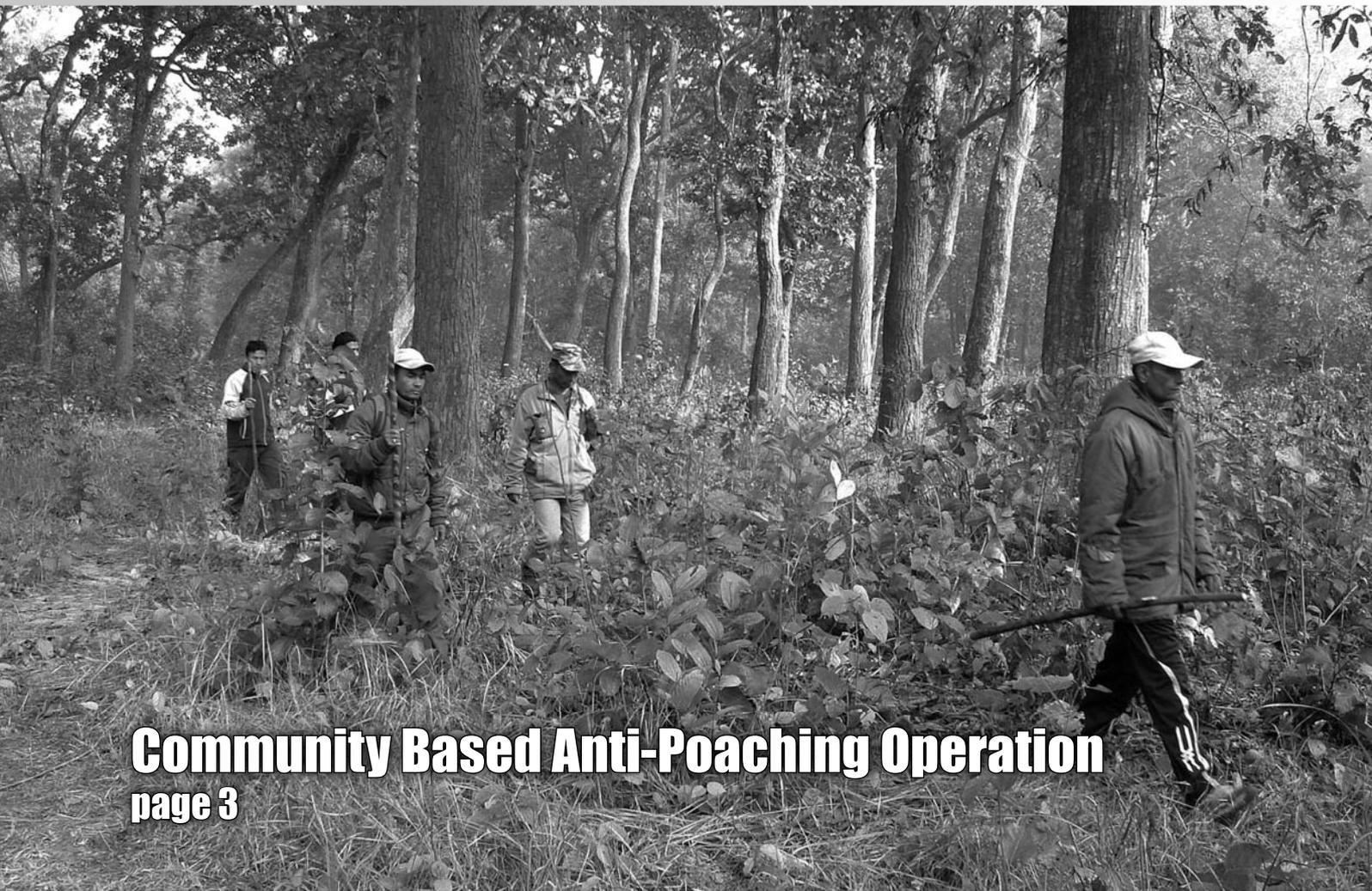


Wildlife Times



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Editorial

Participatory approach has been the key for development in recent times. The participation of local people for any developmental activities is a necessity in today's time as the traditional knowledge with modern entities is basis for progress. Community Based Anti-Poaching operation (CBAPO) is an initiation by the local youths residing in Buffer Zones and Community Forests in and around National Parks who work voluntarily to curb illegal wildlife trades and support park authorities in anti poaching operation. CBAPO is a concept for control of poaching where the local people are involved in awareness development and anti-poaching operation. CBAPO has been actively working for Anti Poaching Operation by assisting the authorities of National Parks. They are vigorously involved in control of poaching and public awareness. They are playing crucial role in generating awareness to the public and providing information to enforcement agencies to control wildlife crime. It is necessary that more people are aware about such initiatives so that people at local level are motivated for such activities. With sufficient funding and training programs, CBAPO can be the best solution for anti poaching operation on local level.

The main challenge for CBAPO now is self-sustenance, as it does not have enough resources. Similarly, TAL program has been supporting it effectively while the park has limited its support in many areas as the park is involved mostly in the core area. The locals gave some suggestions for the further effectiveness of control of illegal wildlife trade like installation of firewood depot in buffer zone, which may reduce the movement of local people in the park area, the need of effective awareness programs in Northern region of Chitwan as there is less effective protection programs and more proactive and cordial role of the army for conservation as accord to the people's expectation.

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With the first successful translocation of tiger from Chitwan National Park to Bardia National park, this has paved new path for mammal translocation. This translocation is the first ever tiger translocation in the world. Though rhino translocation had been done in the past, the translocation of such a large and ferocious mammal in Nepal is a great achievement for the wildlife experts. The translocation was done with the aid of scientific equipments and trained personnel. This translocation received worldwide attention with the involvement of WWF Nepal in the overall process. Nepal has been providing ambience for scientific study of animals from since last few decades. Nepal has always opened its door for the scientists for research when other countries were reluctant. So, the enthusiasm of Nepal is easily seen with such response. The translocation of the tiger may be a milestone in the doubling of tigers by year 2022.

