitat with the fishing cat



Favorite Fishing Cat Image and Why (3rd IFCS, 2023)



The first fishing cat I saw in my life up-close way back in 2012 right in my neighborhood that left a long-lasting fascination within me for these incredible cats!

Murthy Kantimahanti, Conservation of fishing cats in the eastern ghats, Eastern Ghats Wildlife Society (India)



**EASTERN GHATS
FISHING CAT PROJECT**







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23C 12/03/2022 09:29PM CAMERA1



FISHING CAT CONSERVATION,
INDONESIA

JAVA INDONESIA

ERWIN WILianto

Looking for the rarest small cat in Asia, the Javan fishing cat. Searching every habitat patch that is predicted to be suitable for the fishing cat.



Photo by Alain Compost.



Fig. 5. Fishing cat killed by a hunter in Java (Delsman 1932).



Project Information

Background

To date there are no recent records of Fishing Cat occurrence in Indonesia. The latest known Fishing Cat photograph was from a wildlife photographer back at 2010 at Pulau Dua Nature Reserve, West Java. Most research has been conducted in western part of Java island.

In 2018, the project run a Fishing Cat survey with support by the MbSCF and the Fishing Cat Fund. Although, results have yet to confirm the existence of the species in Java, the project continued to search every habitat that is predicted to be suitable for the fishing cat.

Objective

Searching for any remaining population of Fishing Cat throughout Java, Indonesia

Current Status of Medium-Small Cat in Indonesia.
July 13th, 2023

INDONESIAN WILDCATS

Erwin Wilianto

*Lebih baik diasingkan
daripada menyerah pada Kemunafikan*

Activities

We initiate a FC occurrence survey in Eastern part of Java, covering Probolinggo area and Baluran National Park

During June - Sept 2022 we conducted a transect and camera trapping in Probolinggo mangrove area covering 10 (1 x 1 km²) grid cell with total +700 trap days. Yet no FC recorded.

Survey at Baluran NP. No FC records

During the 3rd International Fishing Cat Symposium in Siem Reap (Cambodia), Erwin announced that in all likelihood, the Javan Fishing Cat is currently extinct.

Erwin will continue as FCCA partner in an advisory capacity



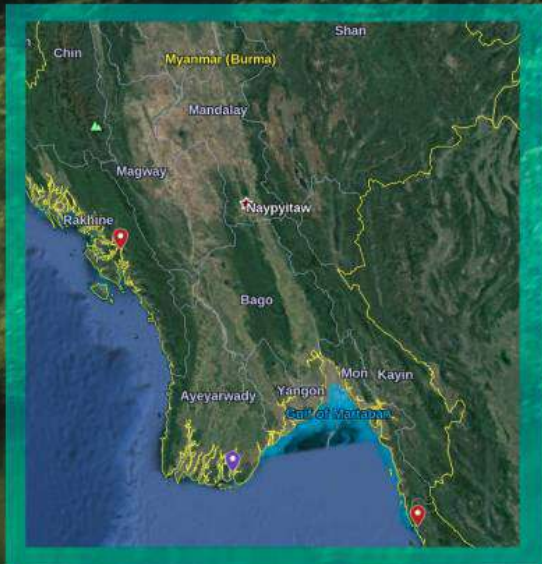


FISHING CAT
CONSERVATION, MYANMAR

MYANMAR

AI SUZUKI

Trying to find Fishing cat in the Ayeyawardy delta region and investigate their distribution and status.
Seeking strategies to reduce indiscriminate snare by working with hunters and creating
conservation-related job opportunities



KYAUKHEL 4

96F 35C



Project Information

Background

The project has been implemented in mangrove in Ayeyarwady delta, Myanmar. Fishing cat population here is exposed to the two main threats: habitat loss and hunting for subsistence use.

Habitat loss occurs with land conversion to agricultural land. Fishing cat is not primary target for hunting, but opportunistically hunted.

Objectives

- 1.To reduce hunting pressure on Fishing cat
- 2.To understand distribution of Fishing cat in Ayeyawardy delta to extend conservation
- 3.To establish the system of evidence-based conservation by Burmese youths and local communities for future



**FISHING CAT PROJECT,
MYANMAR**



*Fishing cats were killed near fishery pond.
We had just started the project to reduce the
killing and worked with owners. Small-scale
fish pond in Ayeyarwady delta can be good
foraging site if it become safe place for them*

Conservation Metrics

6 hunters becomes regular and good camera trappers. Those hunters and villagers create **hunting free zone** for cats during their camera trapping survey.

More camera trap surveys pending at **new confirmed sites**

3 Master student has completed thier master for Fishing cats and/or small cats, and currently 1 student seeking for his opportunity to finish his master and go PhD study on Fishing cat conservation.

2 school teachers take an initiative to teach their students about biodiversity conservation.

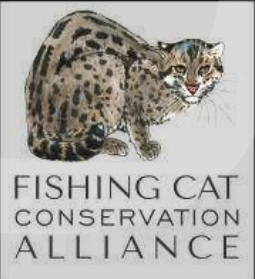


Favorite Fishing Cat Image and Why (3rd IFCS, 2023)



The photos were recorded during camera trap survey in 2020. This is one of our few photos of fishing cat during survey. Although fishing cat is reportedly found by locals, it has hard to identify whether fishing cat was there or not in the mangrove forests of Meinmahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary in the Ayeyarwady delta of Myanmar which might be a suitable habitat of fishing cat. Because of our recorded photos, we could confirm that Meinmahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary is one of fewer places where fishing cats inhabit.

Kyaw Zayar Moe Fishing Cat Conservation Project (Myanmar)




