



WCN NEWSLETTER

Wildlife Conservation Nepal

Issue 1 Volume 2, July 2005



HRH Crown Prince Paras Bir Bikram Shah Dev and HRH Crown Princess Himani Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah visiting WCN stall.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Paras Bir Bikram Shah Dev and Crown Princess Himani Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah visited WCN's stall at the National Environmental Exhibition and enquired with interest about WCN activities. WCN stall focused on generating awareness amongst students, teachers and communities at large about the natural heritage of Nepal and displayed information on its current activities and programs. The Exhibition was organised to celebrate the World Environment Day.

This event had been participated by over 40 different organizations at Tribhuvan University ground from May 25 - 27, 2005. Most schools from Kathmandu valley visited the exhibition. ■

WCN GOES ON AIR



Ms. Samridhi Shrestha along with Ujwal Bhattarai in the studio.

WCN youth program has been initiating different campaigns to create awareness on environment and wildlife conservation. After a workshop and discussions with different groups, the youth program recommended radio broadcasting to be a strong medium to reach the general mass. The messages from radio broadcasting would carry message and thus leave a print. So, FOOTPRINTS came into existence.

Footprints is aimed at sensitizing people on conservation issues and on natural resources themes. The program is aired every Tuesday at 8.00 a.m. on Times FM 90.6 MHz. Each episode contains information on policy, environment, facts and figures on protected areas, wildlife and endangered mammals, international conventions, illegal wildlife trade, awareness campaigns and sustainable use of natural resources and environment degradation.

Having completed 18 episodes and with fan mails and queries rising each week, Footprints has been able to make a small niche amongst radio listeners today. The program invites students from schools, colleges and universities to discuss and debate on natural resources issues.

The WCN communication team headed by Ms. Samridhi Shrestha believes that radio program such as FOOTPRINTS is important because each episode is unique due to quality research so that listeners will be entertained with information which are beyond their reach.

WCN pursues excellence by researching and creating programs that have a human touch. ■

Tune into

FOOTPRINTS on Times FM 90.6 Every Tuesday at 8:00 A.M.

GODAVARI

Approximately 16 kilometers south of Kathmandu lies Godavari which has Phulchowki mountain range extending from from 1,525 to 2,765 meters and covers about 50 km². Researchers recommends that this area be provided with a protected status, because of its rich biodiversity, water resource and a number of significant cultural and religious sites.

Godavari harbors more than 571 angiosperms, 2 gymnosperms and 80 species of ferns and fern allies with 256 species of birds, of which 6 are threatened worldwide. Common leopard, barking deer, jungle cats, martens and mongoose are also found in Godavari. New spiders and insects have been recorded recently.

About thirty years ago the demand of charcoal for producing energy and making ornaments increased and the supply was met through rhododendron trees of Godavari. Due to uprooting and

burning trees for charcoal, forest have fragmented. While on the other hand, the marble factory, that began its operation from the early sixties have attributed to noise pollution and environment degradation. Local communities, environmentalists and researchers have lobbied to stop the marble factory.

Godavari is heading for an environment disaster, if proper actions are not taken now. In an attempt to portray a present day scenario of Godavari, WCN organised a seminar “Flowers, Insects and Culture of Godavari” on 29 April, 2005. Mr. Nripa Dhoj Khadka, senior instructor at the Institute of Engineering, TU, presented a critical seminar through his personal experience of over fifteen years working in Godavari environment and taking pictures. Brinda Dewan, Volunteer and a researcher spoke about the ecology of Godavari. Students, academicians, researchers and policy makers participated in the seminar. ■



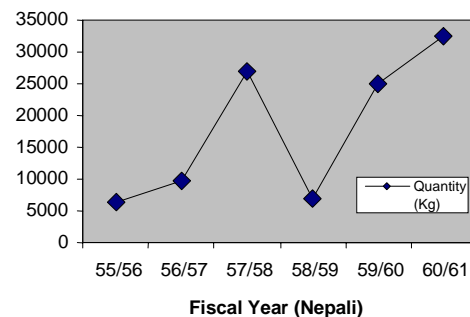
INVESTIGATING ORCHID TRADE

Orchids are a subject of great fascination to gardeners, botanists and nature lovers particularly due to their unique and attractive flowers. Unfortunately Nepal’s orchids are under threat due to increasing destruction of their natural habitat and over exploitation.

