

Wildlife Times



Snow leopard in Mt. Everest 2005, Photo by: Joel Brown

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Editorial

The Tiger Range Countries now have a huge responsibility of not only saving the tigers but also doubling them by year 2022. The year of the Tiger 2010 ended with promises and hopes to double the number in the Tiger Summit held in St. Petersburg in November 2010. Soon after that, Nepal government, who has been actively involved and participating in tiger conservation, set aside 10 million rupees every month for tiger. This huge sum of money has been allocated for the tiger conservation activities. The effort shown is appreciable. But evaluating the present scenario, has this amount been aptly used for conservation? This year tiger count started only in Chure region (Terai) of Nepal due to lack of fund. This census was also only possible due to the funding from the students. This contradicting action on part of the government official shows the carelessness and mismanagement of the budget. The big question here is why the money was not used for tiger count which is a vital element for tiger conservation? Where is the cash that should have been used? Why is the government only big talk, but no action? These questions need to be answered soon so that the conservation of tiger remains a priority and Nepal can live upto its commitment to save the tigers.

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Recently some senior and field staffs resigned from Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) having long and impressive experience on park management particularly on tiger conservation. It is learnt that they left due to frustration and joined non-governmental organizations. This is unfortunate for department that the capable officers are leaving at a time when the government and international organizations are increasing budgets for conservation activities. It is not enough to allocate the resources only, if the competent people are not available. If there are no capable and experienced people left in DNPWC for park management, only the resources and external supports would not be sufficient. Managers and conservationists are required for systematic management and preservation. Without skilled people, the budget itself cannot accommodate. It is necessary for government to create suitable environment where the people can continue their work and are motivated for their endeavors.

The Serpent King

How a notorious Malaysian wildlife smuggler was brought to justice -- and what it tells us about stopping the world's most profitable black market.

By Bryan Christy

It began almost innocently. A broken lock on a suitcase moving through Kuala Lumpur International Airport this summer led to an odd discovery: nearly 100 baby boa constrictors, two vipers, and a South American turtle, all hidden inside. It was a fairly modest catch for a wildlife smuggler, but the man who claimed the suitcase was no ordinary criminal. He was Anson Wong Keng Liang, the world's most notorious wildlife trafficker. And instead of a slap on the wrist, which he might reasonably have expected, Wong was about to receive a surprising punishment.

From the tiny Malaysian island of Penang, in a storefront no larger than your average nail salon, Wong commanded one of the world's largest wildlife trafficking syndicates. Much of the work Wong's company, Sungai Rusa Wildlife, had done since he got into the business three decades ago was above-board: He legally wholesaled tens of thousands of wild reptiles annually, making him the likely source for many of the snakes, lizards, turtles, and frogs on sale in American pet stores. But using a private zoo as a cover, he also offered an



astounding array of contraband, including snow leopard pelts, panda bear skins, rhino horns, rare birds, and Komodo dragons. He moved everything from chinchillas to elephants, smuggling critically endangered wildlife from Australia, China, Madagascar, New Zealand, South America, and elsewhere to markets largely in Europe, Japan, and the United States.

Wong got into the business in the early 1980s, selling exotic animals to zoos and dealers around the world. In the beginning, he told me when I met him at his office on Penang in March 2007, he dealt openly in the unavailable: gorillas, tigers -- "anything," he said, by which he meant "anything

rare." (Changes in international and Malaysian law eventually led him to focus on reptiles, which he believed were not as protected as other species.) Wong's techniques mirrored those of narcotics and other traffickers. He paid mules to carry Komodo dragons hidden inside suitcases, and hid endangered Malagasy tortoises at the bottom of legal wildlife shipments. Purchasing vacation packages as cover, he sent men out to poach rare wildlife from breeding facilities in New Zealand. The most important technique Wong and other large-scale smugglers employ, however, is far less exotic than all that. Instead, it has to do with paperwork.

Smugglers like Wong scan the globe for countries with weak laws or corrupt law enforcement officials tasked with stamping their animals' documentation, paper that is as much in demand as the animals themselves.

Few places launder as much illegal wildlife as Penang. The island's location and favorable regulatory regime have made it not just a global manufacturing hub for multinational companies such as Dell and Intel, but also a bathtub drain for the world's rare animals. This was largely the work of Wong: "I can get anything here from anywhere," he boasted to an American undercover agent in March 1997. "Nothing can be done to me. I could sell a panda - and, nothing. As long as I'm here, I'm safe." The key, he explained, was paying off government

officials in the customs bureau and, importantly, in the wildlife department, the agency responsible for CITES paperwork.

Wong's activities finally landed him on the radar of international law enforcement agencies in the early 1990s, when Special Operations, the elite undercover unit of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), made him the target of an investigation called Operation Chameleon. Agents set up a reptile importing company outside of San Francisco and a retail operation in Reno, Nevada, and began doing business with Wong. Before long, they discovered Wong not only smuggled rare and endangered reptiles, but also critically endangered birds and mammals. His reach was global.

To arrest Wong, agents needed a ruse to lure him out of Malaysia. There is a lucrative international black market in bear bile, which is used as a cure-all in traditional Asian medicine. USFWS Special Agent George Morrison, acting undercover, offered Wong a piece of a bear-bile smuggling operation he claimed to be running, on one condition: The two men had to meet in person. Wong agreed, but because he was already wanted in the United States on smuggling charges, he refused to meet there or in Canada. They agreed to go to Mexico instead.

When Wong stepped off a Japan Airlines flight in Mexico City

on September 18, 1998, he was met by Morrison, along with Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert S. Anderson and a team of Mexican federals, who arrested him. Wong fought his extradition from Mexico to the United States for two years, but eventually he gave in.

In June 2001, Wong was sentenced in California to 71 months in prison, fined \$60,000, and banned from exporting to the United States for three years after his release. But the sentence did not stop him. While he was in prison his wife ran his wildlife business, including sales to the United States. When he got out in 2003, Wong returned to Malaysia, grew a pony tail, and went back to work.

Things didn't begin to change until January 2010, when National Geographic published a profile I wrote of Wong, detailing his government connection and his new plans to exploit tigers. The outcry by both the public and journalists in the Malaysian press was immediate. (Malaysian newspapers and television are state controlled, which makes it difficult for journalists to criticize the government directly -- but they are free to disclose foreign reporting about Malaysia, such as my story.) In the course of the past year, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment announced a revamp of its wildlife department, promising to rotate senior officers every three years. It stripped the department of key powers and

is in the process of transferring Mislihah, who is now also under investigation by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission. As a result, when Wong was caught with a suitcase of boa constrictors, he didn't get away with it. The Malaysian government revoked his business licenses, shut down his zoo, and seized his entire collection of animals, including his Bengal tigers. In

November, a judge sentenced him to five years in prison, an unprecedented term for a wildlife trafficker in Malaysia, and a stern sentence for animal smuggling compared to current standards anywhere else in the world.