https://fishingcat.org/western-terai-fishing-cat-project/

WESTERN TERAI FISHING CAT PROJECT

THE FISHING CAT WHO WE ARE PARTNER PROJECTS RESOURCES FISHING CAT FEBRUARY CONTACT US **DONATE**

Western Terai Fishing Cat Project



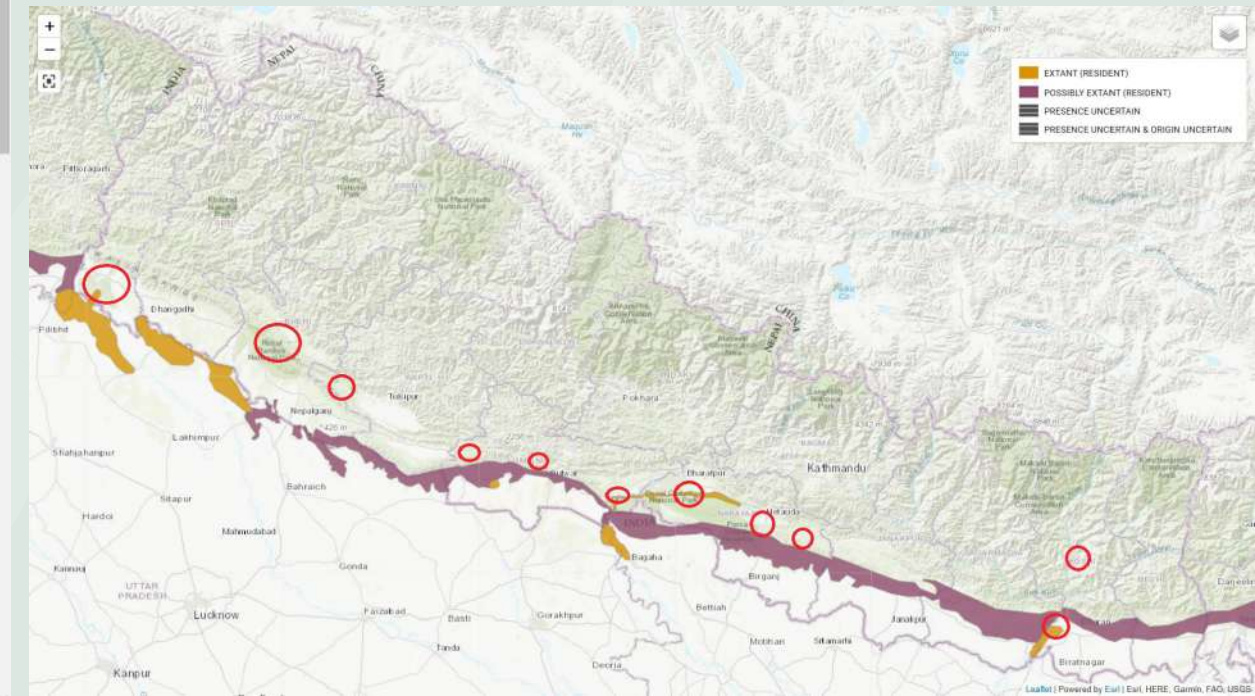
1 / 6

Ganesh Puri graduated in forestry and wildlife from the Agriculture and Forestry University, Nepal. Working as a government forest and wildlife ranger in the Western Terai region, Nepal, he has seen over and over again the threats to the fishing cat; habitat loss, retaliatory killings from hunting, poisoning, and snaring. Enough was enough, Ganesh decided to commit to mitigating these threats for the

Project initiated: 2020

Current status: Ongoing

Founder / Primary Investigator: Ganesh Puri



The mission of this project is to conserve fishing cat in the western part of Nepal.

Project Information

Background

The Western Terai Fishing Cat Conservation Project aims to safeguard the survival of fishing cats in the western region of Nepal, particularly in the Western Terai Landscape. This landscape is marked by a conflict between fishing cats and fish farmers. The fishing cats frequently raid private fish farms, leading to retaliatory killings by farmers. To address this issue, we have implemented various conservation programs.

Our efforts have focused on finding sustainable solutions that benefit both fishing cats and fish farmers. Through awareness campaigns and education initiatives, we have sought to promote a better understanding of the ecological importance of fishing cats and the challenges they face. By fostering empathy and highlighting the benefits of coexistence, we aim to reduce conflicts and encourage tolerance towards the presence of fishing cats in the vicinity of fish farms.

Goals & Objectives

The main goal of this project is ensure the long-term survival and conservation of the fishing cat in the Western Terai Landscape of Nepal. Which have following objectives:

- Minimize conflicts between fishing cats and fish farmers in the region.
- Promote coexistence between fishing cats and human communities, particularly fish farmers.
- Enhance awareness and understanding of the ecological importance of fishing cats and their role in the ecosystem.
- Facilitate sustainable livelihoods for local communities while conserving the fishing cat habitat.



Current Activities

1. Fish Bank Program
2. Udd (Fishing cat) guardian club formation
3. Fishing cat and it's habitat monitoring
4. Mass awareness program (radio program, school program, hoarding board installation)
5. Nursery Program (Seedling production and plantation)





This marks the initial photographic documentation of a fishing cat I captured in the western region of Kapilvastu. The cat appeared in front of our camera, seemingly conveying, "I am here with my meal; thanks for coming to save me."

Ganesh Puri, Western Terai Fishing Cat Conservation Project (Nepal)



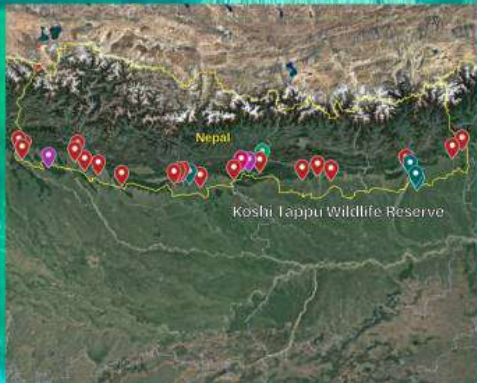


FISHING CAT PROJECT, KOSHI
AND LUMBINI WETLANDS

NEPAL

PRATIVA KASPAL

We work in conservation of Fishing cats through the formation of community-based Fishing Cat support groups and strengthen them with substantial local capacity building, conservation awareness campaigns and mitigation measures to reduce the existing human Fishing Cat conflict and threats.



हाम्रै कारण संकटमा छ यो मलाहा बिरालो, संरक्षण गर्दा हुन्छ है हाम्रो जीवन उज्यालो ।
Fishing Cat is in danger because of our own greed, our life will be brighten once conservation proceed.



**मलाहा बिरालो संरक्षण सम्बन्धि सामुदायिक
अन्तरक्रिया कार्यक्रम**

**Community Interaction program for
Fishing Cat conservation in local wetlands**



Project Information



Background

The Rupandehi district, the project's site, offers wetlands that shelters the elusive Fishing cat and offers a promising chance for success because the primary threat is overharvesting of resources and the rampant hunting and killing by the indigenous communities, challenges that can be managed. The long term goal of our study is to identity priority conservation areas and enhance the capabilities of the indigenous communities, youths and students through the formation of Fishing Cat support/guardian groups, engagement and participatory ecological research and education outreach programs.

Objectives

- To estimate the presence status, distribution of the cat to identify priority areas
- To conduct semi-structured interviews with indigenous ethnic (Patharkatt & Netuwa) members to gauge extent of traditional knowledge, extent of trapping and killing and attitudes to exploitation and conservation,
- To launch Fishing Cat conservation awareness programs amongst the wide array of local people and government officials,
- To facilitate build capacity programs through alternate income generation activities



Current Activities

1. Research & Social surveys

- Field-based sign surveys and camera trapping
- Community Interview Survey

2. Conservation Education

- Publication and production of Fishing cat educational kits and movie
- Conservation education class in schools
- Hoarding boards installation
- Fishing Cat Conservation Radio Programs
- Fishing Cat write up in local online news
- Conservation education on the wheels

3. Community Engagements

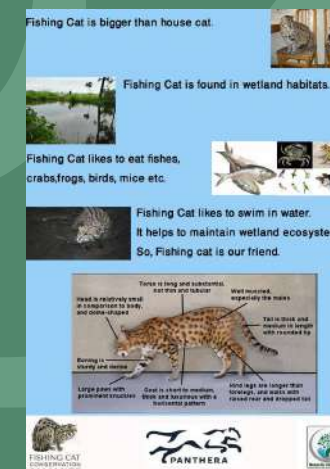
- Formation of community-based Fishing Cat support groups
- Formation of teacher-student oriented Fishing cat conservation clubs

4. Community capacity building programs

- Alternate income generation training for indigenous communities
- Workshop with local fish farmers
- Workshop and training with the youth leaders

5. Information Sharing

- Collaboration and Information sharing with forest officials and ward presidents at local level
- Information Sharing with Dr. Dindo Compilan, IUCN Regional Councilor, Mr. Sean Southey, Chair of IUCN Commission, and Dr. Sindhu Prasad Dhungana, Director General of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation on Fishing cat conservation, wetland conservation, and indigenous people, CMS Vatawaran, India



Favorite Fishing Cat Image and Why (3rd IFCS, 2023)



The fishing cat image was sketched by my son, who presented it to me as a surprise during Mother's Day so that I could use it during conservation education and awareness campaigns.