Over 2,000 species are known to occur in Asia while Nepal has a little over 360 species. Buddhi R. Dangol, research officer at WCN carried out a study on orchid trade in Kathmandu. The report reveals that illegal trade in orchid is on the rise. The study further provides information that orchid habitat in the wild, especially in Makwanpur district have been dislodged due to intensive harvesting. Dakshinkali has been one of the entry point for the trade. Local nurseries in Kathmandu place order in advance and the local sellers deliver it to the nurseries. However, there are occasional buyers who inadvertently purchase orchids just out of curiosity and fascination. Orchids are also exported in large numbers from

Chitwan especially to India. Today, collectors especially women and children have to venture deeper into the forest for collecting orchid. There is no mechanism to

Revenue collected from Wild Orchid



Source: Hamro Ban, DoF/HMG

regulate the trade within the country. However, HMG of Nepal has been able to collect revenue by collecting orchids from all the districts of Nepal (Fig. above). ■

New Faces

To support the Youth program, Ms. Ambika Amatya joined WCN as an assistant from January 3, 2005. Mr. Ujwal Bhattarai, computer engineer and a photographer joined WCN Radio program and currently heads the Photography Unit.

Meetings

On January 23, 2005, Mr. Bengt Kvitzau, Danish Forest consultant met Mr. Prasanna Yonzon, CEO to collaborate Environment Conservation Awareness Program with Nature School.■

The Board of Trustee Meeting was held on April 15, 2005. A five year strategic plan has been developed. Programs and budget for the coming year were discussed. Most of the trustees were present in the meeting.■

Stakeholders Meeting (May 12, 2005)

The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) conducted a stakeholder meeting where WCN was also invited on formulating a strategy to protect and conserve large and endangered mammals with focus to rhino conservation.■

World Environment Day

To mark the environment day June 5, 2005, WCN was invited by St. Mary's School to share knowledge on environment and wildlife conservation to all the wards of the school including teachers.

Workshop

A CITES Training workshop (June 26-28, 2005) was held in Kathmandu by DNPWC. Prasanna Yonzon was invited as a resource person from the NGO sector to train the participants.■

Rhino Count 2005

The DNPWC conducted a meeting to inform stakeholders of rhino count 2005 on May 18, 2005. It recorded 372 rhinos in Chitwan. The last census of 2000 recorded 544 rhinos in Royal Chitwan National Park.■

Tiger Skin Seizure

The outcome from a workshop on Fighting Wildlife

Crime conducted by WCN in conjunction with Nepal Ex-Police Association and the DNPWC last December led to the seizure of two tiger skins by Nepal Police at Tatopani in the last week of April.■

Rhino Horn Trade

In its line of investigation, WCN was able to track rhino horn trade being brought to Kathmandu from Chitwan. Today, middle men have been replaced by women. After three months of investigation, WCN recorded rhino horn trade near Swayambhunath Temple.■



The rhino horn

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Tiger Cub Saved

Two tiger cubs in Chitwan have been rescued by WCN member, R. Khadka, who handed it over to the park personnel for safe keeping. The cub had been left by its mother due to a forest fire. Later, the cub was released in the same spot where it was picked.■

Interaction Role with Media on Conservation

WCN in a series of interaction with different media (TV and radio) have highlighted roles on conservation and illegal wildlife trade.■

Two Programs on Floor

Nagao Natural Environment Foundation, Japan, have supported two youth programs of WCN. Both the programs are being done at school and at community level.■

Agreement Signed

A Memorandum of understanding was signed between Times FM 90.6 MHz and Wildlife Conservation Nepal to conduct a weekly program for 52 weeks.■

Posters Distributed

Over 2,500 posters on limiting wildlife trade have been distributed to Nepal Police and their precincts, customs, foreign post office, public places, schools, Universities and at regional political offices as well.■

ARRESTING ILLICIT TRADE ON WILDLIFE

- Prasanna Yonzon

Background

South Asia holds the largest population of the Asian one horned rhinoceros and over half of the Royal Bengal tiger population. The greater one-horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) were once distributed throughout the northern floodplain and foothills of the Indian subcontinent between Indo-Burmese border to the Sindh river basin in Pakistan (Menon 1996). The Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) is a native to the Indian sub-continent and is distributed in Myanmar, Bhutan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal.

Due to over hunting, habitat destruction and inadequate food base, tigers and rhinos in many parts have become locally extinct. Today, tigers are limited to protected areas and in some cases pocket areas that have good forest cover with adequate prey base (Bawa, 2005). In Nepal, rhino and tiger is a protected species under the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973.