The effort to catch Wong - - all 17 years of it -- offers a few important lessons on what it takes to stop a kingpin. In

2009, over 18,000 live animals and more than 267 tons of dead animals and derivative products were seized in law enforcement actions in Southeast Asia alone -- and that appetite won't go away just because Wong temporarily did. It's all but guaranteed that somewhere in Malaysia or another country willing to look the other way, there are aspiring kingpins working to take over his business.

Malaysia's new wildlife law used to tackle cyber crime

The Selangor State Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) raided the man's home in Bukit Jelutong on 11 January Tuesday and found the ivory items, which he advertised in the classified ads of a well known local website.

He is expected to be charged under Section 68(b) of the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 which came into force in December.

He faces up to MYR 100,000 (USD 32,500) in fines or up to three years in jail, or both, if found guilty.

Under the previous law the penalties would have been significantly lower: a fine of not exceeding MYR 3, 000 (USD975) or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year or to both.

While Malaysia does not possess the open ivory markets of other countries in the region, the country is becoming one of concern for its role in the global ivory trade. Malaysia was identified in the latest Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) report as a country of concern because of its role as a significant transit point.

ETIS is the world's largest database of elephant product seizure records, comprising more than 15,400 ivory seizure cases compiled over the last 21 years. The data shows a growing number of illegal ivory shipments passing through Malaysian ports.

In 2009, a large shipment of 5,647 kg of ivory was seized in Viet Nam, having passed through Pasir Gudang, Malaysia, while in 2010; 1,665 kg of ivory was seized in Hai Phong Port, Viet Nam, again having come via Malaysia.

In August last year, Wildlife officers seized two tonnes of elephant ivory and five rhino horns at Kenya's international airport, which were to be illegally shipped to Malaysia.

Journey from Mustang to Chitwan

By Jim Ottaway

This is the remaining half of the excerpt from his trek journal to Mustang and Chitwan in the month of September-October 2010.



Lo-Manthang Walled City of King of Mustang -- From left, Phurba Sherpa, widow of Mingma Sherpa; Jim Ottaway Jr., trek leader; Hemanta Mishra, former member secretary of King Mahendra Trust For Nature Conservation.

Wednesday, Sept. 29

We rode Tibetan horses north of Lo-Monthang fortress to Choser in two hours past many green trees and fields of wheat and barley being harvested and threshed with sticks and winnowed by women throwing the wheat or barley up in the air to let strong afternoon winds blow the chaff away easily.

Suddenly Hemanta Mishra's Tibetan horse put his front left hoof into a deep pool of muddy water, lost his balance and fell over, pitching Hemanta onto the ground, luckily not on the usual rocks, but smooth dry earth. So Hemanta's fall scared us, but he was not hurt. It was the only accident we had with the sure-footed Tibetan horses during our trek in Upper Mustang, although they often scared me by insisting on walking right on the edge of our steep trails.

We rode our horses up hill and over dry limestone to the Cave of Jhong built about 1,000 years ago as a safe place from bandits and warlords.

Thursday, Sept. 30

Samzong village of 21 houses,

five already moved because water no longer comes to the village itself from glaciers along the Tibetan border 15 miles away. Now they have to haul water up from the Sam Dzung Khola (river) far below, which is losing its water flow.

Our 3 p.m. audience with the King was a very special occasion, quite formal, with Tsewang Bista acting as interpreter for us all. I was told to sit at his left hand as oldest member of the trekking group. Arthur Anderson and Hemanta Mishra had met the King on earlier visits to Mustang. Amanda said the most interesting thing of all when she said she was one of most Nepalese who have never visited Mustang – way up behind the Annapurna Mountain Range, and as we were learning, hard to get to! That surprised me, but then I thought I have never been to the Statue of Liberty, Niagara Falls or Grand Canyon in my own country.

Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) offices in Mustang are across from the King's Palace in the Fortress. Chandra Gurung and Mingma Sherpa added Mustang in 1992 to the original 1985 ACAP. Tasha Bista gave us a presentation on ACAP projects in the Mustang region: population 5,395 in 1,171 households, 40% with electricity. Mustang emerged as a Kingdom in 1440 and became part of Nepal in 1789. First tourists in March, 1992, and growing slowly because of a \$50-a-day permit charge. We paid \$500 for 10-day permit

each – limiting the number of tourists to about 2,000 recently.

Annual trade fairs at the high pass of Kora-la on Tibet-Mustang border are growing in popularity, so more Tibetan and Chinese goods are expected in Mustang, on one of the most ancient trade routes between China, Tibet, Nepal and India.

Friday, Oct. 1

We start back down from Lo-Manthang, going over our highest pass south along a more western trail at 4,090 meters or 13,497 feet – our highest point of altitude at village of Pangga or Samduling on our Mustang map.

From Lo-Gekar Gumpa we went up and down steep ravines and mountain sides with dramatic landscape views – unexpected beauty every day at every turn. It was our best mix of riding Tibetan horses uphill and walking downhill on steep trails with walking sticks. My knees hurt at times but got me down to our evening dinner and rest at Ghami at 4 p.m. Even with horses, this is a very tough trek for me at my age, and hard work for everyone at times; not for someone who is not fairly fit, with some endurance and strength.

I love seeing dandelions and blue asters (I see at home) at 13,000 feet in Upper Mustang.

Saturday, Oct. 2

Overnight at Ghami at 3,510

meters or 11,523 feet where our best dinner yet is served – a bowl of noodles, edible meat chunks, carrots. We are all delighted!

This day we trekked happily again, under another clear blue sky with some white clouds on the mountain peaks East and West of us, trekking south, back toward Jomsom Airport.

We left Ghami at a leisurely pace on horseback at 9:15 a.m. and rode horses uphill, while hiking downhill on foot on steep grades of dry, dusty, rocky surface trails, with some stretches on the main dirt road to Tibet.

Thank God we rode horses, with very comfortable Tibetan rugs for saddles, going south over the same main dirt road that had been so completely scary driving north in a jeep-style Indian pick-up truck, with a young 16-year-old, risk-taking driver described to comfort us as “the best available driver in Mustang.” That “comfort” reminded me of a Sherpa joke on my first Nepal trek in 1984 to the Mt. Everest Base Camp. When I showed fear of crossing an old rope suspension bridge across a deep gorge, my Sherpa companions “comforted” me by saying, “Don't worry. We fix them when they break.”