Prativa Kaspal, Lumbini Fishing Cat Project, Women for Conservation (Nepal)



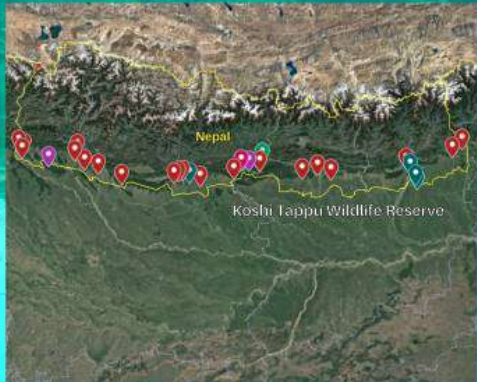


FISHING CAT PROJECT, KOSHI
TAPPU WILDLIFE RESERVE

NEPAL

RAMA MISHRA

Working with the fish farmers in human dominated landscape of Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve Buffer Zone area. We surveyed fish ponds and Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve to understand the fishing cat population and relationship with fish farmers. We conducted school and community education programs.



Project Information

Background

The Terai Fishing Cat Project, founded in 2012, is an initiative dedicated to the study, conservation, and ecological understanding of fishing cats in the Terai region of Nepal. With a strong focus on data-driven research and evidence-based findings, the project aims to shed light on the lesser-known aspect of fishing cats and contribute to its long-term survival in Nepal. This employs the use of modern technologies like GPS satellite collars and camera traps. Despite their ecological significance, fishing cats have received limited attention from researchers, conservationists and relevant authorities. The information thus gathered are expected to bridge this knowledge gap enabling tailored conservation effort and formulation of appropriate management plans. Besides, the project is also working to reduce the threats to fishing cats in the adjoining buffer zone of Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve in Eastern Nepal. To develop a sense of appreciation for small wild cats, particularly fishing cats, and promote co-existence, the project has adopted a unique idea of mobilizing volunteers from all fishing cats ranges of Nepal that actively conducts community and school outreach programs and awareness campaigns.

Goals and Objectives

The broad objective of this project is to contribute in research, conservation and awareness of fishing cats in the Terai region of Nepal. Specifically, the objectives are divided into:

- To understand the ecological requirements of fishing cats including home range, habitat use, movement pattern and dietary composition.
- To reduce threat, support locals livelihood and promote conservation of fishing cats through the distribution of predator-proof chicken coops and fish fries.
- Raise public awareness about the ecological importance and conservation status of fishing cats through educational campaigns, workshops, community engagement programs and social medias.
- To utilize the research findings to support government in formulating a fishing cat action plan in the country.



Current Activities

Research	Conservation	Education and Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diet study using scat analysis• Home range estimation using data obtained from GPS Satellite collars• Camera trap study in Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve to estimate population demography of fishing cats• Carnivore interaction in Shuklaphanta National Park• Exploration of additional potential areas to investigate the presence of fishing cats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Construction of first small wild cats rescue and rehabilitation centre in Chitwan, Central Nepal Link• Livelihood support and threat reduction through predator proof chicken coop and fish fry distribution to local farmers in the Buffer zone areas of Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of posters, stickers, t-shirts and presentations (View)• Community and school level awareness program through mobilized volunteers (n=19) in all fishing cat range of Nepal• Supervision to research students and guest lectures to National and Intl. University level students• Mainstreaming fishing cat via research paper, popular articles, news features and collaborating with other medias



Favorite Fishing Cat Image and Why (3rd IFCS, 2023)



The fishing cat photo is captured in Chitwan National Park during day time.

Rama Mishra, Terai Fishing Cat Project, WILD CARE (Nepal)





NEPAL

SAGAR DAHAL

Working for the conservation of Fishing Cat since 2011. Understanding the frequency of their visit to the private fish ponds. Implementing threat reduction programs by making stronger chicken coups.



Project Information



Background

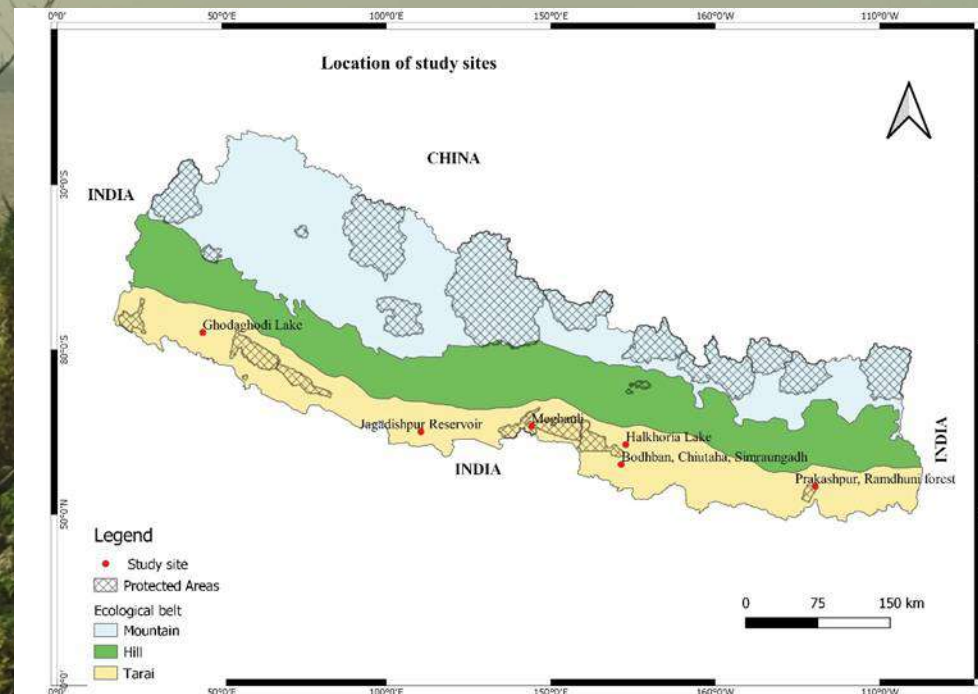
The “Fishing Cat Conservation Project”, Nepal was initiated in 2014. Nepal was known as the northern most border of fishing cat distribution range country with habitat in the lowlands of Nepal. The population were known only from the protected areas and large areas of outside the protected were unexplored. The goal of the project was to explore the fishing cat distribution locations outside the protected areas in the Terai of Nepal, investigate threat status and initiate conservation programs.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the project is to initiate the conservation of fishing cat in Nepal

The objectives of the project are:

- Investigate the potential fishing cat distribution sites outside the protected areas in Nepal
- Identify existing threats to the fishing cats
- Build connection with the local community for the conservation activities
- Conduct various fishing cat conservation activities (community based conservation, incentive based conservation)
- Build rapport with government stakeholders for fishing cat conservation



Tasks Conducted in 2021-2023

1. Completed the series of booklets on the species of small cats found in Nepal.

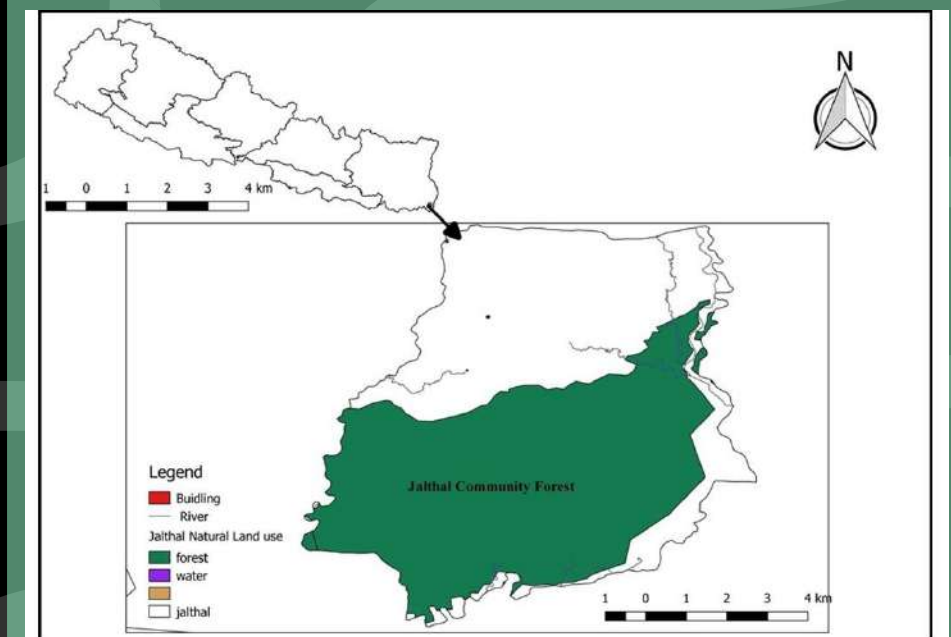
These booklets now can be shared while conducting outreach programs, used while conducting surveys and distributed in conservation awareness programs. We started the task in 2016 and completed them by 2023.