Community Based Anti-Poaching Operation

From saving a rhino from possible retaliation by the local community when it accidentally entered a settlement area in Birendranagar, Chitwan to retrieving arms and ammunition hidden by poachers in the forest, Community Based Anti-Poaching operation (CBAPO) is an initiation by the local youths residing in Buffer Zones and Community Forests in and around National Parks who work voluntarily to curb illegal wildlife trades and support park authorities in anti-poaching operations. CBAPO is a unique example of community stewardship in controlling poaching and generating awareness on wildlife conservation.

Swechha Lamichhane of Wildlife Times undertook a field visit in Chitwan to understand its operation and mechanism. An excerpt of her findings is presented below.

History of CBAPO

The anti-poaching program was established in 1973 by Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) when rhino poaching had become a serious problem in Chitwan. Chronologically,



CBAPO members in Anti Poaching Operations with the Park authorities

the protection of endangered species, such as rhino and tiger, started in 1940, when the Rana administration (1846-1950) formed the gaida-gasti for patrolling the Chitwan, Nawalparasi and Bardia districts (DNPWC/WWF 1996). In 1975, 200-armed Nepal Army staff were introduced to Chitwan National Park (CNP) and permanently stationed inside the park. Later the Nepal army number was increased and they were extended to the most of the protected areas.

With the establishment of Buffer Zone, poaching became one of the principle threats.

Many rhinos were killed in the early stages of the establishment of the buffer zone. The rhinos dwelled around the buffer zone for food, so they were present in abundance in that area. As the buffer zone was easily accessible to all, poaching in the buffer zone became more rampant. There was increase in rhino poaching till 2002, while this trend decreased after 2002. Fifty rhinos died in 2002-2003 of which 29 rhinos died due to poaching while in 2003-2004, the total of 24 rhinos died. In 2004-2005, 16 rhinos died due to poaching out of death of 27 rhinos. (Annual Reports, DNPWC).



Anti Poaching Units in the field

Poaching finds its roots in the rising demand for rhino horns and tiger bones and, more importantly, poverty amongst local communities who in effect would earn more than a year's present income from one poaching incident.

As poaching increased, the youth became more concerned about the issue and in effect organized themselves in groups to mitigate illegal poaching, thus bringing about the establishment of the CBAPO concept. CBAPO is a sub-committee of Buffer Zone User Committee (BZUC) that is under Buffer Zone Management Committee (BZMC). There are 22 BZUCs which have 22 branches of CBAPO as sub-committees. Generally, in each CBAPO, there are nine wards. Each ward has five members of which two mandatorily need to be women.

CBAPO was established first in Nawalparasi district in 2002 where the youths collectively and actively participated to declare the district as poaching-

free area. Today, there are 658 members. Later success of CBAPO replicated to Mrigakunja BZUC, Bachauli; Budhi Rapti BZUC, Kumroj; KhagendraMalli BZUC, Kathar; and Lothar BZUC, Piple. And now CBAPO's are actively working under all 22 BZUC's of Chitwan National Park and also in all BZUC's of Bardia National Park & Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve. In Parsa Wildlife Reserve there are Seven CBAPO's and 12 BZUC's.

CBAPO Activities

The major activity of CBAPO is awareness generation amongst the local communities and eco-clubs to protect wild animals from poaching and curbing illegal wildlife trade. Awareness programs are held at regular intervals. These include street dramas, house-to-house visits, distribution of pamphlets and posters, rallies,

hoarding boards and games such as football and marathon to name a few. Additionally, as most of the local people are illiterate, an effective way of attracting their attention is through popular folk songs. Such songs are dedicated to wildlife conservation. Radio programs, in Tharu and Nepali languages, are also aired regularly. Interaction is done with the indigenous people of the region like *Majhi*, *Mushar* and *Bote* as their daily lives and culture is directly linked with wild animals. Most often, the poachers bribe them with money to assist them in poaching. Interaction programs with them are therefore important in making them understand the significance of saving wild animals.

As per needed, CBAPO also participates in joint patrolling with the National Park. It has its own information collection system, the information from which is provided to the park authorities. It rescues orphan animals and hands them over to the park authorities. It stops encroachment of communities in forest land in order to protect habitat of wild animals.



Street Drama organized by CBAPO

Apart from its core activities, CBAPO has been actively involved in control of illegal fishing and control of nylon fish nets. It also curbs illegal dumping of poisonous substances in the water bodies and raises awareness on the harmful effect of chemicals and pesticides on the ecosystem and humans alike.

Network and Vigilance

CBAPO maintains rapport and networking with all conservation partners active in the field. WWF Nepal has been supporting CBAPO since its inception through the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) program. Through the program, training programs are conducted for the members for effective functioning and members are assisted in proposal development. The main role of WWF Nepal is it to mediate between the CBAPO and the National Park.

Women are active participants in CBAPO activities. As they spend a lot of time in the forests collecting firewood and grazing cattle, they have a more important role. It can be said that women contribute to the majority of the effectiveness in CBAPO work.

Every year CBAPO organizes a workshop to prepare its annual plan which is submitted to the BZMC, National Park and WWF Nepal for compliance. Tiger-rhino conservation committee along with other field-based committees is also involved in its preparation.

External support

To strengthen CBAPO, a mechanism has been developed to channel 10% of total amount of Conservation Education activities budget of BZUC. It also receives financial and technical assistance from WWF Nepal through the TAL program. From last year TAL program established revolving fund in two BZUC's, each 5 lakh, of Madi and Nawalparasi of which 10% income has been directly channelized through CBAPO for its sustainability.

