



ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2079-80



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ABOUT NCSC

Nature Conservation and Study Centre (NCSC) is an organization driven to conserve nature. We aim to do so by achieving a better understanding of biodiversity, protection of ecosystem function, enhanced understanding of climate change, and empowered resilient communities with an intact value-system. Our core values are equality, diversity, innovation, collaboration, accountability, ownership, hope for the future, and transparency.

We aspire for a sustainable world in harmony with nature.

We work and collaborate with scientists, researchers, activists, communities, and policy-makers to incorporate high-quality result-oriented scientific research into nature conservation and sustainable livelihood.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends and Supporters of Nature Conservation and Study Center,

I am delighted to share with you the remarkable achievements of our organization over the past fiscal year 2022/23. As we continue to advocate for biodiversity and nature conservation, it is a privilege to reflect on the significant progress we have made thanks to your unwavering support.

In our effort to nurture a deeper understanding of the natural world and inspire a sense of responsibility for its preservation, we are proud to report that we reached more than 250 students through various outreach and awareness programs. By engaging with young minds and instilling in them a passion for conservation, we are sowing the seeds of change for a brighter, more sustainable future. We continue to engage and educate the community, and this year, we expanded our outreach efforts by creating and uploading three informative and inspiring conservation videos. These videos, namely "Bats for Balanced Ecosystem: Ecological Documentary," "Save The Frogs Day 2023," and "World Sparrow Day 2023," have reached a wide audience, spreading awareness about critical conservation issues and inspiring action.

Our most impactful achievement this year was the successful completion of the Chamera, Chiuri, and Chepang Project. This initiative was born out of the urgent need to address the dwindling Chiuri tree population, which holds tremendous significance for communities like the Chepang, who rely on it for Chiuri Ghee, oilseed cakes, and honey. Similarly, one of the highlights of this year was the successful organization of a community conservation workshop, where experts shared invaluable insights and knowledge. This initiative furthered our commitment to educating and empowering individuals to become stewards of our planet.

Financial sustainability is crucial for our work, and I am pleased to announce that we secured funding for six essential projects distributed in three different provinces. These projects will play a pivotal role in the protection of our environment and the preservation of precious ecosystems.

Collaboration is at the heart of our approach, and in the past year, we forged partnerships with six academic institutions. These collaborations are instrumental in advancing our research and conservation efforts. Together, we are pooling resources and expertise to tackle the complex challenges facing our planet.

Last but not least, we celebrated three meaningful events throughout the year, bringing together our dedicated team, supporters, and local communities. These occasions allowed us to reflect on our achievements, express gratitude, and strengthen our collective resolve to protect and preserve our planet's biodiversity.

