PROJECT HUNT: AN ASSESSMENT OF WILDLIFE HUNTING PRACTICES BY LOCAL COMMUNITY IN CHIZAMI, NAGALAND, INDIA

Erekhrou Naro 1, Erite L. Mero 1, Ezekolhi Naro 1, Kekhrowu-u Kapfo 1, Khrobeu Wezah 1, Khromeseu Thopi 1, Kuweu Rhakho 1, Lhitshewu Akami 1, Lhitshou Thopi 1, Metshevou-Chirhah 1, Tekhewulo Chirhah 1, Tekhewou-u Tsuhah 1, Tshekulihi Thopi 1, Tekhrode Wezah 1, Weto-lou L. Mero 1, Wetshokhro Thopi 1, Wetshokhroo Thopi 1, Wekoweu Tsuhah 2, Neelesh Dahanukar 3,4 & Payal B. Molur 5,6

1 Hoolock Gibbon Eco Club (HGEC), North East Network (NEN), Resource Center, Chizami, Phek District, Nagaland 797102, India
2 North East Network (NEN), Resource Center, Chizami, Phek District, Nagaland, 797102, India
3 Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), G1 Block, Dr. Homi Bhabha Road, Pashan, Pune, Maharashtra 411008, India
4 Systematics, Ecology and Conservation Laboratory, 5 Social Sciences and Policy Laboratory, Zoo Outreach Organization (ZOO), 96 Kumudham Nagar, Vilankurichi Road, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu 641035, India
5 Go Wild, D2, ‘Mitralaya’ Gem Nirmaalayam, EB Colony Phase 2, Ganapathy, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu 641006, India
6 nagaland@northeastnetwork.org, 3 n.dahanukar@iiserpune.ac.in, 4 payal.bmolur@gmail.com (corresponding author)

Abstract: Hunting is suggested as a major threat to Indian wildlife, especially in the northeastern states. In Nagaland hunting has a traditional and cultural significance, which should be taken into consideration by conservation efforts. Limited information is available on this issue, and in order to establish a baseline for efforts aimed at education and implementation of conservation programmes, in this study we investigated various aspects of hunting practices in Chizami Village, Nagaland. Our study involved general voting by 868 people and detailed interviews of 80 hunters, and explores the demography of hunters, hunting areas, hunting preference for season and animals, methods of hunting, reasons for hunting and willingness to cease hunting. Our results indicate that education could be an important primer for initiating biological conservation efforts in Chizami and other areas.

Keywords: Chakhesang tribe, conservation, community forest, education, traditional practices, Wildlife (Protection) Act.
INTRODUCTION

Overhunting has been identified as one of the major threats to wildlife in many parts of the world (Datta et al. 2008; Aiyadurai 2011; Harrison 2011; Kamins et al. 2011; Nasi et al. 2011; Bhupathy et al. 2013), thus regulating hunting would be important for the conservation of wildlife and biodiversity. In order to evolve sustainable hunting regulations it is important to have baseline data on relevant socio-economic drivers and cultural practices, and on the species hunted, their population structures and harvest levels.

The state of Nagaland falls within the Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot (Mittermeier et al. 2005). Nagaland has an area of 16,579 km² and consists of 11 districts and 16 tribes. Elevation varies from 350–3,000 m and the area supports vast diversity of flora and fauna owing to very heavy rains. Forest types include tropical wet evergreen forest, tropical evergreen forest, cane & bamboo forests, semi-evergreen forests, cachar tropical semi-evergreen forest, moist deciduous forest, secondary moist deciduous forest, sub-tropical hill forest, and wet temperate forest (Sethy & Chauhan 2012). Nagaland has undergone rapid deforestation (Choudhury 2001, 2005, 2006; Srivastava 2006; Sethy & Chauhan 2012). Closed forest (canopy cover of >40%) was 42.8% of total geographical area in 1972–1975, which declined to 29.8% by 1980–1982, 21% by 1995 and <20% by the year 2000 (Choudhury 2001). Loss of forests due to population growth, encroachment and fragmentation resulted from overgrazing, extraction of non-timber forest produce, illegal harvesting of plant parts, fruit collection. Expansion of agriculture, plantations and jhum (shifting) cultivation, together with developmental activities have also threatened biodiversity (Choudhury 2001, 2005, 2006; Srivastava 2006; Sethy & Chauhan 2012). Much of the local fauna is also gravely threatened by poaching for food and local trade (Choudhury 2001, 2005, 2006; Srivastava 2006; Sethy & Chauhan 2012).

