

# Wildlife Times



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# Editorial

The politeness and soft-spoken nature of Chairman of Constituent Assembly Subhash Nemwang is known not only to 601 constituent assembly members but also to those who listened to him at public functions where he was invited as chief guest.

As a chief guest of National Conservation Day, he talked about the recent growth of tiger population in Chitwan National Park, gharial releases in Nepali rivers and their ultimate destination in Indian rivers, and more importantly based on parliament subcommittee reports accusing the forest ministry for not being able to stop rampant illegal forest destruction.

But alas! Forest Minister and Secretary were not present at the occasion to listen to the accusations from non other than country's chief of legislative body.

In a similar manner, on 3rd September in yet another gathering of conservationists held at auditorium of newly built building of National Trust of Nature Conservation (NTNC), Forest Minister who is also Chairman of the trust proudly presented documentary on last year's one hundred thousand tree plantation. However, the Prime Minister refuted the documentary saying that the documentary should be on what happened after a year of plantation rather than showing the last year's plantation fanfare.

These are the two simple examples of the growing concerns on nation's challenging conservation works by top executive and legislative level. There should be a mechanism to turn promptly concerns of this magnitude into action.

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With the theme of "Save the Wild Tiger and save so much more", National Conservation Day was celebrated on September 23 2010. This day is represented as the day to commemorate to all the conservationists who dedicated their lives for the conservation of the nature. The celebration of National Conservation Day marks the anniversary of tragic helicopter crash in the Eastern region of Nepal in September 23 2006, which took lives of 26 prominent conservationists of Nepal. Conservation organizations like ICIMOD, IUCN Nepal, NTNC, TMI, WCN, WWF Nepal and WWG took the initiative to honor this day as National Conservation Day. The organizations proposed to the government to mark this day to honor the deceased in 2007.

In 2007, the various conservation organizations including WWG celebrated this day as Conservation Day in an informal manner. The government had not yet declared this day officially. In 2008, the first National Conservation Day was celebrated after approval and declaration from the government. The last year's theme was 'Climate for life: call of the Himalayas'. This year keeping in mind for 2010 as year of the tiger, it is based on saving wild tigers.

# Save the Wild Tiger to Save So Much More

The admiration expressed in the William Blake's poem has lost its significance in today's materialistic world. Along with tiger, many species have been pushed to the brink of extinction due to human greed and anthropogenic actions like habitat destruction, poaching and illegal trade. Thus, the fate of many species of flora and fauna on this earth is at very crucial state of survival.

Despite conservation efforts from local to the global levels, we have not succeeded to the extent possible with few exceptions to reverse the declining population trend of the key indicator species, particularly the species with high commercial values. As a result, our own survival is also questionable.

The most fascinating predator, the tiger, is at the apex of food chain, except us humans. Although the tigers are regarded as a symbol of power, virility and fertility in the natural world and worshiped as a guardian of nature, like any other species, they too are also facing tremendous pressure from the unprecedented activities like poaching, illegal trade and habitat loss. For instance, within

**Tiger! Tiger! Burning Bright,  
In the forests of the night;  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?**

*William Blake*

a short span of 40 years, three species of tiger namely - Bali in 1940, Caspian in 1970 and Javan in 1980 become extinct from their natural habitat. For your information, just over a century, there were eight species of tigers such as Amur, Bali, Caspian, Indo-Chinese, Javan, Royal Bengal, South China and Sumatran with an estimated world population of 100,000 tigers in the wild.

Today, the world populations of tigers have abruptly come down to merely 3,200 individuals, and consequently their distribution and habitat have shrunk dramatically and confined to only six percent of available habitat. The tiger range countries and international communities have made their commitment to double the tiger number by 2022, particularly promoted by WWF in 2008.

The 14 tiger range countries are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos,

Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam making concerted efforts towards the goal of doubling the number of tigers.

Nepal began its new conservation initiative with the enactment of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act in 1973. The implementation of Act led to the creation of the first protected area of the country - Chitwan National Park to protect the declining population of endangered species such as tigers and rhinos. Three national parks Chitwan, Bardia and Banke and two wildlife reserves Parsa and Suklaphanta in Tarai cover the key tiger population and their main habitats. The fourth amendment of the Act is a landmark in conservation for paradigm shift from conventional type of protected area management to a participatory approaches, where sharing of 50% of the



*Shyam S Bajimaya*

Photo: WWF





park revenue and people' participation becoming obligatory.

Nepal with the support from partners - WWF, FAO/UNDP/GEF, National Trust for Nature Conservation and many others has done commendable work in conservation of nature and endangered species. This has been achieved by establishing a network of protected areas and taking a huge leap from species to landscape level conservation with trans-boundary initiatives. A successful model even at global scale initiated in Nepal in collaboration with WWF Nepal and other conservation partners is the "Tarai Arc Landscape", which covers an area of 49,500 sq. km extending from Bagmati river in the east of Nepal to Yamuna river in India, connecting 15 protected area networks.