2. Progressed in PhD program at Florida International University.

Started the PhD program starting from January 2021 and by the the end of 2023, all the necessary required courses to be taken are completed with the successful qualifying exam. Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation provided the fellowship to carry out the PhD program at Florida International University in 2021. In 2024 during the fourth year of PhD, I will be defending my proposal and heading to the field works. All the necessary permission are already secured from the Government agencies.

3. Survey of fishing cat in the Jhapa district of Eastern Nepal.

Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve is the known Easternmost distribution range of fishing cat in Nepal. In the July of 2022, we surveyed the wetlands, Jalthal forests, river banks and tea gardens of Jhapa district adjacent to the Nepal India border for the potential presence of fishing cat. However, the camera trap survey did not yield any fishing cat in the area but the area had distribution of jungle cats



Activities 2021-2023

- 4. Fishing cat Conservation Co-learning field.** In our more than a decade long fishing cat conservation works in the lowlands of Nepal, we have come along a long way from the conservation education and awareness programs. We have now identified threats, found their evidence in the field, collaborated with the community for the conservation and now in a phase to understand their aspects of conservation demands. As a vanguard of the local community conservation, locals are shaping our conservation programs rather than conducting the plannings from our side. During this field, we were more inclined to listen to what the community has to say rather than the other way round. After repeated visits to all these sites in the last 9 years, we have made long term local conservation partners with the addition of a new generation. We communicated with the stakeholders in the July of 2022 to understand the challenges and conservation requirements.
- 5. Renewed hoarding boards distributed fishing cat conservation booklets.** Ripped and torn hoarding boards of fishing cat conservation in central and eastern Nepal were renewed and mended. We talked with the officials of local government regarding the challenges and threat as well as potential measures of conservation with them.
- 6. Conducted fishing cat conservation awareness programs with local community and security personnel.**



Ongoing and Planned Activities

1. **Data collection on illegal wildlife trade:** We will collect global information on legal trade of fishing cat in 2024. Similarly, we will also collect evidences of illegal trade of fishing cat within the country along the human dominated landscape of fishing cat distribution range sites in Nepal.
2. **Visits of governmental agencies to collect the record of illegal trade if any.** The field work will start from the May of 2024.
3. **Website containing the information of the works done by Fishing cat conservation Project Nepal is under construction and is coming soon.**
4. **A story map of all the past activities of Fishing Cat Conservation Project Nepal was made in ArcGIS story maps and released.**

Link to the story map: <https://arcg.is/0Hv5ib>

A night-vision photograph of a fishing cat walking through dense vegetation. The cat is light-colored with dark spots and stripes, and is moving from right to left. The background is dark with some green foliage visible.

Fishing Cat Conservation Project Nepal

Fishing Cat Conservation Project Nepal started in 2014 for the exploration and conservation of fishing cat in Nepal.

More than a decade journey of fishing cat conservation in Nepal.

January 9, 2024

Favorite Fishing Cat Image and Why (3rd IFCS, 2023)



The fishing cat mother and cub were captured in camera traps in the private fish ponds of the eastern banks of Koshi River basin. Fish ponds of Koshi banks are important fishing cat foraging habitat and major reasons of conflict with humans.

Sagar Dahal, Fishing Cat Conservation Project (Nepal)





THE FISHING CAT WHO WE ARE PARTNER PROJECTS RESOURCES FISHING CAT FEBRUARY CONTACT US DONATE

Community Based Conservation of Fishing Cat in Jagdishpur, Kapilvastu of Nepal



Swechhya completed her Masters Degree on Environmental Science in 2018 from Tribhuvan University. She did her dissertation to understand the human-fishing cat conflict in Bara within Fishing Cat Conservation Project Nepal initiated by **Small Mammals Conservation and Research Foundation (SMCRF)**. Since then, Swechhya has been employed as a project assistant for SMCRF. She

Project initiated: 2019

Current status: Ongoing

Primary Investigator: Swechhya Shrestha



Community Based Conservation Of Fishing Cat

Project Information

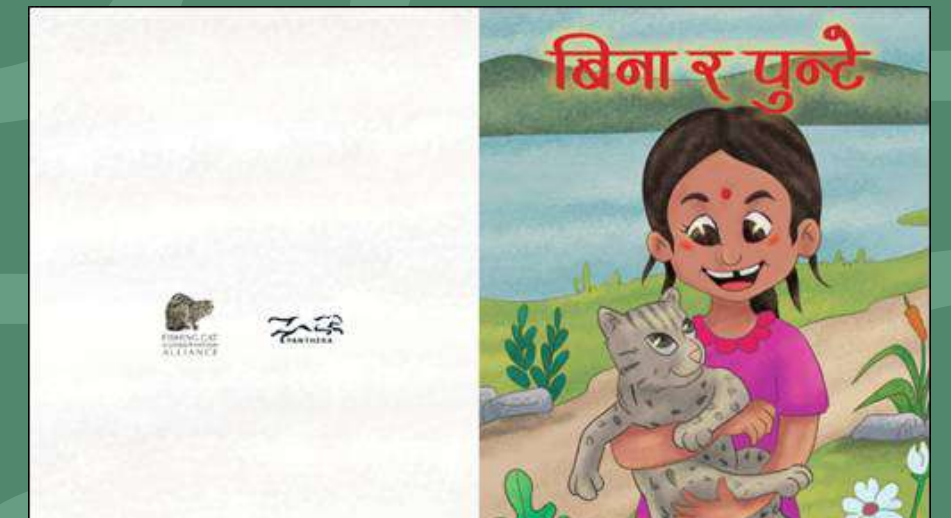
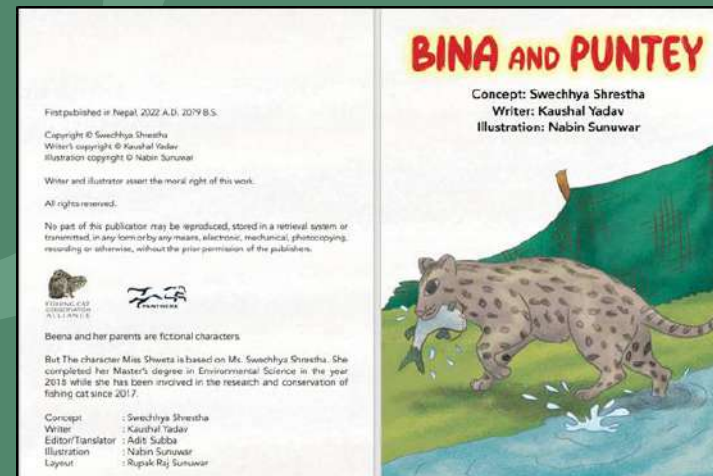
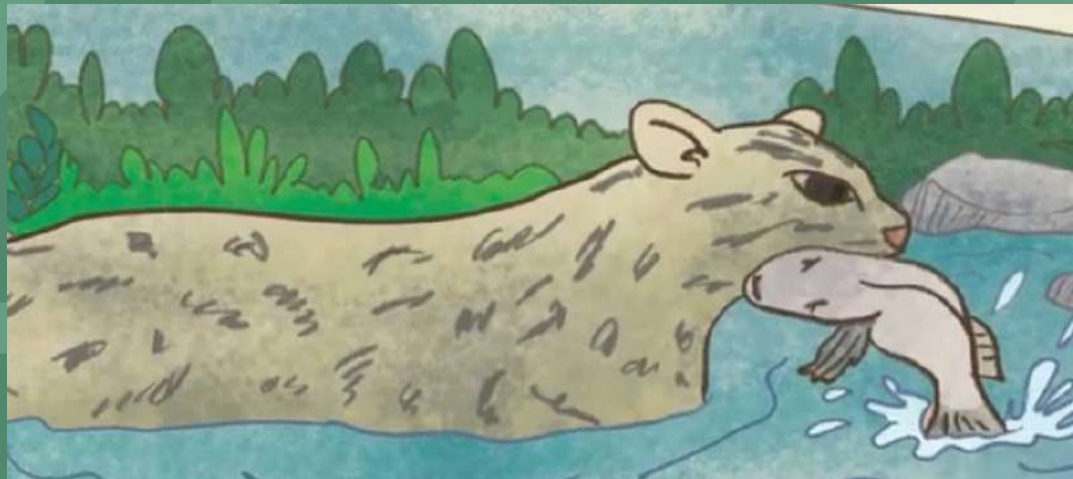


