

Training in Field Techniques for survey of Volant and Non-Volant Small Mammals Conservation workshop

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A six-day hands-on training in Field techniques for survey of Volant and Non-Volant small mammals was conducted at Nepal Staff Administrative College, Kathmandu and Institute of Forestry Pokhara, Nepal from 19-24 June 2007. The training programme was organized by Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore/ CBSG South Asia and its networks CCINSA and RILSCINSA, hosted by NATURE, Kathmandu and Bats Friends, Pokhara, Nepal.

The programme was organized in such a way that the introduction and basic aspect of the small mammal study was covered at Kathmandu, at the State Administrative Staff College, Jawalakhali from 19-21 June 2007, while the second part of the programme was an intensive field training for selected field researchers organized at the campus of the Institute of Forestry, Pokhara from 22-24 June 2007. At Jawalakhali 42 participants including 37 students/ researchers from Nepal, two from Bangladesh, one each from India, Pakistan and Scotland attended it and 16 selected participants from the above attended the intensive training at Pokhara. The resource persons, Prof. Paul Racey from Aberdeen University, Dr. Mike Jordon, Curator of Higher vertebrates, Chester Zoo and Dr. Sripathi Kandula from Madurai Kamaraj University and also the Scientific chair of CCINSA handled both class room and field sessions. The programme was made possible with the general financial support of Bat Conservation International, Chester Zoo and Knowsley Safari Park, UK.

Day 1. 19 June 07

The programme started with a simple inaugural which was attended by senior teachers and heads of the Zoology Department of Tribhuvan University. Paul and Mike gave a detailed introduction to Volant and Non-Volant small mammals. In the subsequent lectures they introduced standard techniques in inventory and monitoring techniques and sampling methodologies. In the late afternoon the participants set 40 traps in the campus for rodents and late in the evening spread one net for batting.

Day 2. 20 June 07

The day started with observation of rodent traps. On the second day many shrews were caught. Mike Jordan demonstrated the handling methods and explained sexing and identification. In the class room session survey methods of Volant and non-volant mammals were discussed. Sripathi Kandula spoke about four different research work that is being carried out by the researchers at Madurai Kamaraj university. Leaf selection and tent construction by *Cynopterus sphinx*, deposition of masticated plant materials in the tent roosts of *Cynopterus sphinx*; dispersal pattern and solitary adult males in a polygynous mating bat, *Cynopterus sphinx* are some of the topics he covered. Paul also covered a topic on ethics of bat trapping and marking techniques before going for field work. In the evening traps were checked and 5 mist nets were set at

the Central Zoo Campus. Seven bats belonging to two species were caught at the zoo campus. After examining the bats the second day of the workshop ended at 9.15 pm.

Day 3. 21 June 07

The day started with examining trapped rodents and insectivores. Participants were given a chance to handle the animals. After examination, animals were released. After tea, Dr. Will Tuladhar-Douglas gave a guest lecture on Ethnoecology, smallish mammals, and Nepal. Later Paul, Mike and Sripathi answered to the questions of all participants. After evaluation of the workshop the group set out for Pokhara in a bus. Reached Pokhara at 10 pm.

Day 4. 22 June 07

The Dean of the Institute of Forestry was invited to give a brief about the training programme. After setting traps for rodents and insectivores at the campus, the group went to World Peace Cave which is about 20km drive from the campus and 15 minutes walk. Four species of Bat were caught. After examining them the group reached the campus and continued with the rodent examination. Later 4 mist nets were set to trap bats which were examined and identified.

Day 5. 23 June 07

The day started with observation of traps for rodents and insectivores. The caught rodents were examined. After tea the group left for Pandit Chowk to observe Indian Flying fox's roost. After lunch the group went to Birendra Cave which is about an hour drive plus 5 minute walk. The cave is situated in front of Putli Cave. Two bat species were caught and examined. After returning to the campus, traps were examined and fresh baits were placed and netted for bats and examined.

Day 6. 24 June 07

The day started with Rodent trap observation. In the class room session follow up session on bats, rodents and insectivores was conducted by Paul and Mike. Paul summarized the workshop events and said a total of 26 bats belonging to 5 species were caught and examined. The species were *Hipposideros armiger*, *Rhinolophus affinis*, *Miniopterus* sp., *Pipistrellus coromandra* and *Rousettus egypeti*. Apart from this the roosts of *Pteropus giganteus* was examined and counting techniques were tried.

After this Mike Jordan summarized about the Rodent and insectivores species caught during the workshop. He said 30 animals belonging to four species were caught. They were (1) *Suncus murinus* that weighted about 50 gms, (2) *Bandicuta bengalensis* found in Kathmandu but not in Pokhara campus, (3) *Mus cookie*, 2 female specimens were caught of which one perforate and the other imperforate and (4) *Rattus rattus (tanezumi)*.

The workshop ended with the simple valedictory