I took my first break from the group trek experience of togetherness at 2:30 p.m. as we entered Syanboche at 12,600 feet, finding a comfortable rock for my 30-year-old bottom-patched Brooks Brothers

Harris tweed pants. I rested and meditated, thinking of nothing for 45 minutes.

Sunday, Oct. 3

We depart Shayanboche at 8 a.m. and rest at Sayla Pass also at 12,600 feet. A snow leopard had killed two horses recently and we saw huge vultures circling round us a few feet away, apparently feeding on the horses far below.

As I hike down the very steep trail from our lunch stop at Samar to Chhusang for the night (where we slept our first night going up), I passed numerous stone-walled enclosures protecting poplar tree forests planted with ACAP encouragement 15 to 20 years ago. Reforestation was one of the first priorities of ACAP when it started up in 1985. So I stop and feel sad for my dead friends Chandra and Mingma, who started ACAP with Hemanta Mishra, and suddenly there are tears in my eyes and a wave of grief seizes me.

Monday, Oct. 4

Tsewang told us last night at dinner that the road building from Chhusang to Kagbeni had pushed stones onto a very narrow part of our trail leading us out to the road at Tangbe where two Indian jeeps will pick us up. It turned out to be a very dangerous “cliff-hanger” experience where about 150 feet of the path we climbed up a week before was destroyed by rocks falling from road construction above.

Tsewang Bista, our trek leader, got his Sherpas and Forrest Berkely to stand on the few good footing positions, and help the rest of us slowly find foot holds and hand holds. We all got across safely, but the 1,000-foot drop below us was very scary! I did not look down.

Muktinath Temple – We take two jeeps uphill to the east to visit this unusual Hindu and Buddhist pilgrimage shrine. It has a male Hindu priest and a female Buddhist priestess in separate sacred spaces in the same shrine area, visited by thousands of Indian Hindu pilgrims, who run fast under its 108 very cold-water sacred spring spouts for purification.

Tuesday, Oct. 5

We fly from Jomsom back down to Pokhara, again between the high peaks of Annapurna to the east and Dhaulagiri to the west. Then by air-conditioned Toyota Tree Tops van on a hot day to the Chitwan National Park in the lowland Terai jungle. We stop in Mugling for lunch where they have best light omelet and fried potatoes in Nepal.

Tiger Tops Resort – An elephant cries out at 3:50 p.m. to call us to our first 4 p.m. elephant ride in the jungle and along the Narayani River.

We took a 2 ½-hour long walk on top of a female elephant named Hira Kali, 30 years old, always eating tall elephant grass. We went first through the Saal forest and then into tall

elephant grasses to water holes where we were lucky to see 19 rhinos in muddy wallows – an unusually high number to sight. We were told there are about 400 still alive in Nepal, down from about 600 before widespread poaching during the Maoist uprising from 1996 to 2006.

We also spotted deer, langur monkeys, jungle maina birds, and a flock of open-billed storks landing on treetops after sunset for the night. Some birds we saw were spotted dove, redheaded trogon, king fishers (white throated), lesser adjutant storks, two large peacocks high in a tree, jungle fowl. Arthur Anderson and Amanda saw two wild boars from their elephant top chair.

Then tiger pug marks, front and back female paw tracks. Mr. Dhan Bahadur Tamang said they were footprints of a female tiger known as “Lucky.” She was born in 1993 and has very distinctive paw tracks. Mr. Dhan is chief naturalist who joined Tiger Tops Oct. 1, 1969, before the Chitwan National Forest was declared a protected area in 1973. First guests came to Tiger Tops in 1965 – 45 years ago! His family is all the animals in Chitwan!

Seven forms of travel in last 24 hours of this trek of amazing variety – hiking from Chhusang; rock climbing across 150 feet of trail destroyed by road construction; jeep riding on narrow, winding, switchback trails up to site of Muktinath sacred to both Hindus and

Buddhists; horseback riding up steepest trails from Chhusang; airplane flight of 20 minutes from Jomsom in Lower Mustang to Pokhara. Then boat ride across the Reu River to Tiger Tops; elephant back ride for 2 ½ hours at sunset.

Wednesday, Oct. 6

Up at 5:30 a.m. again, not for an early plane flight, but for early morning 6 a.m. elephant ride with our group to listen to and see birds and look for tigers and rhinos again – we saw no tigers at Tiger Tops during this first trip to Chitwan. Tiger Tops has stopped its old cruelty to animals' practice of staking live deer or buffalo in the jungle to attract tigers for tourists.

Birds of the Morning – Emerald parakeets and spotted doves call out in the morning forest as we set off on three elephant backs again – two or three of us seated on a square green-padded platform with a handrail around it to hold on to. More birds from elephant back with Dhan: Collared falconet, blacked-headed oriole, grey-headed lapwing, river lapwing, red-wattled lapwing, scarlet minuet, white-throated fantail, parter (anhinga), redheaded trogan.

Tigers are pregnant for only 15 to 16 weeks before they give birth; elephants for 24 months! Tigers are hard to see in this Chitwan Park, but our lead naturalist Dhan Bahadur Tamang who has been at Tiger Tops for 42 years has seen them many times – once two male

tigers trying to mate with one female tiger, fighting for their prize.

Lunch at Tented Camp -- Four rhinos sighted from viewing porch at lunch! Four more during morning elephant ride. Afternoon walk to a bird blind with Dhan, the oldest guide, who helped Hemanta Mishra to trap and tranquilize tigers in Chitwan Park from 1978. Dhan once waited three days and nights to dart and tranquilize a tiger they trapped in a ravine where he had to come out some day. They shot him at about 8 p.m. on the third day when he had to come out for food and water!

We walk east from Tiger Tops Tented Camp, seeing front and rear male tiger paw tracks (pugmarks) Dhan recognized as a killer of small rhinos. Dhan said the tiger tracks came from last night! That gives me pause. Do tigers hunt only at night? We climb a 30-foot high wooden blind and sit under a thatched roof of grasses with binoculars, looking for birds, rhinos, maybe a tiger later on at sunset. Dhan talks to two langur monkeys, with a guttural grunt, and they answer from high up in tree branches.

More bird sightings or songs identified: oriental pied hornbill, black hooded oriole – I saw his yellow chest in flight; spotted dove – off to our right cooing like any Central Park dove; yellow-breasted babbler – song only; and a chestnut-capped babbler.