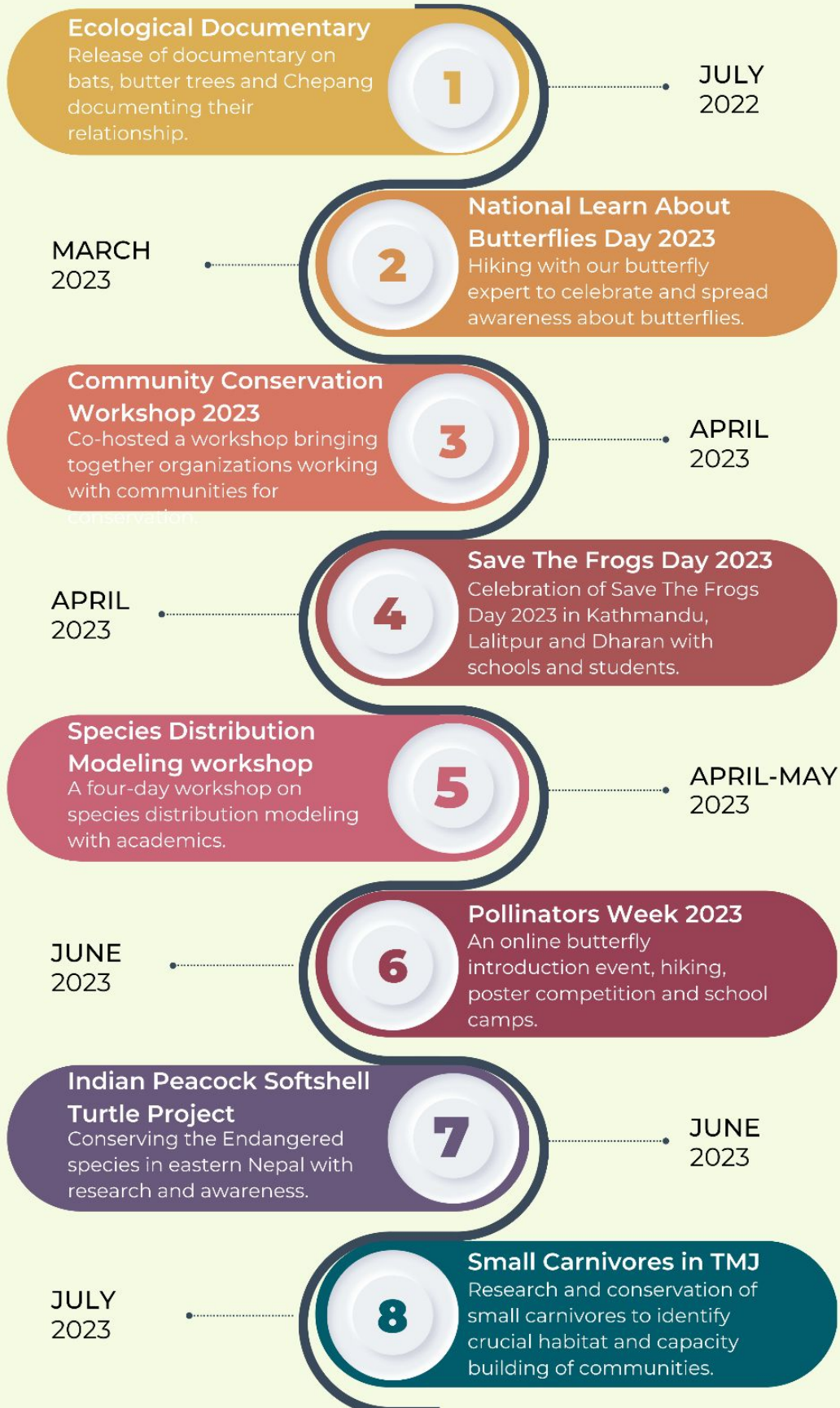
In closing, I want to express my deepest appreciation to our dedicated team, volunteers, donors, and partners who have made these accomplishments possible. Together, we are making a positive impact on biodiversity and nature conservation.

As we look ahead to the coming year, I am filled with hope and determination. The challenges may be great, but with your continued support, we will strive to make an even greater difference in the world of conservation.

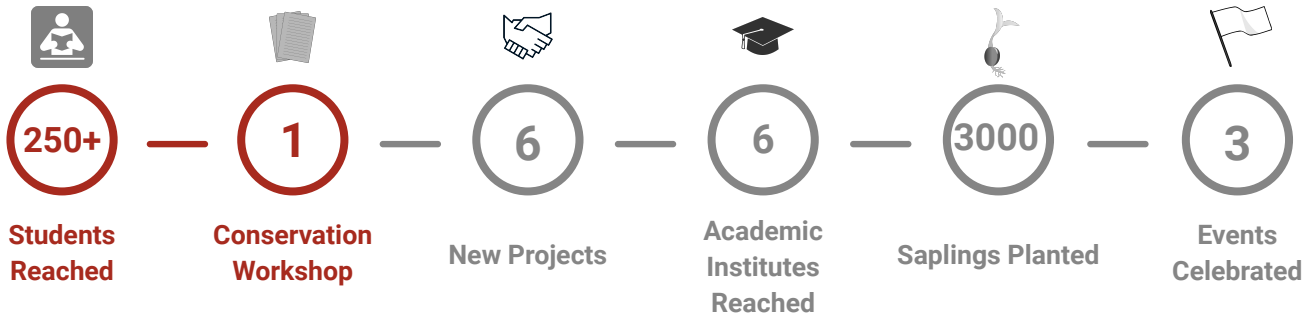
Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our cause. Together, we can ensure a more sustainable and biodiverse future for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Meena Bohara, PhD
President, NCSC

