

## Himalayan Wildlife Trade Rim Busted

**C**amouflaged within the Tibetan community and working in transfrontier area with adequate nexus and support, an international trader operating in three countries China, Nepal and India has been finally caught in Kathmandu by field operatives of Wildlife Conservation Nepal with support of Nepal Police.



Largest seizures made in Nepal's history in Syabru Besi, Dhunche on September 1, 2005.

Tsewang, previously known as Tashi Tsering began his crime career transporting wildlife products from India and then selling in China. The name Tashi Tsering cropped up in 2002, in one of the mega busts of wildlife products in Ghaziabad, India which bore Tashi's signatures. The INTERPOL issued a red corner notice against Tashi for violating the National Parks and Wildlife Act, India 1973. After learning that a warrant had been issued in his name, Tashi went underground and emerged with a new identity Tsewang. Tsewang has been compared with Sansar Chand, the notorious wildlife trader in India, responsible for wiping out the tiger population of Sariska National Park, India. The CBI, which was closely monitoring Tsewang for sometime also issued a red corner notice last September 2005 after they came to learn that Tsewang was in fact the same person Tashi Tsering.



Tsewang \ Tashi Tsering

After carrying out clandestine operation, he used to come to Boudha, share the profit with counterparts and collect money for a new campaign. The recent Dhunche seizure of 279 wildlife skins (5 tigers, 36 leopards and 238 otters along with 113 kg of tiger bones) on September 1, 2005 belonged to Tsewang, because one of the arrested courier identified Tsewang as the owner of the consignment.

WCN field operatives began monitoring Tsewang's residence from September and had information that Tsewang would be arriving from Delhi on December 9, 2005. WCN coordinated with Kathmandu Valley Police, Nepal Ex-Police Association and the Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation and with Boudha Police personnel arrested Tsewang on December 11, 2005. As he was being escorted to Langtang National Park for wildlife crimes committed, he knew what awaited him. An attorney representing Tsewang was already in Langtang National Park and seeking bail for his client which the Park authorities denied. Currently, he is in the custody of Langtang National Park and is awaiting sentence. Tsewang will be tried by the Chief Warden of Langtang National Park for crimes committed against wildlife. The Himalayan trade ring nexus is strong and bears political clout. By arresting Tsewang, we saved many endangered mammals from being poached. Today, we need to develop awareness and simultaneously arrest poaching to safeguard our natural heritage from traders and poachers.■



### ECAP Outreach Program in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur

From June to December 2005, ECAP, supported by its volunteers conducted outreach programs to nine schools in Kathmandu Valley successfully.

ECAP changes its module every six months. The thematic in this six month period were waste management, urban wildlife conservation with focus to birds, wetland conservation and its utility, environment conservation, protected area and people, tiger conservation and developing natural landscape on urban setting.

Today, ECAP is supporting a college to develop a curricula for environment graduate students.■

#### TUNE INTO



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# CATT: The Campaign Against Tiger Trafficking

## An organised response to an organized crime

**C**ampaign Against Tiger Trafficking (CATT) is a three year initiative by a US based organization Save The Tiger Fund and its alliances. CATT is the first global partnership initiative focused exclusively on stopping trade of tigers and their body parts. Today, the tigers are in extreme danger of extinction because of its demand in the oriental market.

About 41 years ago, three of the nine tiger sub species had become extinct. Another Sumatran tiger could be extinct by 2020. India on the other hand with the highest population of the Royal Bengal Tiger in the world has succumbed to high levels of poaching. Sariska National Park in India lost all tiger population to poaching. There is a chance that Nepal could also lose its population of the Royal Bengal Tiger (350-360 individuals) if such trend continues. CATT with its alliances ranging from Animals Asia Foundation, Environmental Investigation Agency, Flora and Fauna International, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Phoenix Fund, Save the Tiger Fund, Wildlife Conservation Nepal, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wildlife Protection Society of India, Wildlife Trust of India and Zoological Society of London have galvanized support to stop tiger trade from countries which consume them. China has already committed towards the protection of tigers through its announcement of the 2008 green Olympic mascots which has China and Asia's most

endangered species the tiger. WCN launched CATT campaign in Kathmandu. WCN in its stride to protect and conserve tiger organized seminars, slide shows, distribution of fliers and posters and initiated interaction programs in schools and communities.