My favorite grasses are sacrum spontaneum with long waving white heads five feet to 20 feet high. Rhinos and elephants like its sweet taste! The other common sacrum tall grass is Bengalensis. But there are 50 different varieties of sacrum tall grass in the Chitwan grassland. Looking north from our quiet bird blind, I see large grassland with occasional kapok or silk cotton (simal) trees; and in the distance a huge riverine forest with kapok, acacia, and rosewood in sandy old riverbed. Looking south behind us I see thick saal tree forest on higher, drier ground toward the Indian border.

A tiger moth and a tiger butterfly pass by, both with tiger orange color. However, no wild tigers sighted in the grassland.

Dhan showed me ten minutes of his own video of the large male tiger whose paw marks (pugmarks) we just saw in the sandy trail coming to the blind! He caught this male tiger on video from elephant back last March 2010.

Dhan also showed me a fascinating hand-held video he made in March of a python killing a hog deer by squeezing it to death around its whole body and neck. Also an April video of the same male tiger called "Rhino-Eater" eating a gaur (Indian bison) it had killed between the Tented Camp and Tiger Tops Jungle Hotel, and was slowly returning to eat it for a week, coming every evening for his dinner, eating all night long and leaving in the



Narendra Man Babu Pradhan, chief warden of Chitwan National Park in Nepal in Nepal, dedicating new breeding pool for endangered gharial (crocodiles) at Kasara, headquarters of Chitwan National Park in southern Nepal.

early morning. (His black ears have little white spots at the back).

Sloth Bear – There are sloth bear droppings on the floor of our “blind” or “hide” right behind my seat! This large black bear is about six feet tall standing up with white mouth and white V-shape markings on his chest. He climbs trees and all the steps to our blind.

Thursday, Oct. 7

We leave the magical Tented Camp at Tiger Tops for a stop at Kasara to dedicate a gharial (crocodile) breeding pool at the headquarters of Chitwan National Park, then further east to Sauraha for the gharial (crocodile species) breeding pool dedication with first bricks laid into wet cement by Anil Manandhar, director of WWF/

Nepal, and me – in a dirt pit with an Indian priest chanting prayers, sprinkling holy water and red hibiscus flowers – an exotic scene!

Vulture Conservation Breeding Center at Kasara headquarters of Chitwan National Park. Sick holy cows with dychlophene painkillers were poisoning vultures and killing them off in Nepal. WWF started this vulture-breeding center in 2008; now 43 vultures are living there. It takes six years to produce a vulture egg. There are two holding aviary and one breeding aviary buildings. Vultures are scavengers eating mostly dead animals in the wild.

There are five “vulture restaurants” near “holy cow hospices” in five districts – Nawalparasi, Kapilbastu,

Dang, Palpa, and Kailali – all run by local community forest management committees along the southern border of Nepal.

Maoist uprising from 1996 to 2006 led to more poaching of rhinos and tigers in Chitwan National Park as military guards around Chitwan were reassigned to fight the Maoists. The current military commander of 1,000 soldiers at 34 poacher lookout posts in Chitwan told me what he needs most is a small two-man helicopter to spot poachers at work.

Wild tusker elephants raid the farmers’ crops and go after female elephants in government camps and private resort elephant camps full of females that are more docile. We were told 25 wild elephants roam the Chitwan National Park, and some recently entered a village and destroyed a house!

Chital Alarm Call in riverine forest as we rode elephants Thursday afternoon – exhausted after two ceremonies at Kasara and Sauraha. Hemanta explained that call of a spotted deer or chital means they sense there is predators like leopard or tiger, nearby. Both animals exist in Chitwan National Park because the jungle and riverine forest has been restored, attracting deer and other prey for leopards and tigers.

We also saw a larger male sambar – a large deer – standing quite still in riverine forest as we passed on our elephant. Hemanta said he is one of the

dumbest deer and easiest for tigers to hunt.

Shanta Raj was the main speaker at welcome home dinner and dancing party Thursday night for Hemanta and Sushma Mishra, who were very happy back in their home jungle natural habitat. He is chief scientist at Chitwan who wrote his PhD thesis on rhinos.

Friday, Oct. 8

First day of Dashain Festival, we saw sacrifice of a black goat to the Goddess of the Jungle, Ban-Devi, along with a pigeon and a chicken with their throats cut. Arthur Anderson and I were invited to pray on our knees to “the goddess who is everywhere and nowhere in the forest.” About 20 men were present; Sushma Mishra joined us after the killing, as the only woman there.

Friday morning about 9:15 to 9:45, we floated quietly down the Budhi Rapti River (old river course) seeing one large, old crocodile and one smaller one sunning themselves on the riverbank after the monsoon period of heavy rains. We also saw more colorful birds including woolly-necked stork, black bittern, white-throated kingfisher, stork-billed kingfisher, open-billed stork, river lapwing, sand martin.

A present danger to forest and wild animals in Chitwan

National Park is an invasive vine species called “Mikania micrantha.” It is fast killing healthy open grassland and some whole trees across the Terai, moving east to west toward Bardia National Park 200 kilometers west! It kills off rhino and tiger food grazing grasses.

Mikania was brought to India by the British from South and Central America to be used as camouflage cover (so the Nepalese say). It's only known safe biological destroyer is a rust fungus called “puccinia spegazzino” which will be tried on it after a full impact study.

Later I played a small horizontal Nepali drum, with high and low sounds on its two opposite drumheads, while the Nepali Tiger Camp workers at Sauraha danced with some of our trekking group.

Friday Night Dinner – Our last memorable meal together was at the elegant home in the mountains north of Kathmandu of Tenzing and Lisa Choegyal. He is a successful Tibetan rug maker who sells some of them in North America.

Lisa is a tall, energetic, cheerful hostess who seems to know everyone in Kathmandu after living with her Nepali husband for over 20 years. Lisa is very helpful to Phurba Sherpa in selecting the best students for the Mingma Sherpa Foundation

program for forestry and community development careers. I am a member of her board of directors, along with Kathryn Fuller, chairman of the Ford Foundation after being president of the World Wildlife Fund, and Bruce Bunting, president of the Bhutan Foundation, after being vice president for Asia at WWF.

Sumitra Gurung, wife of late Chandra Gurung of WWF Nepal, came to the dinner party in her elegant Nepali dress. Her daughter, Amanda, who came on our Mustang trek and Chitwan forest camping trip, is currently preparing a new Nepal reforestation proposal.

Saturday, Oct. 9

I depart Annapurna Hotel at 7 a.m. after farewell hugs with Phurba Sherpa and Arthur Anderson. Phurba brought me a Nepali/Tibetan drum as a farewell present – like the drum, I played for the dancers at the Sauraha Tiger Camp during the festivities. It barely fits into my large trek bag!