Meat is a major part of the daily diet in Nagaland and hunting is integral to the cultural practices of many tribes, including traditional medicine (Lohe 2011; Bhupathy et al. 2013). While most hunting and poaching in northeastern India (and India in general) was formerly done for domestic consumption, the catch is now being widely sold (Kumara & Singh 2004; Datta et al. 2008; Aiyadurai et al. 2010; Velho et al. 2012; Bhupathy et al. 2013; Selvan et al. 2013; Velho & Laurance 2013) with devastating consequences. For example the Hoolock Gibbon Hoolock hoolock is now locally extinct in two of four protected areas in Nagaland (Choudhury 2006), while state populations have declined markedly for the Sun Bear Helarctos malayanus (Sethy & Chauhan 2012) and several species of Galliformes (Aiyadurai 2011).

This study focuses on hunting practices in Chizami Village, located in Phek District (Image 1), where the people belong to the Khezha-speaking community of the Chakhesang tribe. This area was chosen for a study of hunting practices and impact because it is a richly biodiverse region where hunting has been described as excessive (see Choudhury 2001, 2005, 2006; Srivastava 2006; Sethy & Chauhan 2012; Bhupathy et al. 2013). Hunting is an important part of local culture and hunters have a high social status. For example, a hunter who kills a tiger is entitled to wear the distinctive ‘luza’ (a special headgear, while one who kills a wild boar wears a ‘menipfu’ necklace of its incisors around his neck. Children are taught from an early age about hunting in vivid tales told by relations, hence they consider hunting a natural right. Apart from cultural traditions, hunters also harvest animals for food, medicine and to earn an income. Communal hunting parties formed during festivals and special occasions are also a key aspect of social bonding within village khels1, making hunting the core of highly valued communal rituals involving extensive cooperation (Shikhu 2007; Welman 2011).

METHODS

Study area

The village of Chizami (24°24’N & 94°24’E) is 88 km due east of Kohima, in Phek District, southeastern part of Nagaland. It is 10 km from the state capital, Kohima. Chizami Village is located in the Phek District (Image 1), where the people belong to the Khezha-speaking community of the Chakhesang tribe. This area was chosen for a study of hunting practices and impact because it is a richly biodiverse region where hunting has been described as excessive (see Choudhury 2001, 2005, 2006; Srivastava 2006; Sethy & Chauhan 2012; Bhupathy et al. 2013). Hunting is an important part of local culture and hunters have a high social status. For example, a hunter who kills a tiger is entitled to wear the distinctive ‘luza’ (a special headgear, while one who kills a wild boar wears a ‘menipfu’ necklace of its incisors around his neck. Children are taught from an early age about hunting in vivid tales told by relations, hence they consider hunting a natural right. Apart from cultural traditions, hunters also harvest animals for food, medicine and to earn an income. Communal hunting parties formed during festivals and special occasions are also a key aspect of social bonding within village khels1, making hunting the core of highly valued communal rituals involving extensive cooperation (Shikhu 2007; Welman 2011).

1 villages in Nagaland are divided into two or more khels, where each khel has their own separate organization and administration
of Nagaland (Fig. 1). Phek District covers an approximate area of 852km² and the altitudinal range varies from 981–2000 m. It is situated within the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot (Fig. 1). The forest type at Chizami is mainly sub-tropical pine forest with some northern sub-tropical broad-leaved wet hill forest (Naro & Sondhi 2014). The village shares its boundary with Pholami Village on the north, Khomi, Sumi and Losami villages on the north-east, Lai Village of Manipur in the east, Thetsumi Village in the south, Enhulumi Village in the west and Porba and Sakraba villages in the north-west. It is one of the largest and oldest villages of the Chakhesang tribe, with a population of 3,968 individuals, 793 households (Census of India 2011) and 19 clans (Lohe 2011). Most of the villagers depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Jhum cultivation is practiced but most of the cultivation is done in terraced fields. Besides agriculture people also take up carpentry, basket weaving, small businesses, government service and teaching. The village is divided into khels which are like blocks or colonies in the cities. There are six khels: Pfutsepa, Pulekhro, Kepero, Pfutshe, Ladelekhro and Mechtetheza.