A tiger skin seized from a reputed family in Nepal

The highlight of the campaign was at the Nepal Ex-Police auditorium where Nepal Ex-Police Association members and district presidents had gathered to hear tiger conservation issues and its trade. The Presidents and members were informed about the importance of tiger in conservation - WCN requested the association's support in stopping tiger trade. This message has been passed to district level members as well.

Quite a few number of households in Nepal have tiger trophies at home that have become an integral part of their heirloom. The best alternate is to authenticate such trophies so that these do not enter the black market. ■

## Thinking About Our Small Neighbors - The House Sparrows

House Sparrows are perhaps one of those few birds whose appearance is familiar across the globe. Once abundant, today the house sparrows have declined in many parts of the world.



Khokana VDC

Buddhi Ratna Dangol initiated a study on house sparrows, a pilot research project under Urban Wildlife Program, since June 2005.



Traditional bird holes in the houses of Khokana

Urban Wildlife Program is dedicated to conservation of urban wildlife.

The first phase of the research based in Khokana, a small traditional village of Lalitpur district of Kathmandu Valley focused on the importance of the declining tradition of building bird holes in the survival of house sparrows. ■

# Tracking Down Illegal Trade in Kathmandu

## -WCN Investigates

**A**lmost all wildlife trade and its transaction are done in Kathmandu or other urban centers prior to its final destination abroad. Usually full cash payment is made at the point of sale (this could be in India, Nepal or Tibet). The courier charges 5 to 10% of the total value of the merchandise and will deliver the goods at the trader's destination (sometimes wildlife products are stored for a long time in Kathmandu) and then illicitly moved to international markets. People associated with wildlife trade know that the trade is illegal and liable to prosecution if caught, but the profit and margin is high, the legal aspects are always over looked.

WCN realizes that surveillance is necessary to anticipate market trend and stop the steady growing wildlife product market. WCN began monitoring wildlife trade in key areas that had demands for such products. In such intelligence gathering and monitoring trade, WCN has been supported by institutions at home and abroad.

Some of the successful cases WCN had been dealing have been briefly mentioned below.

### Mongoose:



The recent raid on paint brush factories which used mongoose hair in making paint brushes had been the effort of WCN. WCN provided critical information to Nepal Television with the names of the factories that were making mongoose hair



paint brushes. Nepal Television then broadcasted the raid in its prime news. The factories have been shut down.

### Birds:

Despite recent raids by CITES officials on birds and its handlers, wild bird market seems to be booming in Kathmandu. Most birds are sold as pets. Over the years, parrots, falcons, myna, budgerigar and pigeons are sold openly. WCN tracked five Eurasian eagle owls being available in the underground wildlife market. The traders frequently move the owls from one place to another, fearing raid by enforcement agencies. WCN found some of them in a very bad state.



A trader showing WCN field operatives stretched wings of an Eurasian owl

WCN is working with Kathmandu District Forest Office in getting these birds back to their environment. To stop such trade from happening again and again, we need to review our policies and make necessary amendments so that effective actions are taken against bird traders and poachers.

### Himalayan Marmot:

The Himalayan marmot skins were openly sold in Boudha. On October 5, 2005 WCN informed the CITES unit at the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and Nepal Police



A marmot skin being sold at Boudha

The Boudha Police station deployed a deterrence method and the marmot trade has been stopped in Boudha.

