



WWF

NEWSLETTER

JULY
2013

Inside the Himalayas

Vol 3 | No. 1 | July 2013

WWF Nepal newsletter



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Message from the Country Representative

On 19th May 2013 WWF Nepal completed 20 years of its office establishment in Nepal. These two decades have been the building blocks for sustainable partnerships in conservation marked by a series of conservation gains for Nepal. And in this history of conservation success, we feel proud to be a partner of the Government of Nepal, conservation agencies and the local communities in helping protect the country's natural riches.

In this issue of Inside the Himalayas we celebrate this power of partnerships amidst the 20 years of our establishment. And as we step into a new era in conservation, I take pride in sharing the latest win in conservation – the encouraging result of the Tiger and Prey-base Survey 2013 that shows an increase in Nepal's tiger population by 63% from the last survey in 2009.

I express my deepest gratitude to the Government of Nepal, conservation partners and the local communities for their continuous support and cooperation. Together we will go the distance in conservation.

Happy Reading!

Anil Manandhar

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Nepal records remarkable growth in tiger numbers

An encouraging announcement from the Government of Nepal on Global Tiger Day, 29 July 2013, put the number of wild tigers in the country at 198 (163 - 235). This marks an increase in the population by 63% from the last survey in 2009.

"Nepal's results are an important milestone to reaching the global TX2 goal of doubling the number of wild tigers by the year 2022," stated Megh Bahadur Pandey, Director General of Nepal's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation. "Tigers are a part of Nepal's natural wealth and we are committed to ensuring these magnificent wild cats have the prey, protection and space to thrive."

Tigers are found in the Terai Arc Landscape stretching 600 miles across 15 protected area networks in Nepal and India. The two countries embarked on the first-ever joint tiger survey using a common methodology in January 2013. In Nepal, the field survey was carried out between February and June 2013 followed by two months of data analysis to arrive at the final estimates. It was agreed by the two governments that each country could release its national estimates and that a joint report will be released later in the year to provide a landscape-wide estimation of tiger populations and a better understanding of tiger movements in the trans-boundary landscape.

Nepal's analysis covered five protected areas and three corridors. It revealed tiger populations have

tripled in Bardia National Park, from 18 (17 - 29) in 2009 to 50 (45 - 55), and doubled in Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve, from 8 (8 - 14) in 2009 to 17 (13 - 21). Tiger numbers in Chitwan National Park, home to the country's largest number of wild tigers, have also increased, from 91 (71 - 147) in 2009 to 120 (98 - 139). The results have also shown a comeback of tigers in the recently declared Banke National Park with the presence of 4 (3 - 7) tigers.

"While we celebrate the positive results from this tiger survey, WWF calls on the government of Nepal to redouble efforts to protect these conservation gains that could easily be lost as human-tiger conflict increases and illegal wildlife trade empties

our forests," stated Anil Manandhar, Country Representative of WWF Nepal. "Tigers are an iconic symbol of wild nature and WWF will continue to work closely with the government, conservation partners and local communities in Nepal to get to TX2."

The tiger and prey-base survey was a collaborative effort of the Government of Nepal's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and Department of Forests, WWF Nepal and National Trust for Nature Conservation. It was funded by WWF UK, WWF Australia, WWF US, Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, Hariyo Ban Program (funded by USAID), and US Fish and Wildlife Service.



Miss Nepal 2013 Ishani Shrestha is WWF's Young Conservation Ambassador

WWF Nepal appointed Ishani Shrestha, Miss Nepal – World 2013, as the eighth Young Conservation Ambassador at a ceremony in Kathmandu on 15 April 2013.

"WWF is pleased to appoint Ishani as our Young Conservation Ambassador," said Dr. Ghana S Gurung, Conservation Program Director of WWF Nepal. "During her tenure she will promote biodiversity conservation in Nepal through awareness and action." I would also like to acknowledge with gratitude Miss Nepal 2012, Shristi Shrestha for her active contribution to help raise awareness on WWF's conservation endeavors and also being the first Young Conservation Ambassador to fundraise for the local people of Ghunsa in Kanchenjunga.

"I would, in the best possible way, use this opportunity to raise awareness on conservation issues," said Ishani, the newly appointed Young Conservation Ambassador.



