



MONITORING SLOTH BEAR POPULATION AND HABITATS



Jointly Organized by
Chhotaudepur Forest Division, Chhotaudepur
Knowledge resource by
WCB Research Foundation, Patan



Kevdi Eco-tourism Area, Chhotaudepur
8 – 11 January, 2022

Comprehensive Report



Acknowledgements

Gujarat forest department and WCB Research Lab have signed a MoU for joint research, monitoring and capacity building for wildlife and forest conservation and under the same, this twenty-20 training course is designed. This training course is mainly focusing on monitoring the sloth bear population and habitat with scientific approach and the firsthand knowledge of the front line forest staff. National training programme on Monitoring Sloth Bear Population and Habitats is an innovative practice of capacity building and exchange of knowledge between forest staff organized by Chhotaudepur Forest Division, Chhotaudepur and WCB Research Foundation, Patan. The training programme would not have been a great success without active involvement and support of many peoples' hard work. We take liberty to acknowledge all who have been a great help to make this national training a big success.

Above all, we sincerely thank Ms. Aradhana Sahu, IFS, CCF Vadodara Circle for necessary approval and financial support. Her guidance and encouraging attitude boosted the future wildlife researchers and the frontline forest staff. Dr. Dhaval Gadhvi, GFS, DCF of Chhotaudepur is duly acknowledged for his deep involvement to organized this training programme.

We are also thankful to the governing council of Wildlife Conservation Research Foundation for the approval of this collaborative training programme in very short notice.

Our sincere thanks are due to all the resource persons who have spread their valuable time to be present physically as well as virtually and provided their knowledge to all the participants. We heartily thank all the CFs, DCFs of respective circle and divisions who have permitted their frontline staff to

participate in this training programme during tough time of COVID-19 pandemic.

We would like to acknowledge with great pleasure the continuous support from the local staff of Chhotaudepur range for their assistance during the field work and arranging all the logistics during the training period.

We would like to extend our thanks to Kevdi forest staff and all who are not named above but played an instrumental role during this training course. The training would not have been successful without the support of all the volunteers who worked very hard make it a big success.

Last but not least we would thank all the participants who travelled from different states of the country to be part of this national training programme and staff from different forest divisions for exchanging their knowledge and experience with us. Lastly, we duly acknowledge all those who have helped directly or indirectly to make this National training programme on Monitoring Sloth Bear Population and Habitats a big success.



Dr. Dhaval Gadhavi addressing the participants in the inaugural function

About the training Course:

National Training Programme on Monitoring Sloth Bear Population and Habitat was jointly organized by Wildlife and Conservation Biology Research Foundation, Patan and Chhotaudepur Forest Division, Chhotaudepur to develop the capacity of young researchers and frontline forest staff to conduct monitoring of sloth bear and habitats and exchange of knowledge between participants. The training programme was organized at Kevdi Eco tourism area in Chhotaudepur district. The training was called “20 – Twenty” that included 40 participants out of which 20 were students across the country and 20 frontline forest staff of Gujarat Forest Department. Participants teams were made with one student and one forest frontline staff benefiting everyone with knowledge exchange, experience sharing and capacity building.

Experts from various universities, forest department and their partners and collaborators across the country have delivered their talk and hands-on training on habitat evaluation monitoring and management, demonstration of camera traps and placing them on field. Apart from this, the advanced monitoring and assessment technique sessions on applications of Remote Sensing (RS) and use of Geoinformatics System (GIS) in bear habitat management was also taught during the course of training period. Also, field based mapping exercise, sloth bear population monitoring, conservation education and outreach, human-sloth bear conflicts and sloth bear rescue operations along with many field based sessions was part of the training programme that play vital role for initiating science based conservation and management of wildlife.

To enhance the problem solving and communication skills of participants, they were linked with the strong professional network of national and international

level experts and exchanging knowledge. Everyday few student participants presented their research and exchanges of ideas were happened.

Chhotaudepur forest division covered the basic cost towards the logistics including all training materials and training kit, meals, lodging, field travel during the course and remuneration of experts including their TA/DA. WCB Research Foundation has provided the knowledge resources and overall coordination of the course.

Course Objectives:

- The goal of the training is to train young researchers and forest field staff on science based sloth bear population monitoring and assessment of its habitat.
- The training highly focused on sloth bear population monitoring, its habitats and rescue conserving future sloth bear population.
- The training course included use of camera traps, advance technology like remote sensing and GIS to monitor sloth bear habitat as well as scientific documentation.
- The outcome of the training is to deliver the force of young researcher and forest staff together can conduct the effective research on wildlife and habitat as per policy makers and generating baseline data that can help in future conservation of wildlife and habitats.
- Exchange of field based knowledge and scientific knowledge between the forest field staff and researchers.