### Chuba Dress and other trades:

Leopard skins are in demand in Kathmandu amongst the rich Tibetan communities. They wear them during carnivals and on special occasions. The leopard skin is draped over the shoulder which comes in the front and is tied to the waist and are commonly known as Chuba. Over the years, chuba has remained a symbol of wealth. The lady wearing the leopard chuba dress (in the picture above) knew wearing a chuba was illegal. This photo was taken in Boudha, 500 meters away from the Boudha Police station.



WCN field operatives disguised as buyers visited shops and met traders. More than two dozen shops in Boudha and in Patan dealt in ivory products.



Furthermore, we have come to understand that Tibetans use more wildlife products than the average Nepali. Most of the illegal wildlife trade points are in Boudha, Swayambhu and

Banepa area. Ivory bangles, beads, earrings, small snuff boxes, jewellery boxes are mostly hand crafted in Patan. Similarly, Shahtoosh shawls are still available in Kathmandu. The shawls could be old stock. WCN is establishing a database on wildlife trade. ■

# Nature Through Lens

Nature through Lens, a four day nature and wildlife photography exhibition was held at the Nanglo Bakery Café in Sundhara from August 28 -31, 2005. This exhibition is an outcome of a week long nature and wildlife photography workshop organized by WCN Urban Wildlife Program in July 2005. Novice photographers from Nepal, Italy, England and Japan took part in the workshop and were guided by prominent Nepali photographers Mani Lama, Nanda SJB Rana, Raj Bhai Suwal, Nripa D. Khadka and Sanu Bajracharya. The exhibition had a delightful collection of photographs of 15 participants.



conservation at the local level. The visitors were pleasantly surprised to see such beautiful nature and wildlife photographs of Kathmandu Valley which was previously highlighted only for its cultural and religion aspects. Photo Concern Pvt. Ltd, Nepal's foremost studio provided photography materials and other supports for the workshop, Nanglo Pvt. Ltd provided the venue and Gokarna Resort supported in the field study and photography session. ■

Nature through Lens not only promoted nature photography but at the same time raised funds for

## Celebrating World Habitat Day - Planting trees

WCN Urban Wildlife Program (UWP) celebrated World Habitat Day on October 3-4, 2005 by conducting plantation in the green belt section of Dhumbarahi, Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Ward No. 4 along the Manmohan Marg.



Senior members of Dhumbarahi participating in the tree plantation

The program was conducted in collaboration with Dhumbarahi Yuva Jagaran Club (DYJC) representing the Dhumbarahi Community with the objectives of promoting urban avian fauna and butterfly habitat and improve the environment. UWP has committed support to DYJC to maintain the area for one year with the provision of being extended next year as well. The plantation site includes a park built by DYJC in 2004 with the approval of Kathmandu Metropolitan City Office. DYJC and UWP looks forward in developing the park to a more green environment.

The tree and shrub species chosen for the plantation were

fruits, shade providers, annual flowering plants and trees with ornamental value that contribute towards a better urban landscape.

The campaign was carried out in two phases. Cleaning up the park and plantation. On October 4, 2005, over 50 people from WCN, DYJC and community members took part in the plantation program.



Making the Green Belt green



Let us each plant a tree

A senior citizen (woman) of Dhumbarahi initiated the program by planting a cherry blossom tree sapling. UWP plans to support such projects along the degraded parts of the Green Belt which have been turned into wastelands. ■

## In the News

### Seminar

WCN members attended a seminar entitled Wildlife Research and Conservation Efforts in the Western Himalayas by Dr. S. Sathyakumar. The program was organized by Resources Himalaya Foundation. ■

### Workshop

WCN conducted a three day proposal writing training to Saugat Legal and Research Consultancy Pvt. Ltd. from November 22-24, 2005. The program was designed by WCN team. ■

### Project Grant Awarded

WCN has been awarded a grant to carry out a project to save tigers beyond protected areas. The project has been awarded by National Fish and Wildlife Services, Save the Tiger Fund. ■

### Interaction Program

Youth Environment Program Coordinators from WCN attended an interaction program with Mr. Scott MacLennan, Director of The Mountain Fund on November 17, 2005 to discuss future programs in Nepal on environment and communication.