Sarus Crane Conservation Week celebrated in Lumbini

The Sarus Crane Conservation Week was celebrated in Lumbini from 12th to 18th June, 2013 under the leadership of WWF Nepal and in partnership with the local community and youth. 10 local schools participated in the week-long event which included quiz, art, drama and banner design competitions all based on the theme of Sarus Crane conservation. Similarly, awareness rallies were also organized by the students of the Eco Clubs. The students visited several sites where Sarus Cranes are commonly found and discussed the importance of conserving and protecting the habitat of this species with the local people.

The goal of this event was mainly to bring about awareness on the various threats to Sarus Crane populations in the nearby wetland and farm areas and disseminate important facts and information about Sarus Crane to the local community. Students from the age group of 12-18 years were involved in this campaign.

Students who excelled in the various competition categories organized during the Sarus Crane Conservation Week were awarded with certificates and educational materials during the closing ceremony.

WWF and World Cyclist Foundation to promote the Green Hiker campaign

WWF Nepal joined hands with Mr. Pushkar Shah, a world cyclist and leader of World Cyclist Foundation, in order to promote responsible tourism in Nepal's Himalayas under WWF's Green Hiker Campaign.

Honorable Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Mr Ram Kumar Shrestha, handed over a bicycle supported by WWF Nepal to Mr. Pushkar Shah amidst a ceremony in the capital on 16 May 2013. Mr. Shah undertook an ambitious cycling expedition across Nepal's Great Himalaya Trail to promote tourism in the region with cycling being an avenue to attract more tourists in the region and, in effect, address the livelihoods of people.

Through his expedition, WWF Nepal seeks to promote the message of responsible tourism in the Himalayas.

"WWF Nepal sees a strong connect between tourism and conservation, and the Himalayas which is Nepal's biggest tourist attraction is also one of the hardest hit in terms of climate change," stated Dr. Ghana S Gurung, Conservation Program Director of WWF Nepal. "The Green Hiker campaign and this partnership with Mr. Pushkar Shah seek to create greater environmental awareness so that people can enjoy nature while ensuring that its pristine nature is protected," he added.

Mr. Shah has been travelling the world in his bicycle for the past fifteen years spreading the message of world peace.



Local level trans-boundary meeting between China and Nepal

China and Nepal have agreed on sharing information and working jointly in managing illegal wildlife trade and controlling forest fires in border areas. The agreement was an outcome of a local level trans-boundary meeting between the two neighbouring countries, China and Nepal, which was held on 6 June 2013 at Syafrubesi, one of the villages in Langtang National Park.

The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Phurba Dorje, Chief Administrator (Magistrate) of the Peoples' Government of Jilong County, TAR, China and Mr. Basu Dev Ghimire, Chief District Officer of Rasuwa District, and attended by the Chief of Securities (Civil Police, Armed Police Force and Nepal Army), representatives from Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, WWF Nepal, Langtang National Park officials, DDC members, custom officials, and staff from agriculture and livestock office. The meeting also agreed on continuing the green economic corridor initiative along the Syafrubesi-Rasuwa-Kerung highway, the border point between Nepal and China.

It was also agreed that similar meetings will be conducted annually, and Chief Administrator (Magistrate) of the Peoples' Government of Jilong County,

and Chief District Officer of Rasuwa will take the lead in coordinating such meetings here on.



WWF Nepal celebrates 20 years of conservation partnerships

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Akash Shrestha

Senior Manager, Communications and Marketing

On 19 May 2013, WWF Nepal celebrated 20 years of its office establishment in Nepal. 20 years of conservation partnerships from the national to the grassroots level, were at the forefront of the celebrations to mark the rich history of conservation gains for Nepal.

"WWF Nepal's official presence started in 1993 with three people in a small room. Today, we have built a core family of nearly 100 staff and an extended one with the government, conservation agencies and the local community," stated Mr. Anil Manandhar, Country Representative of WWF Nepal. "Over these years, Nepal has witnessed significant advances in conservation all of which has been possible because of the power of partnerships," he added.

At a special ceremony organized to mark this day in Amaltari in the buffer zone of Chitwan National Park in Nepal's Terai Arc Landscape, more than 70 partner organizations were felicitated by WWF Nepal in recognition of their support and contribution in conservation. These included Government of Nepal's line Ministries and Departments, donor organizations, NGOs, enforcement agencies and community-based organizations. Dr. K. C. Paudel, Secretary of the



Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, was the Chair of the event which saw the active participation of more than 1,000 community members.