About the WCB Research Foundation:

Wildlife Conservation Biology (WCB) Research Foundation is a Non-profit organization registered with Government of India established in September 2020. The foundation is established with the goal of accelerating action oriented research and enhances the capacity of students for research and development in the field of wildlife and conservation biology. We are committed to science based conservation and outreach activities through research and development. We completed more than twelve research projects funded by several nation and international agencies and published more than 100 scholarly research papers, reports, books of national and international standings.

Since the establishment of the WCB Research Foundation, we had many interns and dissertation students. We offer and encourage exchange programmes with organization and institutes with similar interest and open for bilateral programmes related to wildlife and conservation biology. Currently we have four ongoing research and conservation projects in different parts of the state.

Our future goal is to encourage young students to make their career in the field of wildlife and conservation and enhance the capacity through training and workshops. Apart from this, we publish scholarly research articles and observation focused on the field of wildlife and conservation biology in our triannual newsletter “Prithivya”. Every year we announce M I Patel Award for young wildlife Biologists to encourage young researchers.

We are also engaged in community services such as wildlife rescue, plantation, eco-restoration and biodiversity monitoring and assessment.

Inauguration session:

The training programme was inaugurated on January 8, 2022 by Dr. Dhaval Gadhavi, the Deputy Conservator of Forest of Chhotaudepur in the presence of Dr. Nishith Dharaiya, the Course Coordinator and the founder of the WCB Research Foundation, ACF Mr. K M Bariya and the delegates of Kevdi Gram Panchayat.



During the inauguration session Dr. Dhaval Gadhvi, DCF of Chhotaudepur division and course coordinator have welcomed and introduced all the participants and guests with brief information about training course, venue and the activities organised during the training period. Moving on, Mr. Niranjan Rathwa, RFO- Chhota Udepur, briefed about the guests and welcomed them by presenting a memento. Dr. Nishith Dharaiya provided the details about the training programme and important objectives of the course. After a briefing about the training programme Dr. Dhaval Gadhvi, DCF of Chhotaudepur gave welcome speech to all the participants and explained the significance and usefulness of such training programme for the field staff. Adding to this, he

explained the needs of scientific monitoring in managing sloth bear habitats and the important role of field staff in conserving the sloth bear habitats.

During the inauguration session WCB Research Foundation in collaboration with Forest department released a comic leaflet of the 2nd winning story organised in 2020. This comic pamphlet is to be distributed among school children as an activity of Sloth Bear Conservation Outreach Programme in Chhotaudepur.



Training Sessions:

Following inaugural session, the training was moved in the classroom where every participants introduce themselves along with physically present resource persons and volunteers. Each forest staff participant was teamed with one research student during the course, so that they will get maximum opportunity for interaction and exchange of knowledge.

During the four day training programme, 14 different sessions including 3 field based exercise were carried out. The important sessions and topics covered during the training by 8 renowned resource person invited from different institutions and forest department. Each resource person conducted online either classroom sessions followed by relevant field work. The topics covered during the training programme are habitat evaluation monitoring and management, demonstration of camera traps, placing them on field, the advanced monitoring and assessment technique sessions on applications of Remote Sensing (RS), use of Geoinformatics System (GIS) in bear habitat management, field based mapping exercise, sloth bear population monitoring, conservation education, outreach, human-sloth bear conflicts and sloth bear rescue operations. The details of topic covered by the respective resource person is given in the table below.



Resource person	Date of session	Session detail
Dr. Nishith Dharaiya <i>WCB Research Foundation, Patan Co Chair, IUCN SSC Sloth bear Expert Team</i>	January 8 – 11, 2022	• Current status of sloth bear in the world: need for monitoring & assessment of sloth bear & habitat • Sloth Bear population monitoring • Opportunities for bear research • Human – sloth bear conflict • Overall Coordination of the training
Dr. Rohit Patel <i>Assistant Professor, Govt Science College, Dhanpur</i>	January 8, 2022	• Habitat evaluation, monitoring and management
Ms. Shalu Mesaria <i>Senior Project Fellow, Sloth bear conservation Project, WCB Research Foundation</i>	January 8 – 9, 2022	• Demonstration of Camera traps and applications • Placing camera trap in the field • Preparation for field work, data sheet and data management • Camera trap results and discussion • Participant Presentation
Mr. Vanraj Solanki, RFO Mr. Niranjjan Rathva, RFO	January 8, 2022	• Field experiences of sloth bear rescue
Dr. Gururaja KV <i>Academic Dean, Shrishti Manipal Institute, Bengaluru</i>	January 9, 2022	• Applications of RS and GIS in bear habitat management • Mapping exercise
Shri. Hemant Suthar <i>Retd. DCF, Gujarat Forest Department</i>	January 9, 2022	• Conservation education and outreach
Mr. H J Vanda <i>RFO and the Member of Wildlife Crime Cell, Gujarat Forest Department</i>	January 9, 2022	• Wildlife crime case studies
Dr. Swapnil Sonawane <i>Member, IUCN SSC Sloth bear Expert Team and Sloth bear Rescue Expert, Maharashtra</i>	January 11, 2022	• Sloth bear rescue operations
Mr. Pratik Desai <i>Junior Project Fellow, WCB Research Lab</i>	January 9 – 11, 2022	• Preparation for field work, data sheet and data management • Field work