Nepal is also promoting transnational cooperation with India and China, and Nepal has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with China and a resolution with India

on mutual cooperation in resolving common cross-border conservation issues as well as explore development opportunities.

Nepal is a member to several international conventions like CITES, CBD and became a member to Global Tiger Forum in 2001. The Forum is a multi inter-governmental body for the conservation of tiger in the wild. Nepal was elected chairperson of the Forum in November 2004 and was reelected chair by the fourth General Assembly of the Forum held in Kathmandu in March 2007.

Recognizing the magnitude of tiger crisis, World Bank President Robert Zoellick kicked off "Global Tiger Initiative" in June 2008 for reversing the declining tiger populations. "The Forgotten Crisis" meeting in Pattaya, "Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop" in Nepal, "1<sup>st</sup> Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation" in Thailand, and high-level official meeting in Bali were the important

meetings for shaping up the future strategies and recovery action plans for achieving the critical target of doubling the tiger population by 2022. To mark the year of the tiger, GTI plans to hold "Tiger Summit" in St. Petersburg, Russia in November 2010 for reaffirming top-level commitments from the heads of the government of the tiger range countries, and conservation partners and the endorsement of the recovery plans for saving tigers.

Nepal showed its commitment by establishing a high-level Tiger Conservation Coordination Committee under the leadership of Rt. Honorable Prime Minister. Likewise, the formation of Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and initiation to create South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network for combating wildlife crime are in process. Nepal also declared Banke National Park to secure more tiger habitats as part of its national commitment to double the tiger numbers. In fact, Nepal has already met the target of Millennium Development Goal by bringing about 24% coverage of country's area under protected areas.

To mark the year of the tiger, Nepal has successfully launched the cancellation of tiger postal stamp by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister recently. Beside these achievements, I am aware that the government has just declared more wildlife habitats under special management.

*Excerpts from the key note speech delivered on 23 September on the occasion of National Conservation Day at Nepal Academy Hall. Mr. Bajimaya is a former Director General of Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation of Nepal*

# Protected Forest Areas Declared

Mr. Harihar Sigdel, Deputy Director General of Department of Forest on National Conservation Day, declared the protected forest areas on 23 September 2010. While he was speaking on the occasion, some participants claiming to be from Federation of Community Forest User Group (FECOFUN) protested the declaration terming it as anti-forest users group move from the government. They demanded to withdraw it and left the program hall making rest of the audience confused.

Reading the declaration statement, Mr. Sigdel said it is based on the provision of Forest Act 2049, Section 4 Article 23 (1). The Forest Act 2049 empowered the ministry to declare any part of the national forest as Protected Forest Area if that forest has special ecological, scientific and cultural value. The Ministry of Forest made this decision on 16 September 2010 and the forest department got an authority to prepare the management action plan as per Article 24 of Forest Act 2049, the statement reads.

The declared protected forest areas are: Barandabhar forest area (10,400 hectares) of

Chitwan district, Panchase Forest Area bio trail (18,000 hectares) of Parvat, Baglung, Syanja districts, Madane Forest area (13,800 hectares) of Gulmi, Baglung, Pyuthan districts, Laljhandi Mohana Forest area (24,664 hectares) of Kailali, Kanchanpur districts, Basanta Forest area bio trail (40,782 hectares) of Kailali district and Khata Forest area bio trail (5000 hectare) of Bardia district.

Nepal has already shown its commitment in National and International level by declaring conservation areas (national parks, wildlife reserves, hunting reserve), wetlands and world heritage sites. Previously, focus was on the sites and protected areas for biodiversity conservation. By realizing these areas alone was not enough for overall biodiversity conservation, the need of inclusion of special forest areas and bio trails as protected area was felt.

Bio trail is an area or trail joining two or more ecological sites where there is continuous gene flow contributing to species conservation. It also denotes an area whether temporary or permanent where there is a potential of growth



Photo: WWG



of flora and fauna and their movement is possible. The movement of animals from one natural habitat to another will control inbreeding, help in genetic diversity, increase in number of animals, help in conceiving animals, Declaration and conservation of bio trail for endangered species like elephants, rhinos and tigers help in maintaining and developing world heritage sites which could lead a tourism development. Therefore, protected biodiversity at landscape level bio trails play an important and sensitive role. People participation is necessary to conserve bio trails.

National forest, community forest and other forest areas fall under the bio trail and so with the people's participation such bio trails will be conserved and managed as protected community forest, protected

religious forest and protected leasehold forest. It assumes the management model of bio trails will be more inclusive in nature than previously practiced management models.

Protected areas are generally conservation oriented hence the distribution of forest products and non-timber forest products are restricted hampering the household and agricultural activities. Those households, which are not included in the buffer zone, could be part of this protected forest areas.