The past 20 years have seen significant conservation gains in Nepal. The landscape level approach to conservation, exemplified by the ambitious Terai Arc Landscape and Sacred Himalayan Landscape programs of the Government of Nepal in which WWF Nepal is an active partner, was initiated during this period. These programs have introduced important conservation strategies aimed at protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat, protecting and building populations of key species such as tigers, rhinos and snow leopards, and creating enabling policies and mechanisms related to addressing climate change, land use and trans-boundary conservation issues. This period has also helped build and strengthen an important link in conservation – the local communities – through which sustainable forest management and anti-poaching are now locally led and supported initiatives.

"The Government of Nepal has found a valuable partner in WWF," stated Dr. K. C. Paudel, Secretary of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation.

"We look forward to strengthening this partnership in the years to come so that Nepal can be a leading example in conservation," he added.

As part of the celebrations, WWF Nepal announced an important next step for the organization in conservation – the creation of sustainable villages – with Amaltari as the first village towards this end. A homestay program, a community clinic and a women-led micro-enterprise were launched as starting initiatives in providing alternate livelihoods and wellbeing opportunities for local communities in order to strengthen their motivation in conservation.

"WWF Nepal has recognized the role of local people in conservation," stated Mr. Prem Shankar Mardania, Chairperson of Amaltari Buffer Zone User Committee. "Just as conservation takes care of people, the people will take care of conservation," he added.

Please click the link below to view a video that captures the 20 years of conservation partnerships in Nepal which was developed on this occasion:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZwTQP0XkeE>

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"My Defining Moment at WWF Nepal"

The Terai Arc Landscape program is the flagship conservation program of the Government of Nepal in which WWF Nepal is an active partner. Apparently, it was a program that nearly did not see the light of day.

It was in 2001, the inception year of the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) program, when the senior team from WWF Nepal was in Dhangadi for the establishment of the field level program. During this inception period, there were several people, including conservationists, who were openly skeptical of its feasibility and success.

Such was the atmosphere in Dhangadi too, and I was assigned to do a presentation in Dhangadi in front of all the senior government officials on why and how we felt TAL would work. I started my presentation with a little nervousness and excitement, but more than anything else, the belief that the TAL program would overcome all odds to become one of Nepal's flagship programs.

To see the program running in its 13th year now, and with remarkable success, I must say we have come a long way since Dhangadi!



Anil Manandhar
Country Representative

It seems like yesterday when I first stepped into the office, a little shy, a little nervous, and unknown of what lay ahead. As I sit and recall the past days, there has never been a dull moment in the eight years that I have spent here. I have found a home away from home!



Prajana Waiba Pradhan
Senior Human Resource Officer

There has been laughter; there have been tears. And there is one incident that can never be erased from my memory – the loss of our colleagues, conservation leaders and our then Country Representative, Late Dr. Chandra Gurung, in the tragic helicopter accident on 23 September 2006. While the incident will remain to be an indelible spot in the history of WWF Nepal, the road to recovery has been a positive one, the result of which can be seen today in the growth of WWF Nepal, not only in its programs but also in its people.

I have always valued the culture that Late Dr. Gurung had inspired in the organization and as a Human Resource professional today, I continue to strive to keep the same alive.

I started working for WWF Nepal from 1 June 1993, and I am in fact as old as the institution!

Our office experienced a very modest start since it only constituted three staff and one room at Hotel Vajra. In these early days, and given the resource constraints, I in fact had to wear several hats – that of a security guard, gardener, and cleaner as well as the office messenger! Sometimes I had to travel about 25 kilometers a day on a bicycle just to drop off a letter.

As the organization started to grow in terms of its programs and resources, life has become a lot easier though I will cherish my memories of the yesteryears forever.



Ishwor Man Shrestha
Office Messenger

I joined WWF Nepal on 21 November 1994. During that time our office used to work only in one national park, Chitwan National Park, but over the years, our working area expanded.