Participant Presentations:

Apart from day time training sessions, each participant presented their work at the end of every day. Their presentation included current research work, activities and their future plans in the field related to wildlife and conservation. All the research students gave their presentation on various topics of wildlife and their current research and conservation work.



Valedictory session:

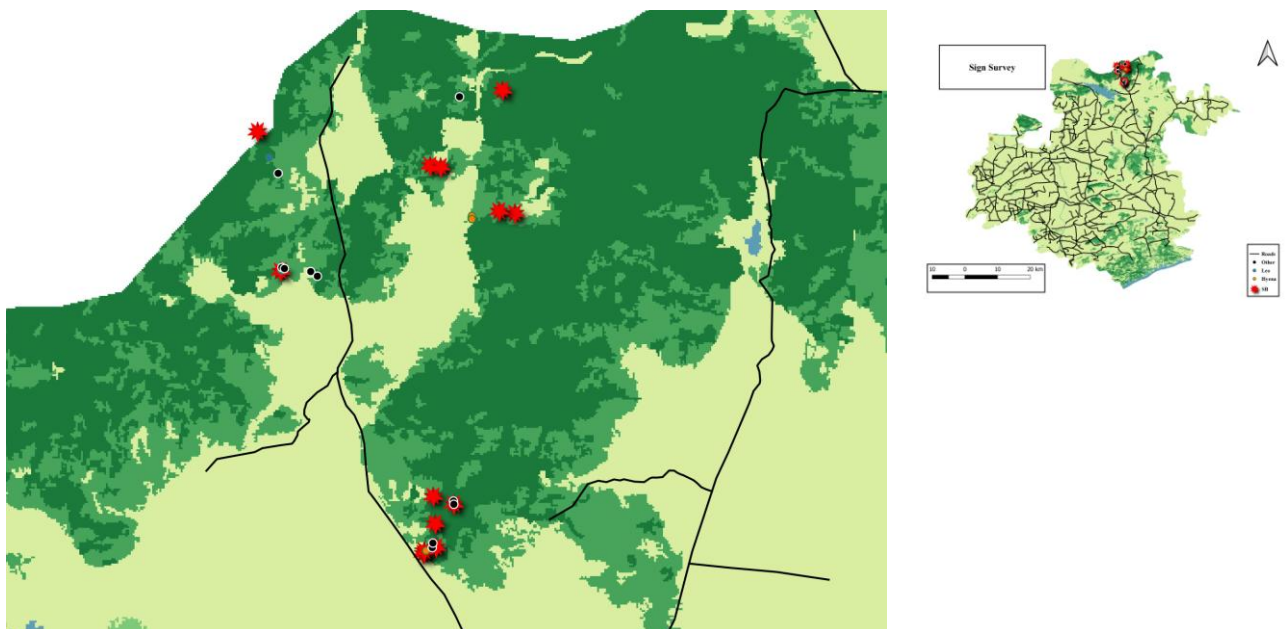
The valedictory session of the training program was chaired by Dr. Dhaval Gadhavi, DCF, Chhota Udepur during which, the participants were asked to provide their verbal feedback about the entire training programme. Dr. Nishith Dharaiya have delivered his concluding remarks and briefed the sessions conducted during the training. Ms. Sakshi Wagh, the winner of the story writing competition was specially called in the session to receive her prize for the best story. Along with these, following participants were given away the awards for their best performance in the training.

1	Best Trainee (Forest Staff)	Mr. S. P. Hathila	<i>Forest Guard Godhara Forest Division</i>
2	Best Trainee (Researcher)	Mr. Shailesh Desai	<i>BKNM University, Junagadh</i>
3	Best Presentation	Mr. Keshank Dave	<i>Anand Agriculture University</i>
4	Best trainee in field	Ms. Neelu Soni	<i>SGB Amravati University</i>
5	Best performance	Ms. W. Reshmi Singha	<i>Assam University</i>

All the participants have given the certificates of successful completion of training. Finally Dr. Dhaval Gadhavi has presented his presidential talk and congratulated all the participants and assured such more training in near future. Mr. N C Rathva, RFO, Chhota Udepur has delivered the vote of thanks before the concluding.