Major Issues and Today's Problem

Shrinkage of natural habitat and poaching are some of the threats to the survival of these large and endangered mammals (DNPWC, KMTNC & WWF Nepal, 2002). In recent times, tiger have been targeted because of the profit. Sariska National Park in India lost all 24 tigers to poaching, is an indicator that wildlife crime has become a well oiled-system (Times of India,

31st Jan, 2005). In the past ten years 1500 tigers have been lost to poachers in India (India Today, 2005) while Nepal lost 45 (natural and poached) in five (Chapagain, 2003). Rhinos have not fared well either. In the last five years, Nepal lost 160 rhinos to poaching and natural death (DNPWC, 2005). In Nepal, it is not only poaching, but insurgency that have taken a toll in conservation efforts. At the rate of which these wildlife are being systematically 'culled,' the existing population could go extinct by 2020.

Such illegal trade paramount to a nexus, intertwined with traders, poachers and the demand-supply of these products from clients which are spread in many countries (Figure 1). For all these illegal activities to prevail requires assurance of a market, which seems to be booming with demands from the nouveau rich. In some culture, especially within the Tibetan communities, dresses adorn with strips of wildlife skin is not uncommon. It has been known that pelts of leopard and on occasion tiger skins or other endangered mammals adorned in national costumes have become a status symbol.

Today, a tiger skin in the international black market costs from US\$10,000 to 20,000 (Chengappa, 2005) while a leopard fetches US\$ 450. A local poacher receives US\$ 300 in Chitwan to do a 'job' on a tiger. Such discrepancy in profit have lured traders into protected areas, offering cash in advance for poaching jobs. In the late nineties, such trade flourished on a promiscuous scale (Adhikari, 2002) while today, traders in border areas procure, sell and send illegal wildlife product to other countries in a casual manner which is hard to detect. Sometimes, the trader ply their trade by conniving with clerks to have their goods officially sealed and stamped so that it is authenticated.

Wildlife Seizures in Nepal

Nepal has open border with India on the south and Tibet on the north which are porous and accessible, is advantageous for traders dealing in wildlife products (Talukdar, 2003). Last year in the past six months



Female rhino with calf in Sauraha, RCNP

© WCN

alone, 10 tiger skins and scores of animal bones and skin were seized in Nepal (per. comm. Shrestha, Kathmandu District Forest Officer, 2004). This year a major haul was the seizure of two tiger skins seized by Nepal Police at Tatopani customs near the Tibet border. With frequent seizures on wildlife product, especially in border areas provide clue that such trade operate on clandestine basis and pinpoints Nepal as a conduit for illegal wildlife market to the orient and beyond.

Interrogating traders and poachers in penitentiary mention India¹ as a source for major wildlife product. Recently, Pemba Lama alias Yakche, a Tibetan origin, was caught in Chitwan in his vehicle with a rhino horn and a weighing scale. After interrogation, it was confirmed Pemba was a top wildlife trader in rhino horn. Currently, he holds a Nepali citizenship and has sold more than 20 rhino horns. With such trade on the rise, Nepal's endangered wildlife population along with the subcontinent is under constant threat for survival.

Limiting Trade

One can never eradicate this trade because it is market driven with high benefits. However, the trade can be limited by creating awareness in societies that

purchase these products. Besides awareness and strict policies, it requires communication, correct information and immediate action against poachers and traders, if we are to limit the trade.

Similarly, skills and new processes for information gathering can be a tool to be effective to monitor wildlife trade. WCN with DNPWC and WWF Nepal has developed a new paradigm by involving ex-security forces to monitor illegal wildlife trade. ■

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Fig 1. Dots represent protected areas of India that have (tiger) poaching in them. Tiger trade from India to Nepal and then to China and beyond (Source: India Today, May 23, 2005).

¹ On April 7 2005, Delhi Police seized 45 leopard skin and 14 otter skin that were being sent to Nepal. Two Nepalese were caught. Last July, 2004 Kathmandu Police seized 3 tiger trophies, 11 otters including five sack of tiger bones. On March 29, 2004, a truck on its way to China overturned in Sindhupalchok, 60 km from Kathmandu had 7 leopard skins, 6 otter skins, 2 tiger skulls and bones with 175 strip of rhino skin.



YOUTH OUTREACH PROGRAM

WCN ECAP has been conducting outreach programs in many schools of Kathmandu valley with a view to generate awareness on nature conservation. A four day outreach program on environment and conservation was held at Gaurishankar Secondary School and Bernhardt Higher Secondary School led by Ritu Gurung, ECAP coordinator.