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



ACTIVITIES



Conservation Publication

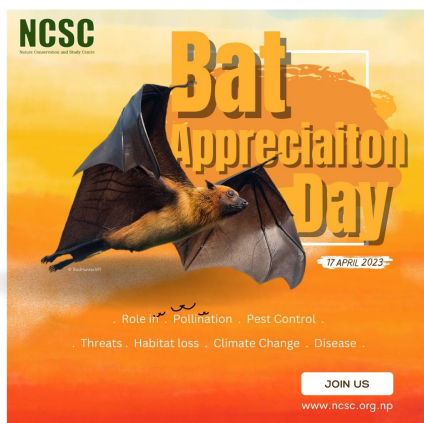
We created and uploaded **3 outreach videos** on different conservation issues this fiscal year.

1. *Bats for balanced ecosystem: Ecological Documentary*
2. *Save The Frogs Day 2023!*
3. *World Sparrow Day 2023*



Our team were also member of two new publications in peer-reviewed journals:

1. *Evaluating the influence of environmental variables on fish abundance and distribution in the Singhiya River of Morang District, eastern Nepal.* Jash Hang Limbu, Dipak Rajbanshi, Jawan Tumbahangfe, **Asmit Subba**, Sumnima Tumba, Rakshya Basnet. Journal of Threatened Taxa, Vol 15 No. 5 (2023): page 23216–23226
2. *Seasonal variation and crop diversity shape the composition of bird communities in agricultural landscapes in Nepal.* Hem Bahadur Katuwal, **Jeevan Rai**, Kyle Tomlinson, Bhagawat Rimal, Hari Prasad Sharma, Hem Sagar Baral, Alice C. Hughes, Rui-Chang Quan. Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment, Vol 333 (2022)



Similarly, we also released 13 conservation posters through our different social media handles.

1. *World Bear Day 2023*
2. *Bat Appreciation Day*
3. *Save The Frogs! 2023*
4. *International Leopard Day 2023*
5. *Pollinators Week 2023*



Completion of Chamera, Chiuri and Chepang Project

Our initiative targeted the diminishing Chiuri tree population, crucial for communities like the Chepang, reliant on it for Chiuri Ghee, oilseed cakes, and honey. Bat decline is suspected as a key factor in this issue.

Fruit-eating bats, or *Chamero*, are vital for Chiuri tree pollination, enabling essential processes like pollination and seed dispersal. Unfortunately, negative perceptions and hunting for food have harmed bat populations, particularly in Chitwan district.

Led by Ms. Aditi Subba and supported by the Rufford Foundation and Brevard Zoo, our project documented bat pollination of Chiuri and conducted a vegetation survey to address the shrinking Chiuri tree population, vital for forest-dependent communities, notably the Chepang.



Key Project Activities and Outcomes:

1. Ecological Documentary: We released 'Bats for a Balanced Ecosystem,' a documentary highlighting fruit bats' vital role as pollinators, available on our YouTube channel.

2. Chiuri Sapling Plantation: We planted 3000 Chiuri saplings in local community forests, aiding tree conservation.

3. Bat Monitoring Training: We trained CFUG members in bat identification and survey methods.

4. Chiuri Vegetation Survey: We conducted a Quadrat-based survey, recording 243 plant species and observing about 595 Chiuri trees.



5. Bat Habitat Survey: Over 30 days, we monitored bat habitats at 11 stations using Mini Songmeters.

6. Beekeeping Workshop: To enhance Chiuri pollination, we organized a beekeeping workshop for CFUG members.

Our efforts aimed to raise awareness about bats' crucial role in Chiuri pollination and encourage conservation actions.



