

Monitoring and conservation of bats in the Kathmandu valley, Nepal

Sanjan Thapa^{1,*}, Suchita Shrestha¹, Sagar Dahal¹, B. A. Daniel² and Nanda B. Singh³

¹Small Mammals Conservation and Research Foundation, New Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal

²Zoo Outreach Organization, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

³Central Department of Zoology, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal

*Corresponding Author's E-mail: sanjan@smcrf.org

(Accepted April 30, 2012)

ABSTRACT

The Kathmandu Valley has been a centre for bat study since the 19th century. Twenty five species of bats have been documented from Kathmandu Valley including two species of fruit bats until 1997. Opportunistic and sporadic survey was continued then after. There was a gap of more than a decade for monitoring. A recent preliminary survey in 2008 re-recorded only three species which revealed the need for detailed monitoring. Bats conservation is a rare practice in Nepal which lags behind neighboring countries. The negative perception of the bats and lack of awareness is the primary factor for the lack of conservation. This project is designed to redress this at twenty sites within the Kathmandu Valley where mist and scoop nettings together with roost survey were carried out. Lectures to schoolchildren were the primary conservation action along with radio-awareness programmes. Twelve species was re-recorded excluding fruit bats and two unidentified species (*Pipistrellus* sp. and *Myotis* sp.). Specific roost sites and foraging habitats were discovered and documented in the study area. A new site of occurrence of vulnerable species Mandelli's Mouse-eared *Myotis* *Myotis sicarius* was identified. A special trend of seasonal variation in species at few study sites was observed while in few the species were found resident. Thirteen half hour radio programmes about bats were successfully broadcast throughout Nepal from Radio Kantipur. Lectures of 45 minutes were delivered to in an average 75 schoolchildren per school at twenty schools in fifteen project sites. Post project effectiveness evaluation should be carried out.

Key words: Bat fauna, Nepal, detailed monitoring, radio-awareness programme