To support CBAPO as a self-sustaining unit, elephant dung paper production has been initiated with the support of TAL program where 10% of the profit is allotted for anti-poaching operations. Similarly, in Mirgakunja BZUC 10% profit of milk cooperative allocated for CBAPO operation



Patrolling of the Rapti River

where milk chilling plant was supported by TAL.

(We are thankful to Mr. Diwakar Chapagain, Coordinator of WWF Nepal program, Prem Paudel, field assistant for Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) program in Chitwan, Rishi Gurung, former chairman of CBAPO for Bachauli (founder chairman) and Bharat Sapkota, office assistant for CBAPO, Bachauli for their inputs).



All women members in one CBAPO

Anil Manandhar is the Country Representative of WWF Nepal since 2007. Anil has been with WWF since 1997. During his four years of tenure as Country Representative of WWF Nepal, their programs and funding diversity has been widened with more participatory approach. Wildlife Times contacted him to talk about the activities of WWF Nepal on CBAPO.



How WWF Nepal perceived CBAPO?

Local communities are the guardians of local resources including wildlife and it is equally important that these communities are given the right and responsibilities to protect the resources around them. Community Based Anti-Poaching Operations (CBAPO) are a key stakeholder and partner of WWF Nepal at the local level for curbing illegal activities against wildlife, their habitats, wildlife corridors and forest areas. Over the years, CBAPOs have demonstrated exceptional stewardship in controlling such illegal activities, exemplified by numerous instances of controlling crimes against wildlife and forest resources. We are very hopeful that CBAPOs will independently be able to safeguard their resources from any kind of illegal activities in the long run.

How CBAPO supporting APUs?

CBAPOs have been instrumental in providing valuable information to the enforcement agencies. Since the members of the CBAPOs are local residents living around the forests and wildlife habitats, they have significant knowledge on the prime areas for illegal activities and can monitor the movement of the culprits in these areas. CBAPOs also undertake regular patrolling in the wildlife habitats

and forest areas. Such activities have been supporting the APU in curbing illegal activities against wildlife and their habitats. They have generated conservation awareness in the communities which indirectly helps enforcement agencies.

How effective so far CBAPO to curb illegal wildlife trade in Nepal?

CBAPOs are very much concerned about illegal wildlife trade in Nepal as it is the one of the key reasons for poaching of precious wildlife species such as tigers and rhinos. The CBAPOs are playing a very effective role in controlling poaching and illegal wildlife trade in their locations through regular patrolling, keeping vigilance on poachers and traders, and collecting information on criminals and furnishing the same to the enforcement agencies for timely action. They are playing crucial role in generating awareness to the public and providing information to enforcement agencies to control wildlife crime.

Is CBAPO a unique model of Nepal or similar operations existed also in other countries?

The concept of organizing the members of local communities in safeguarding the natural resources around their areas in the form of CBAPO is, in my opinion, a unique strategy to

promote community ownership and protect wildlife and their habitats as well as other resources of Nepal. There may be such kinds of groups with similar purposes in other countries of South East Asia and Africa.

How CBAPO sustains in future?

It is a big challenge for CBAPOs to continue their work in a sustainable manner and without support from outside agencies. Considering this, we have started a mechanism whereby CBAPOs may operate sustainably. Through the Terai Arc Landscape program, we have piloted a CBAPO fund within the Community Forest User Groups (CFUG). Under this mechanism, the CFUG contributes a certain amount to the fund so that activities are conducted regularly even without support received from other sources; WWF in turn contributes some seed money as a matching fund. If we are successful in setting up such funds in each CFUG and Buffer Zone User Committee (BZUCs), I think the CBAPOs will be able to sustain themselves in the future. They are institutionally linked with CFUGs and BZUCs so that they are under a system supported by laws. Under this provision, they can sustain legally and explore innovative ideas for financial sustainability as well.

Monkey Paintings Exhibition



WWG hosted a painting exhibition as a part of the stop the monkey business campaign's success celebration. The painting exhibition was held on 11-13th February in Park Gallery Pulchowk. His Excellency Mr. Jean-Charles Demarquis French ambassador to Republic of Nepal was the chief guest for the exhibition.

Along with His Excellency, Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, Member of Constituent Assembly and Council member of World Conservation Union and Mr. Bigyan Pradhan, Vice-Chairman of WWG spoke on the occasion about the success story of WWG in stopping the export of rhesus monkeys to USA for lab tests and experiments.

Wildlife Watch Group, along with WWF Nepal, IUCN Nepal and IPPL (International Primate Protection League); joined hand to celebrate the decision taken on 2009 by the ministry of forest and soil conservation to stop exporting Nepalese monkeys to laboratories in foreign countries, mainly in the USA.



H.E. French Ambassador inaugurating the exhibition

An Art workshop was organized by WWG along with CEC IUCN (Commission on Communication and Education of the World Conservation Union), BATAS Organization, IPPL (International Primate Protection League), Prerana Organization, Natural History Museum and NEFUG (Nepalese Federation of Forests Users Group) on 23 January 2010 to commemorate the end of monkey business. The theme of the workshop was **Let Monkeys be allowed to live in wild and free**. The art workshop was held as a celebration of the decision of the government to shut down the monkey breeding center and free the captive monkeys in the wild on 18 December 2009. 23 artists and 22 students had participated on this workshop to celebrate the ending of the monkey business In Nepal.

On the occasion, chief guest for the program, His Excellency Mr. Jean-Charles Demarquis, French Ambassador to Republic of Nepal spoke. He expressed his enthusiasm by saying, "I congratulate all the artists particularly the children whose painting feature in this catalogue and wish WWG every success in their endeavors to preserve the monkey population in Nepal". Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba who had been supporting WWG throughout the campaign expresses her regard to WWG for successfully organizing the protest against the export of monkeys to USA for lab experiments and for hosting the exhibition for awareness purpose. Mr. Bigyan Pradhan, Vice Chairman of WWG, thanked the entire artists, participants and the organizing members for their participation

and giving their valuable time to support the cause. He stated this event as a first-of-its-kind on theme of wildlife conservation particularly on primate. His Excellency then released the catalogue 'Monkeys Painting Exhibition' and then inaugurated the exhibition by lighting the lamps and ribbon cut.