After this three-week trek with Hemanta Mishra, I now know much more about his many adventures with kings, politicians, elephant and tiger hunters and protectors, poachers and wardens. He was endlessly amusing to all of us on this trek with his non-stop amazing adventures and story telling.



Cameras for tiger study capture poachers at Orang



Guwahati, 13 January: Camera traps, which up to now have clicked pictures of wildlife in Assam, have now for the first time taken pictures showing poachers at Orang National Park.

Revealing this at a news conference, Assam principal chief conservator of forests (wildlife), Suresh Chand, said pictures taken by camera traps hung on trees have been able to take pictures of a group of poachers who had killed a rhino on January 9. "Cameras which were placed in the trees got the pictures of poachers who were moving in the area. The poachers had come with intent to kill a rhino," Chand said.

The poachers were carrying.303

rifles. Camera trapping is being done by Aaranyak, wildlife NGO, at Orang National Park for tiger estimation. Around 70 cameras have been put up at strategic locations in the park.

Chand said the poachers, who are believed to be the same, came on January 5. They, however, succeeded in killing a rhino on January 9.

Chand said on January 9, the poachers had changed their route and were successful in killing the rhino.

Divisional forest officer of Orang National Park S.K. Daila said the poachers had adopted a new strategy of shooting the rhino at night. "We have seen poachers striking at dusk or in the wee hours. However, these poachers shot the rhino around 1.30am. They fired from very close range," he said.

The staff on duty on January 9, N. Chamua, will be put under suspension. "We suspect that he was conniving with the poachers," Chand said. The official said the poachers were from outside the area and the pictures have been sent to nearby police stations.

"The forest department has announced a reward of Rs 25,000 for identifying the poachers," he said. Chand said the killing of a rhino in Orang took place after a year.

In the entire state in 2010, there were seven instances of rhino poaching while in 2009 there were 14 cases. In 2009, the number of rhinos in Orang was 64 rhinos while in 2006, 68 rhinos were recorded.

In the 2009 tiger camera trapping report of Aaranyak in collaboration with forest department, seven tigers, including two males and five females, were recorded in Orang National Park.

Two poachers were killed in an encounter with forest guards in July last year and several arms and ammunition were recovered from them. Another poacher was killed in March last year.

Tiger poisoned to death in Kaziranga

Guwahati, 14 January: Barely a fortnight after a tiger was poisoned to death in Assam's Orang National Park; a full-grown tigress was killed

allegedly in a similar fashion at Kaziranga National Park on 13 January Thursday. Forest guards found the carcass of the adult tigress floating on the Brahmaputra near Hoflot forest camp of the park.

"We got information about the tigress floating on the river. It was a tigress, aged about seven," Kaziranga National Park director Surajit Dutta said. Park authorities have conducted a postmortem of the tigress and sent some samples to the state forensic laboratory and wildlife institute to discern the actual cause of its death.

"Our doctors have done the postmortem of the tigress and sent samples for confirmation of the actual cause of death," said Dutta. The director said the big cat might have been killed by some locals of the Char area, who were troubled by the animal for some time. "Four veterinarians conducted the autopsy of the tigress in the presence of officials from National Tiger Conservation Authority, Kaziranga director and other top forest officials at the park. The samples have been sent for forensic tests," said divisional forest officer (Kaziranga) Dibyadhar Gogoi.

He added, "We have found the carcass of an adult female Royal Bengal Tiger near Hoflot forest camp under the northern range (Biswanath ghat) of the park. The area in which the carcass was found was under the newly-proposed sixth addition of the park."

Gogoi, however, ruled out the possibility of poaching in case of the tiger death and said, "From the circumstantial evidence, we can say it was not an incident relating to poaching." Kaziranga witnessed five tiger deaths last year. Of five tiger deaths in 2010, one was killed in an attack by wild buffalos, while three died in territorial fights. One died due to old age ailments.

On December 27, a five-year-old tigress was poisoned to death at the Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park by villagers from the Panchnoi area of the forest.

Price of Rhino horn more expensive than gold in SA

Johannesburg, 17 January. The price of a horn of an African rhino has increased to 400,000 rand (\$59,000) per kg, making it far more expensive than gold, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) reported. The SABC quoted the International Rhino Foundation as saying that demand for rhino horns has caused its price to escalate.

Rhino poaching increased in South Africa in 2010, with 330 rhinos shot dead for their horns in wildlife parks around the country, compared to 122 in 2009, according to Xinhua.

"This has definitely been the worst year for rhino poaching -- this is the highest number ever recorded," National Parks Agency spokesman Reynold Thakhuli told AFP.

However the agency said anti-poaching programmes were yielding results. Five suspected poachers were shot dead at the world-famous Kruger National Park in the last four days.

"Since the beginning of this year a total of five more poachers have died when rangers acted in self-defense after poachers opened fire on them," said parks agency chief executive Dr David Mabunda in a statement.

Kruger suffered the worst losses in 2010, with 146 rhinos killed there. "It is more worrying that rangers are often greeted by the poachers' firepower without warning," Mabunda said.

Police have arrested 162 people linked to rhino crimes at various levels, ranging from actual poachers to couriers and kingpins, but South Africa has already lost five rhinos in 2011, he added.

South Africa is home to more than 70 percent of the world's remaining rhinos and experts blame a booming black-market demand for horns, which saw the number of the animals killed almost treble from 122 in 2009.

It said rhino poaching cost the country at least 250 million rand (\$38 million) in 2010. Pelham Jones of the South African Rhino Owners' Association said private game owners are losing their confidence in rhinos as an investment because of the high risk of poaching and the huge cost of protecting the animals.

The use of rhino horn in Asian traditional medicine has continued to feed demand and more recently, researchers say, a belief that rhino horn can cure cancer has emerged in Vietnam.

Conservationists estimate there are around 25,000 rhinos left globally, with three species in Asia and two in Africa. Asia's rhino populations have already been pushed to the brink of extinction by hunting and deforestation.

Two Chinese seized with Rhino's horn

Bardia, 3 January. Two Chinese were arrested in the buffer zone of Bardia National Park with rhino's horn.

Muwin Saichrin, 40 and Jame Ti Sen, 38, were found with rhino's horn on checking according to The Park officials. They found two dozens horn, twenty lakh rupees and weighing machine.