The core areas of protected forest areas are incorporated in bio trail development and conservation while fringe areas are managed under forest management modalities. The fallen and laying trees in the core areas of protected forest areas can be collected and utilized. Eco-tourism and

community based management practices will create new economic opportunities with private sector participation and joint management system. The community and users group will get seventy-five percent of the income generated through eco tourism in protected forest areas to launch forest management, community development and income generation programs.

### **Protected Forest Area Management Action Plan**

The management action plan will be prepared with the inclusion of following issues: The department of forest then forwards the plan to the ministry for approval and implementation.

- Forest boundary and area covered
- Participatory approach
- Forest conservation modus operandi
- Forest management models
- Conservation of natural resources, community development and livelihood program
- The benefit sharing mechanism of forest and non timber products
- The responsibility of the program
- The program schedule, necessary resources and monitoring methods
- Others

**We would like to correct few of the errors in issue no 24, August 2010 of Wildlife Times**

1. There should be May 7, 2010 instead of May 7, 2067 at last line of the page 5.
2. There should be Chief Secretary, Government of Nepal instead of Main Secretaries, HMG in page 6.
3. There should be Minister, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation- Member Secretary.

We regret for the inconvenience caused.

# Amur Tigers to Get Protected Area on China-Russia Border



Photo: WWG

**H**UNCHUN, China, August 31, 2010 (ENS) - China's Jilin province and the neighboring Primorsky province in Russia have agreed to jointly establish the world's first transboundary protected area for the endangered Amur tiger.

Also called the Siberian tiger, *Panthera tigris ssp. altaica*, this

sub-species is now believed to number just 500 animals in the wild.

The agreement was signed during the second annual Amur Tiger Cultural Festival in the northeastern Chinese city of Hunchun.

The China-Russia agreement was one of the highlights of this

year's festival, which featured such events as tiger conservation and economic development forum, costume parade, art performances and an ecological tour of tiger habitat.

The agreement was signed by officials with the Jilin Provincial Forestry Department of China and two Russian agencies: the Wildlife and Hunting



Photo: WWF

Department of Primorsky province and Special Inspection TIGER of Russia, which is the official name of the Bureau on Protection of Rare and Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna.

"A new transboundary protected area would provide a wider and healthier habitat for Amur tigers and other endangered species, such as the Far East leopard, musk deer and goral," said Yu Changchun, director of the Conservation Department within the Jilin Forestry Department.

The number of Amur tigers in China is estimated at between 18 and 22, according to the Chinese government in 2007, and it is not known if any still survive in North Korea.

The Amur tiger now occurs primarily in Russia, where it has made a spectacular comeback since the 1930s, when the population fell as low as 20 to 30 animals.

Today, there are 331 to 393 adult and sub adult Amur tigers in the Russian Far East, with a an adult breeding population of approximately 250,

according to a comprehensive 2005 population census led by Dale Miquelle of the Russian Far East Program and Wildlife Conservation Society, Vladivostok, Russia.

However, after having been stable for more than a decade due to intensive conservation efforts, partial surveys conducted in subsequent winters indicate that the Russian tiger population is declining.

"Because tigers in this region require large territories to acquire sufficient prey, current strictly protected areas, comprising 3.4 percent (10,300 km<sup>2</sup>) of the region, are unlikely to prevent extirpation of the subspecies in the face of expanding forestry and external demand for tiger parts," Miquelle and his co-author wrote in a 2006 article in the "Journal of Applied Ecology."

Destruction and fragmentation of habitat, poaching and lack of prey have reduced the number of wild Amur tigers. One of six remaining subspecies of tigers, (and sometimes referred to as Siberian tiger), the Amur tiger is primarily found in eastern Russia, with a small number

in northeastern China. Among that population, 20 tigers have been periodically spotted within the borders of China's Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces.

As part of the new pact, Jilin and Primorsky provinces will increase information sharing on Amur tiger and Far East leopard protection and work to adopt identical monitoring systems for tigers and their prey.

They agreed to conduct joint ecological surveys and develop plans to launch an anti-poaching campaign along the China-Russia boarder.

The agreement marks another milestone during the Chinese Year of the Tiger in 2010. WWF launched the TX2 campaign early this year, which seeks to double the number of wild tigers by the next Year of the Tiger in 2022. A groundbreaking tiger conservation declaration from the 13 countries that still have wild tiger populations was prepared in Bali, Indonesia in July this year, and is due to be signed before the close of Year of the Tiger at a tiger conservation summit hosted by Russia. The Declaration seeks to create a tiger recovery program that is global in scope while also promoting transboundary cooperation amongst the 13 tiger range countries.

Nepal and India signed a joint resolution at the end of July to jointly conserve biodiversity including tigers, and strengthen ecological security in the transboundary region.