Pollinators Week 2023

Our campaign effectively raised awareness, engaged communities, and advanced butterfly conservation, contributing to a more sustainable future.

We celebrated National Pollinators Week 2023 to raise awareness and spotlight conservation challenges. Our campaign comprised a series of events: an online butterfly introduction program, a hiking and butterfly-watching adventure, a poster design competition, and a community awareness initiative.

Online Butterfly Introduction Event



A promotional graphic for the online butterfly introduction event. It features a central circular portrait of Mr. Sanej Prasad Suwal, the resource person, with a butterfly illustration behind him. Text on the left specifies the date as 19th June 2023 at 5 PM. Logos for The Eco Conservancy, NCSC, and Butterfly Watchers Nepal are at the bottom. A Zoom icon and 'Via Zoom Meeting' text are at the top right.

Date: 19th June 2023
Time: 5 PM

Our Resource Person:
Mr. Sanej Prasad Suwal

Organized by:  **NCSC**

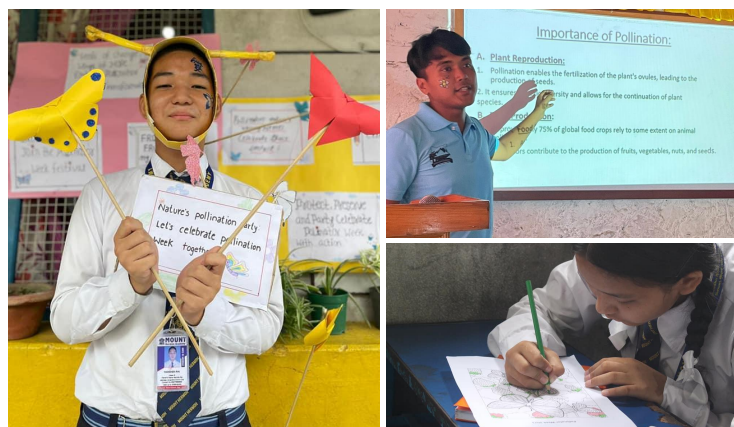
In collaboration with: 

The online butterfly introduction program (June 19-20), shared basic knowledge about butterflies, their importance, and the threats they face. Participants also learned basic butterfly identification, research strategies, butterfly-watching and photography tips.

On June 25, our hiking and butterfly-watching excursion in Dharan engaged 22 nature enthusiasts. We emphasized the critical role of pollinators, especially butterflies, in our ecosystem. This event deepened participants' connection to nature, fostering a sense of responsibility towards pollinators.



Our "Poster Designing Competition" was a collaborative effort involving Butterfly Watchers Nepal, Bhaktapur Jaycees, Research Committee Hattisar (RCH), and The Eco Conservancy. This contest used visual storytelling to advocate for butterfly conservation and their vital role as pollinators. Eleven talented designers participated in the competition, with Kanti Malla and Ritu Joshi emerging as deserving winners.



On June 28, 2023, our school-level awareness program at Mount Hermon Academy aimed to inform the next generation about pollinators' importance and the urgent need for their conservation. Over 100 students actively participated in the activities.



Community Conservation Workshop

On 25 April, 2023, we co-organized a vital workshop on community conservation in Nepal, with Community Conservation, Inc., Greenhood Nepal, and Community Conservation Nepal. This gathering united leading organizations and individuals deeply involved in community-led biodiversity conservation in Nepal. Participants openly shared their experiences and discussed the need for a united network to support community-led conservation. Valuable insights were exchanged, lessons learned were highlighted, and future goals for community-driven conservation in Nepal were outlined.



SDM workshop

Our Species Distribution Modeling (SDM) Workshop, from April 30 to May 3, 2023, was a great success. It brought together individuals deeply passionate about wildlife and environmental conservation. Using 'R' software, we explored modern techniques to understand animal habitats, identify gaps in their presence, and develop strategies for conservation. Three enthusiastic participants joined us, contributing valuable insights.