Study design
This study was initiated and carried out by the ‘Hoolock Gibbon Eco-Club’, which was started by an NGO - North East Network. The objective of forming the club is to spread awareness of wildlife conservation through young children, reconnect them to nature and help create a generation of young environmental activists who are exposed to alternate livelihood options. In the third year the students who comprise

Figure 1. Geographical location of Chizami, Nagaland, India.
the first 16 authors of this article were encouraged to
study a topic concerning conservation, and they chose
hunting. Information on hunting practices was gathered
from hunters by polls and interviews, and the data was
analyzed to establish basic information that can serve as
the basis for more focused research and for efforts to
spread awareness within the Chizami community. The
students began the process with group discussions aimed
at establishing the modalities of scientific research and
communication, together with a survey of the literature
relating to hunting impacts in other areas. They also
took an analysis and statistics course in order to learn
how to collect, analyze and interpret data (Image 2).

Data collection
The data collection was done by two methods, voting
and interviews (Image 3). Eight-hundred-and-sixty-eight
people between the ages of 10 to 70 years participated
in a blind poll (Table 1) over a one week period by
voting. The voting was simply to answer the question

Image 2. The making of Project Hunt. (a) First interaction about the paper with the kids, (b and c) understanding and reading papers,
(d) discussions regarding analysis of collected data and (e) working with the kids on the data set.

Image 3. Voting (a) and interviews (b) conducted in Chizami.
whether people prefer hunting or not. Interviews were conducted in the months of January 2013, July 2013 and January 2014 and employed a prepared questionnaire (Appendix 1). Of 92 households approached, 80 agreed to participate. Interviewees represented all village khels and ranged in age from 10 years to 70+ years.

Analysis

Data obtained from questionnaires was arranged in a matrix with one row for each respondent. Data was analyzed for trends in hunting patterns using Microsoft EXCEL® and the freeware analysis software PAST (Hammer et al. 2001); hypothesis testing employed the Mann-Whitney U-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

When 868 individuals were polled to determine whether they preferred hunting, 22% voted ‘yes’ and 78% voted ‘no’ (Table 1). Although a number of people were approached for a more detailed interview, only 80 agreed (Table 2). From this data an overview of hunting activity in Chizami was assembled that revealed several basic aspects.

Hunter demographics

In Chizami Village the hunting of wild animals is done by men, although women are involved in catching snails, water insects, frogs and fish (snake heads, carp, etc. reared in the paddy fields). This gender difference can be attributed to traditional divisions of labour and to local taboos. Females are the primary farmers in their communities, and while males have some involvement in farming they generally have more time for other activities such as hunting. There are also taboos against women being allowed to handle guns, and it is considered to bring bad luck if men speak with their wives during community hunting events.

The distribution of ages among hunters was bimodal, with modal groups of 14–21 years and 42–49 years (Fig. 2a). The distribution of age of starting to hunt is positively skewed, with most hunters starting early in the 15–20 years age group (Fig. 2b). We observed two separate clusters in the scatter plot of starting age of hunting and current age of hunters (Fig. 2c), and thus considered two distinct groups: the young (11–36 years) and the old (39–74 years) hunters. There was a significant difference in the age of starting hunting in these groups (Mann Whitney U = 418, P = 0.001), with the young hunters starting much earlier than the old hunters (Fig. 2d), indicating that the age at which hunting begins has decreased recently. This can be attributed to several factors: (1) the willingness of local people to purchase increasingly rare wild meat has provided a source of pocket money for the younger generation; (2) the recent availability of locally-crafted guns has greatly improved hunting efficiency relative to traditional methods; (3) extensive deforestation has reduced the chance of encounters with tigers, leopards or other dangerous mammals, allowing youngsters to roam freely and hunt smaller prey.