Background

The project (Initiation of Community Based Conservation of Fishing Cat in Jagdishpur, Kapilvastu) was formed in 2018 which was funded by The Rufford Foundation. Fishing cat was first recorded in Jagdishpur in 2015. A preliminary survey was done in 2018 before developing the project. The survey was done in the form of Key Informant Survey. The result showed that the community has difficulty in identifying the wildlife of the area, including the difference between fishing cat and jungle cat. Aquaculture is one of the important aspects for the economy of the locals of Jagdishpur. Since fishing cats prefer consuming fishes from clean water, retaliatory killing of the mammal is one of the biggest threats for fishing cats. The locals were unaware about the species and its conservational value. Likewise, there had not been any major conservational work done specifying fishing cat even after its official record. Therefore, the project was introduced to balance conservation goal with the needs of local communities through their engagement.

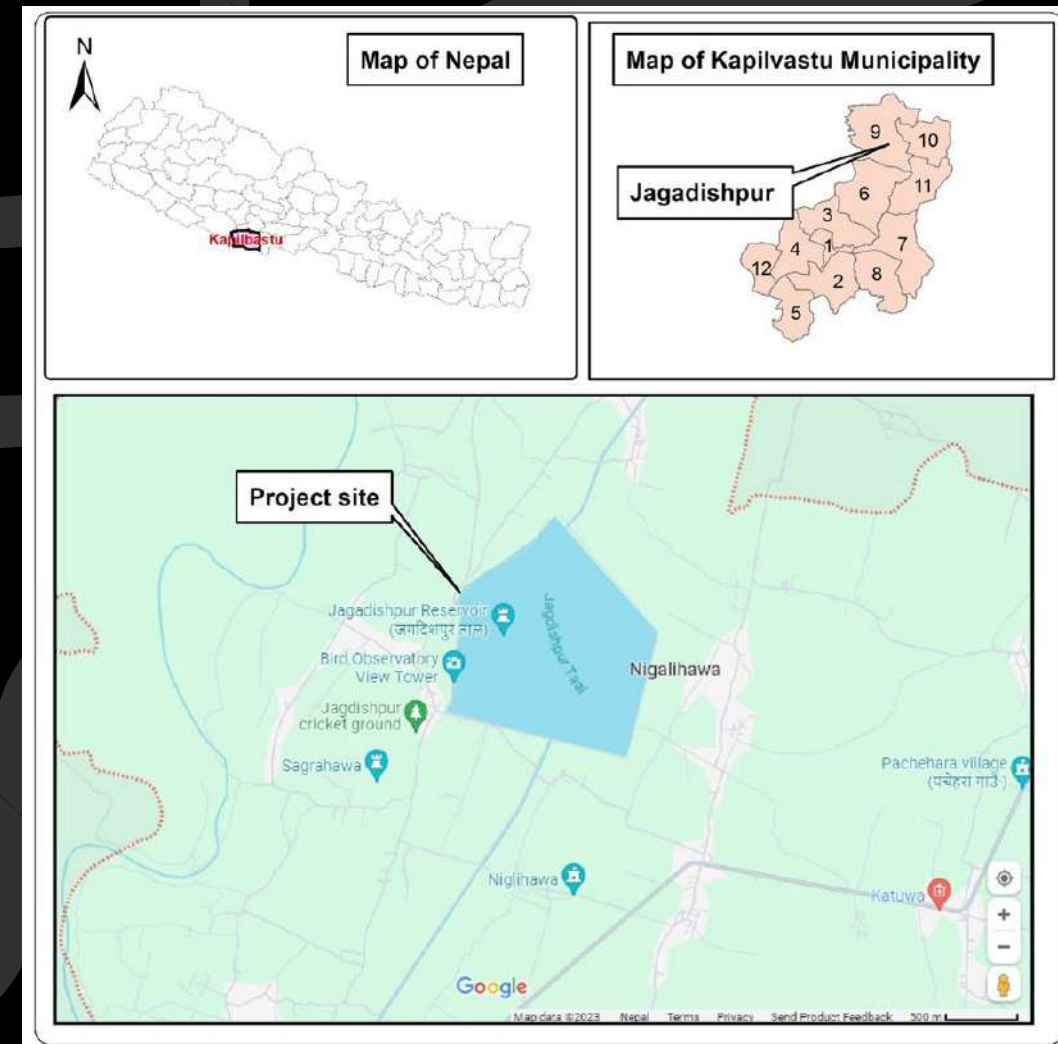
Objectives

1. To support community in order to understand the basic behavioral patterns of fishing cat, its habitat and threats it face.
2. To formulate effective and sustainable conservation strategies by collaborating with local community.
3. To mitigate existing threats to fishing cat by educational and public awareness programs.
4. To promote conservation of fishing cat as well as other wildlife species in the area.



Project Area

The project (Initiation of Community Based Conservation of Fishing Cat in Jagdishpur, Kapilvastu) was formed in 2018 which was funded by The Rufford Foundation. Fishing cat was first recorded in Jagdishpur in 2015. A preliminary survey was done in 2018 before developing the project. The survey was done in the form of Key Informant Survey. The result showed that the community has difficulty in identifying the wildlife of the area, including the difference between fishing cat and jungle cat. Aquaculture is one of the important aspects for the economy of the locals of Jagdishpur. Since fishing cats prefer consuming fishes from clean water, retaliatory killing of the mammal is one of the biggest threats for fishing cats. The locals were unaware about the species and its conservational value. Likewise, there had not been any major conservational work done specifying fishing cat even after its official record. Therefore, the project was introduced to balance conservation goal with the needs of local communities through their engagement.