# Two Crouching Tigers, Some Hidden Dragons

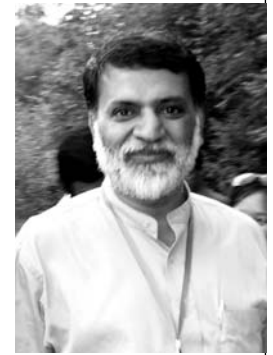


Photo: WWF

*Barun S Mitra*

**T**iger is an iconic animal in culture and history of both China and India. There are perhaps two dozen tigers left in the wild in China, mostly along the Siberian border. India currently estimates that about 1400 tigers are roaming in the wild. But globally, tiger is a highly endangered species, and remains so despite many initiatives launched to save it over the past four decades.

India believes that the demand for tiger parts in traditional Chinese medicine is one of the major sources of threat to tigers in Indian forests. Others think that the pressure of poaching to meet demand in China constitutes a smaller threat, about 25%. The bulk of the threat to tigers in India comes from shrinking forest habitat and the consequent conflict between human and wildlife.

Tiger conservation is not primarily an issue of law enforcement. India has problem of protecting its tigers, just as China has problem in

completely eliminating all trade of tiger parts.

Recently there were some indications that there is perhaps a shift from this mutual blame game. India recently recognized that protecting tigers is

primarily India's responsibility, since the Chinese do not come to India to poach the tigers.

China, on the other hand, is exploring alternative conservation strategies. following its economic rise, increasing number of people are finding non-rural economic opportunities, as a result, human pressure on forest and wild areas in many parts of China have significantly

reduced. In some of these parts, forests have made a dramatic comeback. Some of these old tiger habitats could be ready again to host wildlife.

China is seriously looking for ways of reintroducing tigers in a controlled manner, in a few areas where tigers once roamed. Hardly any country has as much expertise and experience of managing tiger habitats as India. With recent relocation of tigers into areas from where they had vanished, India is also grappling with similar problems.

China does not have wild tigers ready for translocation. so they have set up an ambitious effort to try to develop ways of re-wilding tigers that have been born in captivity. This is a very exciting scientific opportunity.

In both these aspects, preparation of tiger habitat, re-wilding and reintroduction of the tiger, China and India could cooperate, and if successful, it would secure not just the tiger, but generate huge amount of





goodwill between the elephant and the dragon!

China poses an even more audacious challenge to old conservation mindset. It has almost perfected the art of breeding tigers in captivity. It has more than 5000 tigers in captivity in zoos and other facilities. It could initiate a controlled trade in tiger parts from its captive tigers, and that could lower the incentive to poachers to kill wild tigers.

Even if India does not wish to join in this effort to help the cause of conservation through commerce, it stands to gain if China is successful in meeting the demand for tiger parts from its stock of captive tigers.

From the history of world trade, it is clear that smugglers and criminals profit only when there is a restriction on trade, creating an unmet demand for goods and services. Naturally, when trade is outlawed, only outlaws trade! If China were to legalize trade in tiger parts from its breeding facilities, the poachers in India would have little chance of competing with the market forces. Consequently, threat of poaching will almost get eliminated in India. There are many examples from across the world where legal trade has eliminated illegal trade. Over a million crocodiles are harvested each year from farms, yet there is hardly any evidence of any crocodile being killed in India in order to meet the demand from the international fashion industry.

*Excerpts from the article published in India-China Chronical, Vol 1, Issue 1, Jul-Aug, 2010. The Author is Director of Liberty Institute, New Delhi, India*

# Communication Strategy for Tiger Conservation in Bangladesh

The Sundarbans Tiger Project of Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh on 13-17 organized a workshop titled 'Developing a conservation education and community outreach strategy for tiger conservation in Bangladesh' March 2010. This was a first step to develop a communication strategy for tiger conservation in Bangladesh to support the Bangladesh Tiger Action Plan 2009-2017 (BTAP). The workshop was designed based on best practice approaches in Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) developed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) and Ramsar Wetland International.

The Sundarbans Tiger Project organized the workshop with the vision to bring together key leaders from stakeholder groups interested in or already involved in Sundarbans and tiger conservation to advice on the development of a Conservation Education and Community Outreach (CE &CO) strategy in support of the Bangladesh Tiger Action Plan (BTAP).





The workshop was the first step in bringing the BTAP to a larger audience of potential partners including Forest Department, local and national NGOs, local community people, and media personnel; and laid the first building bricks for developing a communication roadmap. The BTAP lays the groundwork for tiger conservation activities in Bangladesh. However, there is need to plan a communication strategy that helps understand what community/audience is best to target, who the influencers are, and what

behaviors are the best to target for change. It also helps identify the interventions, which lead to the desired behaviors of the target audiences to conserve tiger and the Sundarbans

The workshop adopted a hybrid methodology to CEPA mainly based on Ramsar Action Planning Guide and the CEPA toolkit of CBD. This consisted of several steps starting with Introduction and learn by doing, meaningful dialogue with local stakeholders including FD staff, experiencing Sundarbans,

prioritizing behavior change towards a future positive change for the tiger and ended with Evaluation and Recommendations. It was a participatory approach and allowed ample time for discussion and participation. This multi-stakeholder workshop process was aimed at fostering a climate of trust and creativity, building the confidence and motivation of stakeholders to contribute.

