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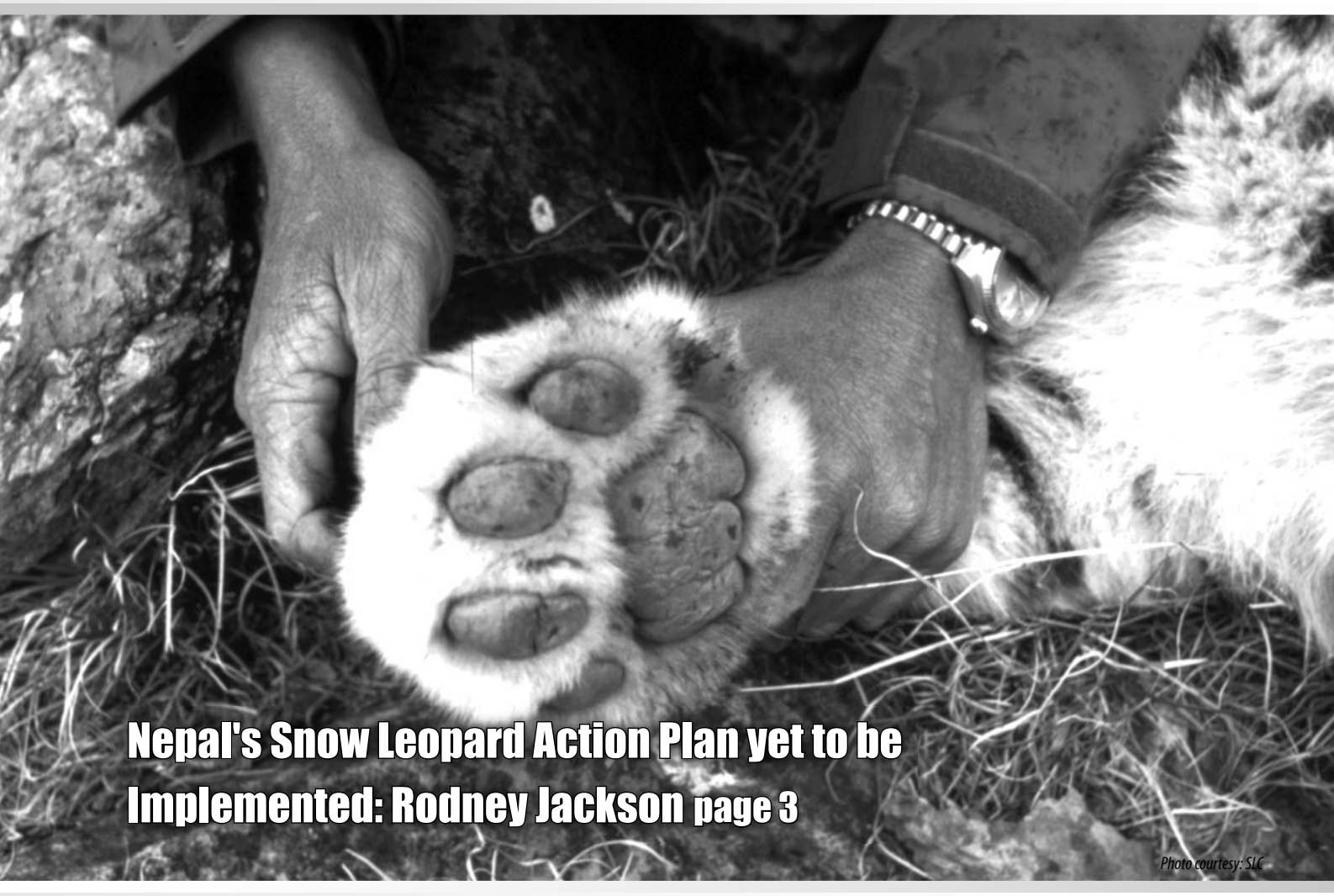
Wildlife Times



Nepal's Snow Leopard Action Plan yet to be Implemented: Rodney Jackson page 3

Photo courtesy: SLC

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Editorial

The ignorance of conservation of snow leopard is a perfect example that it is not commercially viable species and thus is left at the mercy of few conservationists who are determined to save snow leopards. The formal study on snow leopard started only during the late 1970s. Still, there has been no significant involvement of government and international organizations for their conservation.

The snow leopards do not bring in as much funds as rhinos and tigers where organizations are fighting to donate money for conservation programs. While tigers and rhinos gain such attention, the snow leopards, on the other hands, are decreasing due to illegal poaching and trade. As they attack livestock for survival, the locals kill them for mortality control.

The exact number of snow leopards has not yet been calculated in as systematic manner. Till date, there have only been eight radio collared snow leopards. This was done during the 80s and 90s. After 1990, the radio collaring of the snow leopard has been stopped. On this basis, it was assumed that the snow leopards are found only in Manang and Mugu regions of Nepal. Later, direct and indirect observations led to the conclusion that snow leopards are found in Sagarmatha National Park, Langtang National Park and Rolwaling.

There has been no exact scientific means used to find out about the abundance of snow leopards in Nepal. The assumptions on the number have been based on the radio collaring of eight snow leopards that was done 30 years ago. We are dependent on outdated information. The negligence by the government to protect these shy and aloof creatures is well seen where no exact number of snow leopards have been recorded. The estimation is not well enough for conservation.

Rodney Jackson did the study on snow leopard for the first time in Nepal with use of radio collars. Likewise, Madan Oli used radio collars to find out about the diet and habits of snow leopards. Som Ale and Joel brown first took picture of snow leopard in Sagarmatha region proving its presence in that part.

It is necessary to know the number of snow leopards for conservation process. For that, scientific means and methods are necessary. The government has stopped the use of radio collar even though no policy has been made for its ban. The government needs to allow the use of latest scientific equipments and methods to get updates on snow leopards for conservation.