Training outcomes:

- Capacity building of forest field staff for science based monitoring practice of sloth bear and its habitat
- Capacity building of young research students and encouraging them to conduct policy oriented research
- A printed course manual containing study materials, data sheet and field techniques
- A community of practice for wildlife conservation



Classroom sessions:



National Training Programme on Monitoring Sloth Bear Population and Habitat

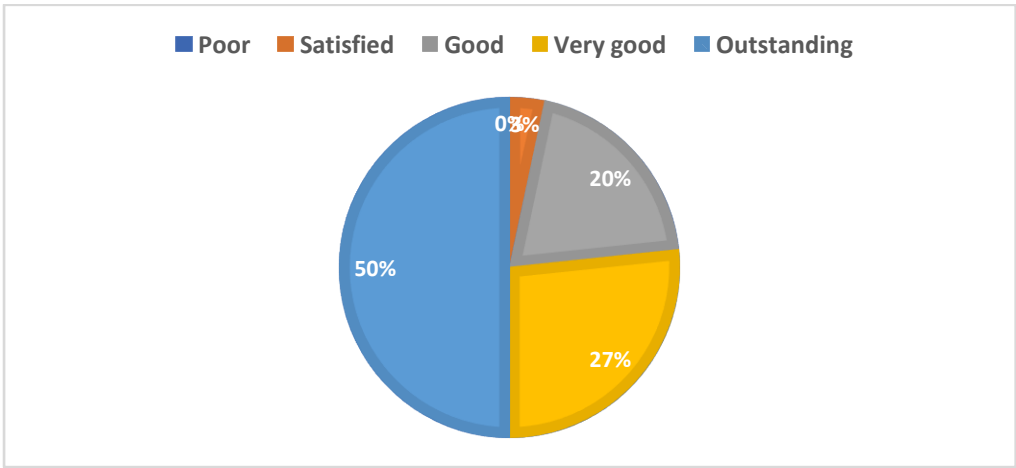


Field Sessions:

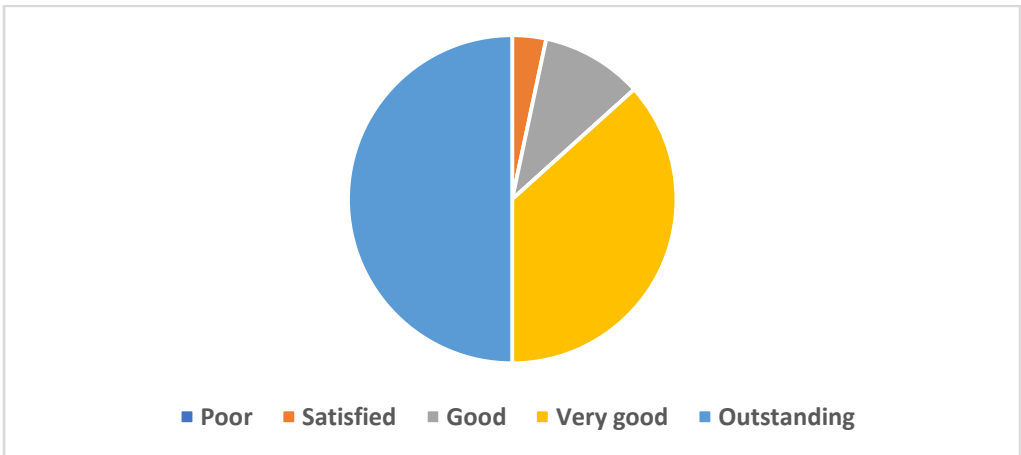


Participants Feedback:

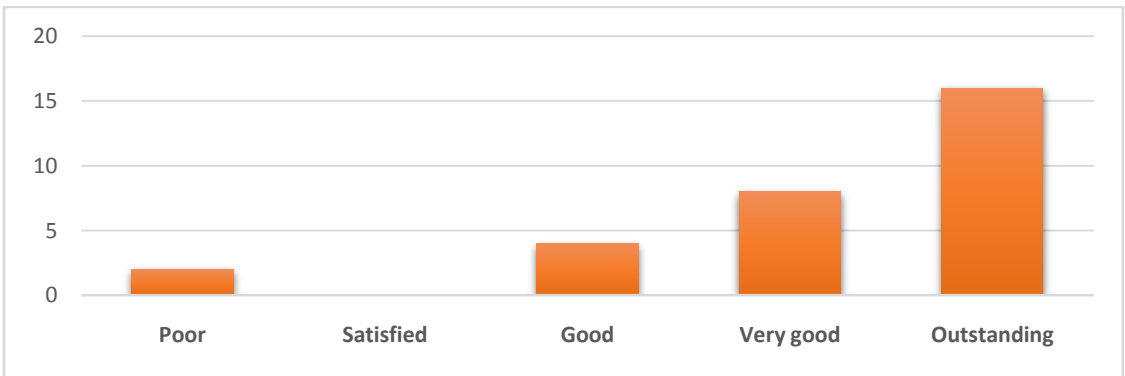
Adequate use of instruction time



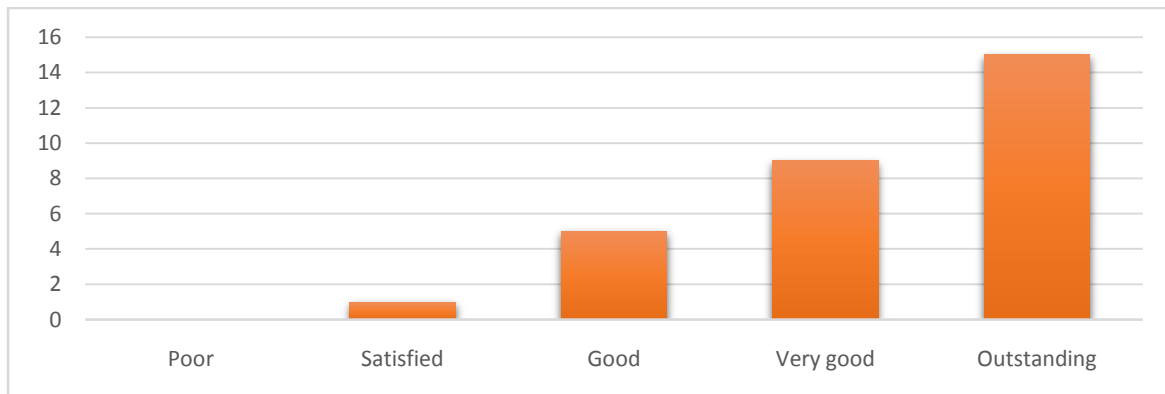
Depth, scope and clarity of material presented in this Training.



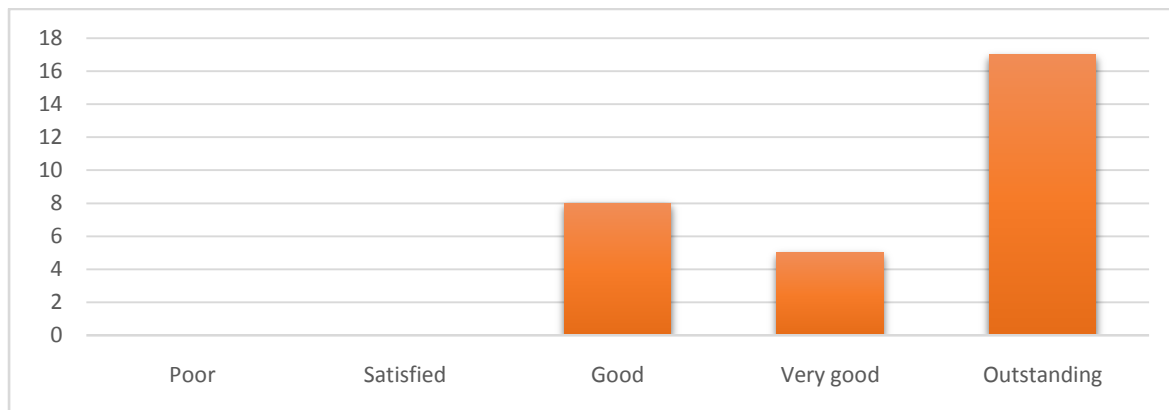
Helpfulness of field exercises, projects and practice Training