September 2021

1. A two-day workshop was held in Chandragiri, Kathmandu to engage youths of Jagadishpur in conservation of Fishing Cat
2. The workshop, hosted by Nature Conservation and Study Centre (NCSC), brought together 10 participants from Jagadishpur and 5 experts.
3. The sessions were about different topics, including Fishing Cat's Habitat and Distribution, Community Conservation, Inorganic Waste in Recreational Areas, Small Mammals and Wildlife Monitoring and Threats on Wetland Birds.
4. The second day of the workshop was followed by an outdoor session where participants were taken to Taudaha Lake for Bird Watching, along with to observe the area.

December 2021

1. An awareness program was held in Jagadishpur, Kapilvastu on 3rd and 4th December 2021 to engage school students around Jagadishpur Reservoir in the conservation of Fishing Cat and biodiversity of Jagdishpur.
2. The program was hosted by Nature Conservation and Study Centre (NCSC), brought together 20 students from 10 different schools around Jagadishpur.
3. The sessions were about different topics, including Fishing Cat's Habitat and Distribution, Importance of Conserving Fishing Cats, Local Activities Conducted to Conserve Fishing Cats, Ramsar Site and Biodiversity of Jagadishpur, and General Introduction to Wildlife Monitoring.
4. On the second day, students were taken for Bird Watching around the reservoir, led by local participants who previously participated in biodiversity conservation workshops on September 2021.



Activities

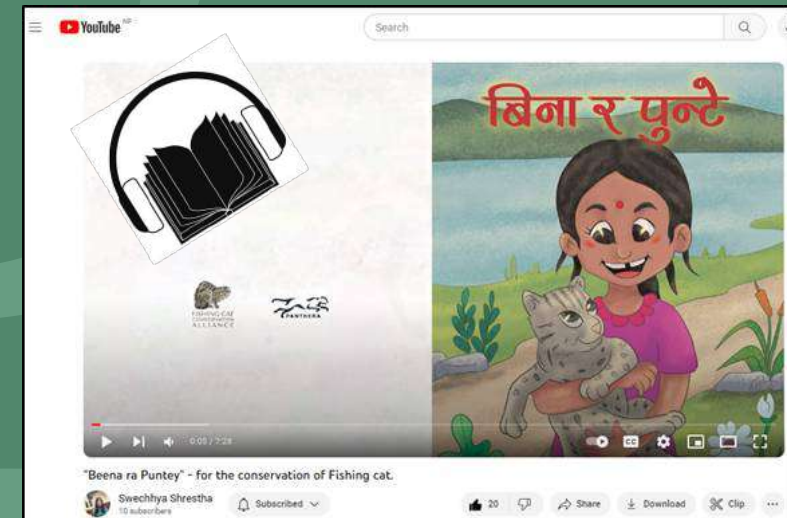
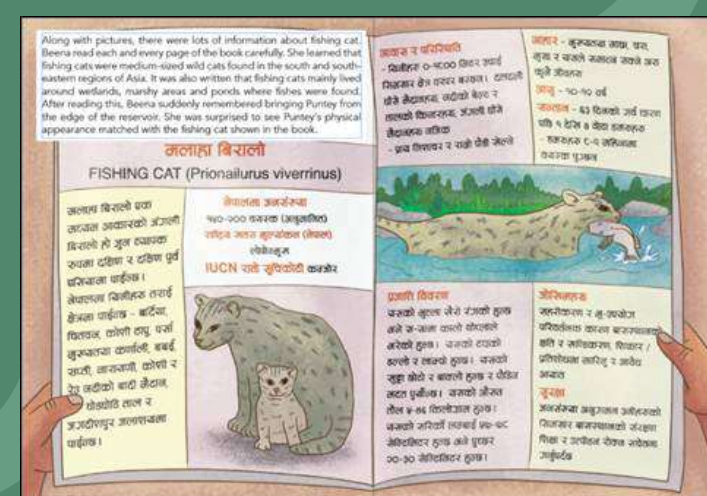
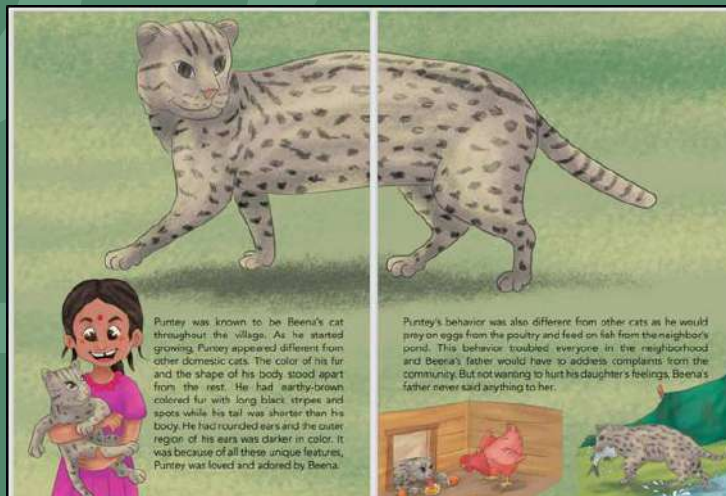
September 2022

1. With the aim to raise awareness about the conservation of fishing cats' educational materials, a storybook called “बिना र पुन्टे” (Beena and Puntey) was designed.
2. Total of 250 copies of the books were printed.
3. The short story unfolds about Beena and Puntey's relationship and how the former gets to learn more about fishing cats.
4. Although targeted to school children, this book contains information about fishing cat for every age group in the community.
5. Illustrative arts and simple language are used in the book to make it more readable and comprehensible.

December 2022 - February 2023 - June 2023

1. An audiobook “Beena ra Puntey- for the conservation of fishing cat” was produced which was adapted from the fictional book “Beena ra Puntey”.
 2. Original idea of producing this audiobook was to reach a wider audience who prefer listening stories.
 3. The audio book has been voiced over in Nepali language along with the subtitles embedded in the pictorial video.
- URL Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjS6xAxxHwI&t=91s>
4. After publishing Nepali version of the story book and its audio book, English version of the books were also designed.
 5. The aim of producing English version is to reach out international audiences and to support the FCCA partners in educational outreach programs whenever needed.

URL Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjS6xAxxHwI&t=91s>



August – October 2023

1. A documentary video “Conserving Fishing Cats” was produced to educate and raise awareness about the lesser known & threatened species; fishing cat.
2. It aims to showcase the unique behavior, habitat and conservation challenges faced by fishing cat, ultimately inspiring viewers to appreciate and contribute to the conservation efforts of the remarkable species.
3. Overall, the motive of the video is to foster a sense of empathy, understanding and action towards the conservation of fishing cat and its niche.

Ongoing Outreach Program

1. The outreach program cum community awareness campaign has been continued from the very beginning of the project.
2. Through the outreach materials (storybook, audio book and now the documentary video) different schools, community and local stakeholders has been reached out to flow the conservation message.



Future Plans

- Celebration of Fishing Cat February by collaborating with other FCCA Nepali partners.
- Continuation of outreach and awareness program via the outreach materials created (Documentary video, books & audio books).
- Extension of the project area and conduction of conservational works.
- Documentary upload on YouTube targeting fishing cat February



Favorite Fishing Cat Image and Why (3rd IFCS, 2023)



This photo of fc is very special to me. It was a camera trap picture. Although its quite blur this picture was from the first project led by me. The picture is from Jagdishpur reservoir of Kapilvastu district, Nepal.

Swechhya Shrestha, Community Based Conservation of Fishing Cat (Nepal)



PAKISTAN

ZAFEER AHMED SHAIKH



Working on the distribution and threats of the Fishing cats around the Indus floodplains in Pakistan. The Fishing Cat was considered extinct from the wild until a survey in 2010 found them. Recent evidence suggests it may be more widespread than previously believed.