The primary objectives of the workshop were to develop

an integrated CE & CO Strategy in support of the BTAP, develop a draft BTAP CE & CO implementation plan including research and campaign milestones, build in country capacity by training participants in the following: Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) methodology; social marketing techniques; and in how to plan, design, implement, evaluate and monitor a CE & CO strategy and subsequent implementation plan.

The main objective of the workshop was to develop a CE & CO strategy in support of the BTAP. But after the workshop the participants had a better idea about the whole strategy development process and they found that it is not possible to develop a whole strategy in 5 days workshop. The participatory process gave the opportunity to look at the tiger conservation from different perspectives and motivated everyone to work further on it. It involved conducting formative research in the target population on conservation behaviors, knowledge, attitudes and plan intervention program to provide messages, services, support and/or benefits to get the desired behavior. The workshop was first phase of developing this roadmap. This groundwork will form the basis for next steps in further developing the behavior

change pathways and therefore a communication strategy that will include the target audiences, the influencers, and the best behaviors to target for change also the intervention ideas. Subsequently, the implementation plan will be developed in another multi-stakeholder workshop.

One of the major objectives of the workshop was to create a platform from which prospective partners can collaborate and participate in developing a multi-stakeholder communication strategy for tiger conservation in Bangladesh. This was satisfactorily achieved in the workshop as noted by the participants in the evaluation session. However, this objective is ongoing and so they must continue to work on maintaining participation and involvement constantly.

The workshop was also an opportunity for the participants to develop their own capacity in strategy development using CEPA methods and social marketing techniques. Participants agreed that this workshop provided guidance tools on developing effective conservation strategies focusing on behavior change and the role of communication in this process.

The key recommendations came forward from the evaluation session, firstly, to establish

regular communication among the workshop participants. A network/collaboration is necessary to enable the participating organizations to work together for tiger conservation. There is also need to reach out further with the Forest Department to develop the strategy further as FD is the major stakeholder of Sundarbans and key implementation partner of the strategy. An effective follow up process will to be developed by STP to ensure continual participant involvement and completion of the strategy development stage is necessary local communities should be involved in the strategy development process through knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey, FGDs and collaborative implementation plan. All the assumptions made by the participants regarding behavior change, KAP and communications interventions during the strategy development process, must be validated by the target audiences through focus group discussions (FGDs) and surveys to develop an effective and efficient communication strategy and implementation plan. Direct communication with the target audiences is necessary to complete the KAP surveys and FGDs. WTB need to build skills of the STP team to undertake these FGDs and surveys.



# Wildlife Watch Group Publication

Wildlife Watch Group has been publishing books on the issues of wildlife and conservation. Following books can be bought from WWG office at Pulchowk or Saraswoti Book Centre at Harihar Bhawan, Lalitpur.

## The lists of books available at Wildlife Watch Group are:

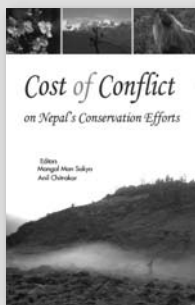
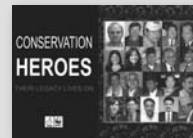


### There's some monkey business going on here

Mangal Man Shakya and Lucia de Vries:  
Price Nrs. 100, US\$ 2, Euro 1,5  
ISBN: PHONIXSTUDIOS SN 0045-1

### Conservation heroes: Their legacy lives on

WWG and WWF Nepal:  
Price Nrs. 1500, US\$ 25, Euro 15  
ISBN: 978-99946-820-6-5

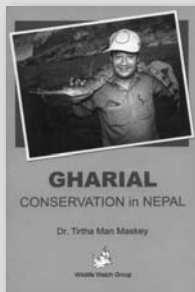
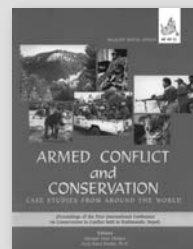


### Cost of Conflict on Nepal's Conservation Efforts

Editors: Mangal Man Shakya and Anil Chitrakar:  
Price Nrs. 700, US\$ 10, Euro 9,  
ISBN: 978-99946-820-1-6

### Armed Conflict and Conservation: Case studies from around the world

Editors: Mangal Man Shakya and Arzu R Deuba:  
Price: Nrs. 1500 US\$ 25, Euro 20,  
ISBN: 978-99946-820-7-2