Most of the hunters we interviewed were farmers (61%), followed by students (25%) and teachers (5%) (Fig. 3). We believe that although the occupation of people could be biased by sampling, the general patterns are qualitatively representative for the entire area. Involvement of farmers in hunting could be attributed to more free time after the paddy harvest, when male engagement in agricultural activities decline, while the involvement of students can be attributed to factors mentioned above for young people in general.

Localization of hunting activities

The primary hunting areas in the vicinity of Chizami in order of intensity of activity are: Kuwari jungle (forest towards the border of Manipur in the east) and the more accessible areas of Ewu (forest south of the village) and Ketsakhrou (a nearby village) (Image 4; Fig. 4a). Younger hunters prevail in Kuwari, while younger people in general.

Table 1. Results of hunting preference poll.

| Khel               | Hunting preferred |
|--------------------|-------------------|
|                    | Yes   | No    |
| Pfutshe            | 28    | 111   |
| Pfutshepa          | 41    | 120   |
| Pulekhro           | 52    | 143   |
| Kepero             | 23    | 109   |
| Ladelekhro and Mechuthesa | 47    | 194   |

Table 2. Details of interviews.

| Khel               | Number of hunters interviewed |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Pfutshepa          | 22                            |
| Pulekhro           | 19                            |
| Kepero             | 10                            |
| Pfutshe            | 12                            |
| Ladelekhro and Mechuthesa | 17                            |
mainly in Ketsakhrou (Fig. 4b). Few hunters were active in all three areas (Fig. 4c) and most preferred to hunt in Kuwari, where the forests have retained populations of valued prey such as deer.

**Timing of hunting activities**

We divided the months for hunting into four seasons: rainy (June–September), autumn (October), winter (November–February) and spring (March–May). Winter was the most preferred season for hunting, followed by spring (Fig. 5a). There was no age bias in the hunting season (Fig. 5b). Only 21% of hunters preferred hunting in all seasons (Fig. 5c). In October there is little hunting during the paddy harvest, while winter is the most popular hunting season because there is no fieldwork for farmers and most others are on holiday. Hunters also believe that during winter animals are more sluggish and stay near their homes, making them easier to catch. Some hunters also suggested that animals are more tasty

Figure 2. Current age and the age at which the hunters started hunting. (a) Distribution of the current age, (b) distribution of the age at which the hunters started hunting, (c) correlation between age of hunters and the age at which they started hunting, and (d) difference in the starting age of hunting for two age groups. In (d), red line depicts the mean and the blue depicts median.

Figure 3. Occupations of the interviewed hunters.
and healthy because they have more fat during winter.

Seasonality in hunting can sometimes also correlate to the traditional animal trapping practices, which involve collecting termite flies used for trapping birds that come out twice in a year, in the month of March-April and September, and one particular bamboo worm (Kavüli) that appears only in winter, which is used to trap birds (Image 5c). During the monsoon hunters mostly look for squirrels and wild boar because they come to oak trees during this season.

**Hunting methods**

Hunters use guns, traps and catapults (i.e., slingshots), with the gun being the preferred weapon (Fig. 6a) since...
it is more reliable in terms of distant aiming, especially while hunting bigger animals. There is a rule in Chizami Village that prohibits the use of guns before the age of 18 years, but we found that eight underage hunters (10% of total hunters interviewed) claimed to have used guns (Fig. 6b). Traps and catapults (Image 5) are seldom used, and mostly in addition to guns (Fig. 6c). A list of different weapons and traps used in Chizami is given in Table 3. Although the traps and practices are not properly documented, some local techniques coincide with those used to hunt birds in Meghalaya, as outlined in Tynsong et al. (2012). A more comprehensive attempt to document traditional traps is essential.

Prey

Birds are the preferred animals for hunting, followed by squirrels and deer (Fig. 7a). Most hunters hunt for birds as they are numerous, easy to catch and are also used for medicinal purposes. Birds are hunted by all ages, while squirrels are hunted mostly by the young and deer and larger mammals by elders (Fig. 7b). Some examples of animals hunted are shown in Image 6.

Why do hunters hunt?