The catalogue contains the message from Shirley McGreal, Chairwoman IPPL. She congratulated the participants and expressed her happiness that Nepalese monkeys are free in the wild. Dhruva Madhikarmi, writer and art critique, expressed his appreciation to the artists, students and organizers for the exhibition. The paintings were placed in two-storied gallery where the paintings of the professional artists were placed in the ground floor and the paintings of the students in first floor. The paintings of the artists were for sale that ranged from NRs. 7,000 to NRs. 50,000. More than hundred visitors came for the exhibition who were handed the monkey books. The girls wearing traditional Nepali dresses welcomed the guests by putting red vermilion and red kwokha (ritual ribbon worn around the neck) as they symbolize victory. The certificates were also distributed to the artists during the program.

The professional artists and the parents of the student artists were also present on the occasion.

Speech of His Excellency Jean Charles- Demarquis, French Ambassador to Republic of Nepal on the occasion of Monkey Paintings Exhibition

Mr. Mangal Man Shakya,
Honourable Dr. Arzu R Deuba,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Stop this monkey business!
A catchy slogan that cannot leave you indifferent! The Wildlife Watch Group has to be commended for its untiring efforts in trying to obtain the ban of breeding monkeys in Nepal for exportation in the name of research and progress.

When I arrived in Nepal a few months ago it amused me to see monkeys mingling with the crowds and I remember wondering them whether these monkeys has been displaced because of deforestation or whether, being considered sacred animals by Hindus and Buddhists they were allowed free reign in the cities !

I am thankful to the Wildlife Watch Group for inviting me today and in doing so making me aware of a cause that I had previously heard little of!

It made me do some research on the objectives of the organisation and the state of European legislation in this matter. I was happy to note that the European Parliament

has valid to revise legislation on animals for scientific purposes. Unfortunately, at present it is not possible to ban outright the use for safety testing and biomedical research. The 3Rs principle of replacing, reducing and refining animal testing is firmly anchored in the new legislation. EU member states have 24 months to adopt and publish national legislation, which will come into effect in January 2013!

It was interesting also to learn about Coalition Anti-Vivisection- a Franco Belgium partner of the Wildlife Watch Group, which is active in fighting common causes for the protection of animals.

What is certain is that governments need to make strict regulations in order to protect their wildlife and in doing so protect the heritage of the people! I do hope that the Wildlife Watch Group continue their efforts to bring



about the change that is needed in this country to protect not only monkeys but all dumb animals who need people like the Wildlife Watch Group but also you and me to fight for their right to live and grow in peace!

I congratulate all those who have contributed in the compiling of this catalogue, the children and local artists whose paintings will do much to increase our awareness on this subject and to all of you who have come here today to support this very good cause.

In the name of the Monkey population of Nepal I say “MERCİ BEAUCOUP”.

The first wild Tiger Translocation



On the way to Bardia

For the first time in Nepal, a wild tiger fitted with satellite collar was translocated from the Chitwan National Park (CNP) to Bardia National Park (BNP).

CNP authorities had rescued the injured male tiger from the premises of a hotel in Sauraha in September, 2010. “The tiger was placed in a secure enclosure at the park headquarters in Kasara for treatment where it recovered completely. A team of wildlife veterinarians, biologists and park authorities tranquilized it and fitted it with a Global Positioning System (GPS) collar,” according to Dr. Maheshwor Dhakal, ecologist, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC).



Carter S Roberts President and CEO WWF USA with then Minister of Forest and Soil Conservation of Nepal



Tranquilized Tiger

“The first of its kind in Nepal, this translocation is a concrete example of our promise to save the wild tiger using the best science available, including the application of cutting-edge technologies,” then Minister for Forests and Soil Conservation, Deepak Bohara, said after the DNPWC translocated the big cat with help from WWF and National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC).

“Working together, we can help achieve the global community’s goal to double the number of tigers by 2022,” he said, referring to the goal set at the recently concluded tiger summit in Russia.

The big cat was transported about 600 km in a specially constructed trailer from CNP to BNP under strict supervision and security measures.

It was introduced to its new home in the fertile valley along the river. “The Babai is an ideal location for the tiger translocation because of its vast size and available prey species, improved anti-poaching efforts, lower human-tiger conflict and connectivity with other protected areas through the Terai Arc Landscape, all the way to India’s Suhelwa Wildlife Sanctuary,” said Krishna Prasad Acharya, director-general, DNPWC.



Ready for journey



Scientific Measurement I



Scientific Measurement II



Scientific Measurement III



After awakening in Bardia



Tiger carrying Truck

The satellite collar fitted on the tiger's neck gives an accurate location every half hour. It will help scientists to gain a better understanding of tiger ecology and monitor the translocated tiger's adaptive skills.

"I am convinced that Nepal will definitely double the tiger number by 2022," said Carter S Roberts, WWF USA president. A special team has been deployed in BNP to

monitor the behavior of the tiger.

The wildlife authorities in Kathmandu and Bardia will be able to monitor the movement of the wild cat through their computers. "For the first three months, we will be closely monitoring the tiger's ability to adapt to the new habitat. GPS monitoring will continue for further research on its behavior," Dr. Dhakal added.

Common Sense and the Tiger

By Carey L Biron

Contrary to the recent hubbub over the ‘discovery’ of tigers living at high altitudes in Bhutan, a Nepali wildlife biologist made this finding almost a decade ago – but never received credit.