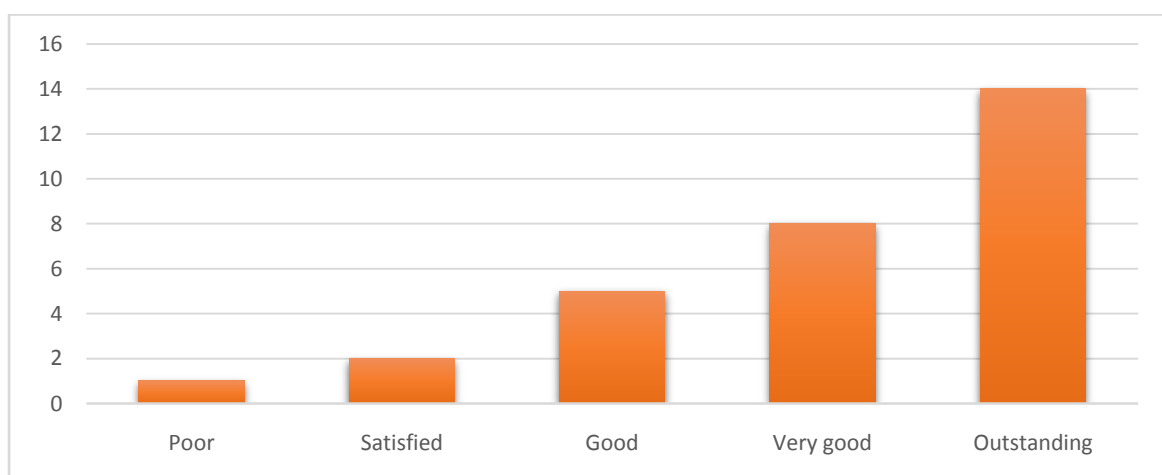
Adequate instruction provided for you to apply this information to your vocation



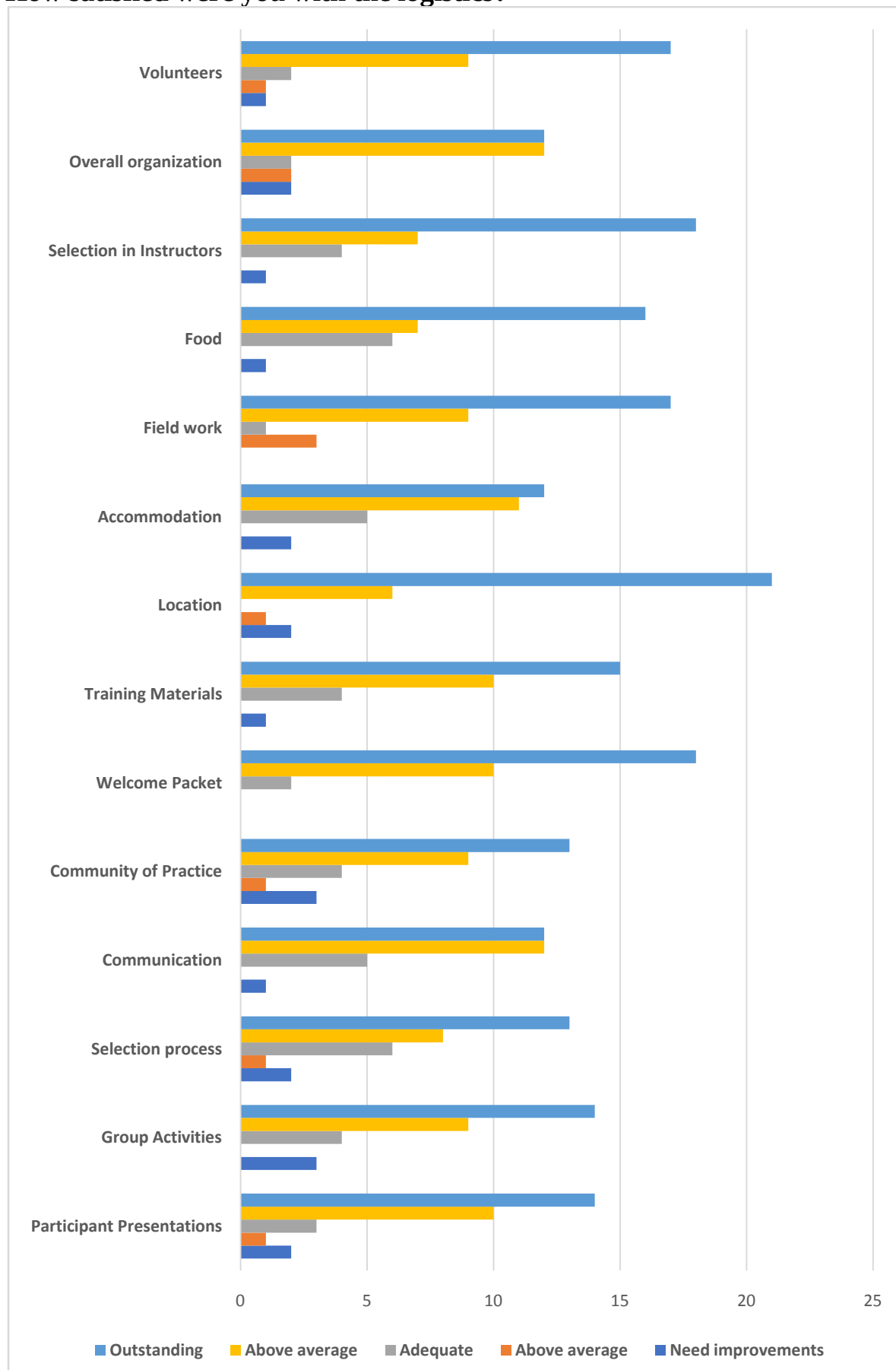
Ability of the instructor(S) to present the material



