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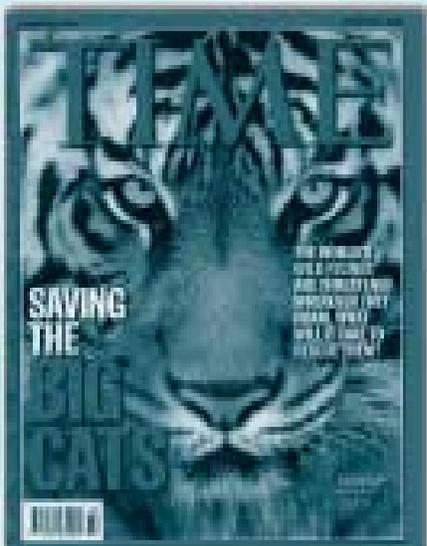
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EcoCircular

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WWF Nepal Program Newsletter



“The [TAL] program has been a success in southern Nepal's Bagmara Forest, where the WWF and the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation helped local people set up a tree nursery. Tigers returned to the area, and locals are able to harvest timber, fuel wood and grasses according to a strict management plan. Local people also benefit directly from the return of wildlife. They collected about \$73,000 last year from tourists who came see tigers, elephants and rhinos in their forests.”

‘Nowhere to Roam’ - Time, 23 August

For our work to be recognized by a widely-credible magazine like *Time* was very gratifying. With a profile of a global conservation organization, WWF's focus is saving nature with people, a policy that lies at the heart of the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) Program.

With an eye on the bigger picture, Dr Chandra P Gurung, Country Representative WWF Nepal Program, is happy that the work being done in the field has met with success despite the political upheavals. He adds, “The united effort of all the partners, donors and WWF in promoting and sustaining conservation in these uncertain times is something that we can all be proud of. It encourages us do more.” Jamuna Krishna Tamrakar, Director General DoF, agrees, “When so much attention is shown in Nepal's tiger conservation efforts, we are encouraged to aspire to achieve greater success in the future.”

Indeed, conservation is a task that never finishes so, instead of resting on our laurels, WWF continues to do the best we can with what we have for a living planet.

Spread the word:

TAL in
TIME!



FOREST AND SPECIES

Plantation

Sundevi User Committee of Royal Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve buffer zone finished planting 25,375 different species on 19.5 ha in the community forest and school premises.

The Katarnia User Group fenced 23 ha of Katarnia Buffer Zone Community Forest boundary with barbed wire to reduce encroachment and over grazing. Plantation activities will be initiated soon on a barren 10 ha plot within the fenced area.

Bhada User Committee has planted 7,911 of seven species on 10.045 ha degraded area in the Katarnia Buffer Zone Community Forest. TAL

provided only seedling support. Pit construction, seedling transportation, and plantation were done entirely by users.

Snow leopards in KCA

Birendra Prasad Kandel, Ranger of Chitwan National Park, submitted a report on 'Refreshment training on conservation, monitoring, and awareness of snow leopards in the Kangchenjunga Area'. The major objective was to train Snow Leopard Conservation Committee members to gather information on the status of the endangered animal. It also helped to evaluate threats, conservation issues, and management constraints regarding the snow leopard and its prey species. One of the major outcomes of the field visit during the training was the observation of signs of dead snow leopard at Sukpibo area of Nakphinda Kharka (4,727m). The monitoring team found seven nylon snares and pointed poles mingled with snow leopard fur and skin hidden under a rocky fissure, about 15m away from the killing site. However, the carcass was not found. The killing is estimated to have occurred during Nov-Dec 2003.



EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Community forests in Bhutan?