Nepal's Snow Leopard Action Plan yet to be Implemented: Rodney Jackson

The snow leopard of central Asia is one of the rarest of all big cats—perhaps the most beautiful, least-studied endangered species on earth.

Rodney Jackson was born in South Africa on January 19, 1944. He spent his childhood amongst the bushes, pugmarks, tracks and in wilderness. He received his bachelor's degree and doctorate from the University of London. He completed his master's degree in zoology from the University of California at Berkeley, in 1971 during which he attended a lecture by John Tyson, leader of 1961 and 1964 English mapping and mountaineering expeditions to Nepal's far West, to talk about the Kanjibora Himal region, which changed the course of his life. Enticed by the ruggedness and wilderness of these regions, Rodney decided to come to Nepal in 1976 to find and photograph snow leopards.

The study on snow leopard was minimal before 1969. From 1969, the renowned field biologist George B. Schaller had conducted a series for expeditions throughout the Himalayas. Apart from that, no significant studies had been done. During his visit to Nepal, Rodney found it as an opportunity for scientific study of these elusive cats. When he returned from Nepal in early 1977, Rodney began to search for a source of funding for a radio-tracking study of snow leopards. He formed a non-profit institute, California Institute of Environmental Studies (CIES). After his proposals were rejected by many agencies, he finally got grants through Rolex Awards for Enterprise in 1980. The Snow Leopard Project was launched and Rodney came to Nepal to radio collar leopards. With this began the extraordinary achievements of Rodney Jackson.

Studying snow leopards is extremely challenging; Jackson has endured long, bitter winters , monsoon rains that sent landslides and boulders tumbling through their study area and dangerous terrain at altitudes above 12,000 feet to track and monitor these elusive creatures, and to teach local goat herders how to protect their flocks and coexist peacefully with the big cats. Jackson's grassroots approach to research, conservation and education is helping to transform this magnificent big cat from a potential livestock predator to an economic asset throughout much of its 12-country range.

But out of these hardships and frustrations, there is success story of collaring five cats, producing a landmark study' that has helped many to continue their study of this imperiled creatures.

Rodney is director and founder of the Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC), which applies today's technology to the problem of disappearing snow leopards by implementing new camera-trapping and genetic surveying techniques.

He resides in the San Francisco Bay area.

Dr. Rodney Jackson was in Kathmandu last April with another young snow leopard expert Dr. Som Ale to work on snow leopard through SLC. They visited WWG during that time and Dr. Rodney talked with Wildlife Times on various aspects of snow leopard conservation in Nepal and other range countries.

Photo courtesy: SLC

Photo courtesy: WWG

1. ***How did you get into snow leopard conservation in Nepal in mid seventies?***

➢ In early 1970s while studying in Berkeley, California, I happened to see George Schaller's National Geographic article about snow leopards in Pakistan that included a stunning picture. I had planned to return to Africa where I was born but seeing that picture, I was inspired to work on snow leopards instead. Therefore, I decided to visit Nepal, known habitat for snow leopard to undertake research on their status and conservation.

I was introduced to Hemanta Mishra, a notable biologist and conservationist by a mutual friend. In Nepal, the national parks were just being established and volunteers of FAO, UNDP and Smithsonian Institute were engaged in wildlife research and conservation projects. Hemanta advised me to go to Dolpa to study snow leopards but it turned out to be a restricted area for foreigners. Therefore, I went to Mugu instead after making a preliminary trek to Langtang, arriving at the remote village of Dolphu in late October. At that time, the annual hunt of the local Tibetan people was underway. The hunters worked in groups of 2-4 men, and if successful, they earned enough cash from the very valuable musk deer pods to meet their needs for a year. Poisoned bamboos and trap lines were used to kill animals. I documented the proceedings in an article, but realized that snow leopards were at risk as well for their pelts were being sold in India for 50-100 dollars. Local people considered snow leopards as a pest, for killing their livestock, primarily goats, cattle and yaks.

I also realized that as a biologist, I should be working to save the snow leopard from risk of extinction. I prepared a research proposal, and after receiving funding in 1981 via the Rolex Award, I was able to initiate a four-year radio collar tracking study in the Langu Valley. We faced many challenges and hurdles but were successful in radio collaring five snow leopards and tracking them in a study that has remained the landmark one until recently. I also received grants from National Geographic Society and some support from the New York Zoological Society and WWF US.

2. ***You being a first field biologist in the world who radio collared snow leopard in the wild, how many snow leopards has been radio collared since then in Nepal and world.***

➢ We radio collared five snow leopards: three males and two females, tracking them from 1981-1985. In 1987, Madan Oli put radio collar in three snow leopards in Manang. An Indian, Raghu Chundawat radio collared a male snow leopard in Hemis National Park in 1991. In 1994, George Schaller attached two radio collars in Mongolia, and then Tom McCarthy collared three or four snow leopards in Mongolia in late 1990s. In 2006, Tom attached satellite collar to a female leopard in Pakistan. Between 2008 and 2011, he and his associates at the Panthera Foundation fixed satellite collars on twelve snow leopards in Mongolia. In 2008, I placed a satellite collar on a male snow leopard in Mongolia and recorded its position every 8 hours over a 12-month period, accumulating some 1,100 locations. Then about a month ago, a snow leopard was collared in Russia and visited by Putin.