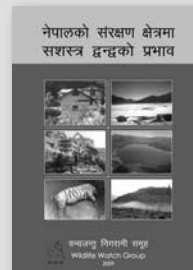
### Gharial Conservation in Nepal

Dr. Tirtha Man Maskey:  
Price Nrs. 1000, US\$ 16, Euro 12,  
ISBN: 978-99946-820-4-1

### नेपालको संरक्षण क्षेत्रमा सशस्त्र द्वन्द्वको प्रभाव

वन्धुजन्तु निगरानी समूह

ISBN: 978-999-46-820-8-9

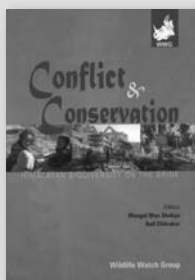
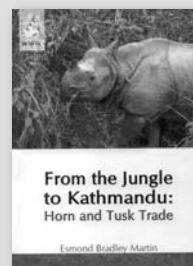


### Tiger Warden

Laxmi Badan Maskey:  
Price 400,  
ISBN: 978-99946-820-2-7

### From the jungle to Kathmandu: Horn and Tusk Trade

Esmond Bradley Martin:  
Price Nrs: 1000, US\$ 30, Euro 20,  
ISBN: 978-999-46-820-9-6



### Conflict and Conservation: Himalayan Biodiversity on the brink

Mangal Man Shakya and Anil Chitrakar:  
Price: Nrs. 400,  
ISBN: 978-99946-820-0-8

### Trading for Extinction: An expose of illegal wildlife Trade in Nepal

Mangal Man Shakya:  
Price: 450, US\$ 7, Euro 6  
ISBN: 999933-885-6-4



# A Roaring Illegal Trade

*Rashvinjeet S. Bedi*

Wildlife trader Anson Wong is not alone when it comes to employing ‘questionable’ methods in the trade.

Many might wonder what wildlife trader Anson Wong was thinking when he decided to smuggle 95 boa constrictors, two rhinoceros vipers and a mata mata turtle in his luggage. Was he desperate, arrogant, or just plain stupid to take such a risk?

But he is not the only one to have employed “questionable” methods in the trade.

Last month, a woman was caught trying to smuggle a tiger cub in her luggage at the Suvarnabumi Airport in Bangkok.

The two-month-old cub, which was reportedly destined for customers in Iran, was sedated and hidden among stuffed tiger toys in the suspect’s carry-on luggage.

Other people have been caught smuggling animals like birds and lizards in their clothes.

Illegal trade in wildlife is considered to be a low risk job that yields

high profits. In fact, it is so lucrative that Elizabeth John, senior communication officer for Traffic (The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network), is hesitant in saying the current price for the various species of animals in the market.

“Discussing prices only encourages people to go out, catch wildlife and sell them. Just look at how talk of high prices are driving the current tokay gecko collection craze,” she says.

Illegal trade in wildlife is the second biggest illegal trade in the world after narcotics. Interpol experts estimate that wildlife smuggling is worth US\$10bil to US\$20bil a year.

The trade is diverse, ranging from live animals and plants to a vast array of wildlife products, including food items, leather goods, wooden musical instruments, timber, tourist curios and medicines.

In 2009, 129 major or model wildlife law enforcement actions by South-East Asian authorities across seven countries were reported. These resulted in 156 arrests and 45 convictions.

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**Cute and Cuddly** : A Thai veterinarian playing with the tiger cub that had been found drugged and hidden among stuffed toy tiger in the suitcase of a women flying from Bangkok to Iran.

More than 18,545 animals were recovered alive; in total, over 267 tonnes of wildlife and derivative products were confiscated, with a minimum estimated black market value of RM124mil.

And Malaysia is in the spotlight because of Wong's exploits. Known as the "Asian wildlife kingpin" and the "Lizard King", Wong was previously jailed in the US for seven years.

For his latest brush with the law, Wong, who was caught in transit to Jakarta from Penang, received a six-month jail sentence and RM195,000 fine, which many considered a slap on the wrist for him.

But the wildlife trade in Malaysia is beyond Wong alone.

"The trade crosses borders. Malaysia plays a role as a transit point and source country. As other countries are losing wildlife, Malaysia is a target," says John.

Malaysia is considered to be one of the most diverse sources of wildlife in the world, she adds.

"We have some of the most unique and rarest animals in the world, among them orangutan, tigers, tapirs, pangolins and turtles."

John points out that a large part of the wildlife trade is legal.

"If not, we wouldn't be able to eat a lot of the fish that we eat and use the timber that we do on a daily basis."

But, she says, "Some animals and plants are rare and more vulnerable. They need protection and can't be traded."

This is where the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) comes into play.

An international agreement between governments that aims to ensure that trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival, CITES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of selected species to certain controls.

These are categorized as Appendix 1, 2 or 3. Appendix 1 lists animals that are threatened with extinction and trade is permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Animals on the appendix 2 and 3 lists are less vulnerable but trade is still controlled.