### Meetings

The Chief Executive Officer Prasanna Yonzon met representatives of Environment Investigation Agency, UK and Wildlife Protection Society of India concerning issues on illegal wildlife trade on August 16, 2005 at WCN premises. ■

WCN had a strategic meeting at WWF Nepal office along with representatives of DNPWC, WWF Nepal and Nepal Ex Police Association on Oct 24, 2005 on curbing rhino poaching in Nepal .

On November 11, 2005, Mr. Prasanna Yonzon had a meeting with Kathmandu Valley Police Chief, Deputy Inspector General of Police Mr. Krishna Basnet to share information on traders and combat illegal wildlife trade. Following the meeting the notorious trader Tsewang was arrested. ■

Dr. Mahendra Shrestha, Project Director of Save the Tiger Fund visited WCN office on November 15, 2005. ■

Prasanna Yonzon attended a meeting in New Delhi on Wildlife Environment Monitoring System on November 18, 2005 in an effort to establish a wildlife crime database in South Asia so as to provide information on wildlife trade in the region to enforcement agencies and for research purposes. ■

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## Society For Conservation Biology in Nepal

**O**n November 17, 2005, the first Asian Regional Conference of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) was inaugurated in Kathmandu amongst an international gathering of conservationists, biologists, educationists, students, lawyers, resource managers and policy makers from home and abroad at Hotel Yak and Yeti. Dr. Swayambhu Man Amatya, Secretary, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation read the royal message from His Royal Highness the Crown Prince Paras Bir Bikram Shah Dev who wished the Conference a success.

Dr. Pralad Yonzon, President of the Asia Section of SCB and Chairman of Resources Himalaya Foundation stressed on the importance of good science and research in conservation.



The Governing Board of SCB Conference summing up the achievements

SCB is an international professional organization dedicated to promote the phenomena that affect the maintenance, loss and restoration of biological diversity.

Resource managers, educationists, conservationist workers and students who have a common goal to



Participants actively interacting

conserve nature and study about biological diversity are members of this society. The society aims to advance science and the practice of conserving the Earth's biological diversity.

Their vision is a world where people understand, value and conserve the diversity of life on earth. One hundred and sixty two participants from different countries presented papers on varied themes with a strong participation from Nepal.

WCN presented a paper on national strategy on wildlife trade and transboundary issues in the conference. The conference was a landmark event in the field of biodiversity conservation in Nepal. ■

# Taudaha, -A Haven for birds

## Taudaha Pond

Taudaha is one of the most important natural wetland of Kathmandu Valley which also contributes to the groundwater recharge of Bagmati Watershed. Situated in Ward No.15 of Kirtipur Municipality, it is a habitat for a large number of birds and is also a staging site for migratory birds that arrive from Siberia every winter. Over 80 species of birds are found in Taudaha. Although there is a difference in opinion about the depth of the pond amongst different researchers, it is stated to be around seven meters according to a recent research done in the pond.

Covering an area of four hectare, taudaha is not only ecologically important but also holds religious belief that a jewel studded palace of king of serpents - Karkotak lies beneath the pond. It is also believed that the Bhoto ( Vest ) displayed during the Rato Machindranath festival belongs to King Karkotak. During the festivals of Nag Panchami and Janai Purnima a fair is held in the premises of the pond every year.

Though Taudaha has captured considerable attention of many organizations, it still faces enormous pressure of human encroachment, siltation and water pollution. To bring awareness to people about this internationally important ecological site, WCN Urban Wildlife Program has initiated programs in Taudaha to support local initiative groups by supporting them in their activities.