During the outreach program, seven projects had been identified by the schools. These were painting a poster, collage, nature photography, knowing and identifying local plants having medicinal properties and identifying trees, case study on scientific projects, treating and benefitting from solid waste management, and news reporting. Mr. Bikash Chand Shrestha, Senior Fisheries Development Officer at Balaju, briefed a group of students on inland fisheries and production in Nepal and create awareness at local level in aqua-

culture conservation.

To another group of participants, Prof. Karan B Shah, head of the Natural History Museum and Dr. Puspa K Shrestha briefed about the museum and the specimens that were under their collection.

At the end, participants shared their experiences through a seminar in which the school principals were the moderators. The program was a learning experience for schools and teachers as well. WCN youth program will conduct a valley science exhibition after the completion of the outreach program. ■



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An official from National Fisheries Development Centre at Balaju briefing ECAP students about hatchery processes.

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

His Excellency Mr. Michel Jolivet, the French Ambassador to Nepal inaugurated a Photography exhibition at the Nepal Tourism Board, following the Amateur Photography Competition in January 2005 organized by WCN on nature and wildlife. Over a 120 photographs of sixty seven participants were displayed in the exhibition. The participants came from all walks of life. The winners were awarded in a ceremony while top ten photographs, selected by Nepal's prominent photographers were published as greeting cards. The cards are on sale and the funds raised will be ploughed back into conservation program.

The exhibition was partially sponsored by Fuji Flims, Nepal Tourism Board, Wildlife Watch Group and many individuals. Over a thousand visitors enjoyed the exhibition. Later, the exhibition was held in WCN premise at Sanepa specially for students. The youth

wing interacted with students from different backgrounds. The interaction provided WCN an opportunity to learn about their views towards environment and natural resources. ■



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H.E. Mr. Michel Jolivet, French Ambassador to Nepal inaugurating the photography exhibition

● ● ● ● ● WCN YOUTH *online* @ www.wcn.org.np/youth

WCN urban wildlife PROGRAM

WCN Urban Wildlife Program (UWP) organized a seven day nature and wildlife photography workshop from July 21, 2005. Fourteen Nepalese amateur photographers from Kathmandu, Dharan and Pokhara along with three foreigners from Italy, England and Japan participated in the workshop. The workshop was facilitated by five prominent photographers in Nepal - Mani Lama, Nanda SJB Rana, Raj Bhai Suwal, Nripa Dhoj Khadka and Sanu Bajracharya. The participants learnt important photography basics and composition from Mr. Lama and Mr. Suwal respectively, while Mr. Rana, Mr. Khadka and Mr. Bajracharya provided in depth knowledge about nature and wildlife photography. For their field trips, the participants were taken to two places in Kathmandu Valley, Godavari Botanical Garden and Gokarna forest to practice the skills developed by them during the course of the workshop. Mr. Ujwal Bhattarai, head of the photography unit of WCN, gave tips on how to compose a subject so as to enhance the landscape and the photograph as well.



Photo : Mani Lama

A participant engrossed taking pictures during the field visit to Godavari

PHOTOGRAPHY - an ADVOCACY TOOL

The workshop was targeted to individuals who were amateur photographers with a passion to learn about nature photography. The main objective of the workshop was to instigate interest in nature and wildlife of the valley especially aimed at young enthusiastic photographers and at the same time promote nature and wildlife photography in the country. UWP Coordinator Ms. Sanjeevani Yonzon believes photography can be a powerful advocacy tool for conservation awareness. UWP has been organizing photography workshops in schools and colleges and for its in-house volunteers and this program has been particularly popular amongst the youth.

Following the workshop, a week long exhibition will be put up displaying photographs shot by the participants during their field visit. UWP will be organizing similar workshops in Biratnagar, Dharan and Pokhara.

Photography Workshop Partners



This is probably the first photography workshop focused on nature and wildlife in Nepal. WCN welcomes more partnerships and support to carry out such activities that inspire interaction with nature. WCN is trying to provide a platform for nature photographers

to do justice to our natural heritage by capturing true pictures through their lenses so that its beauty or plight can reach out to people of all ages to bring them together to protect and conserve biodiversity. ■

PUBLICATIONS



A brief introduction to the endangered wildlife in Nepal with CITES Appendices



An ECAP guide book for Schools



A research on orchid market in Kathmandu

"A Species Protected is a Heritage Maintained"
-WCN

Editor: Ritu Gurung, ECAP Coordinator
Special contributor: Sanjeevani Yonzon



Log on to WCN's website www.wcn.org.np for news updates and information on wildlife and conservation issues

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