In February 2001, the ridgelines of central Bhutan were covered with a light dusting of snow. At the time, Pralad Yonzon, one of South Asia's top field biologists, was in professional exile from his home country, Nepal, and had been prowling these hills as a consultant to the Thimphu government. Consultant is a word that he uses for himself only sparingly and with clear distaste. ‘You have to understand,’ he says, ‘consultants wear three-piece suits, carry laptops, are jet-setters – half of their report is already finished before they leave home. I do not do that. All of my data came from the field. Everybody in Thimphu would be happy when I would go off for three months and never show my face.’ He was the type of consultant – at the time, researching and writing a conservation plan for Bhutan’s central Thrumshingla National Park – who would pack his rucksack full of essentials and head out, roughing it out for months at a time.

Therefore, it was that Yonzon

found himself cresting the snowy saddle of a ridge that February, and staring at the unmistakable tracks – pugmarks – of a royal Bengal tiger. Previously, Yonzon had worked as a field biologist with the Smithsonian Tiger Project in Nepal’s Chitwan National Park for five years, in addition to having been the director of the King Mahendra Trust, a semi-government body overseeing conservation efforts in Nepal. As such, he was given to trusting his own wildlife identification. As he looked at the pugmarks, there was only one problem: the ridgeline that he was standing on was at an altitude of more than 4000 meters – 4110 m, he later ascertained.

‘That’s way up there,’ Yonzon emphasizes, by which he means that not only are tigers not supposed to go that high, but no tiger evidence had ever been found at anywhere near that altitude. Indeed, all over the world tiger habitat does not rise above 1000 m. Over the next few weeks, Yonzon was determined to document the discovery for the world to see. Armed with just two film ‘camera traps’, he recalls carefully scouring the landscape for a place he felt confident would be fruitful – ‘with only two cameras, you



Pralad Yonzon

have to be really picky,’ he says. After shooting a few dozen rolls of film, he brought the camera back to Kathmandu for processing, as there were no such facilities in Bhutan at the time.

Out of all the rolls exposed, Yonzon had captured just one image of a tiger, but that was all he needed. True, at around 3000 m, his camera trap had been set up far lower than his initial discovery of the pugmarks. But not only did that single image still constitute the highest-altitude evidence of a tiger anywhere in the world at the time; it was also the first instance in which a live tiger had ever been photographed in Bhutan. Thus, Yonzon would seem to have scored something of a double play: satisfying his own scientific and research instincts while simultaneously making his employer – and, as a bonus, his employer’s entire citizenry – very happy.

Except, in fact, not everyone was pleased. Newspapers in Bhutan



Caught ya! Pralad Yonzon's image in Bhutan at an altitude of 3000 m, April 2001

duly published the photograph to great acclaim, but with one piece of information missing: the photo credit. 'The Bhutanese were very happy,' he recalls today, 'but some officials were not. I think they were unhappy because [the tiger photograph] was found by a Nepali, and that stigma is there no matter what we do. It was not openly stated, but since then they have published that photo many times, and I haven't come across a single instance where they've said this photo was taken by Pralad Yonzon.' In addition to the Bhutanese authorities, the broader scientific community has also failed to give due credit for the photograph. This was on show in mid-September, when a BBC camera crew's 'discovery' of tigers at 4100 m made international headlines – though the Bhutanese newspaper *Keunsel* was slightly more circumspect, quoting the country's head conservationist, Sonam Wangchuck, as noting that 'evidence of "mountain tigers"', as the BBC calls them, was "discovered" by park officials in Bhutan last year.'

Yonzon pauses for a moment, and his usual energetic, matter-of-fact tone falters briefly before continuing. 'I don't mind – its okay. Science is science. I do not

get credit – fine. But some time, if they had said just, Yonzon has taken this photo, I would be elated.'

From thin air

Of course, science is science, nothing more or less. It is supposed to give hard answers or suggest likely possibilities; it is supposed to be black and white. It is supposed to wrestle quietly, relentlessly, with a complex, organic problem until, one day, hopefully, up pops an incontrovertible theory or solution. It is not supposed to be affected by the vagaries of human comfort, fickle emotion – certainly not the endlessly problematic winds of politics and nationalism. Yet in fact, today's scientific process oftentimes does not seem to be very scientific at all.

This appears to be a problem that goes well beyond the confines of today's debates. In the late 1970s, Yonzon recalls, he attended the very first tiger symposium to be held at the international level, in Delhi. A key focus at that time was to set benchmarks for subsequent conservation efforts. In the course of these discussions, it was mentioned that, two decades earlier, some 50,000 tigers had lived in the wild. Where exactly this estimate had come from was unclear, however, until eventually the conference organisers found a frail old man, and asked him to take to the dais.

Salim Ali was a renowned bird expert, who years earlier had collaborated on a definitive ten-

volume set of books on birds of South Asia. He was also said to have been the one who came up with the 50,000 number in the first place. How had he done it, the conference-goers now asked him. As Yonzon relates, Ali responded clearly and to the point: 'There was no census,' he began. 'One evening, we were sitting on a porch, on cane chairs, and we were served tea, English tea. And we were talking about it, and somebody said, "What do you think about the number of tigers?" And just off the top of my head I said 50,000.' In addition, that was how the number came to stick – for decades. Amazingly, Ali's recollections of this important incident were never published, nor even formally discussed. However, for Yonzon, the experience was a stroke of lightning – not only in terms of how the scientific process worked (or otherwise), but also in terms of how relatively rare integrity of a certain type seemed to be in his field at the time. 'This was such an honest man,' Yonzon says. 'He had no fear! But still, later on this number became part of the science – everybody said, 20 years back there were 50,000 tigers. Salim Ali had guts to say that this was how it had actually happened.'