The satellite collar has internal clock system that

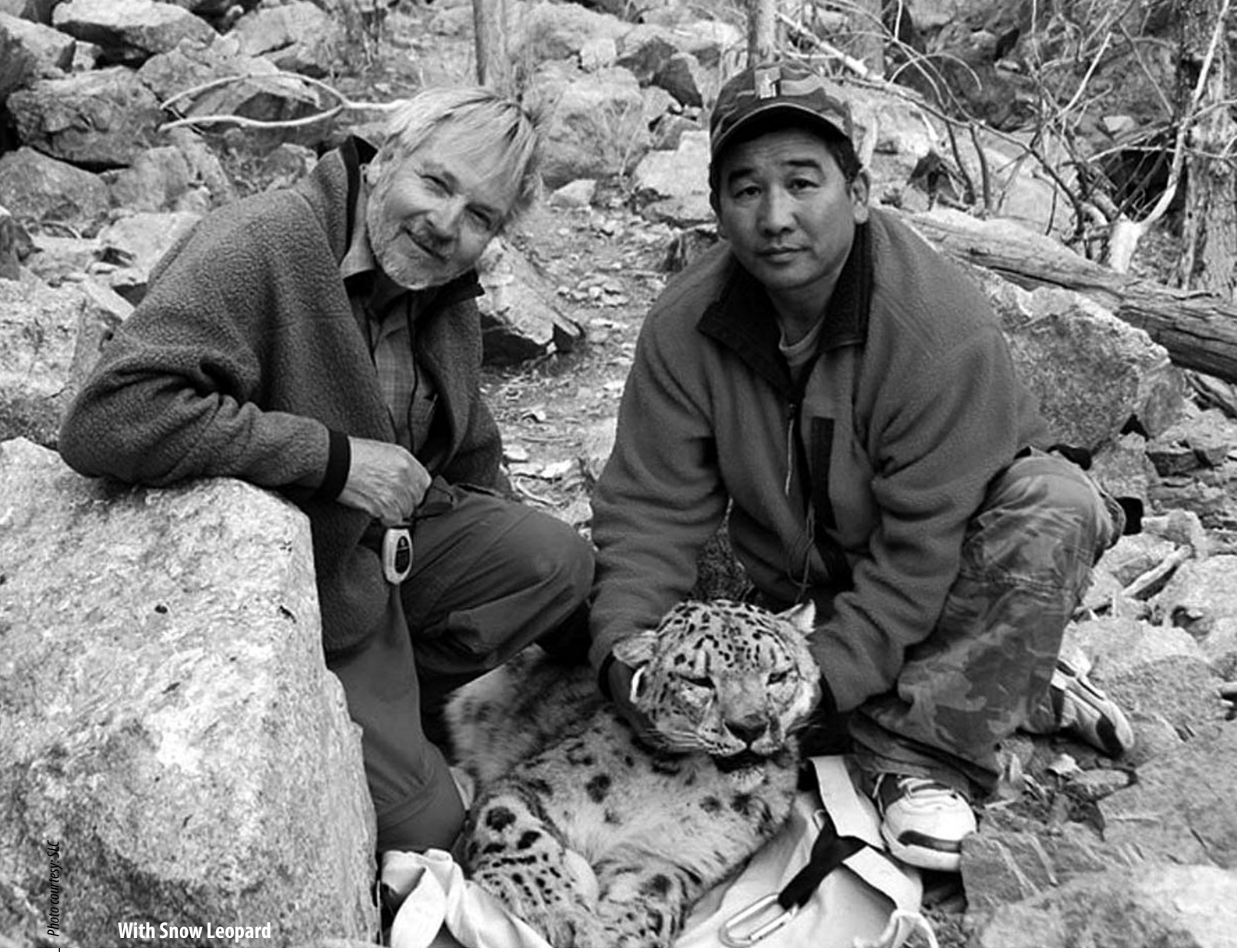


Photo courtesy-SLC

With Snow Leopard

automatically collects locations at fixed intervals as well as dropping the collar off at a pre-determined time, so the store-on-board GPS locations can be retrieved into a computer for analysis. Telemetry technology has advanced greatly, becoming far more easy to apply and certainly more reliable than the system I used in the 1980's. Then the battery would fade quickly, tracking from the ground was very hard, and collars almost impossible to recover.

3. ***What is the viable snow leopard population in Nepal? Is the current estimate 350-500 viable or below?***

➢ This is only a "best guess," for until recently there was no means to make an accurate count of this elusive predator. I made the above estimate in 1995-96 based on available habitat, using a topological map of Nepal and GIS software to predict suitable habitat. If the terrain is steep and rocky, it is generally good for snow leopards. Sign left by snow leopards along their travel lanes can also be tallied, but there is no direct relationship between sign abundance and numbers of the cat. Nowadays, using remote camera traps and DNA extracted from scats its possible to obtain very accurate and reliable population estimates.

4. ***Could you briefly outline your works in snow leopard conservation after you left Nepal in 1985 and subsequent activities till date?***

➢ I realized that Nepal represented a hotspot for snow leopard back in 1981. After I did my research study in Nepal from 1986 to 1994, I supervised trainings for park and NGOs staff and field officers in snow leopard survey and habitat

techniques. This method, known as SLIMS (Snow Leopard Information Management System) involved walking along ridgelines and valley edges while counting all sign left by snow leopard, including pugmarks, scrapes, scats, and urine sprays (which they use for marking their home ranges and establishing land-tenure rights). In general, we deduced that the more sign present, the greater the number of snow leopards using the area. Thus, survey guidelines were prepared for rangers and scientists in order to encourage monitoring of this rarely seen carnivore. Over the years, I have lead training workshops in Bhutan, Mongolia, China, Nepal and Pakistan.

5. ***What made you to form Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC)? Tell us about the activities of SLC.***

➢ Despite these trainings, the regional wildlife agencies and NGOs were able to conduct only a few surveys. I became increasingly worried over continued declines in snow leopard sightings and sign to prey depletion from poaching of large ungulates. At the same time reports of livestock depredation became increasingly common, and I got more worried about the future of this iconic species across its 12 range countries in Central Asia, namely, Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and possibly also Myanmar.

I also came to sympathize with the herder who lost 20-50 sheep or goats after a snow leopard had entered the corral at night—after all, these livestock represented his bank account. No wonder herders considered snow leopards to be a pest! Therefore, in 2000 I founded the Snow Leopard Conservancy to specifically focus on community-based stewardship of the snow leopard, its prey and habitat. I came to consider conservation action by local people as the best long-term solution.