Because of potential profits, smugglers often take the risk and smuggle animals that are not supposed to be traded.

In this trade there are kingpins, middlemen, collectors – and customers, of course.

The demand exists because there are people who want to display a tiger skin on their wall, or who believe that pangolins can cure asthma. (Pangolins, which are the most traded species, can cost up to RM220 per kg. The scales, believed to have medicinal properties, can fetch up to RM800 per kg.)



And there are people who believe that eating tiger parts can improve their sexual prowess while others simply like to keep endangered animals for their exotic value (see accompanying stories).

John says smugglers devise many different ways to smuggle the wildlife.

A tiger could be chopped up before being sold to restaurants, she says.

“The other parts such as teeth, claws, penis, skin and whiskers could be sold separately. Once you cut up the animal, it would be quite easy to smuggle the parts across the border.”

Tiger meat from Malaysia has been known to make it all the way to China.

John also says that it is quite common for pangolins to be smuggled in consignments of frozen fish. In another instance, monitor lizards were smuggled in a lorry full of garlic to mask their smell.

Recently, Customs officers in Hong Kong seized 384 elephant tusks packed in two shipping containers that came into the city’s port from Tanzania.

The ivory valued at RM4.4mil entered Hong Kong via Malaysia and were transported in packages declared as “dried anchovies”.

In January this year, Hong Kong Customs also seized 186

pieces of ivory found inside a container labelled as white wood from Nigeria.

Due to the high yields, someone with a legal permit to trade could also misuse it, John says.

“For example, you only declare 500 live cobras when there are actually 1,000. Is the officer going to verify the number?”

Wildlife trafficking is also increasingly being linked to organised crime, she says, citing the example of the 300 Madagascar tortoises found with narcotics in an unclaimed bag at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in June.

In July, a police raid on a stolen car syndicate also netted a huge collection of endangered wild animals. The prized seizure at the warehouse in Taman Wahyu, Kuala Lumpur, was a pair of the rare bird of paradise, also known as cenderawasih in Malay, which supposedly has the power to bring good fortune to its owner. The pair is said to be worth RM1mil on the wildlife black market.

President of Malaysia Animal Rights Society (ROAR) N. Surendran wonders why people like Wong are still given licences to trade despite his reputation as a known wildlife smuggler.

“They are giving him free run,” he says, referring to Perhilitan.

Surendran also believes that private zoos and theme parks act as a front for the illegal trade.



**"Why are people like Wong still given licences to trade?"** M. Surendran, President of Malaysia Animal Right Society.

He says that while such zoos might have legitimate breeding programmes, they also act as a transit point for animals from all over the world.

“With this front, they can import and export animals. It looks legitimate,” he explains.

Showing some documents to prove his point, he claims that a zoo in Johor was found to be breaching regulations over and over again but it is still in operation.

As for Wong’s conviction, Surendran says Perhilitan cannot claim any triumph to catching him red-handed.

“That was uncovered by airport security. Perhilitan was only involved in the prosecution. It was not as if Perhilitan conducted a sting operation.”



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### Leopard attack kills child

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Kaski, August 6. A four year old child of Kalika VDC died due to leopard attack. Bipana Timilsina, daughter of Surya Raj Timilsina, was attacked by the leopard at six in the evening near her house. The corpse was found the next morning in pieces according to Bindu Adhikari, a local.

The relatives and locals went for search after the leopard took the child away. In the evening, clothing items were found and the body was found in pieces in the morning. The leopard attacked the child while she was on her way to her home from neighbor's house.

The mother, Narayani Timilsina, fell unconscious after the death of her daughter and was taken to the hospital. Suryaraj Adhikari, a local, informed that VDC has asked for permission to kill the leopard and the forest office has been told informally.

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### Female recruited as Guard for National Park

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Bardia, September 5. The relatives who lost their dear ones due to animal attacks have found employment in the Parks. The women of Buffer Zone of Bardia National Park have found job opportunities as security guards in the Park.

The women involved in this job are satisfied. Twenty five years old Parvati Acharya is enjoying the work. Her father had died after being attacked by the elephant.

There are four women involved in the guarding of the Park. They want to prove themselves as able and independent. Acharya said that she is ready to walk as much as possible and face any difficulty.

Being born and raised in the Buffer Zone area, she loves animals and the forests. Her married life became happy after she took the job.

Shanti Saud working as guard lost her husband. Her husband was killed by the elephant of the Park. She is responsible for taking care of seven members of her family. Ramesh Thapa,

Deputy Conservation Officer said that security job is challenging but fruitful job for women. He said that people are attracted to this job because of challenges and excitement.

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### Rhino birth gives joy to Bardia National Park

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Kathmandu September 6. Park staffs are celebrating the birth of first rhino in two years at Bardia National Park since the government started anti-poaching measures.