They were captured trying to buy the wild animal's parts in Magaragaadi. The media was informed through a phone call about the confiscation and Chinese citizens. Ramesh Thapa, Deputy Conservation Officer, said that after a longtime, foreigners were captured associated with illegal wildlife trade. He added, the Nepal Army and Park officials became successful to capture illegal traders who are involved for a long time. The arrested Chinese are under investigation.

Thapa said that the traders attract the local people luring them with easy money. The Chinese traders give more money than the Indian traders so that the locals work for them.

The Army assigned in Bardia National Park use three types of operations for controlling poaching. Sweeping, Ambush and surveillance are the three operation executed by the Army in buffer zone.

The Chinese are held in custody for investigation. The illegal; wildlife traders will be prosecuted according to national Park and wildlife Act 1973. The sentence for illegal trade and killing of wild animals is fifteen years imprisonment and one lakh fine.

Pangolin saved

Kathmandu, 3 January. A pangolin was saved from being sold after team of Kathmandu Municipality Crime Branch stopped the act.

The police seized the pangolin from Kavre, Khopasi but the traders escaped.

Chief Rana Bahadur Chand said that they were informed about the possible trading of pangolin in Kavre. The traders were able to escape even though the police had covered the area.

The traders have been identified and the police is searching for them said Chand. The pangolin was handed to the Central Zoo, Jawalakhel.

Rhino killed

Chitwan, 4 January. A male rhino was killed by a poacher with gunshot in Chitwan National Park.

The horn of the rhino has been taken by the poacher. The dead rhino was found in Dhowaha village, Maadi. Chief Conservation Officer of Chitwan National Park Narendra Man Babu Pradhan said they were informed in the evening.

Veterinarian Kamal Gaire said that rhino was shot on the right shoulder. Last month, some traders had killed another rhino and taken the hoof and horn. The place of death of rhino is one kilometer away from the village adjacent to the park.

According to Chitwan National Park official, thirteen rhinos were killed in year 2009/10. The 2008 census showed 408 rhinos but 30 of them already been killed after the census.

Decrease in Migratory birds this year

Itahari, 4 January. Koshi Tappu Wildlife reserve, considered as the 'paradise of birds', was deprived of migratory birds this year. The native birds are also less in number this year.

After the breaching of Koshi barrage, a large portion of the area has turned into desert. Hem Sagar Baral, a bird expert, said that there is decrease in the number of migratory birds. There are 867 species of birds

found in Nepal of which 492 species are found in Koshi Tappu.

Badri Narayan Chowdhary of Koshi Campus said that five years before, the tourists came from all over the world to sight birds. A decade ago, the migratory birds came from Siberia, Korea, Middle Asia.

The birds like Northern pintail duck, Northern shoveler duck, falcated duck, ferruginous pochard duck, common golden eye duck and common merganser have not been seen this year.

Chowdhary said that due to disappearance of the birds, the identity of Koshi Tappu is going to change. This year, the migratory birds seen were 150 Eurasian wigeon, 500 ruddy shelduck, 2500 cormorant, 1000 lesser whistling duck, 150 gadwall duck, 2 black headed ibis said Warden Ashok Ram. While the migratory birds have decreased, there is increase in vultures. About 500 of the Himalayan vultures were spotted this year.

There are eight species of vultures found in Nepal. Among them white-rumped, slender-billed, red-headed and Egyptian vultures are listed as endangered. Due to excessive cold in the Himalayan regions, the vultures have migrated to Koshi Tappu.

The endangered species like black-necked stork and greater adjutant were not seen. Similarly, simtitara cannot be

seen anymore. Baral said that due to population growth and loss of food, the number of birds is decreasing. More than 500 people are involved in fishery which is a threat to the birds. Baral said the government should be more involved with the conservation of birds. Vivekananda Jha of Koshi Tappu said that increase in number of people for construction of barrage has made the native birds to move away from the area.

Koshi Tappu is stretched to Sunsari, Saptari and Udaypur covering area of 175 sq. km. The eight of the lakes of the wetlands are dry during summer.

Four tons Orchids found



Kathmandu, 6 January. The joint team of District Forest and Police found four tons of banned orchids. Due to the dispute during the illegal trade, the police and district forest was able to know about it.

District Forest Officer Yadav Prasad Dhittal said that they received anonymous call about the trade after which the joint team raided the house of Surya Bahadur Ghole of Kapilakot and found 3943 kilo of orchids. The house was given on lease.

Both of them have not been arrested.

The team has found the truck owned by Anamika Stores used for loading and unloading of the orchids. The location from where the capture was done falls under Kalpabrikchya range post. This is 30 km far from Sindhuli. The dispute between the two parties over the loading of the orchids led to the phone call said Dhittal. The orchids were unloaded in the house after dispute between the two parties.

Dittal said that a wide spread nexus is involved in the illegal trading of orchids. They have found the involvement of a gang from Kavre in orchid trade. In 19 November 2010 the cabinet banned the collection, selling and trading of orchids. In a book published by Bhakta Bahadur Raskoti in 2009 'Orchids of Nepal', there are 302 species of orchids in Nepal. It has medicinal values.

Bird count in wetlands

Kathmandu, 8 January. The bird count in wetland for this year was conducted. The bird count takes place in the second and third week of January every year. The bird count in the wetlands has been going on since twenty four years.

The wetlands of Terai are important for water birds. The bird count was started in Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Beeshazari lake, Jadgeishpur lake and Ghodaghodi lake which are hotspot for bird



Beeshazari Lake



Jdgishpur Lake



Ghodaghodi Lake

watchers. Other than these famous spots, the count was also done in ten wetlands in Pokhara and in Bagmati and Taudaha in Kathmandu said ornithologist Hem Sagar Baral.

Baral said that to estimate the number of birds and for regular monitoring, the bird census is very important. Along with the bird count, the census also looks upon the decrease in number of birds and the conservation methods. Wetland is an important region for birds and other rare species.

Dr. Baral said that there are many species of duck, white-breasted waterhen, common coot, purple swamphen, great cormorant, and egret but there number has been decreasing every year.

Two hundred people were involved in the bird census which was completed in two weeks. The team of one to 25 are formed according to the location said Baral. The local people's participation was encouraged for counting. The counting was headed by Wetlands International.

Tiger count restricted to Chure

Chitwan, 16 January. Chitwan National Park has restricted the count of tiger only to in Chure region due to lack of budget. 'The counting has been started only in Chure due to lack of budget. In that also, most of the funding has been done by the research students themselves' said Chief Warden Narendra Man Babu Pradhan.

This year no funding was provided by the donors which has affected the census of animals. He said they are searching for donors. This year DNPWC has also neglected the census.