Driving around our project areas a few years ago when the armed conflict was at its peak was not a cake walk. It was, in fact, a matter of great risk to run field programs let alone drive in the field districts. There were numerous instances where my vehicle was stopped by Maoist cadres and we could not even guess what their next course of action would be. But it is a matter of great pride to me that even during this period of the insurgency, WWF Nepal was one of the few organizations that was allowed to operate in the field. I think it was the people's belief in the worth of our programs as well as the determination of our staff to keep working despite all odds.



Hira Kaji Manandhar
Head Driver

Having joined WWF Nepal way back in 2004, I have a host of memories to share. But my trip to Bardia National Park is one of my favorites. It was the trip that acquainted me with the connection between people and conservation.

I was inspired by the work of the youth members of the Community Based Anti-Poaching Unit (CBAPU) who were constructively working to ensure that the biodiversity around their community is protected. Putting their own lives at stake, they patrolled their community forest on a regular basis and also gave tip offs to the Bardia National Park's authority upon seeing any activities related to wildlife crimes.

I also got an opportunity to spend a night in Dalla Homestay Village in Khata corridor. The homestay program in Dalla, which was started in 2010, was an absolute example of how an eco-tourism initiative can connect communities with conservation. Homestay came with a reward for the people of Dalla – tourism revenues brought about by better protected forests and presence of wildlife – and also worked as an incentive to sustain community protection measures in their forests.



Salina Shrestha
Administrative Assistant, Hariyo Ban Program



Dr. Ghana S. Gurung
Conservation Program Director

I began my career in WWF as an In-charge of the mountain program, with the prime focus being Kangchenjunga Conservation Area.

My past working experience with Nepal's first community managed protected area – Annapurna Conservation Area – had invigorated a wish within me to establish yet another community owned and managed conservation area. My dream was realized on 23 September 2006 when the Government of Nepal along with WWF officially handed over the management of

Kangchenjunga to the Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Management Council. My happiness, which would have known no boundaries, was unfortunately cut short with the tragic helicopter accident where we lost 24 of the team members, including my mentors and seniors, who had gone for the handover ceremony.

We however had to keep the flame of conservation burning. We translated our sorrow into strength to realize the dreams of our conservation heroes. Looking back I feel we have not only walked rightly in their path but have also scaled new horizons in conservation.

Words from HR...



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Prajana Waiba Pradhan

Senior Human Resource Officer

The 19th of May marks the anniversary of WWF Nepal and is an important HR calendar event. This year, we had an additional reason to celebrate – the fact that we had crossed 20 years since the establishment of the WWF office in Nepal.

As with earlier years, team building games were organized for the staff on this day. The staff members were divided into two teams, Killer Bees and Terrific Tigers, who fought it out in different sporting competitions such as Badminton, Table Tennis, Swimming, Relay, Cricket, Football,

Volleyball and Tug of War. The competition ended with the Killer Bees taking the shield of Team WWF!

Likewise, to celebrate the overall theme of “Commemorating Partnerships in Conservation” on the 20th anniversary, various partner organizations of WWF Nepal were felicitated in recognition of their support in conservation.

And as the fiscal year draws to a close with one of the busiest quarters in the year, we look forward to a new year of conservation gains and an ever-motivated team.

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Staff Awards:

Employee of the Year	: Shiv Raj Bhatta & Dr. Ghana S. Gurung
Field Star	: Tilak Dhakal & Gautam Paudyal
Best Team Player	: Dr. Ghana S. Gurung
Shining Debut	: Richa Bhattarai



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BEAUTY OF THE BEAST!

Tilak Dhakal

Project Co-Manager, TAL - CBRP

The first and most frequently asked question by anyone who visits the Terai is, "Will I see a tiger?" You can add me to that list!

And what's ironic about this is that I, in fact, work day in and day out in the land of the tiger, the Terai Arc landscape, and have come face-to-face with tigers on different occasions. But that is but the sheer appeal of this charismatic beast.

And of these seemingly 'many' occasions, there is one that I always recall.

In July of 2011, I led a field trip for three of our Kathmandu-based staff - Eliza, Moon and Rabi (while the two women are no longer with WWF, I am sure the memory is still strong). The plan was to visit all the corridors and bottlenecks of the Terai Arc Landscape so that the team could frame ideas for and document new concepts and projects, and also monitor ongoing project activities.