Project Information

Background

Project formally initiated in-situ work in February 2021

The project is a network of farmers, landowners, wildlife department officials, citizen scientists, business men and students that jointly work to facilitate small wild cat conservation, primarily targeting Fishing cats across 5 Study sites distributed in the country mainly in Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.



• Goals and Objectives

IFCP aims to:

- Understand the distribution, threats and status of Fishing cats and other small wild cat species in Pakistan.
- Enhance public awareness and identify Fishing cats as a flagship species of the wetlands of Indus plains.
- Work on effective solutions to threats facing this species by creation of threat mitigating strategies.



Current Activities

- **Chicken coop program to reduce retaliatory killings**
 - Reducing human-wildlife conflict
- **Round table meetings**
 - Local stakeholders to bring all parties on same page
- **Camera trapping**
 - Field surveys to map out distribution accurately
- **Support, and Establish safe and smooth rescue procedures**
- **Outreach**
 - Signboards
 - Wall murals in village schools



Fishing Cat (Prionailurus viverrinus)

Distribution
Fishing Cat is only found in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand though once the cat was widespread throughout Southeast and South Asia. In Pakistan, Fishing cats primarily survive in the riverine forests around the Indus river and the vast spreading canal system that extends from the Indus in Sindh and Balochistan province.

Habitat
Fishing cats predominantly inhabit riverine habitats along the Indus river and thus, is also found in adjoining wetlands, river banks and marshlands.

Feeding Behaviour
Fishing Cat feeds on fish, crabs, rodents, birds, hard-shelled freshwater molluscs, and any other animals that can be caught as its prey.

Reproduction and Lifecycle
Fishing Cat become sexually mature at around 30 months. The general breeding period of Fishing Cat is in the winter season mainly in January and February.

Social Behaviour
Fishing Cat is primarily nocturnal and solitary.

Threats
Fishing cats face numerous threats in Pakistan. Retaliatory killings are one of the most common threats. As Fishing cats often prey on poultry from village households and fish from fish farms. Habitat destruction and loss is also a major threat.

Conservation and Legal Status
Fishing Cat is Globally categorised as Vulnerable (VU) and Nationally Endangered in the IUCN Red List of threatened species. CITES protect Fishing cats under Appendix II. It is given special protection under Sindh Wildlife Management Act of 2020.

Population
no national count yet.

Morphology
the body weight is 5-16 kg.
The head-body length of Fishing Cat ranges from 57-78 cm.
tail length of 20-30 cm.

INDUS

VULNERABLE

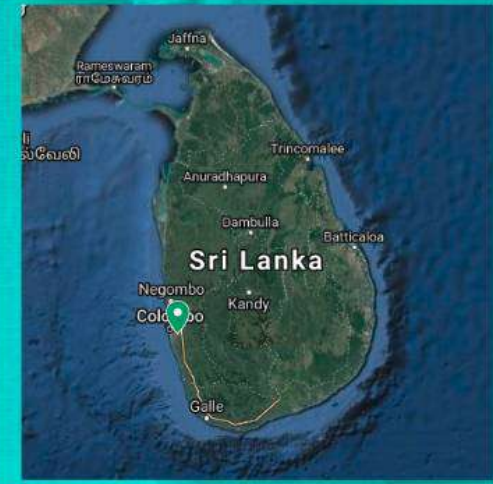
Favorite Fishing Cat Image and Why (3rd IFCS, 2023)



This is a young, most likely female, cat that is out and about in the early morning of a spring day at one of our study sites in Jhimpir, Thatta district, on the outskirts of Keenjhar lake. The best part of this video is that this juvenile is in a completely safe, private farmland where there is no possibility of harm towards them in any way possible. This is a very rare example as much of Fishing cat's range in Pakistan falls outside the Protected Areas.

Zafeer Ahmed Shaikh. Indus Fishing Cat Project (Pakistan)





SRI LANKA

ANYA RATNAYAKA

Studying the only known hyper-urban population of fishing cats via GPS collars and camera traps.
Spreading awareness for the species and working towards making it Colombo's guardian species.



Ramsar accreditation of Colombo Wetlands: Rebranding Colombo as a Wetland City

Wednesday, 21 November 2018 00:00 - 1265



The wetland complex in Colombo spreads across Diyawannawa, Beddagana, Thalawathugoda, Kotte, Kolonnawa, Thalangana and Ambatala, rendering a mammoth of services which are often looked over by stakeholders

Project Information



Background

Start date

September 2013

This project aims to protect fishing cats and urban wetlands in Colombo Sri Lanka by conducting research, raising awareness, and implementing conservation measures. The project focuses on studying the ecology and behaviour of the only known hyper-urban population of fishing cats within the species global range, as they adapt to their ever-changing urban environment, while also working on mitigating human-wildlife conflict, raising awareness of urban wildlife and wetlands, and providing vital information on the collected data to all government stakeholders.

By working with local communities and stakeholders, the project aims to protect fishing cats and promote the coexistence between humans and wildlife in urban environments.

Current activities

Research

1. GPS tracking fishing cats to understand movement and habitat use in urban spaces (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s42991-021-00198-z>).
2. Diet analysis and the discovery of micro-plastics in fishing cat scat (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2022.120694>).
3. Camera trapping to (i) monitor fishing cats in disturbed urban environments, (ii) understand how fishing cat activity changes based on the levels of human presence and habitat modification, and (iii) detect any interactions between domestic and wild species.