SLC's basic goal is to

Photo courtesy: SLC

Rodney Jackson taking field notes

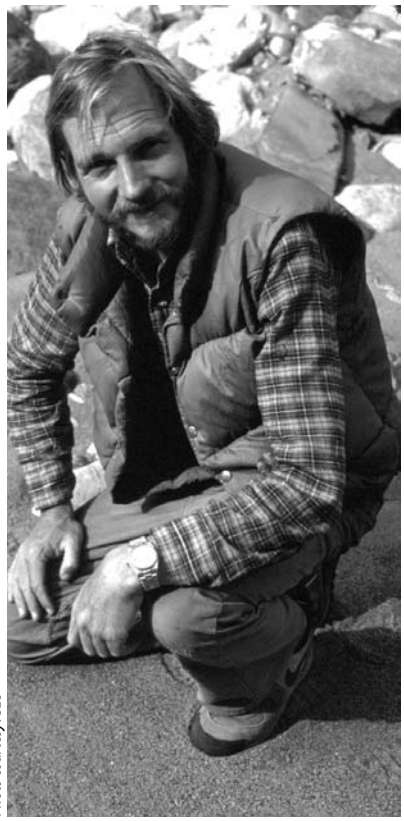


Photo courtesy: SLC

Inspecting pugmark

Photo courtesy: SLC

Scat on grass

I realized that Nepal represented a hotspot for snow leopard back in 1981. After I did my research study in Nepal from 1986 to 1994, I supervised trainings for park and NGOs staff and field officers in snow leopard survey and habitat techniques.

change local people's perception of the snow leopard so they value it more alive than dead. The four approaches being used through community actions are:

a. To reduce livestock depredation, for such loss greatly enrages most herders. To avoid such human-wildlife conflict, we have established some 60 predator-proofed livestock corrals or enclosures in India, Nepal, Pakistan and Tajikistan. By building a strong stone wall and covering the top with wire mesh, so a snow leopard can no longer gain access or kill the livestock within. By stopping multiple killing of valuable domestic animals, herders no longer take retributive action, poisoning or killing snow leopards. Depredation on the open pasture is far more difficult to control. However, by tolerating occasional losses, herders are providing a biodiversity service by helping sustain this endangered cat in areas where wild prey is scarce.

b. Improvement of local livelihoods: Supplemental income offers an additional incentive for co-existing with this predator and other predators like the wolf. For this, we have created different income generating activities like rural tourism, including the very successful Himalayan Homestays program of Ladakh and Zanskar in India. SLC, working with local partners, organizes workshops to train people in environmentally friendly and sustainable livelihoods.

c. Environmental awareness is done targeting children and teachers. We have published children's books, including information on the leopard and mountain fauna and flora in the local curriculum while promoting local stories about snow leopard conservation.

d. Monitoring and research: This is an essential part of any conservation program, and I look forward to working with the government of Nepal to update our understanding of snow leopard ecology. For the estimation of

snow leopard population size, two techniques have gained momentum in the last few years. They are camera trapping and non-invasive genetics. Both are less expensive than radio or satellite tracking. For genetics, a sophisticate lab is required. It is hard for Nepal to afford it, as the budget exceeds $250,000 for equipment alone. Nepal does not currently allow the export of scat to other countries for analysis or verification, although PCR products are routinely exchanged between many international laboratories. It is good science to have such data validated independently.

6. ***Is there enough political support by snow leopard range country governments in conservation of snow leopard?***

➢ Tigers and rhinos receive many millions of dollars but snow leopard conservation is given very little funding – not only in Nepal but also in almost all other range countries. Strong political support from the government, people and NGOs is essential for long-term protection.

Nepal has prepared an Action Plan, but this is yet to be implemented. In addition, lack of awareness about snow leopards is another reason for their decline. The Indian Government launched Project Snow Leopard in 2009, which includes significant funding. However, it is too early to determine how successful this initiative will be.

7. ***Is poaching or illegal trade main threat of survival for snow leopard? What are other threats?***

➢ Yes, poaching of prey, which leads to depletion of the snow leopards' natural food supply, so they may then turn more to livestock for their survival. In turn, this leads to more killing of snow leopards by herders and the start of a vicious negative cycle of depredation followed by retribution. In addition, the growing demand for traditional Chinese medicines places substantial pressure on rare species like the snow leopard, reaching across international borders. At a very conservative guess, I would say that 30-50 (or more) leopards are killed every year, some poisoned by herders for killing livestock.

Other threats include competition between wild ungulates and livestock for forage, gold mining in Mongolia and road construction on the Tibetan Plateau.

8. ***What is your assessment toward snow leopard action plan prepared by the Government of Nepal?***