## Taudaha Jamboree 2006

Starting from January 2006 nine organizations including WCN are coming together to organize the Second Taudaha Jamboree to celebrate World Wetlands Day 2006. As a follow up of the one day Jamboree, a workshop on the importance



of wetlands will be organised at the Nepal Tourism Board with Friends of Bagmati. WCN will be conducting Nature Hike, Mithila Art Workshop, Green Maps with students. The main objective of the Jamboree is to raise awareness about Taudaha among the civil society so as to conserve it in its beautiful natural state.■

## MY FRIEND - THE TREE

ECAP has launched a Campaign "My Friend The Tree" in different schools of Godavari. Godavari is important because it has the highest species of avian fauna and flora in Kathmandu Valley. The Campaign will mainly focus on making the students aware of the importance of trees and birds.

More than 70 students from eight different schools will be actively participating in a week long campaign which will include orientation, outreach workshop, tree plantation and street plays. The Campaign will start from April 2006.■

**"A Species Protected  
is a  
Heritage  
Maintained"  
-WCN**

# YOUNG VOICES

## Working with WCN Youth Environment Program

By Apsana Giri & Brinda Dewan

An opportunity to attend a seminar on non timber forest products held at Wildlife Conservation Nepal was how we came to know about the different programs conducted at WCN. At the end of the seminar, we learnt that we could enroll as volunteers in their youth program. Having registered as volunteers, we were invited to many programs held by WCN. With time, we got involved in the outreach program run under Environmental Conservation Awareness Program (ECAP).



Ms. Giri teaching the students the role of plants in our lives

ECAP is a program run by young environmentalists and we were always able to adjust with the participants and get to work with like minded people. We never felt out of place at any stage of our involvement.

ECAP is an interactive program which disseminate information on education, environment awareness and on conservation themes through fun filled simple projects unlike our traditional methods that are taught in schools. The two days outreach program has not only been an opportunity to share our knowledge with young students but it has also given us a chance to learn many new things. It is said that learning is a two way process, and volunteering as Workshop facilitators has made this belief even stronger in us.

We had a strong theoretical knowledge but in ECAP, those became practical. And with each workshop, the outreach program has evolved into a better design program because the students provide us with feedback which in turn helps us to improve our working style.

To act as facilitators we have to be well informed about the subject that we are going to share with the young students.



Fascinated young students flipping through wildlife magazines provided by ECAP

This keeps us on our toes and abreast with the new developments on various subjects related to environment. Through this program, we have developed and honed our personal skills like adjusting to different situations and



Ms. Dewan giving a talk program on Godavari's ecological status

people, developing interpersonal skills, building self-confidence and working as a team.

WCN and ECAP has not only given us opportunities to contribute, even if only little, towards environmental conservation but also helped us to be stronger and capable individuals who are proactive in conservation.

Today we do believe that every small effort towards conservation is worth trying. ■

***Apsana Giri and Brinda Dewan are postgraduates and have been associated with WCN youth program since 2004.***

## Upcoming Events

### 2nd Annual Photography Competition

WCN Youth Environment Program (YEP) is holding its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual amateur nature/wildlife photography competition this February 2006.

The Competition has been announced through our website, through posters and programs in FM stations. It is a free competition with no age bar. The photographs submitted at WCN will be judged by a panel of prominent photographers and the best 10 photographs will be featured in 10 Greeting Cards. A thousand copies of each card will be printed out bearing its photographers name. The photographers will then be enrolled in our photography club and will be given opportunities to gain more knowledge in photography through workshops in subsidized rates and in free seminars throughout the year.

The winners will be announced at the inaugural session of the exhibition.■



### Conservation Campaign

## Awareness Campaign on Illegal Wildlife Trade to Mountain Communities through Religious Bodies

Wildlife Conservation Nepal is launching a campaign to raise awareness among the mountain communities against the illegal wildlife trade in Nepal.

Editorial team: Sanjeevani Yonzon, Ritu Gurung and Bhushan Shilpakar



Log on to WCN's website [www.wcn.org.np](http://www.wcn.org.np) for news updates and information on conservation issues

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