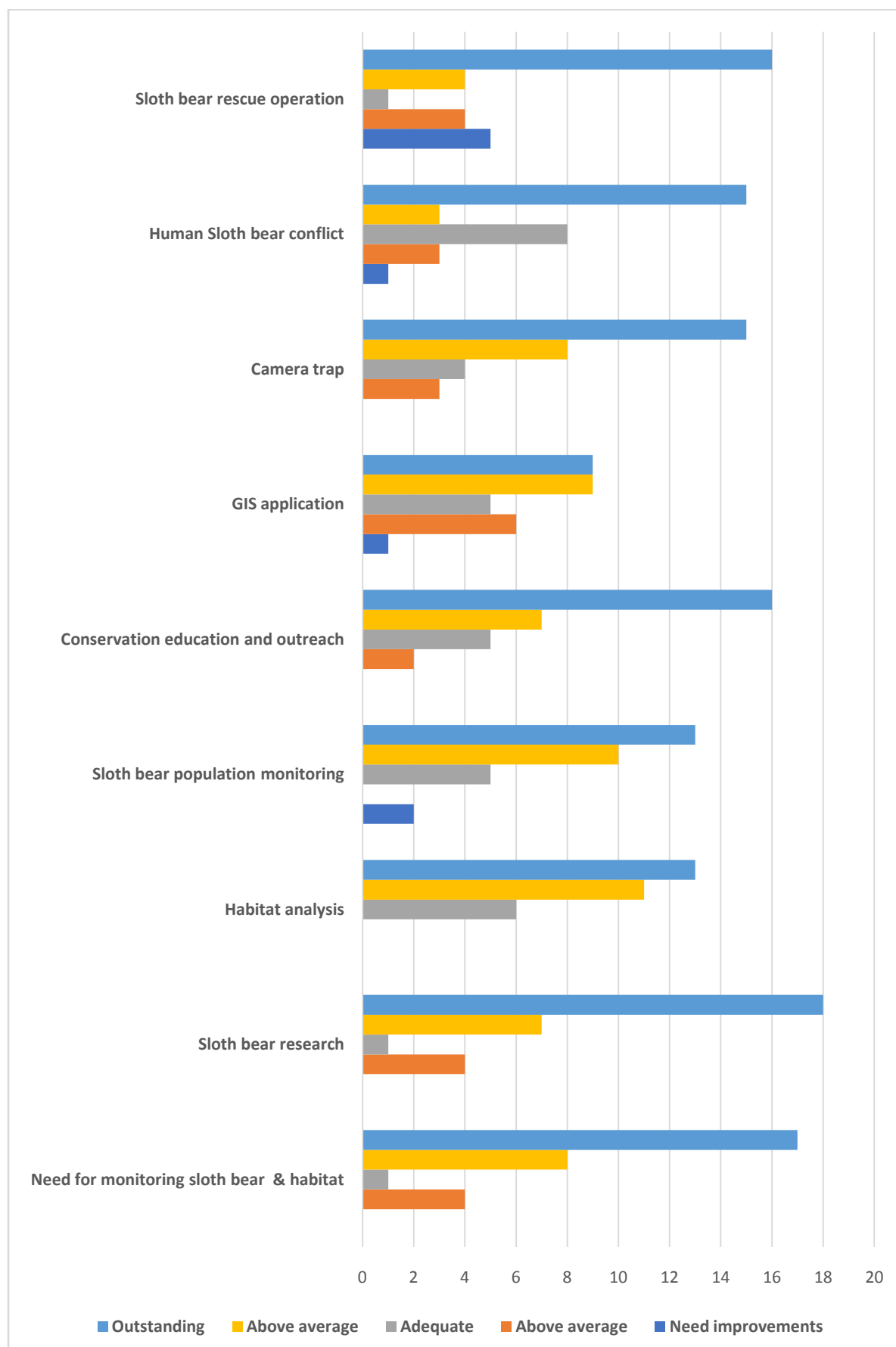
Organization of the sessions



How satisfied were you with the logistics?



Applicability of various sessions to your job



General Feedback:

The participants were also asked to provide their overall feedback and the suggestions for the future improvements. Most of the forest staff were satisfied with the training module and instructors; however, they have pointed out on the following.

1. The number of days for the training should be more and the field sessions should be more than the classwork.
2. More stress should be given on GIS, GPS and sloth bear rescue operations
3. Some hands-on practices should be provided for rescue instruments and camera trap sessions
4. Such training should be organized every year with the same group with more advanced topics.