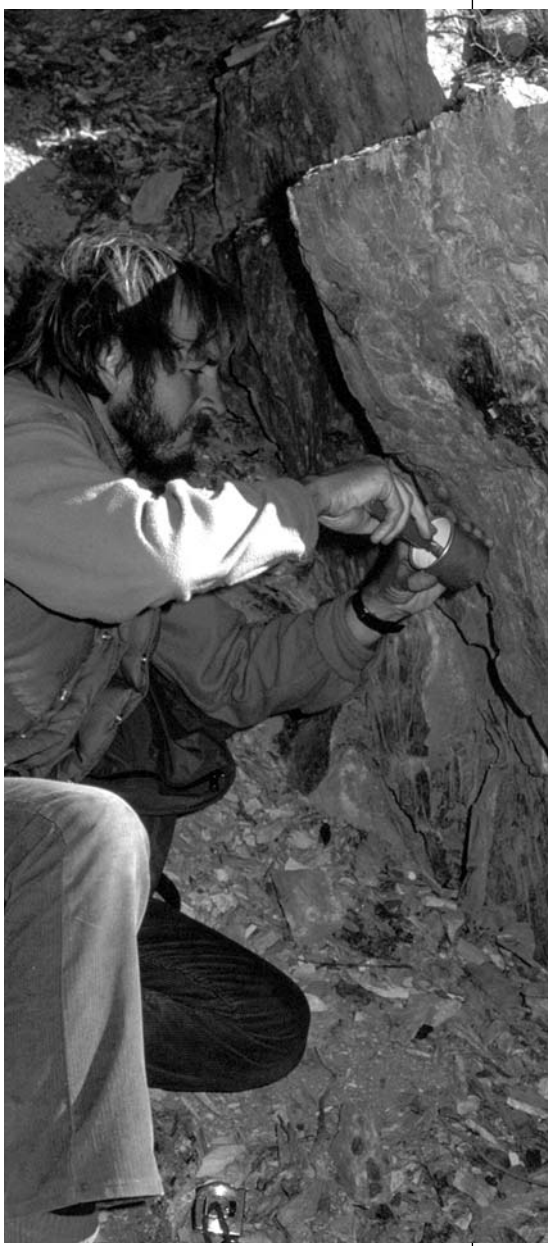


Photo courtesy: SLC

Inspecting Rockscent

Tigers and rhinos receive many millions of dollars but snow leopard conservation is given very little funding – not only in Nepal but also in almost all other range countries.

Radio Tracking

Photo courtesy: SLC

- Nepal's Snow Leopard Action Plan was prepared in 2005. It reflects scientific information at the time but may not adequately address the political reality or constraints of necessary resources, including funding. As a plan, it has yet to be implemented. I feel that more input from local communities is needed, for given the right conditions; they could be very helpful toward its implementation. Actions need to be ranked, perhaps by a well-informed Working Group with authority to oversee the plan's implementation.

9. ***Do you think Nepal's government and non-government institutions generating enough resources for conservation of snow leopard?***

- Clearly, Nepal has limited resources for snow leopard conservation. India is putting a large amount of money toward snow leopard conservation. As I recall, nearly 3 million has been allocated over the five-year plan. INGO's may spend up to two million per annum across the 12 range countries, far less than the funding being devoted to tiger conservation. There is cross boundary collaboration between Mongolia and Russia. In my opinion, we need to increase such international efforts to other countries.

More Words No Action

There were not much write-ups on snow leopard in Nepali press. This is an article written by an environmental journalist Shreelal Shah back in 1998 in Nepali in 'Jaibik Bibidhata'.

Wildlife Times decided to publish this article taking into account the fact that the style of the write-up would be the same would it have been written in present context due to elusive nature of the snow leopard and less information available on the species.

Photo courtesy: SLC

The snow leopards of Nepal sustain on the livestock of the farmers said Dr. Prahlad Yonjan.

There is no estimation on exact number of snow leopards that are found in Nepal. Snow leopards are found only in the Northern region of Nepal. Mid Asia and Hindukush regions are the major habitats of snow leopards. The major countries where snow leopards are found are Nepal, India, Pakistan, Tibet, Mongolia and Russia. The snow leopards are estimated to be from three to ten thousands in wild and around four hundred as domesticated. They fall under CITES I category i.e. they are endangered animals and trade is prohibited. Nepal's law has also placed snow leopard in the list of endangered animal but no investigation has been done. Ecologist Narayan Prasad Poudel of DNPWC stated, "there may be five hundred to thousand snow leopards in Nepal but the numbers are useless without any verification."

Rodney Jackson of California Institute had found five snow leopards decades ago in Langu valley bordering Dolpa and Mugu districts with his team. With the same assumption, the estimation that one snow leopard is found per 100 sq. km from 3000 to 5000 m altitude was made. According to experts, one snow leopard uses from eight to twenty sq. km. area. In this view, the number of snow leopards in Nepal is low.

According to King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, Madan Oli did the research on snow leopard for the trust.

The destruction of forests and the loss of prey are the reasons for not only killing of livestock by the leopards but also the decrease in their number.

It is believed that snow leopards are found in the forests of the mountainous region from East to West of Nepal. However, Dr. Yonjan believes that since Blue sheep is the main food for snow leopard, they are found only where blue sheep are found.

"Blue sheep are not found in Sagarmatha and Langtang regions, so there is no snow

The destruction of forests and the loss of prey are the reasons for not only killing of livestock by the leopards but also the decrease in their number.

leopards", said Dr. Yonjan. As people also reside at the mountain regions, both blue sheeps and snow leopards become victims of humans. The killing of blue sheep is considered as a major reason for dependency of snow leopards on livestock for survival. Blue sheep, Himalayan Tahr, Himalayan Wild Goat, Musk deer, sheep, goat and yak are the prey of snow leopards.

Not only in Nepal, snow leopards have become endangered worldwide especially to fulfill the demand for animal furs. Even though, they are considered dangerous and are capable of killing animals larger than they are, they are afraid of humans. Therefore, people take advantage to trade bones and skins.

Even though Nepal has signed CITES treaty, the trade and poaching of snow leopards have been increasing. India and China are the main markets for trades of body parts according to Karna Bahadur Shah of Natural History Museum. He also added that as snow leopards are found in rural and remote areas, not many studies have been done on them.

To save snow leopards of Nepal, it is necessary for study as soon as possible.

Madan K. Oli did his dissertation for the degree of Master of Philosophy on the topic "The ecology and conservation of the Snow Leopard (Panthera uncia) in the Annapurna Conservation Area, Nepal" in 1991. The study was undertaken in the Upper Manang valley of the Annapurna Conservation Area, to investigate diet of the snow leopard, aspects of ecology of the main ungulate prey, the blue sheep, the pattern and economic impact of the snow leopard's predation on livestock, and to explore the ways of resolving conflict between snow leopards and local human population. During the study, three adult snow leopards (2 females, 1 male) were radio-collared. Their weight and body measurement was done. According to the result, male weighed 47 kg with 115 cm body length and tail length of 93 cm. The first female weighed 40-45 kg with body length 111 cm and tail length 89 cm while the second female weighed 39 kg with body length 113 cm and tail length 93 cm. This is the first scenario in Nepal where a Nepali did radio collaring of snow leopard to pursuit his degree.