Save The Frogs Day Celebration

We celebrated Save The Frogs Day 2023 engaging students from three different Nepalese schools in a celebration of amphibians and conservation. The main event took place in Ranibari Community Forest in Kathmandu district, with partner events in Dharan and Lalitpur districts. Approximately 130 students participated, enjoying a range of educational activities including interactive presentations, games, nature walks, coloring competitions, and more. Throughout the week, we also shared informative infographics about Nepal's amphibians on our social media platforms to enhance public awareness.

This event, supported by SAVE THE FROGS!, was made possible through partnerships with Ranibari Community Forest User Group, Research Committee Hattisar (RCH), and Environmental Protection and Study Center (ENPROSC), along with the efforts of independent volunteers.



National Learn About Butterflies Day 2023

To mark National Learn About Butterflies Day 2023, NCSC partnered with Butterfly Watchers Nepal, Bhaktapur Jaycees, and the District Forest Office, Bhaktapur, for an enriching hiking event. Led by butterfly expert Sanej Prasad Suwal, eight enthusiasts explored a 5-kilometer trail, learning butterfly identification techniques and the significance of these creatures in our ecosystem. This event, promoting butterfly conservation and sustainable tourism in Nepal, reflects our dedication to biodiversity preservation.

New Projects

We have initiated six new conservation projects, ranging from preserving endangered species like the Chinese Pangolin to community-led initiatives in Nepal's forests. These projects aim to foster wildlife conservation, habitat protection, and community involvement, highlighting NCSC's commitment to environmental stewardship.



Indian Peacock Softshell Turtle in Jhapa

The Indian Peacock Softshell Turtle is endangered in eastern Nepal due to habitat loss and pollution. Our project, funded by the Rufford Small Grants, aims to assess their distribution and threats. We'll raise awareness through campaigns and workshops, promoting sustainable practices. Evidence-based materials will guide conservation efforts, ensuring the turtle's preservation.

Small Carnivores in TMJ

We're committed to small carnivore conservation in Tinjure-Milke-Jaljale (TMJ) following our previous work on small carnivores in TMJ. TMJ, rich in Rhododendron forests and wildlife, is vital for local communities and tourism.

Our project, funded by the Rufford Small Grants aims to empower communities in small carnivore conservation leadership. We will use camera traps for data, educate secondary students, and empower community forest groups.



Eco-clubs in Khotang

Our project, supported by the Greenville Zoo, addresses the critical endangerment of the Chinese pangolin in Khotang district. We're establishing eco-clubs in local schools to educate students and teachers about pangolin conservation and biodiversity. These eco-clubs will take part in conservation projects, fostering a sense of responsibility and sustainability.



Rapid Biodiversity Assessment in the mid-hills

Our project, funded by The Explorers Club, focuses on the biodiverse mid-hill forest near Dudhpokhari, Nepal. This landscape connects the Annapurna and Manaslu Conservation Areas but doesn't have conservation attention due to limited biodiversity knowledge. We'll assess mammals, birds, herpetofauna, and butterflies. Findings will be shared with local communities and governments to emphasize the importance of preserving their biodiversity.



Community Conservation Projects

We have got two new community conservation projects supported by Community Conservation Inc (CCI) and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCV) of Wisconsin – Madison. Both projects reflect our belief that communities are the most crucial stakeholders of conservation.