The trip turned out to be very fruitful and its purpose was met. As a closing treat, the four of us decided to take a jungle drive in Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve on the second last day of our trip.

Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve covers 305 km² of open grassland, forests, riverbeds and tropical wetlands. This reserve hosts Bengal tigers, one horned rhinoceros, crocodiles, giant elephants and Asia's largest population of swamp deer, as well as a large number of migratory birds.

And at the top of our agenda – you guessed it – was a tiger sighting!

We entered Suklaphanta at around 3pm. It was bright and sunny and we drove across the grassland and water holes. Along the way, we were thrilled to spot numerous species including swamp deer, hog deer, spotted deer and wild boar. However, there was no sign of the tiger.

It was nearly sun set when we got to the watch tower at the reserve and we decided to stop over to enjoy the brilliant hues of blue, orange and yellow. The landscape was breathtaking but in a corner of our hearts we were quite glum about not having seen a tiger.

It was slowly getting dark and we decided to let go of our hopes and head back to the hotel. Eliza was seated in the front and three of us were in the back seat of the jeep. Amongst us, Eliza seemed the most eager to see a tiger but because the chance of seeing it was very minimal, she seemed a little dejected. Rabi and Moon were apparently very tired and started to doze off as soon as the vehicle started.



As our vehicle moved forward, it took us closer to our destination and farther from our wishes to see the tiger.

And then suddenly, our driver stopped the vehicle.

Barely six meters from our vehicle stood a large adult tiger! The next three minutes were a contradiction of emotions.

Rabi and Moon fumbled with their cameras, zooming in and out, focusing and refocusing, trying to get their perfect shot of the tiger. Eliza and I just sat their speechless and motionless in complete awe of the magnificent species. Both of us had our camera in our hands but neither our hands nor our eyes moved.

Those three minutes – from the time the tiger stood before us to the time it quietly moved by – were probably the longest as well as the shortest for us! I had failed to capture the tiger in my camera but that did not matter. I had captured it in my heart.

And when I reflect on the question, 'Will I see a tiger', while considering myself luckier than others to have seen one in different occasions, there is only one thought that comes to my mind apparently – the best part of seeing a tiger is that you don't see one! Why? Because that way, they are better protected. That way, they can blend with the grasslands, away from the prying eyes and intentions of the few who wish to destroy something so inspiring and beautiful.

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Hot off the Press

WWF ON YOUR RADIO

Kalika FM	Thu	7:25 PM to 7:55 PM
Phoolbari FM	Wed	8:30 PM to 9:00 PM
Shuklaphanta FM	Sun	7:15 PM to 7:45 PM
Bageshwori FM	Thu	6:30 PM to 7:00 PM
Madhyapaschim FM	Fri	7:30 PM to 8:00 PM
Samudayik Radio Solu FM	Fri	6:35 PM to 6:50 PM



*Snow Leopard Conservation
Action Plan for Nepal
2005-2015*



A day in the life of a tiger tracker



Fact Sheet - Snow Leopard



Fact Sheet - Red Pandas



जलवायुका लागि सक्षम संरक्षण



*Learning for Climate
Adaptation*

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the past months we welcomed new staff...

- **Srijana Baral**
Program Officer, ChAL, Hariyo Ban Program
- **Surendra Ranpal**
Field Program Associate, TAL PABZ, Hariyo Ban Program
- **Yadav Prasad Kandel**
Program Officer, Forest Carbon
- **Jagadish Chandra Kuikel**
Livelihoods Specialist, Hariyo Ban Program
- **Shikha Gurung**
Campaigns and Marketing Officer

and we bid farewell to...

- **Yashaswi Shrestha**
Senior Program Associate, Lumbini Project

Inside the Himalayas

Editor:
Simrika Sharma
Marasini

Editorial Team:
Akash Shrestha
Prajana Waiba Pradhan
Mreedu Gyawali

On the Cover:
Watering plants at the
Community Forest
Co-ordination Committee
(CFCC) head quarters in
Khata.



For Living Himalayas

WWF's work in Nepal is part of WWF's Living Himalayas Initiative which aims to bring the three governments of Nepal, Bhutan and India together to effectively manage and conserve the Eastern Himalayan region for the sake of their exceptional wildlife, breathtaking environment and unique people.

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