According to the findings of the thesis, the diet of the snow leopard was investigated by analyzing scats collected between April 1990 and February 1991. Blue sheep were the main prey throughout the year. The main species of livestock taken was the domestic yak. The population was determined according to the people's perception. Most of the respondents seemed to believe that the number of snow leopards in three villages: Bhraka, Khangsar and Manang/Tanki were 9 to 15. Only three respondents from Manang provided information on snow leopard poaching. Two of them independently gave the same information, involving death of three leopards over the last 15 years. Similarly, local people considered snow leopards to be pest and had a negative attitude towards them. Snow leopards were reported to have been killed by the local people in defense of livestock. The people find it hard to agree with the view that snow leopards should be protected at the expense of their valued livestock. The conflict between snow leopards and local human population continues to grow because of the snow leopard's predation on livestock.

Wildlife Victims Want Employment and Trainings

Chitwan, 22 May. In 2009, Narabahadur Sunar was attacked by a sloth bear. He is now handicapped. His wife Muna said that they went to national park for the relief many times to receive eight thousand rupees.

Padam Bahadur Thapa of Gunjanagar died last year due to rhino attack. The family laments that it has been difficult to take care of the children now. They have not received any relief.

Jung Bahadur Bote has been injured by a wild animal. Bote said that due to lack of money, he could not receive any medical treatment.

Chitwan National Park organized a program on 21 May to give relief to the people who were injured or died due to animal attacks. The national park gave away sixteen lakhs and three thousand rupees to 36 families who were injured or dead due to wild animal attacks. The victims' complaint about their wretched conditions during the program.

The national parks give one and half lakh to the family of the dead and around fifty thousand to the injured people. The amount is given directly from Ministry of Finance to the national parks.

The people around Madi, Patihani, Jagatpur, Meghauli, Gunjanagar are highly affected by the wild animal attack. The animals attack by either destroying human settlement or attacking people in the periphery of the jungle while collecting fodders.

The people are dependent on jungle for grasses, fodders, vegetables, fishes and other necessities.

The families of the bereaved who received relief are Singha Ram Kumal (Meghauli), Padam Bahadur Thapa Magar (Gunjanagar), Maharaj Mahato (Ratnanagar), Muna Kumari Kafle (Pragatinagar), Phulmaya Bote (Rajahar), Dil Bahadur Bote (Agyauli) and Dayaram Wik (Dumkibas).

Many other injured people have not received the relief said the park officials.

The victims of wildlife attacks have prepared 22 points demand including security forces other than Nepal army. They have also requested for removal of National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973. They have asked for Rs. 5 to 10 lakhs relief to the family of the deceased due to wild animal attacks. Similarly, they have asked free treatment and monthly stipends for the handicaps.

The local people repeatedly complain about misconducts of Nepal army personnel. Chairman of Nepal Bote Samaj Jen Kumar Bote said that the army confiscate the fishes and nets that they collect for their livelihood.

Api Nampa Conservation Area: Established But Not Recruited

Kathmandu, 25 May. The Api Nampa Conservation Area (ANCA), situated in Darchula, which was declared as a conservation area from Everest Base Camp one year ago during historic cabinet meeting, is now single handedly run by one employee. Though the government has approved sixty staffs for ANCA, Warden Sher Singh Thagunna has alone been taking care of the area. He said that it is unmanageable and difficult for one person to do all the tasks like field visit, discussion, accounting etc.

Warden Thagunna said that even after many appeals to the ministry and department for help, there was no response. Therefore, he is looking after the conservation area with help of eight local NGOs. Last year among the 16.9 million rupees government had set aside, 5.5 million for personal budget was sent back due to absence of employee.

Bordering with Tibet and India, the locals blame the government of not giving enough attention to Api Nampa Conservation area, which has strategic security importance. Every year, woods and wild animals' parts are traded to India and Tibet from the conservation area due absence of government.

Due to the lack of provision for temporary recruiting of staffs in Conservation Areas, there has been a setback according to Director General of DNPWC Krishna Acharya. For hiring permanent staffs, approval from public administration and Finance Ministry is neeeded. He also added that the staffs from the departments are to be sent to Api Nampa but as there is lack of sufficient staffs in the department itself. The department needs thousand people to fulfill the need of staffs in all the conservation areas. He said that within two weeks, provisions will be made and proposal submitted to the Ministry for further action.

The headquarter of Api Nampa was declared in Khalanga last year in 16 July 2010 four days after it was published in gazette in 12 July. The new headquarter is under construction in Birendraban said the warden. He said, "With the help of NGOs, there are now 189 user groups from all the vdcs with 75 female groups. For every group, Rs. 2000 is spent and Api Nampa does not even have 2.8 millions."

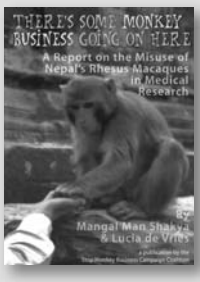
The management plan for Api Nampa has been formulated for five years as per National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973 with the estimated budget required is 310 millions of which 130 millions is for infrastructure development.

Api Nampa covers an area of 1,903 sq. km and spreads along twenty-one vdcs.

