

**Involving Communities in Southern Tanintharyi Region
in Conservation of Gurney's Pitta
Social Assessment
November 2017**

Background

A total of 13 villages (Yae Phyu, Chaung La Mu, Pyi Gyi Mandai, Chaung Nauk Pyan, Ma Noe Yone, Lenya, 12 mile, 14 mile, Yadanar Bon, 27 miles, Nam Kha Prao, Khae Chaund and Lam pam) in Tanintharyi District are located near to the Gurney's Pitta Species and Habitat Conservation Area. Agriculture is the main livelihood activity for these communities, the main crops being paddy, betel nut, rubber, tapioca, rambutan, durian, and mangosteen. These are grown on a large scale. In all villages the most important source of cash income is growing betel nut. Some farmers are very interested in expanding their betel nut plantations. Most depend on one commodity as their primary source of income.

Indigenous Peoples in the Project Area

The people living in these thirteen villages are of Karen and Burmese ethnicity. The Karen National Union (KNU) still controls much of the area. Where they do, there is less hunting of wildlife.

Expected Project Impacts on the Community

The project will use participatory methods, which support the development of new policies for collaborative protected area management and innovative economic incentive schemes for community-based conservation. Through collaborative management approaches, community-based conservation interventions, and economic incentives for sustainable livelihoods, the project will contribute to the well-being of indigenous communities. Specific impacts on local people will include:

- Local people will learn about the conservation of Gurney's pitta habitat, and how they can conserve this habitat for all species.
- Community-based organizations from Tanintharyi region will be encouraged to actively participate in Gurney's pitta habitat conservation.
- The KNU Forest Department will have increased capacity to develop solutions for conservation of Gurney's pitta, and all stakeholders will be motivated to get involved in conservation.
- There will be increased national and local awareness about the status of and threats to Gurney's pitta and its habitat.

No significant negative impacts are anticipated as a result of this project.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent

In selecting the location and design of the project, we consulted with local villagers, local authorities, and conservation organizations working in Tanintharyi Region. This was done to ensure that our project will not negatively affect any nearby communities.

Measures to Avoid Adverse Impacts and Provide Culturally Appropriate Benefits

No adverse impacts are expected to be produced by this project. This will be ensured by using participatory approaches, and keeping local communities informed of project progress.

Other risks associated with the project include potential adverse reactions to recent political changes in Myanmar, and the long-standing civil unrest in Karen State. The project will avoid conducting activities in areas with security risks, to ensure the safety of project staff and all stakeholders.

How These Measures Will be Monitored

Site visits will be undertaken to monitor the activities of community based organizations and Local Conservation Groups for their involvement in conservation of Gurney's pitta. Evaluation sheets will be prepared for the training workshops, and the feedback will be reviewed after completion of the training.

BANCA's Executive Director will visit the project to ensure that project activities are on track, and any issues (including adverse impacts on local people) are addressed accordingly.

Grievance Mechanism

BANCA will work closely with FFI and Wahplaw organization to receive advice about our activities and share socio-economic information. If necessary, activities will be carried out alongside staff of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC), Regional Government, and Karen National Union.

We will keep local communities well informed about our activities beforehand, to attract their participation. The Local Conservation Group will decide which activities should be prioritized. BANCA staff will help facilitate the process and finalize reports, after we receive consensus from the villagers.

The members of the Local Conservation Group will provide feedback to BANCA. We will provide them (with contact details (including mobile phone numbers) of BANCA, MERN (the CEPF Regional Implementation Team National Coordinator), and IUCN Myanmar.