Yonzon's exile from Nepal came shortly after he took over as director at the Mahendra Trust, and discovered a high-level employee using official vehicles for personal reasons. His subsequent stern measures embittered him towards the high-level conservation officialdom for years. Today,

a decade after his discovery in Bhutan, Pralad Yonzon is back in Kathmandu, where he mentors young graduates at Resources Himalaya, a knowledge-based conservation foundation. In the meantime, the tiger has become even more of an international conservation cause celebre than it used to be. Yet last October, when the major tiger-related international symposium of the year took place in Kathmandu – where 2010 was formally declared the international Year of the Tiger – Yonzon was not in attendance. He was, he explains, ‘disgusted’ by the lack of truth in the whole process.

At the October 2009 meeting, the Nepali government announced plans to double the country’s current tiger population within a decade, which the country’s forests minister, Deepak Bohora, defined as bringing the number beyond 242. In so doing, Nepal was following the outlines of a major initiative of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) called ‘Tx2: Double or Nothing’, which aims to double the global tiger population by 2022, already chosen as the next international Year of the Tiger. With as few as an estimated 3200 tigers (of six different species) left in the wild today (according to the WWF), and all of these in the Asian continent, the critical need for such undertakings is obvious. Yet according to Yonzon, these attempts are also incapable of meeting their goals if governments and INGOs continue to follow the methods of the past. Further, he has seen management plans – local, national, international – come

and go, along with countless promises by politicians. The outgoing forests minister, he points out, will not be in his current post when 2022 rolls around, and is in no way accountable for the ‘promises’ that he makes today.

So, Yonzon decided that he simply would not take part in the year’s extravaganzas. What is the point of just pouring new money down the same channels, when those approaches have specifically not worked in the past? ‘Every government in the tiger-range countries has a law, a policy, national parks, park staff, army, police – they can arrest anything that goes against tiger conservation,’ he says. ‘So why is it not working? That is the question that needs to be asked.’ And, he has a probable answer: ‘I think that the whole system is falling down because we are not getting to the knowledge-holders. In July, Nepal’s Department of National Parks, WWF Nepal and the Nepal Trust for Nature Conservation claimed adult tigers in Chitwan had increased from 91 to 125 in just a single year. The suggestion is that more camera traps were used in area than were used last year.’ This explanation is unsatisfactory to Yonzon, however, given that the study also claims to have found only 23 cubs. According to previous knowledge, the breeding adults within Nepal’s tiger population tend to have on average 2.8 cubs (or ‘sub adults’); as such, this should have worked out to some 350 cubs in the recent study. Given this inconsistency, Yonzon’s theory is that the

sudden jump in numbers is actually due to researchers counting cubs as adult tigers. ‘There are no satisfactory biological explanations for this increase of 34 tigers based on the 2010 count,’ he says. ‘And that shows that money can’t buy knowledge.’

Instead, Yonzon continues donors and governments ‘have to make it clear what exactly is the newfound knowledge on which we can spend new money – and that is not happening. Instead, it is the same old story, the same old same system with dated information, in which a select group of officials and their preferred underlings take all decisions.’ As an alternative, he suggests, graduates should be groomed by their mentors, independent of government and INGO influence, in degraded forest areas where tiger populations are on the edge. ‘This is the battlefield, where donors can contribute to defend it at all cost.’

Outside the lines

What is it about Bhutan that allows tigers to exist at such high altitudes – and is there any lesson there for broader conservation efforts? According to Yonzon, the tiger in Bhutan, despite its unique aspects (not only is it found at higher altitudes, but it also seems to be slightly smaller than its lower-lying cousins), is not a different subspecies. Instead, it is the Bhutanese topography that is different – and Thimphu’s own conservation approaches. Unlike in nearly any part of Nepal or India, Bhutan’s

decades of strict forestry has resulted in large swathes of contiguous forestland running from lower altitudes all of the way up to the tree line, around 3500 to 4000 m. Thus, not only do tigers have continuous corridors through which to move, but so too does their prey.

This has allowed Thimphu to break out of a mentality, particularly fostered by multilateral donors, that focuses solely on officially designated national parks and conservation areas. In fact, Yonzon suggests, the overwhelming majority of threats to the tiger population are not in such protected areas, but rather in the forest borders and/or buffer zones. Here is where, far more than anywhere else, tigers come in contact with human settlements and livestock, yet today there is very little international focus on such peripheries – and in Nepal, beyond a few such projects, there is none. This is underlined by Bhutan's confessed success with regards to an official compensation programme for any livestock killed by tigers. According to recent estimates from Thimphu, this approach has resulted in saving roughly eight tigers per year in Bhutan. In Nepal, there is still no movement on compensation whatsoever.

This blindness to on-the-ground realities, on the part of both donors and governments, is crippling conservation efforts, Yonzon says. In his view, the centrality of knowledge is of utmost importance in any scientific undertaking; when dealing with a complex issue

such as tiger habitat and human populations, that knowledge needs to be strengthened by simple common sense. 'We don't need big science,' he emphasizes. 'Good, common sense is good science. If you have common sense, we absolutely can save the tiger.' Yet as issues such as 'saving' the tiger have become of increased interest to international audiences, the actual science has almost inevitably taken a back seat to the concerns that keep the whole machine running: money, politics, branding. In Yonzon's view, none of this would be particularly objectionable if it were having the desired effect. Given that, thus far, it has not, he is both outraged and saddened that more radical thinking has not been given greater credence.

With regards to tiger conservation, he says, over the 30 years since Salim Ali gave his presentation, two general schools of thought have arisen. The first says that we have to save tigers – we need to raise money, support governments and NGOs, formulate socio-economic activities to better people's lives. 'Philosophically, this sounds very good,' says Yonzon. In addition, indeed, this is the general approach that currently constitutes the majority of conservation around the world – it makes up the policymakers, the NGOs, the donors and their armchair biologists. On the other hand, there are also, the 'native researchers, isolated, scattered, no unions, no conferences or meetings, and they do their individual research. Sometimes,

they are thrown out because they have remained true to their work. They have said something wrong to the park management or donor agencies, and they've been socially ostracized in the field of tiger conservation.'