Another one-horned rhino calf was spotted with the mother by park staff during a recent elephant patrol in Bardia.

Supported by experts from the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and a grant from the Darwin Initiative, a systematic anti-poaching and monitoring patrols are carried out by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) to protect this endangered animal.

Nepal's rhino population has been subjected to intensive poaching over the past decade. Now less than 450 rhino remain



in Bardia and Chitwan National Park and Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve.

The elephant patrol teams have also seen success in Chitwan National Park, where a female calf was recently rescued after being separated from its mother during the monsoon.

### **Release of Illegal trader before the date**

Chitwan September 7. Gokul Panta of Narayangadh involved in the trading of horns of rhinos has been released before the scheduled time. Even though he was to be released in April 29, 2011, he was released on August 30, 2010. He left for abroad after the release. The Chitwan National park is unaware of the release. According to the Park, he was captured in 2063 Baisakh and was given 15 years in prison and one hundred thousand fine. He appealed to the court in Hetauda. In November 17, 2008, the court decreased his prison terms from 15 to 5 years. His release date was in 2011.

He was captured by the team of Deputy Conservation Officer Kamaljung Kunwar. According to Kunwar, Panta was associated with renowned illegal wildlife trader Yakche. Yakche is a renowned smuggler of wildlife parts in Nepal and China. He has been in wildlife trade for last two decades and has smuggled as many as 20 rhino horns. According to Gopal Prasad Panta, Chief Conservation Officer, Gokul was fined 1 lakh rupees. According to Megh Bahadur Pandey, Gokul was also subjected to 15 years imprisonment.

### **Rare turtle found**

Lamjung September 8. A rare turtle has been found in Rinus Mohoriyakot VDC of Eastern Lamjung. The turtle found near Janta High School weighed about two kilograms as stated by the locals.

The locals have never seen any turtle in their village and are stunned by the discovery. The school is crowded with the spectators. The female turtle is

kept at the Janta High School as told by the teacher Hom Bahadur Gurung. Although the locals are taking care of the turtle, they are unknown about the feeding behavior of the turtle and have asked help from District Forest Office to show interest in the matter. Even though local newspaper has stated it as a rare turtle, no specifications have been made whether the turtle found is rare type or not.

### **Seven rhinos in one Community Forest**

Bardia, September 9. Shiva Community Forest (CF) found in Buffer Zone of Bardia National Park has seven one horned rhinos. The number rose in a recent time.

The experts say that Shiva CF is a perfect place for rhino habitat. This forest is linked with taduwa-Khata corridor. The rhino gave birth in this jungle recently according to a local RamKrishna Tharu. Before, the rhinos were seen only occasionally but now their numbers have increased.

Deputy Conservation Officer Ramesh Thapa said, "even though the CF has rhino with child does not mean the birth took place there only".

The rhinos of Chitwan have been trans-located at Bardia and Shuklaphanta. In 2008 census, there are 408 rhinos in Nepal. The grassland near the river and jungles are ideal habitat for rhinos. Excess grasses in

the National Park are the cause for rhinos to be found at CF.

The increase in number of rhinos has ultimately led to increase in patrolling and security. The conserved animals move from the corridor to Katarniyaghat Wildlife Reserve in India. The Nepal Army patrols upto Kothiyaghat. The local youth club also supports the program. There are 28 rhinos at Bardia National Park according to Deputy Conservation Officer.

### Rally to save Vultures



Bardia September 10. Bardia Nature Conservation Club, Thakurdwara, on the Day of International Vulture Conservation Day, organized motorcycle rally. The rally started from Thakurdwara covering eleven VDCs of Rajapur area and many other VDCs of Bardia District.

The Day was celebrated from last year to conserve the habitat of vultures and to prevent use of diclofenac medicine for domestic animals which is a prime cause of death of vultures. The government from 2009 has banned the distribution and use of diclofenac but the use is still continuing.



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### Owl hunters arrested



Kathmandu September 11. The police arrested three people involved in illegal trading of Brown Fish Owl. The police arrested these people red handed when they were dealing for the owl in Gothathar. The police arrested Tilak Bahadur Khadka, Prem Bahadur Bamjan of Sindhupalchowk and Srijana Khatri of Jorpati.

According to Rana Bahadur Chand, DSP of Kathmandu Crime Branch Khadka and Bamjan used to bring Owls in the residence of Srijana Khatri. Three of them have been sent to Hanuman Dhoka for further investigation. The police have not been able to get hold of the buyers yet.

The illegal traders have to serve two years in prison or ten thousand fines according to the National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 2049. Brown Fish Owl are found in South Asia and South Africa.

These owls have high economic values in Pakistan.

### APPEAL

*Dear valued readers,*

The 25<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:info@citesnepal.org). We also seek support from your organization to continue this Wildlife Times. We look forward to your queries, comments and support.