A Bhutanese delegation led by Dasho Dawa Tshering, Director of Department of Forests visited Nepal to observe community forestry activities from 2-12 August. The four man team also included Chado Tshering, Head of the Social Forestry Division, Gopal Mahat, Joint Director of the Forest Protection and Utilization Division, Shankar Raj Gurung, District Forest Officer at Thimphu, and Sangay, Senior Forest Economist. In Kathmandu, they paid courtesy calls to Chandi Prasad Shrestha, Secretary of MoFSC, Dr Tirtha Man Maskey, DG of DNPWC. They also met Jamuna Krishna Tamrakar, DG of DoF, and Dr Chandra P Gurung, CR of WWF NP. The delegates discussed community forestry with the FECOFUN central office and its district chapters, and NEFUG.

Accompanied by Santosh Nepal, Coordinator - TAL Program, the Bhutanese team visited various community forests and interacted with user groups in the RCNP buffer zone, the terai community forest in Rupandehi, hill community forests in Dovan and Madan Pokhara of Palpa. They also went met user groups in Kaski, Kavrepalanchok and Bhaktapur districts.

Dasho Tshering said that the visit was very fruitful in generating ideas for managing Bhutan's forests. His team concluded that while community forestry was successful in Nepal, it could not be copied exactly in Bhutan because of varying social and natural

conditions. He added that the concept of allowing people to manage fringe forest areas was feasible in Bhutan and suggested that the DoF not relinquish control of contiguous forests in Nepal.

US Ambassador visits

The new US Ambassador to Nepal, HE James F Moriarty, accompanied by Elizabeth Millard, Deputy Chief of Mission, and Cory O'Hara of the Political and Economic Section of the US Embassy visited WWF NP Kathmandu office on 20 August. CR Dr Chandra Gurung made a presentation, stressing the importance of partnerships and WWF NPs continuing work in the field despite the accelerating Maoist insurgency. USAID is a generous donor to ongoing WWF NP projects.



US Ambassador to Nepal, James F Moriarty, visits our Office

CLIMATE CHANGE

CCNN Meeting

Important decisions were made at the Climate Change Network Nepal (CCNN) meeting at Winrock International on 13 August: the network will financially support the Ministry of Population and Environment (MOPE) to launch the first National Communication Report, a National Climate Change Policy document will be created under the ministry's leadership, and funds will be sourced for a MOPE representative to attend the upcoming COP10 meeting at Buenos Aires in December. Several climate change awareness-raising events were also finalized.

Advocacy to MOPE

Sandeep Chamling Rai, Climate Change Officer at WW NP and the Secretary of the Climate Change Network Nepal (CCNN), met with Mohan Bahadur Karki, Secretary, and Purushottam Kunwar, Under Secretary of Ministry of Population and Environment (MOPE) to discuss various issues of climate change. The ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, a national communication report and climate change policy document, awareness raising events, and a National



Nepaw lake

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news briefs

Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) were discussed. The Secretary said HMGN will probably ratify the Kyoto Protocol before COP 10. He added that the national communication report will be launched soon and that MOPE was looking forward to preparing the National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA).

HOT OFF THE PRESS

Women and development

Manaslu Gurung's *'Women and Development in the Third World: A Case Study from Ghandruk'*, Nepal attempts to determine the role of ACAP in promoting women's empowerment through programs like the creation of the Ama Toli. This study looks into specific Gurung cultural characteristics and socio-economic conditions of the village that influenced the success of the Ama Toli. Manaslu Gurung studied Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of California. She currently works as an assistant professor at the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts. She is active in teaching and studying scholarly debates of Third World Development. Copies of the book are available at WWF NP office for NRs 500.



WTLBP brochure

A bilingual (English and Nepali) brochure on the Western Terai Landscape Building Program (WTLB), its working areas, program strategy, working modalities, expected outcomes, and other relevant information was published by the Central Support Unit, Babarmahal.



SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

Parsa Wildlife Reserve Tourism Plan

TAL program is preparing a Tourism Plan for the Parsa Wildlife Reserve. An interaction meeting was held on 5 August at DNPWC to brief officials about the process and progress of formulation of the plan. There was a lively discussion regarding objectives of the plan preparation, concern about the impact on biodiversity, tourism product development, and promotional strategies.