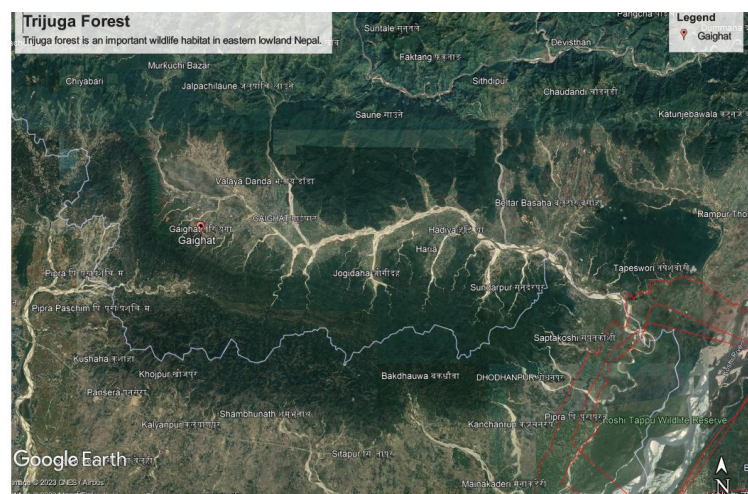


Dakshinkali Municipality

Supported by CCI and RPCV of Wisconsin – Madison, we're focusing on Gopaleshwar CFUG within Dakshinkali Municipality. This area largely relies on agriculture and community forest management. We're conducting a comprehensive wildlife camera trap study focused on Leopard. We aim to prepare the community for potential conflict scenarios and provide wildlife monitoring training to locals, initiating community-led conservation efforts.

Trijuga Forest in Udaypur

Our project, supported by CCI, addresses conservation challenges in the Trijuga forest, spanning 430 sq. km in Nepal's southeast. This forest, home to endangered species like the Asiatic elephant, sloth bear, and Chinese pangolin, faces threats from human-wildlife conflicts. We focus on community-led camera trapping, and capacity building for local forest groups. Our project fosters coexistence between communities and the forest's diverse wildlife.



PROJECT AREAS



Our current projects/activities are distributed from Lamjung to Jhapa district of Nepal covering three provinces.

1. Dona Lake Periphery, Lamjung: Rapid Biodiversity Assessment
2. Icchyakamana and Kalika Municipality, Chitwan- Chamera, Chiuri and Chepang project
3. Dakshinkali Municipality, Kathmandu District: Community Conservation focused on Leopards
4. Kathmandu - Community Conservation Workshop 2023;
Ranibari CFUG - Save The Frogs Day 2023 celebration;
NCSC Headquarter, Kathmandu - Species Distribution Modeling Workshop
5. Harisiddhi School, Lalitpur - Save The Frogs Day 2023 Celebration
6. Forest of Bhaktapur Bhaktapur - National Learn About Butterflies 2023 hiking
7. Diktel Rupakot Majhuwagadhi Municipality, Khotang District: Eco-clubs for Pangolin Conservation
8. Trijuga Forest, Udaypur District: Initiating Community Conservation
9. Mount Hermon Academy, Dharan - Pollinators Week 2023 Celebration;
Research Committee Hattisar, Dharan - Save The Frogs Day 2023 Celebration
10. Tinjure-Milke-Jaljale: Small Carnivores project
11. Kankai River floodplains, Jhapa District: Indian Peacock Softshell Turtle Project

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fiscal Year 2079-80 was a great year for us as we continued to work for nature conservation and protecting our planet. Thanks to all our supporters, partners and donors for helping us to do so.

We want to thank everyone for their continuous support. Following supporters deserve special thank you from us:

- Brevard Zoo, Rufford Small Grants, Rolex Explorers Club, Greenville Zoo, Community Conservation Inc., Returned Peace Corps Volunteer - Wisconsin-Madison, SAVE THE FROGS!, Raj Prasai, Suman Acharya, Manoj Pokharel
- Division Forest Office, Bhaktapur, The Eco Conservancy, Research Association of Hattisar - RAH, Butterfly Watchers Nepal, Community Conservation Inc., Greenhood Nepal, Community Conservation Nepal, ICIMOD - Living Mountain Lab, Ranibari Community Forest User Groups, Mount Hermon Academy, Save The Frogs, Dakshinkali Municipality, Ranidevi Basic School, Harisiddi School, Bhaktapur Jaycees
- BRASS Consulting Private Limited, Santosh Bohara, Sujata Budhathoki, Ramesh Khadka
- All our volunteers