Then there is the other school, which suggests that the global tiger population has become so thin that the entire species stands on the brink of extinction. As the Wildlife Conservation Society prominently warned earlier this year, this could take place 'within our lifetimes'. Simultaneously, groups such as the World Bank-funded Global Tiger Initiative, in partnership with the WWF, are suggesting that within the next 20 years they will be able to double the tiger population. Thus, two highly prominent groups are making almost diametrically opposed suggestions in what they claim for the future, even while both say that they desperately need money. Yonzon says these two contradict and increase confusion – constituting not science but institutional propaganda, in which field-based, quantitative information gathering is a mere third priority. 'As a result, every day we see a losing battle in terms of tiger conservation,' he says. 'Therefore, somebody has to be very honest and very unpopular to say that this is not working. Instead, everybody everywhere says that they are working hard – and every day, we know that the tiger population is going down.'

Courtesy: Himal South Asian 2010 October issue



Village leader arrested in rhino's horn case

Chitwan, 7 February. Former Vice- Chairman of Gunjanagar VDC Amar Bahadur Tamang who fled after Chitwan National Park filed a case against him for selling of rhino's horn has been arrested. He was captured in Hetauda. The Park has fined him fifty thousand rupees and seven years six months imprisonment.

Tamang was suspected after one suspect took his name. On this basis, CNP filed a case against him. CNP filed case on 15 June 2007 according to the Park. Tamang had been disappearing since then. The verdict was given on 3 November 2007. Tamang appealed his case in Appellate Court in Hetauda. He was then arrested at that time. The verdict of the Park is final till the Appellate Court gives its decision.

A precious gift

Bardia, 10 February. Bhadai Tharu, a conservationist who lost his one eye due to tiger attack, feels sunglasses to be an important part of his life. he buys sunlass in every three months from Guleria. But he

has one special sunlass that is for special occasions only.

Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio gifted him a pair of American Polaroid glasses on his visit to Nepal last year. Leonardo had come to Nepal for the campaign to save tigers in collaboration with WWF US. According to Prakash Lamsal, project manager of TAL of bio trail conservation, Bhadai Tharu was the only one to receive a gift from Leonardo.

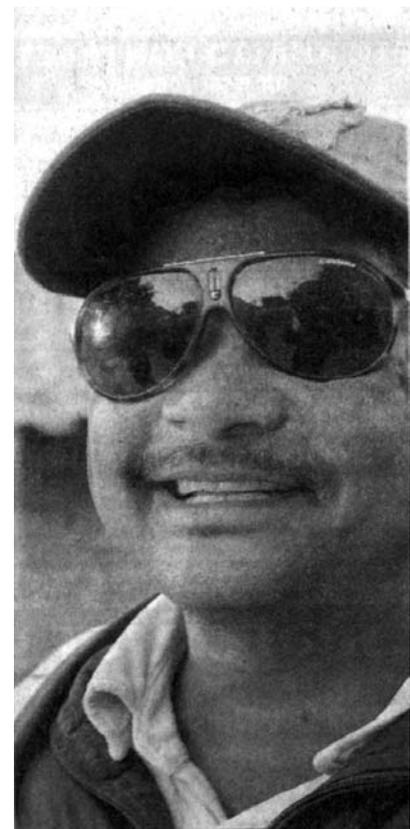
Bhadai Tharu said, "He is not agitated that he lost his sight due to tiger attack as tigers are just animals that are threatened by the humans. That is why we are working for their conservation". After he said this, Leonardo gave him the glasses he was wearing and hugged him. Leonardo met Bhadai after the locals had praised him.

Leonardo praised Bhadai by saying, "You are strong and courageous because of whom the conservation activities are successful".

During the visit, Madhuban building was inaugurated by Leonardo DiCaprio in Madhuban Community Forest.

He lost his eyesight when he encountered a tiger in 2003 in Gauri Community Forest. Even after losing his eye, he has been working for conservation. Therefore, WWF Nepal had presented him Abraham Conservation Award in 2004.

Living in Dhodari village in Khata bio trail, Bhadai has become a prominent figure in conservation field. Bhadai said that everyone teases him of wearing the sunglasses. He said even his wife teases him of wearing a 'hero's' glasses.



Taking care of the wounded

Jumla, 8 February. District Office of livestock has been taking care of a wounded vulture for a week.

The locals found the vulture on the bank of Tila River in a dying condition. The vulture is now able to walk after the care said Office Chief Devendra Bhagat.

The officials said the vulture was wounded by the humans. The locals brought the vulture found in Tatopani to the care center in a bus. The vulture was in a critical condition. Now it is fine.

The vulture still cannot see well with its right eye. Antibiotics and antiseptic medicines were given to it. For the food, the office staffs collect 25 to 100 rupees for the meat.

The vulture is fed 250 mg to 500 mg mutton and buff's meat everyday. The Himalayan vultures found in Nepal and India is in the state of extinction. In Nepal, the eight species of vultures are found. Since there is no general method of knowing the sex of the vulture, it is unknown whether it is male or female.

The vulture is ready to be sent to Vulture Conservation Center in Dang. The current rate of death of vultures due to use of dichlophene is 99%. The government banned the use of dichlophene in 2006 but its use is still going on. The twelve districts of Nepal have already



been announced as dichlophene free zones.

Trench construction in the border

Kanchanpur, 12 February. India has been making trench on the border by digging the soils along the no man's land. India violated the international rule that no infrastructure can be developed along the border.

This construction work by India will act as an obstacle for wildlife movement and inundation of the regions of Nepal.