Hunters generally hunt for food, followed by hunting as a leisure activity (Fig. 8a). Hunting for food also includes animals hunted for perceived medicinal purposes. For example Hoopoe birds, bear bile and squirrel bile/intestines are used for making cough medicines, snake fat is used in healing wounds and whole snakes are used to make one feel lighter and better. For most hunters the motivation is not merely to satisfy hunger but also to meet a desire for bush meat. Males also have considerable leisure time because women do all the household work (e.g., cooking, taking care of children) and most of the farm work aside from planting and harvesting (e.g., weeding). The importance of hunting for cultural prestige has decreased in recent years. Previously hunting was done to show bravery and get recognition, but now being rich and educated with a good job brings more importance and respect than the ability to hunt. Culture prestige is, however, still a motivating factor for some elders (Fig. 8b). Across age groups, some hunters hunt for money (Fig. 8b). The young hunters are mainly interested in pocket money.

Preference for wild meat over domesticated meat and therapeutic use of wild animals (Bhupathy et al. 2013; Velho & Laurance 2013) has had a major role in the hunting for wild animals. Market surveys in Nagaland have already quantified extreme exploitation of wild animals for various reasons (Bhupathy et al. 2013).

Will they stop hunting?

Most hunters are not willing to stop (Fig. 9a), while 35% are willing to do so (Fig. 9a). Although it is not statistically significant, hunters who are willing to stop have higher educational qualifications and are younger (Fig. 9b,c). Hunters who are willing to stop suggested

| Table 3. Traditional weapons and traps used for hunting in Chizami Village. |
| --- |
| Weapons used in hunting | Name, Description, When used | Animals hunted |
| Kusa | Bird traps, made of bamboo March–April & October. With an insect bait of termite flies. | Birds: Liphu-Liso Erütshükezü cū (March–May), paphrüli (migratory birds in October) |
| Emhi | Spear (traditional weapon) | Tiger (Ekhwil), Bear (Ewe) |
| Thotsüyi | Bow and arrow made of bamboo (traditional weapon) | Birds, squirrels, and other larger animals |
| Eyi | Catapult/ sling shot, made of bamboo and cane | Birds, squirrels, etc. |
| Kabu | Guns such as pata. Missile loading, 12 bore, air gun, .22 | Every animal that they see |
| Eza (dao/ Mechet) | Dao is a general metal tool | Anything |
| Etsho | Animal traps made of bamboo. It is a weapon with a noose. | Mongoose, wildcat, birds, squirrels, etc. |
| Ekrobu | Animal traps which is mostly for protection of food crops from animals. It is a hole, which is covered with leaves. It is of two types: (1) a deep hole where animals are trapped and killed later; and (2) a hole where inside, sharp, pointed bamboo sticks are kept and animals are killed right away when they fall into the trap. | Crop raiders especially like wild boars, deer, bear, etc. |
| Erüdüsökhrirh | This is a technique for catching birds. Hunters identify places where birds come to drink water, such as small streams where water is collected. In these places, they put twigs applied with “etse” (glue extracted from a plant) above the water. When birds come to drink water, they perch on these twigs and get trapped. | Birds |
| Erükebokefũ | This technique of bird trapping involves a large group of people. The group form into smaller groups and disperse in different directions. From different directions, they chase birds to one point where a trap is laid for them. | Birds |
| Ekhororofũ | This technique of bird tapping is practiced at the end December. Only during Ernüye festival. The catch got in this hunt is not eaten, but only used as an offering to the spirits. They are hung on a long bamboo pole and kept in the village square (traditionally practice by non-Christian). | Birds |

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Preference for wild meat over domesticated meat and therapeutic use of wild animals (Bhupathy et al. 2013; Velho & Laurance 2013) has had a major role in the hunting for wild animals. Market surveys in Nagaland have already quantified extreme exploitation of wild animals for various reasons (Bhupathy et al. 2013).
Figure 5. Seasons used by the hunters for hunting. (a) Number of hunters choosing different seasons, (b) ages of hunters choosing different seasons and (c) Venn diagram showing the preference for different seasons by the hunters. Percentages are out of total 80 hunters interviewed. In (b) red line depicts the mean and the blue depicts median.