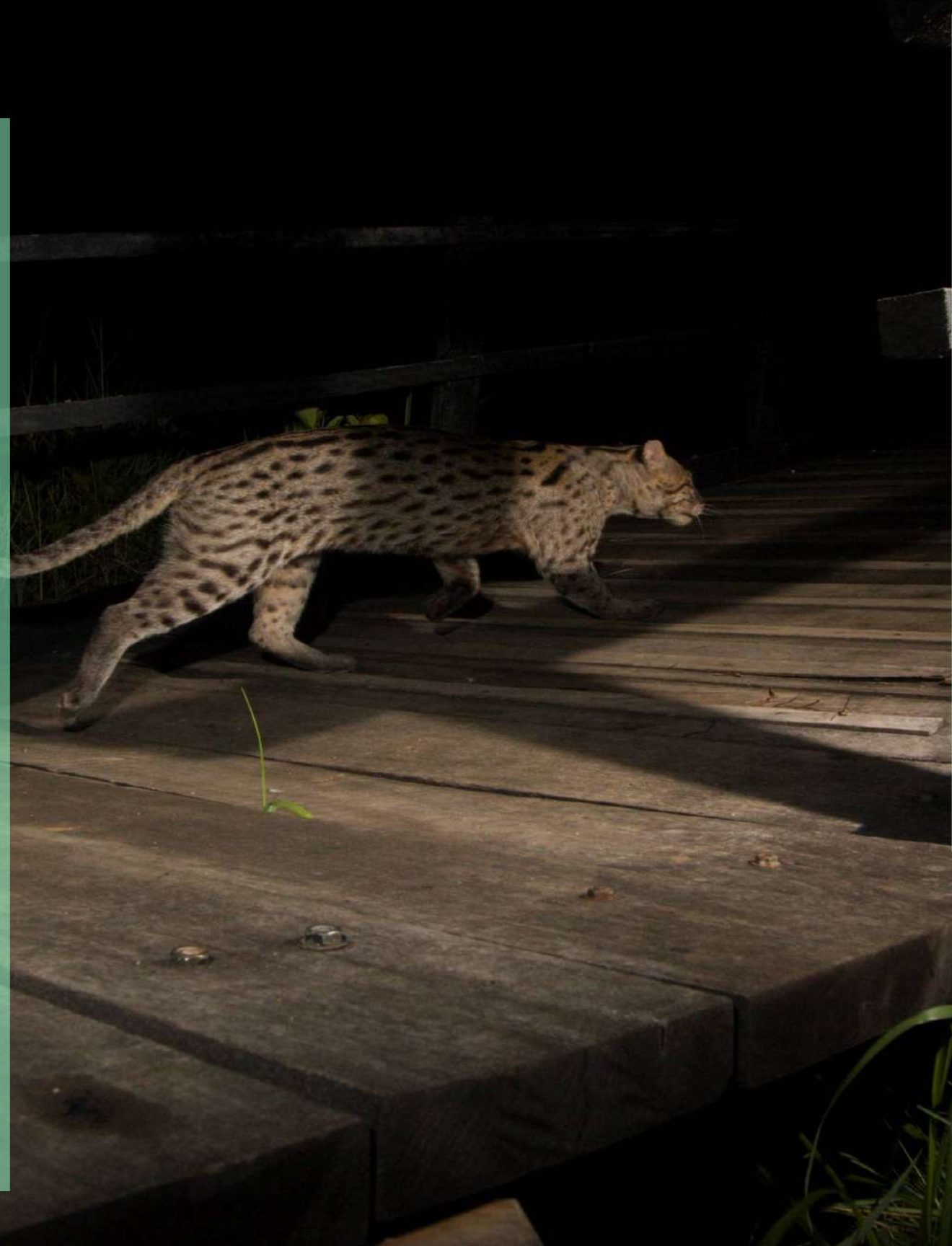
Awareness

4. Ongoing awareness programs and workshops for school children, the public, and government stakeholders on the importance of Colombo's urban wetlands and urban wildlife.
5. Creation of the Young Biologists Starter Course, which hopes to give kids (ages 11-16) the tools they need to enter the field of wildlife conservation.
6. Monthly Urban Wetland Walks for the public, to teach them about wetland habitats and their importance.

Current Activities

Species conservation

- Providing medical equipment to the Department of Wildlife Conservation's (DWC) Vet Units in the Colombo District.
- Providing multi-species recovery enclosures and transport cages to the Attidiya Wildlife Rehabilitation Center.
- Assisting the DWC in any wildlife rescue operations.
- Assisting the DWC officers in investigating potential carnivore-human conflict.
- Advising policy makers in their decision making processes with regards to wildlife and habitat related topics, and consulting on various projects.
- Identifying households that lose poultry to urban carnivores and establishing a trust based working relationship between all parties.
 - Currently these communities have had numerous negative interactions with non-profits (where they had no long-term benefits once the NGO finished working with them), and are therefore very reluctant to discussing their issues with us.



Future activities for 2024

- Establish solid waste plastic traps at major water inlets that lead towards urban wetland habitats.
- Create community involvement in keeping the waterways as clean possible.
- Establish an alternate livelihood program for women in low-income communities living around wetlands.
 - Upcycling single-use plastics.
- Set up chicken coops for low-income households that have lost poultry to urban carnivores.
 - Possibly follow in the footsteps of The Fishing Cat Project, and set up a chicken bank for these households.
- Continue all monthly awareness programs.
- Continue the Young Biologists Starter Course with a new batch of students.



Activities



UFC8m in the trap cage (left); Urban Fishing Cat team turning tracking equipment on (bottom left).



Urban Fishing Cat team getting ready to fix collar on sedated UFC8m (top right); Urban Fishing Cat team taking measurements of UFC8m's canines (right).



Dr Tharaka Prasad trying on the Humaniac™ V-Pro Animal Handling Gloves (left) and the Critter Gloves by Humaniac™ (right).

Images provided by Dr Ganga Wijesinghe.



Dr Ganga checking the respiratory rate of a changeable hawk-eagle (*Nisaetus cirrhatus*) prior to giving it oxygen.



Top row: Dr Chethika Gunasiri teaching the students about the importance of urban wetlands (left), participants identifying organisms collected during their pond dipping session (right).

Center row: An insect's legs seen through a participants FoldScope (left), the FoldScope packs showcasing their contents (right).

Bottom row: Participants presenting what they learned at the end of a session - They were asked to create a new species of mammal based on what they were taught about mammalian adaptations to urbanisation (left), participants learning about animal tracks and scats (right).

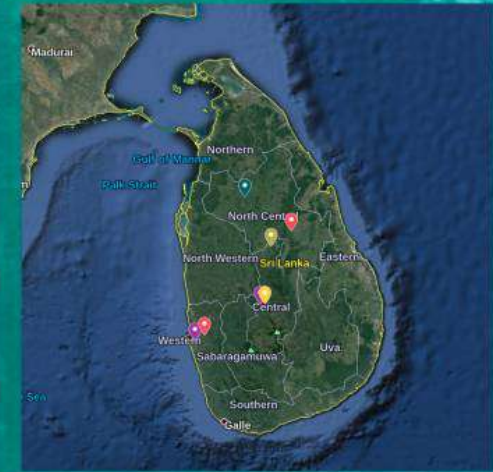
Favorite Fishing Cat Image and Why (3rd IFCS, 2023)



The fishing cat image is special because it is taken in the day time and perfectly captures the beauty of these cats even though it's from a camera trap. It was taken at one of the project study sites in Colombo. The fishing cat habitat image is one of the Urban wetlands in Colombo and is incredible because it shows how urban meets wild and despite all this development, it is the home of this incredible feline.

Anjallee Sheathal Prabhakaran, Urban Fishing Cat Conservation Project (Sri Lanka)





SRI LANKA

ASHAN THUDUGALA

Reducing threats through community based conservation and research of fishing cats in human dominated landscapes in central hills Sri Lanka.



How it's going (2023)

Background

Start date

November 2013

Conservation and research of small wild cats and other mesocarnivores in central and its associated areas in Sri Lanka while collaborating with government and non government bodies in the country.

Objectives and Key Projects

- Maintaining five rehabilitation enclosures for small wild cats and one permanent enclosure for permanently wounded wild cats in Sri Lanka
- Monitoring projects in central and north central provinces in Sri Lanka within past 10 years
- Dealing with policy makers, politicians through sharing our expertise, data, while consulting them with the decision making processes.
- Rescue and rehabilitation programs in central Sri Lanka
- Youth camps, school programs and public awareness raising in past 10 years of time around Sri Lanka
- Community enrichment programs - Fruit plans distribution (seedlings) program, chicken coop program



صندوق محمد بن زايد
للمحافظة على الكائنات الحية
The Mohamed bin Zayed SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND



Expansion of our rehabilitation programs in Sri Lanka

Girithale Rehabilitation centers – 2

28 small wild cats released/ 4 residents

Built on 2016 and 2018



Ampara Rehabilitation centers – 1

3 small wild cats residents

Built on 2023



Permeant enclosure – 2

5 cats

Build on 2014



Randenigala Rehabilitation centers – 1

9 released / 2 residents

Build on 2020





Chicken coop donation to strengthen the community guardianship programs for selected community members



Community enrichment to promote community level guardianship Program



Future activities for coming years



Planned activities

- Expand the project in to rural central hill regions with human wildlife conflicts
- Build up long term threat mitigation and community enrichment program with plantation associated communities
- Continue working with fishing cats while expanding to multi species Community based conservation program
- More focus on wildlife health and rehabilitation
- Keep continuing our work on community enrichment, education and awareness rising in much needed landscapes.



Favorite Fishing Cat Image and Why (3rd IFCS, 2023)



Fishing cat kittens in rehabilitation centers

Ashan Thudugala, Save fishing cat conservation project / Small cat Advocacy & Research (Sri Lanka)







FISHING CAT
CONSERVATION
ALLIANCE