The tiger count was started four years ago. Two years ago, the tiger count was started in the Park in the entire region. The students involved in tiger count are doing their dissertation for their Ph.D. Last year, even though the counting was done for two months, the overall information could not be obtained. This year, four teams of five members have been formed and blocking has been done for counting.

Three hundred eleven cameras of the Park have been used for camera trapping and recapture to collect the data. The elephants would be used as per the requirement.

Tiger count also helps in understanding the biodiversity of the region and formulate plans for conservation believes the conservationists. But according to the park, the destruction of the habitat and food of the tigers have increased more challenges. The tigers go to the human settlement for food which has alarmed the park.

In 2008, the tiger count was done in Nepal at one time. At that time, tiger was not counted in the Chure region. In 2010, there were 125 adult tigers in Chitwan National Park. The range of tiger is from 95 to 184.

Last year, the government gave 38 lakhs for tiger count. The tiger count was done in partnership with government of Nepal, DNPWC, NTNC, WWF Nepal, CNP and TAL program,

The herbs of Panchase unutilized

Parvat, 18 January. Millions of rupees are going down the drain with the lack of initiation to utilize the herbs of Panchase region. Situated in between Parvat, Kaski and Syanja, it is a paradise for herbs. Due to lack of scientific studies and investigations, the worthy plants have become foods for pasture animals. It has been declared as Conservation Area this year.

The local people have requested government for establishment of process center on local level as the government has not been giving any consideration to it. Rupesh Gurung, member of Naule Charchare Community Forest User Group said that the negligence on part of government has made all the valuable foliage just food for animals.

According to him, out of 307 species of herbs found in the world, 151 species are found in Panchase. Out of 381 species of orchids in the world, 266 species are found in this region only. The area of this region is 5,500 ha and is 785m-2517m above the sea level.

Poaching increased after Snowfall

Bajhang, 19 January. The thick snowfall on the higher mountainous region of the district has become a hotspot



for poachers. The poachers and hunters have entered the jungle with illegal arms for poaching while the concerned authorities have not shown any interest towards the issue.

Kailash, Kada, Surma, Daulichor, Gadraya, Dahabagar, Lekgau, Majhigau, Kalukheti, Rilü, Syadi are some of the places where the hunters have come in groups with arms for hunting.

Due to snowfall, the birds and wild animals from the region move to lower elevation. This makes it easier for poachers to hunt.

Every year the hunters form group of 10-15 and hunt Himalayan Monal, Kalij pheasant, Boar, Musk deer,

Spotted deer, Himalayan Goral, serow, leopard and bear. The poachers use rifles and traps to kill the animals.

The police and forest office have been informed of the increasing poaching in the region but no action has been taken to control the illegal activities informed Shyam Budha, a local.

Budha said that from Rilü alone, five groups of hunters have gone to Bajhang and Bajura for hunting. The hunters kill the wild animals and sell them as dry meat or as raw meat or alive.

The meat brought illegally is bought by the district level officers and businessmen.

The fate of snow leopards in and around Mt. Everest

Som B. Ale^{1,2}, Kamal Thapa³, Rodney Jackson² and J.I. David Smith¹

Since the early 2000s snow leopards *Panthera uncia* have re-colonized the southern slopes of Mt. Everest after several decades of extirpation. Are they now beginning to disperse to the adjoining valleys that may serve as habitat corridors linking the Everest region to other protected areas in Nepal? We conducted a cursory survey in autumn 2009 in Rolwaling lying west of Mt. Everest and detected snow leopard presence. We conclude that in these remote valleys snow leopards must rely upon livestock given the low abundance of natural prey, Himalayan tahr. Livestock-rearing is unfortunately declining in the region. Rolwaling requires immediate conservation attention for the continued survival of the endangered snow leopard and other high altitude flora and fauna.

While snow leopards are declining in most range-countries, their return to Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) National Park after an apparent absence of several decades attests to the species' resilience (Ale & Boesi 2005). It has also raised conservation challenges. Will Sagarmatha be able to maintain a viable population of snow leopards? Could this re-established population serve as source for re-colonizing adjacent areas? The answer to the first question is probably "no". As large wide-ranging carnivores at the apex of the food-chain, snow leopards require large areas. None of Nepal's protected areas (including Sagarmatha) is large enough in itself to contain a viable population of snow leopards estimated at around 50 breeding individuals (Soule 1987, Jackson & Ahlborn 1990). The best answer to the second question is "perhaps". The high valleys of Sagarmatha, or Khumbu, are connected to the Rolwaling valley via the high Teshi Lapcha La pass (5,755 m) that may serve as dispersal corridor. In October 2009, we

organized a three-week survey in Rolwaling to assess the status of snow leopards.

A thousand of years ago in the foothills of the Himalayas, Padma Sambhava, the Indian yogi who brought the teachings of Buddhism from India to Tibet, plowed a valley out of the mountains to serve as one of eight beyul (Shangri-La) in Nepal, Tibet and Sikkim, the refuges that were to remain hidden in a time of unprecedented religious crisis protecting dharma until the misfortune passed. One beyul in Nepal went by the name of Rolwaling in the shadow of the lofty mountain Tseringma (7,181 m), or Gauri Shankar, which is believed to be the eldest of five divine sisters (one of them is reputed to reside on the summit of Mt. Everest). It is here, not Khumbu, as most believe, the notorious and celebrated yeti made its home. The sacred land today maintains Buddhist bans on hunting and slaughter, elsewhere observed less scrupulously.

Little is known about Rolwaling

given its relative inaccessibility and because it did not lie on the important China-India trade routes. On 16 October 2009, after four days of continuous trek up along the Rolwaling River, we reached Bedin (3,510 m), a settlement of 65 households, and Na (4,120 m), the summer dwelling of Bedin's Sherpas. Partially shielded by southern mountains from the monsoon, this area has characteristics of the dry inner Himalaya. Mixed stands of *Abies*, *Betula* and *Rhododendron* become thinner as one ascends to Na, being completely replaced by juniper and rhododendrons interspersed with alpine grasses and sedges. When the potato was introduced in the mid-nineteenth century (Bjønness 1980), cultivation became possible at lower altitudes, so the Sherpa, who primarily lived in Na, built Bedin and other winter settlements further downstream. Unlike Khumbu which received protected area status since 1976, Rolwaling falls outside Nepal's protected area network. Excessive hunting - exclusively done by outsiders - has caused Himalayan



Fig. 1 Snow leopard habitat in Omai Tsho (4,600m), Rolwaling (Photo S. Ale).

tahr *Hemitragus jemlahicus* population to plummet, unlike nearby Khumbu where tahr are relatively abundant (Lovari et al. 2009). As with many hunted ungulate populations, the kid-to-female ratio here is good (> 0.7 , that is, over 70% mothers had young). In Rolwaling, we located just three distinct herds comprised of only 5, 4 and 3 individuals. Clearly, Rolwaling's tahr population cannot support even a single snow leopard.