Wildlife Watch Group Publication

Wildlife Watch Group has been publishing books on the issues of wildlife and conservation. Following books can buy 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:
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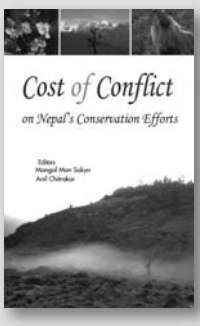

Cost of Conflict on Nepal's Conservation Efforts
Editors: Mangal Man Shakya and Anil Chitrakar:
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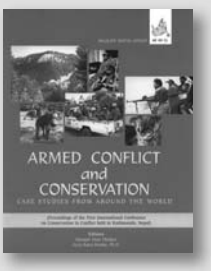

Gharial Conservation in Nepal
Dr. Tirtha Man Maskey:
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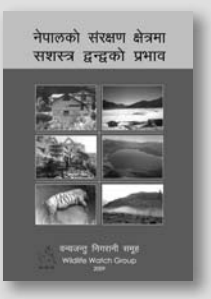

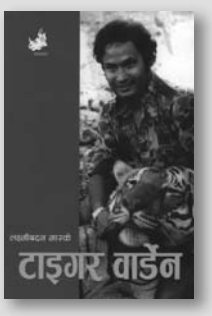

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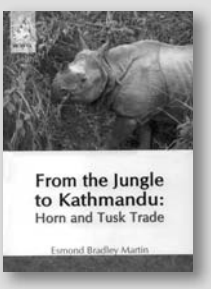

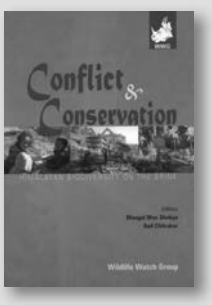

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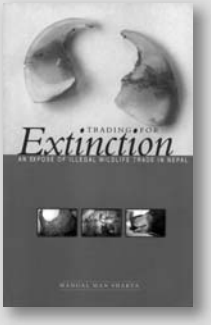

More than 100 birds found

Kathmandu, 5 May. District Forest Office has arrested Isman (Chotu) of Patna with 119 local and exotic birds including birds that are legally prohibited for trades like African gray parrots, Alexandrine parakeets and talking mynah.

He was arrested from a bird shop in Pani Pokhari. The team was led by DFO Mana Bahadur Khadka and Warden of Shivapuri National Park Gopal Prakash Bhattrai. Chotu had been selling birds from his shop only since five years.

According to DFO, the initiation for the investigation was taken by forest department, bird conservation organization, wildlife conservation Nepal and Roots and Shoot after several complaints were received.

In the recent time, trade of Australian and African birds and parrots are taking place.

Along with owl, hill mynah, seven species of parrots like Alexandrine parakeet, Slaty-headed parakeet, and red-breasted parakeet are some of the birds that are listed as CITES II species.

The Australian birds are brought to Kathmandu and traded in India according to Ishana Thapa, conservation officer of bird conservation organization. The highly traded birds are parrots, mynah, lovebirds, robin, word creeker and cockatoo. The birds are kept as pets and are highly in demand. The birds enter Nepal from India through the border regions like Kakadvitta, Jogbani, Raxaul, Sunauli and Jamunaha. The main area for trade is Kathmandu.

Thirty-six animals hunted in Dhorpatan

Baglung, 17 May. Twenty-seven foreigners from eight countries have hunted in Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve. They hunted thirty-six animals said the Reserve officials.
According to Sher Singh Thagunna, Chief of Dhorpatan Reserve, "though permits for 26 blue sheep, 14 Himalayan wild goat, 6 barking deer and birds were taken, only 22 blue sheep, 8 Himalayan wild goat, 6 barking deer and 2 birds were hunted".

Among the hunters who came, 10 were Americans, 5 Russians, 4 Spanish, 3 French, 3 Hungarian, 1 Dutch, 1 British and 2 Nepalese. The tourists come to Dhorpatan for hunting for two seasons in May, June and in September, October said Tulsi Ram Subedi.

There is provision of seven blocks inside the reserve for hunting. Surtiwang in Baglung, Seng, Dogaadi, Ghustung in falgune and Baarse, Gurjakhani in Myagda are some of the blocks where hunting is permitted. The foreigners have to pay royalty of forty thousand for blue sheep and twenty thousand for Himalayan wild goat while locals have to pay five thousand for blue sheep and Himalayan wild goat each.

Increase in blue sheep in Dhorpatan

Baglung, 22 May. There has been an increase in number of blue sheep in Dhorpatan hunting reserve according to the recent census. The count was done after four year in 2011 in May to count blue sheep.

During insurgency, there had been increase in number of Himalayan wild goat. After control of poaching, there has been increase in number of blue sheep.

The count was done on leadership of Ranger Saroj Panthi. The counting team started from Warse and Fagune block. There are 201 blue sheep in Warse and 95 in Fagune block. There are now 296 blue sheep.

The count was completed in two weeks. There are seven blocks in the reserve namely Fagune, Warse, Dogadi, Ghustung, Gurjakhani, Surtibang and Seng. The count was done in only two blocks. Conservation Officer Arjun Bhusal said that since there is increase in two blocks, there is sure chance of increase in other blocks as well.

Every year the tourists come to Dhorpatan Reserve for hunting. Still the increase in number of blue sheep has been commendable. There has also been increase in number of Himalayan wild goat, ghoral, leopard, snow leopard, musk deer, boar, tahr and red panda.

Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve covers an area of 1,325 sq. km. It also has yarsagumba, paanchaule and other valuable herbs. The reserve is visited by tourists and hunters and. It started hunting permit since 1983. The hunting was prohibited during the insurgency. Blue sheep is the main attraction of the reserve.]

Elephants Menace

Jhapa, 18 May. The farmers living near the Indian border are menaced by the elephants such that they spend their nights watching on them. The elephants coming from across the border has destroyed their cornfields and houses.

The local people stay up whole night to scare away the elephants. There are fifteen entry points in Nepal for elephants to enter. As soon as the elephants come to sight, police is gathered and officers are warned.

The smell of wild elephants helps them to know about their arrival. After the menace of the elephants started three weeks ago, the youths took the initiative. Around 146 youths stay up all nights.

Likewise, a child was injured due to elephant attack in Kanchanpur. A ten-year-old Naresh Dhanuk was injured when the wild elephant attacked a flood victim's camp in Krishnapur. The elephants that came from Shuklaphanta Wildlife reserve destroyed five houses. The elephants came at two in the morning and destroyed houses. They were chased away by lighting fires.