Monitoring MAPs

The high altitude area of Walangchung Gola VDC in KCA harbors various Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) and its proximity to Tibetan settlements has

led to the illegal harvesting and export of medicinal plants like Kutki (*Neopicrorhiza scrophulariiflora*) and Maikopila (*Saussurea tridactyla*). As a control measure, the Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Project has started monitoring the area during crucial periods. A team consisting of seven members monitored the area on a three-week period, 19 July-8 August. Another team stationed at Maoma also investigated the MAPs market in Tibet and the possibility of coordination with Thulung Core Zone of the Qomolangma Nature Preserve to control the illegal trade. They concluded that MAPs are sold freely in Tibet, calling for a seasonal check post at Tiptala Bhanjyang, and also a high-level coordination between Nepal and TAR authorities.



Medician Plant

Black bucks bouncing back

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After a low of just nine animals in 1975, a recent count of Nepal's black buck (*Antelope cervicapra*) population has shown that the population has increased to 99.

The black buck's beautiful spiral horn made the animal a popular hunting trophy in the early 1950s. However, heavy hunting pushed the herds roaming Nepal's lowland districts of Banke, Bardia, Kailali, and Kanchanpur to the brink of extinction. By 1975, when conservation efforts to save the species finally began, Nepal had a total of just nine black bucks.

Thanks to conservation efforts, which have long been supported by WWF Nepal Program, the population reached a peak of 177 animals in 1989. However a decade later, this had dropped to 50 due to rapidly shrinking natural habitats, food competition with domestic animals, and reprisal killings by farmers. Stray dogs, hyenas, and jackals also occasionally prey upon the animals.

"Black bucks love to graze in open, short grassland. Encroachment of its natural habitat, generally in fringe areas near humans, poses a great threat to the species' survival," says Shyam Bajimay, an ecologist at Nepal's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC).

The Khairapur area of Bardia district, in the southwest of Nepal, is now the last refuge for black bucks in the country. To prevent the antelopes from raiding crops, mesh wire fences have been put up near human settlements. This and other conservation measures have resulted in a steady rise in the population, with a recent count recording 99 animals.

A 527-hectare Black Buck Conservation Area in Khairapur has also been proposed for the species. Located 36km south of Royal Bardia National Park,

the conservation area is still awaiting formal endorsement from the government. All the people living in the area have been compensated and most have resettled outside the area.

"The proposed Black Buck Conservation Area is the result of concerted efforts by the DNPWC, the Department of Forests, line agencies of His Majesty's Government of Nepal, partner conservation organizations, and representatives of local people," says Gopal P Upadhyay, Chief Warden of Royal Bardia National Park.

Royal Bardia National Park is providing technical support to a committee that supervises the management of the proposed conservation area. User groups for local people's stewardship in conservation have also been formed, and game scouts man a guard post at Khairapur.

WWF Nepal Program's current support to the conservation of the black buck is part of its Terai Arc Landscape Program, which aims to restore and reconnect 11 national parks in Nepal and India to create one continuous Terai Arc landscape. The work includes species conservation, awareness raising, income generation, and capacity building.

Located in the shadow of the Himalayas, the Terai Arc covers 5 million hectares from Nepal's Bagmati River in the east to India's Yamuna River in the west. The rich grasslands and forests provide critical habitat not only for black buck, but also greater one-horned rhinoceros, royal Bengal tigers, Asian elephants, 80 other mammal species, 47 reptile and amphibian species, 556 bird species, and more than 2,100 flowering plant species. The region is also home to more than 6 million people who depend on its resources for their livelihoods.

The Terai Arc forms part of the Terai Duar Savannas and Grasslands ecoregion, one of WWF's Global 200 ecoregions - a science-based global ranking of the world's most biologically outstanding habitats and the regions on which WWF concentrates its efforts.

Basant Subba

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