Field notes from 18 October 2009 reflect the difficulty of finding snow leopard sign in Rolwaling:

The 8th day of our arduous search for snow leopards in Na – we had yet to discover a “clear” set of snow leopard pugmarks. That day, we climbed several hundred meters up the rugged, moraine-hills, one after another, to reach the sacred, 4,600 m high glacial lake, Omai Tsho, which is inhabited by invisible spirits that are half man and half serpent. Lo and behold, a clear set of footprints along the beach: an adult snow leopard (Fig. 1,2)! Local herdsmen reported snow leopard pugmarks in the nearby high Teshi Lapcha La pass leading to Mt. Everest.



Fig. 2 A set of snow leopard pugmarks in Omai Tsho (Photo S. Ale).

Snow leopards may cross this pass. But how do we know whether the individual in Omai Tsho traveled from Khumbu or represented a resident of Rolwaling? This is a difficult question that can be answered only by using techniques of genetics or radio telemetry. Along a nearby ridgeline, we encountered several relics scrapes and feces, an indication that snow leopards regularly visit the area. This was surprising because this rolling area – once inhabited by blue sheep some 50 years ago – supports just a few tahr. Local shepherds also occasionally collected the huge

curved horns of blue sheep from this terrain. Do Omai Tsho and areas encompassing glacialized Tso-Rolpa Lake (which has been in the radar of glacial lake outburst for decades), serve as snow leopard refuge? Perhaps.

We randomly laid out 6 sign-transects with a total length of 4,023 m (mean 700 m, SE=75 m) following standard SLIMS procedures (Jackson & Hunter 1996). We detected several scrapes, scats, pugmarks and tufts of hair on sites where snow leopards had rubbed against rocks, along all but one transect (13 signs in 9 sites, 3.2 signs; 2.2 sign sites per km). Our “incidental” sign search – that is, recording signs that we encountered while walking between transects or while searching other wildlife – revealed 16 signs (11 sites with signs) in 13 full search-days from 16 to 29 October 2009 (Table 1, Fig. 3). The rarity of signs suggests that

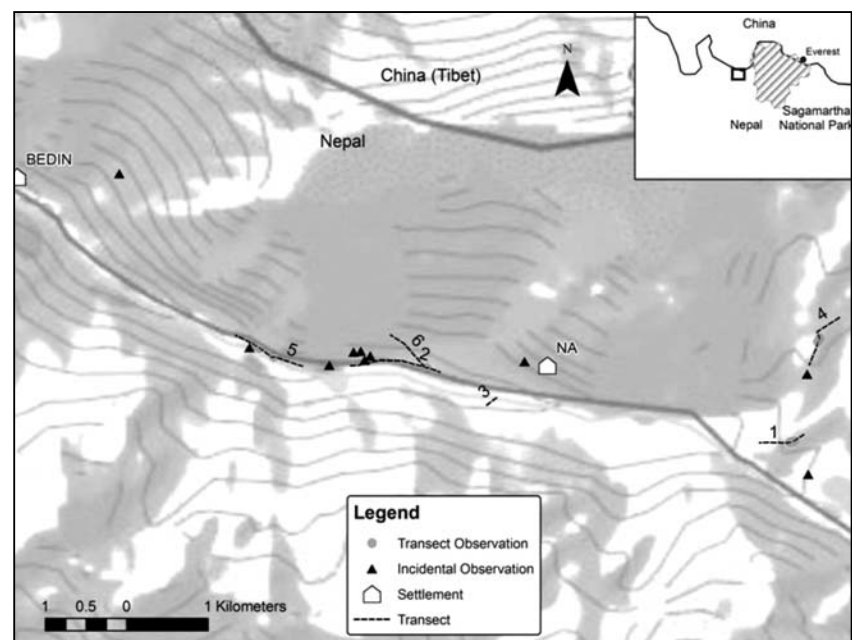


Fig. 3 Map showing snow leopard sign transects and incidental sign in the upper Rolwaling Valley.

Table 1. Number and type of snow leopard sign detected in Rolwaling in October 2009.

	Transect		Incidental Search	
	Signs	Sign sites	Signs	Sign sites
Feces	3	2	10	8
Hair	3	3	2	1
Pugmark	1	1	1	1
Scrape	6	3	3	1
Total	13	9	16	11

snow leopards are scarce in Rolwaling. To take an extreme case, Langu in west Nepal, with a snow leopard density of 8-10 cats/100 km², revealed 36 signs per km (Jackson 1996). While our exhaustive interviews with local herders suggested the presence of three adult snow leopards, we obtained the evidence of just one, a set of pugmarks, but there may be more snow leopards.

We conclude that, despite low natural prey abundance, snow leopards survive in Rolwaling by relying on livestock. Livestock-rearing is unfortunately declining as more and more youth seek employment in lucrative trekking and climbing expeditions that entail their extended absence and even permanent emigration from Rolwaling. Currently, only 32 of 65 households reside permanently in Bedin-Na. We counted 425 livestock (yak, cattle and small ruminants), three times lower than the number just a decade ago. This indicates that the snow leopards' food base has substantially declined. From September 2008 to October 2009, amid rising tensions, 8.5% of total livestock were reported lost to snow leopards, one of the highest depredation rates in the Himalayas (cf. Jackson et al. 2010). Although our sample size comprised only 10 scats, analysis showed 60% livestock-remains, with 10% consisting of tahr. The suggestion may seem counter-intuitive, but to conserve snow leopards in Rolwaling, conservation agencies may need to promote livestock-rearing, and develop appropriate mechanisms for compensating herders for loss of livestock,

while also discouraging tahr poaching through education and patrolling or other means of increased vigilance.

Bedin-Na may serve as a strategic corridor for dispersing snow leopards from the Everest area. A detailed, systematic corridor assessment would help identify suitable snow leopard-corridors for implementing conservation interventions, not only in Rolwaling but also further west. By mapping seasonal livestock movements, other biological and physical variables in addition to snow leopard sign data and analyzing DNA from scats, hair and kills, it may be possible to develop agent based corridor models that can predict how snow leopards will respond to various management options. Such models can be used to explore metapopulation dynamics and devise management strategies of general application in other snow leopard range countries.

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APPEAL

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