Indian Forest Department has constructed big holes and trenches along the border of Bardia to Shuklaphanta in the border of Katarniya ghat, Dudhwa and Lagha-Bagha Conservation Areas. The height

and depth of the trench and holes is one and half meter.

Bardia National Park, Basanta corridor, Lalbhadi corridor and Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve are the affected areas that are connected with India.

According to DFO of Bardia, Nandalal Yadav, India has already digged 12 km trench along Katarniyaghat. The Armed Border Force of India has been looking after the construction.

Chief District Officer of Kanchanpur, Budhi Bahadur Khadka said that the construction of trench has prevented the movement of animals and natural water flow. According to him, till date 1670 m wall and 220 m of holes have been made.

Khadka added that he has already sent letters to Khiri District Office of India and to Home Ministry about the ongoing work. The Indian sides are constructing trench to save animals according to their source.

Chief District Officer of Bardia Ram Krishna Subedi said that in East of Dodari of Bardia, 12 km of trench has already been made. He has hoped to have a talk with the Indian side soon.

Five rhinos that had moved from Bardia to India are still on the Indian side said warden Tika Ram Adhikari.

On July 8 2010, in Delhi, in Biodiversity Conservation Workshop, agreement was made to control illegal trade through cooperation between the two countries.

Ten years ago, India and Nepal executed Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) program for easy movement of wild animals between the two countries. The present action of India is inappropriate.

Secretary of Forest Ministry Yuvraj Bhusal went for field investigation and has promised to bring this issue in national level.

India and Nepal has signed agreement that none of the countries can abrupt the path for movement of wild animal, said Gopal Prasad Upadhyay former DG of DNPWC.

The major habitats of tiger



are Balmiki, Sohelwa, Katarniyaghat, Dudhwa and Lagga-Bagha in India while in Nepal; they are Chitwan, Bardia and Shuklaphanta. It is important for the two countries to work together to save wild animals.

The government of Nepal has sent two letters of concern to the Indian Embassy in Nepal and Embassy of Nepal in New Delhi about the construction of trench. The foreign Ministry sent the letters after it was informed of the ongoing construction in the border area.

Interaction Program on CITES Implementation to illegal wildlife crimes

On 26th January 2011, Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), Department of Forest (DoF) organized an interaction program by John Sellar-Secretariat of Convention on International Trade of

Endangered Species of flora and fauna (CITES) - Chief of Law Enforcement Unit.

On this occasion, Deepak Bohra, the then Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation, talked about CITES and its implementation. He said, "Organized criminal syndicates work in a deep rooted way in many countries. The laws and enforcement can be implemented through cooperation". He also added that CITES has successful convention in the world with 175 countries. For effective response, more conference and workshop are needed for effective CITES implementation and for training.

Krishna Prasad Acharya, Director General for DNPWC said that Nepal became member of CITES since 1975. Different agencies of Nepal are involved; for fauna, it is handled by DNPWC while for flora, there is DoF. Nepal is in

the process of forming new Act which is now in the Parliament for evaluation. He also informed that Government of Nepal has approved the new institutional mechanism i.e. National Tiger Committee under the chairmanship of Prime Minister of Nepal. Nepal has been Collaborating with the SAARC countries for effective control and reduction of illegal; wildlife trade in South Asia. Nepal has signed MoU with China and an agreement with India. MoU with India is on its way soon. This shows the commitment done by Nepal for control of illegal wildlife trade.

John Seller then started the interaction program by giving introduction on CITES. CITES is an international convention that combines wildlife and trade themes with a legally binding instrument for achieving conservation and sustainable use objectives. It has 3 appendices.

Seller related the reasons for intensive illegal poaching and trades prevailing in the world. They are high profits, low risk of detection and low level of punishments. In many countries, there are only fines and no punishment.

There are different types of trades existing in the world apart from ivory and skin trade. There are bush meat trade which is trade of the meat of endangered animals sold for consumption, caviar trade which is trade of fishes and has high money value, the falcon trade where one falcon is worth two hundred thousand dollars, the pet trade common in Japan, USA and Europe, the plant trade, the reptile trade for shoes and bags, the timber trade, traditional medicine trade and the zoo/exhibition/circus trade.

Most of the illegal wildlife trades take place by smuggling, through a border without customs or

control points or through a border post by hiding the species. In Asia, Pangolin highly traded. In many parts of Asia, pangolin is in the brink of extinction.

Many wildlife crimes are organized crimes. There is a huge nexus of people and organized criminals who are spread in the entire region. Too often, illegal CITES goods are simply confiscated by authorities in countries they are transmitting through. Apart from loss of goods, smugglers receive no punishment and so continue their pursuit. For the control of illegal wildlife trade, we need to aware people, make aware about CITES and law enforcement and target inspections, seizures and investigation by appropriate agencies. Forensic science can be a great help to combat illegal trade. In addition, prosecution and adequate penalties are methods for control. China has executed twenty-eight people for wildlife crime last decade. Increased international information exchange, cooperation, sharing information can be the best solution to impede illegal trades and crimes. There is also a CITES National legislation project which helps countries to draft legislation; the Secretariat conducts an in-situ verification to monitor the CITES implementation.

CITES works with World Bank, Interpol, UNODC and World Custom Organization. Alerts are published regularly to provide intelligence to aid risk. The training, awareness raising and rewards are given regularly for mass awareness.

APPEAL

Dear valued readers,

The 30th issue of the Wildlife Times is in your hands. It is our small effort to raise various issues related with wildlife conservation. Please help us include the activities from your group or organizations of wildlife conservation by sending us the concerned information. We would love to find any suggestion and criticism. Please feel free to leave your feedback at info@citesnepal.org. We also seek support from your organization to continue this Wildlife Times. We look forward to your queries, comments and support.