Image 5. Catapult (a) and traditional traps (b-d) used for hunting.
Figure 6. Equipment used for hunting. (a) Number of hunters choosing different equipment, (b) ages of the hunters choosing different equipment and (c) Venn diagram showing the preference for different equipments by the hunters. Percentages are out of total 80 hunters interviewed. In (b) red line depicts the mean and the blue depicts median.

Image 6. Examples of some of the animals hunted in the region. (a) A Ferret Badger hunted at the Village, (b) skulls of hunted animals on display, (c) a Hoopoe caught by a traditional trap and (d) a variety of birds hunted for consumption.
that the forests should be reserved and villagers should be educated regarding the importance of wildlife conservation, a need for alternate livelihood options and availability of other leisure activities (Fig. 10).

**Do the hunters know the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA)?**
Not all hunters were aware of Indian WPA passed in 1972. But they were aware of CPO (Chakhesang Public Organization) animal protection plan (Thopi 2005). The responses were therefore for both WPA and CPO animal protection plan. More than 75% of the hunters interviewed were not aware of this protection plan (Fig. 11a). Phek District is inhabited largely by the Chakhesang tribe, occupying 80 villages. All 80 villages have an umbrella organization called CPO. Although the idea about preservation of wildlife was continuously being discussed in annual CPO meetings, it was reinforced during the annual meeting in 1999 when Mr. Pusazo Luruo was the President. After much discussion on the issue, the CPO general session adopted the following resolutions for all 80 villages to implement: (1) Ban on importing pork from outside the district. This was done with the intention of saving money and promoting the local economy; (2) Seasonal ban on hunting all across the district from 1 February to 31 June (breeding season); (3) Ban on fishing with explosives; (4) Ban on indiscriminate burning of forests; (5) Declaration of complete no hunting zones wherever possible. While the initiative by CPO led to the identification of Important Bird Area (IBA) on a stretch of forest between Pfutsero and Chizami villages, this area was not declared as protected (Thopi 2005). However, in another village, Luzophuhu, the initiative by CPO actually has led to the formation of Village Forest Reserve (Kothari & Pathak 2006), indicating that the initiatives by CPO have some success.

Hunters who were aware of the WPA or CPO protection act had higher education qualifications (Mann-Whitney U = 770, P = 0.014, Fig. 11b). The educated people knew about CPO resolutions because they have more exposure, easier access to such information circulated.
by CPO through circulars, posters, village institutions. Educated people know more about WPA because of more exposure, and are better informed compared to lesser-educated or uneducated hunters.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the first attempt to study hunting patterns in Chizami Village. From the results of the data and analysis we recommend that the issue of hunting should be taken up by the decision-making body and regulated. The attraction to easy cash and the increasing demand for bush meat among the villagers shows a direct correlation to the lowering of the age of the hunters in recent years. Locally crafted guns, modern technology and weapons, which are easier and more reliable in hunting larger animals, have completely replaced traditional hunting practices. Our findings show that there is lot of hunting among the youth, but less resistance to other options among this age group. There is a need to increase employment opportunities and innovative activities in the village to occupy the youth and draw them away from hunting. The village should strictly implement regulations in regard of wildlife protection. Hunting should be practiced in a sustainable way and there is a need to reconcile hunting with wildlife conservation.

Educating hunters regarding biodiversity loss should be taken up actively. This could be done by creating awareness and education through photography exhibitions, film screenings, talks on important environmental issues and exposure to wildlife sanctuaries, and efforts could be made to create new activities to divert their time and energies away from hunting. We should promote and encourage traditional practices in agriculture, craft and weaving by creating a place for entrepreneurship and employment opportunities in the village.

The legislation itself does not really help in curbing hunting because there is no proper enforcement and implementation of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 in the state. To educate the people and address the issue of hunting in the state, the government should provide education and awareness to the community. The government should also strictly implement and enforce the regulation of WPA 1972, and violators should be penalized accordingly.