The research students participated from different states of India were pointed out with the following feedback and suggestions.

1. More time should be given in the field work and number of days for training should be at least one week.
2. Each session should have one day for classroom session followed by the field session
3. Advanced training should be organized in future with more topics such as GIS, Radio telemetry and habitat analysis.
4. The special session on research opportunities was excellent and more time should be given for such sessions.

List of Participants

Forest Field staff

No	Name	Post	Division
1	P. S. Parmar	Forester	Sabarkantha
2	D. V. Zala	Forester	Sabarkantha
3	P. L. Chaudhary	Beat-guard	Sabarkantha
4	D. P. Thakor	Forester	Banaskantha
5	P. B. Rathva	Beat-guard	Baria
6	A. N. Desai	Beat-guard	Sabarkantha
7	V. M. Gauswami	Beat-guard	Banaskantha
8	V. R. Patel	Beat-guard	Sabarkantha
9	P. A. Thakor	Beat-guard	Sabarkantha
10	S. M. Rathva	Beat-guard	Godhra
11	S. P. Hathila	Beat-guard	Godhra
12	P. V. Vasava	Beat-guard	Banaskantha
13	K. V. Bhoi	Forester	Mahisagar
14	L. U. Damor	Beat-guard	Mahisagar
15	R. V. Rathva	Beat-guard	Chhotaudepur
16	H. L. Rathva	Beat-guard	Chhotaudepur
17	K. B. Rathva	Beat-guard	Chhotaudepur
18	C. K. Rathva	Beat-guard	Chhotaudepur
19	Y. G. Baria	Forester	Chhotaudepur
20	D. S. Rathva	Beat-guard	Chhotaudepur
21	R. D. Baria	Beat-guard	Chhotaudepur
22	M. H. Rathva	Forester	Chhotaudepur
23	H. D. Dayra	Beat-guard	Chhotaudepur
24	A. H. Baria	Beat-guard	Chhotaudepur
25	B. L. Rajput	Beat-guard	Vadodara
26	V. R. Parmar	Beat-guard	Vadodara



Chhotaudepur Forest Division, Chhotaudepur & WCB Research Foundation

Research Students

No	Name	Post	Place
1	Mr. Keshank Dave	PhD Scholar	Gujarat
2	Mr. Shailesh Desai	PhD Scholar	Gujarat
3	Ms. Neelu Soni	PhD Scholar	Maharashtra
4	Ms. W. Reshmi Singha	Research Fellow	Assam
5	Mr. Harsh Desai	M.Sc. Student	Gujarat
6	Ms. Shruti Patel	PhD Scholar	Gujarat
7	Ms. Rutika Pandya	Research Fellow	Gujarat
8	Mr. Swarup Datta	Research Fellow	Tripura
9	Mr. Vishal Patel	M.Sc. Student	Gujarat
10	Ms. Pranjli Khadilkar	M.Sc. Student	Gujarat
11	Ms. Shivangi Vyas	PhD Scholar	Gujarat



Prithivya:

Our official Newsletter:



PRITHIVYA

**An official newsletter of
WCB Research Foundation**

is Accepting Articles



**We invite Research Articles, Review
Articles, Research Papers, Field Notes, New
sightings, and Important findings.**

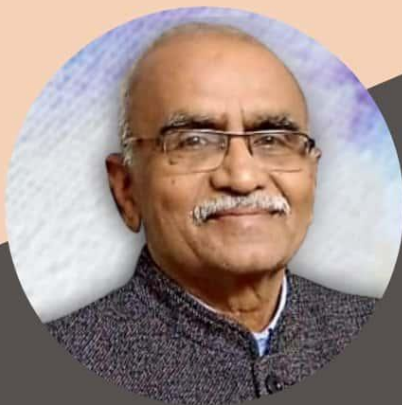
Contact:
prithivya.wcb@gmail.com/wcbresearch@gmail.com



www.wcbresearch.in

Dr. M. I. Patel award for Young Wildlife and Conservation Biologist-2022

Dr. M. I. Patel Award 2022 for Young Wildlife & Conservation Biologist



The Award will be conferred to any young scientist/student/researcher below the age of 35 years working in the field of wildlife and conservation biology (Zoology/Botany/Environmental Science or allied subject) and carried out significant research in the respective field.

Award:

The awardee will receive the cash prize of Rs. 50000/- with a running trophy and the merit certificate.

The registration fee Rs. 550 (non refundable)

How to apply:

Register online with an extended research abstract in 1000 words indicating your outstanding contribution to the wildlife conservation through research. Your application should accompanied with one page CV and a letter of reference

The deadline to apply for the year 2022 is June 30, 2022



Register on: www.wcbresearch.in



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