Common strategy for landscape conservation

19 May. The conservationists have agreed to plan landscape level common strategy to conserve the biodiversity at the border between India and Nepal.

The agreement was done by the officials of the two countries in Dudhawa Tiger reserve adjacent to Kailali and Kanchanpur.

The two-day workshop on 'Transboundary meeting on Terai Arc Landscape Biodiversity' is the first meeting of its kind.

Last year Nepal had signed MoU with India but it lacked clauses and planning for the border region. The Indian Protected Areas such as Sohelwa, Katarniyaghat, Dudhawa and Laghhabagha are joined with the Protected Areas of Nepal such as Parsa, Chitwan, Banke, Bardia and Shuklaphanta.

In addition, the agreement has been done to conserve recently declared bio trails according to Forest Ministry. The major challenges for both the countries are stability in conservation of rhinos, tigers, elephants, control in poaching and trading, management of bio trails and re-establishment of habitats.

The second meeting for the updates will take place in Pokhara in September.

Since 1997, the two countries have worked together to upgrade livelihood of the local people. The conservationists have been working for conservation of tigers, rhinos and elephants through the bio trail management.

Twenty-eight people participated in the meeting including Bishwanath Oli and three other secretaries form Forest Ministry, Planning and Legal Officers, DFOs of the border areas, wardens as well as director and representatives of TAL and WWF Nepal. From

India, the participants included Shailesh Prasad, field director and chief conservator, DFOs, wardens, representatives from WWF India, TRAFFIC, India and TAL.

One dead when picking Yarsa

Rukum, 22 May. One person fell down the cliff while picking yarsagumba. Kalo Chanara of Aathbiskot-4, Rukum fell down the cliff after slipping on the snow. According to police, he fell down four hundred meter down the cliff. The body was found in a bad condition.

Increase in herbs trade in Panchase

Parvat, 21 May. There has been increase in illegal herb trade in Panchase. The negligence by the local authority has led to increasing trade. Panchase covering 5500 ha area is renowned for its abundance of herbs.

There are 112 species of orchids and more than three hundred species of endangered plants in Panchase. The large area accounts for more illegal trade. According to chairman of Panchase Development Committee, Gopal Gurung, said that this year, illegal collection of herbs has increased. The herbs are traded in different regions of Nepal, India and USA as well. The herbs are traded for Rs. 500 to 1000.

The Panchase forest is known for herbs. The rare herbs like Lauth Salla, Chaap, Flaat, Laligurans and Fasru are found in the jungles of Panchase.

Lost or Dead: First Tiger Translocation in Jeopardy

Namobuddha, the first translocated tiger in Nepal has been lost since this month. It has been articulated that Namobuddha has been poached. Even with the installment of Satellite GPS Radio Collaring, the tiger has not been located till date.

The tiger was translocated from Chitwan to Bardia National Park. The tiger was accurately tracked with help of satellite GPS but showed no movement from 12 May.

The conservationists have been shocked to see no movement of the tigers in their computer which otherwise came every day. Ecologist of DNPWC Dr. Maheshwor Dhakal said, "With the help of short message system, we were able to locate the tiger as well as see its movement on computer screen but since the beginning of May, we have no idea on where Namobuddha is."

Chief Warden Tikaram Adhikari said that twenty-four days are given for investigation so the park will give official statement after the full investigation. The conservationists believe that the poachers destroyed the GPS tracker after capturing the tiger.

Five lakhs had been spent for the translocation process and installation. Five trackers had

been recruited to gain spot information.

This poses question on the security and operation of the park. How it is possible for a tiger to be lost that has been installed with satellite GPS tracker? This is a mystery to all the conservationists. The estimation that tiger has been poached shows that the park has not been able to monitor the translocated tiger closely. If that had been the case, the tiger would not have been lost.

The authorities need to come around with the real plight of the lost tiger in spite of the radio collar, otherwise it will be considered as a failure of tiger translocation. The tiger became absent under the nose of conservationists and park staffs. The officers need to determine whether it was an assault of the poachers or the overdose of drugs or technical and human errors on radio collaring. The concerned authorities need to bring the facts to the public as soon as possible.

Posing Nude for Tiger

With the growing concern about conservation of endangered species tiger, many awareness programs and events are organized on regular basis. With few wild cats remaining in the wild, the tiger range countries have opted for doubling of tigers till year 2022.

India has the largest population of tiger in the world. This has made India more vulnerable country. With the new tiger awareness photo shoot done by an emerging Indian actress, it is not known whether this pose will be of any significance for tiger conservation or act as water in the sand.

Film and Television actress Kavita Radheshyam, who is currently working in films Paanch Ghantey Mein Paanch Crore to be released in July and Om Allah, was recently in news for her bold photo session where she posed nude to protest against the cruelty towards animals and to save tigers. Italy based NGO for animals of International Organization of Animal Protection and Welfare (OIPA) made her their brand ambassador after her photo shoot.

When Wildlife Times inquired Kavita about what prompted her to dare such deed, she said, "One night as I was scrolling through the channels, I came across to a TV Channel where it showed news of a leopard (being caged) and burnt alive by some villagers. The shocking thing that occurred to me was despite of presence of forest officers and some other legal authorities including Media, no one was ready to hand over that leopard to a Sanctuary or Zoo. Every one was enjoying the sadistically operated deadly assassin".

After this, Kavita contacted various organizations about this issue. However, she never got any encouraging reply. She then decided that contacting others might be a waste of her time and decided to do naked photo shoot of herself where she could show her resentment through her body. According to her, people are spending money by putting up huge banners and hoardings to Save Tigers. Why do not they actually spend money in really saving them?

Kavita feels that people are stripping the Animals by taking out their 'Skin' for the luxury and comfort. She had to face some negative reactions that she did it nude poses to gain fame and publicity but she did what she wanted to do. She is very happy with her effort to save the wild cats.

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APPEAL

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