This study on hunting practices in Chizami Village has recorded for the first time the hunting practices of locals and the changes over time. Changes due to the introduction of modern weapons versus traditional trapping methods were also documented. The data and

Figure 8. Reasons for hunting. (a) Number of hunters giving different reasons for hunting, (b) ages of the hunters for different reasons for hunting, and (c) Venn diagram showing the overlap between different reasons for hunting. Percentages are out of total 80 hunters interviewed. In (b) red line depicts the mean and the blue depicts median.
analyses show that birds are the main animals hunted, mostly for personal consumption. The importance of hunting for cultural prestige has decreased in the recent years. Today people give more importance and respect to those with high profile jobs and to those who are highly educated. People lacked awareness of biodiversity conservation and its importance. There is a need to create more awareness amongst the community, and local authorities should take the initiative in implementing the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. The village organization bodies should strictly follow the regulation in protection of wildlife and biodiversity of the village. The youth need to be trained in aspects of conservation and wildlife that will help promote alternate livelihoods such as eco-tourism.

We believe that since the hunting in Chizami is influenced by cultural practices, medicinal, ritual values and community ownership of forests, a simple ban on hunting is not likely to provide the desired effect. Further, we also believe that a general national policy is not an answer. There is a need for more region-based policy that forms a liaison between conservation needs and traditional values. Promoting education regarding
Figure 11. Demographic data of hunters who were aware of the local wildlife protection act. (a) Proportion of hunters which knew the act, (b) education qualification of the hunters who knew and who knew not about the local wildlife protection act and (c) ages of the hunters who knew and who knew not about the local wildlife protection act. In (b and c) red line depicts the mean and the blue depicts median.

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conservation issues will also be helpful. Further, we echo the suggestion of Velho & Lawrence (2013), that a multi-level governance framework will fill the gap between national policy and grass-root governance.
Appendix 1. Questionnaire used for the study.

| Basic profile of Hunter: | 1.1 Name: |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| When did you start hunting? | 1.2 Age: |
| How long have you been hunting? | 1.3 Education Qualification: |
| What is hunted? | 1.4 Occupation: |
| How much is hunted? | |
| Where is it hunted? | |
| How do you hunt? | Guns |
| | Catapult |
| | Trap |
| | Others |
| Which season did you hunt and for what? | Weekly |
| How many days do you go for hunting in a week/month/year? | Monthly |
| | Yearly |
| Why do you hunt? | Money |
| | Food |
| | Leisure |
| | Cultural prestige |
| | Other |
| Are you aware of Wildlife Protection Act passed in 1972? | Yes |
| | No |
| What will make you stop hunting? | |

Date of interview: Name of Interviewer:

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Author Details: The children are aged 12–15 years and are all studying. Kewekhreo Thopi and Tshetsholo Naro are the HGEC Trainers. Wekoweu Tsuhah is the Program Manager at NEN. Neelsh Dahanukar works in ecology and evolutionary biology with an emphasis on statistical and mathematical analysis. Payal Molur is a wildlife Educator with Go Wild.

Author Contribution: ErN, ELM, EzN, K-uK, KW, KT, KR, LA, LT, M-uC, TC, T-uT, TT, WW, W-uLM, WT designed the questioner with the help of KeT, TsN, A, ST and PBM; ErN, ELM, EzN, K-uK, KW, KT, KR, LA, LT, M-uC, TC, T-uT, TT, WW, W-uLM, WT collected data with the help of KeT, TsN, A, ST and PBM; ND performed statistical analysis; PBM, KeT, TsN, A, ST and ND wrote the manuscript with inputs from ErN, ELM, EzN, K-uK, KW, KT, KR, LA, LT, M-uC, TC, T-uT, TT, WW, W-uLM, WT.

Editor’s note: In reviewing this article, the first thing that struck me was the importance of tackling an issue such as hunting in rural communities in Northeast India. When I then realized that the work was carried out by 8th and 9th standard students, I was very impressed. Now learning that the project has encouraged further learning in conservation management for students themselves, and also an opportunity to discuss and address this threat to biodiversity more broadly in the community, I am obliged to reflect on impact. Publishing in a reviewed journal is an accomplishment in itself, but conducting work that inspires change and delivers environmental impact on the ground leaves the world a better place. These students have truly done that through their work. I humbly give my gratitude and appreciation to these young conservationists and anticipate hearing more successes from them in the years to come. I truly hope their inspirational message is told in the communities where they live, the community reading these pages, and beyond.

-- Hari Balasubramanian