

Wildlife Times



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Editorial

With political influences and increasing corruption in all levels, conservation of rhino has become a thorny task for the conservationists. The death of eight rhinos in two months in June-July of this year at Chitwan National Park is an example of how rhino poaching has become a serious issue of concern at national level.

In this regard, the initiative taken by the members of parliament is appreciable, as it has become necessary that government take action against illegal wildlife poaching and trade. The report prepared by the members of parliament show their effort to save the rhinos.

The rhinos are killed for medicinal purpose according to Chinese method, to make easy money, to make handles of daggers, knives etc. Whatever maybe the reason, the market of illegal trade is so high and well organized that it is difficult to control poaching. The nexus of the traffickers are well spread and so the conservationists, armies, police and the officers of national parks are not able to get grip of the situation. The lack of cooperation between the different departments is also a reason for not able to find a concrete solution to control poaching. There is lack of communication between concerned departments and the security agencies. This poses serious threats to wild animals, as there is no cooperation and sharing of vital information among them.

The national parks and reserves need to be self sufficient with installation of new and modern technologies for anti-poaching operations. As the poachers have become hi-tech with use of modern guns and communication, the national parks and the security are still reliant on older methods, which are not effective. An efficient surveillance technique is required for control of illegal poaching and trade for which government must show enthusiasm. The wardens should have the authority to operate and monitor the security forces. The wardens are the guardians of national parks and if their orders are not executed, the national parks cannot operate smoothly.

The laws of our country are poorly executed. The court has not shown seriousness in the matter of punishing wildlife offenders the result of which is early release of traffickers and poachers. Giving minimum punishments to traffickers like Yakche who have smuggled as many as 20 rhino horns show flaws in our judicial system. Judge Girish Chandra Lal who is criticized by the media and conservationists alike for his poor verdicts is promoted as permanent judge in the Supreme Court.

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The Pangolin is widely hunted and trafficked for its alleged medicinal properties. It has gained high popularity in national and international markets. The Pangolin's scales are used for clothing items and meat for curing diseases. It falls under conserved species. In Nepal also, its trade has highly increased because of its monetary value. The recent capture of trader carrying pangolin scales in eastern Nepal and his release clearly shows the wide spread market of pangolin. It is necessary to save pangolin that has significant ecological value.

The challenges and solutions for rhino conservation

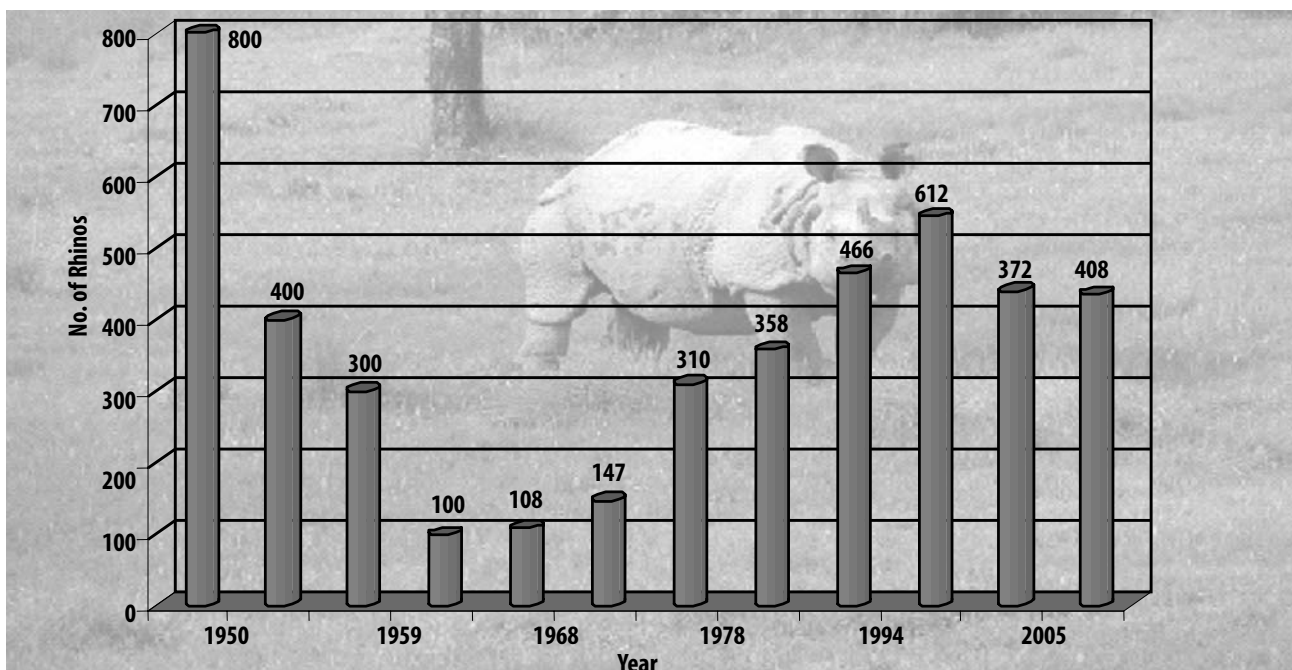
Frequent killing of rhinos take place inside Chitwan National Park and the media do their own analysis. The conservation organizations have weak influence. The government is not paying enough attention to this significant and endangered species. Also, the convicted poachers and traders are released easily. In 1950, there were 800 rhinos in the wild. It decreased drastically in the 1960s to almost 100. Many efforts were made to increase the rhino population to 612. Now the rhino population is 408 according to last census though the death of rhinos is prevalent due to illegal poaching and trade. In

this backdrop, the member of the Constituent Assembly intervened and made field visit to Chitwan National Park to understand the situation.

The members of Constituent Assembly did intensive study and investigation of death of rhinos in Chitwan National Park in June 16-19 2010. The result of the study was presented on November 3, 2010 amidst conservationists and forest ministry for feedback and advice. The field study was done by hon' Shanta Chowdhary, hon' Kul Prasad Nepal, hon' Chandra Dev Joshi, hon' Janak Kumari Chalise, hon' Padam Bahadur Rai, hon' Pattu Tharu,

hon' Laxman Prasad Ghimire and hon' Lalita Shah.

According to one of the study team member hon' Pattu Tharu, eight rhinos died every two months i.e. 20-24 rhinos die each year. The committee went to Chitwan National Park (CNP) to find out the causes behind this increasing death. The interaction in CNP found that in buffer zone, the death is less while in the secure area, the death of rhinos is more. The poachers captured are bailed out by the court and the legal policies are weak. The objective of this interactive program is to collect suggestions to formulate strong policies and strategies.



Why are rhinos killed?

The rhinos are killed for many reasons. They have economic, social and medical values. They are killed for medicinal purpose according to Chinese method, easy way to make money. The traffickers taking advantage of poor people living around the national park by giving them some money, to make handles of daggers and knives. The presence of hotels inside the national park also poses threat. The army, police, officers and anti-poaching units are not performing strong role to safeguard rhino according

to the parliamentarian team. The rhinos moving towards community forests during pregnancy make them easy targets and the farmers making electric wire fence or holes to harm the rhinos coming to their fields

One of the major problems seen was the lack of cooperation. If there is cooperation among the concerned departments, the head of security, the warden, the poaching will be less. Otherwise, it increases. The present wildlife law, which is 40 years old, is

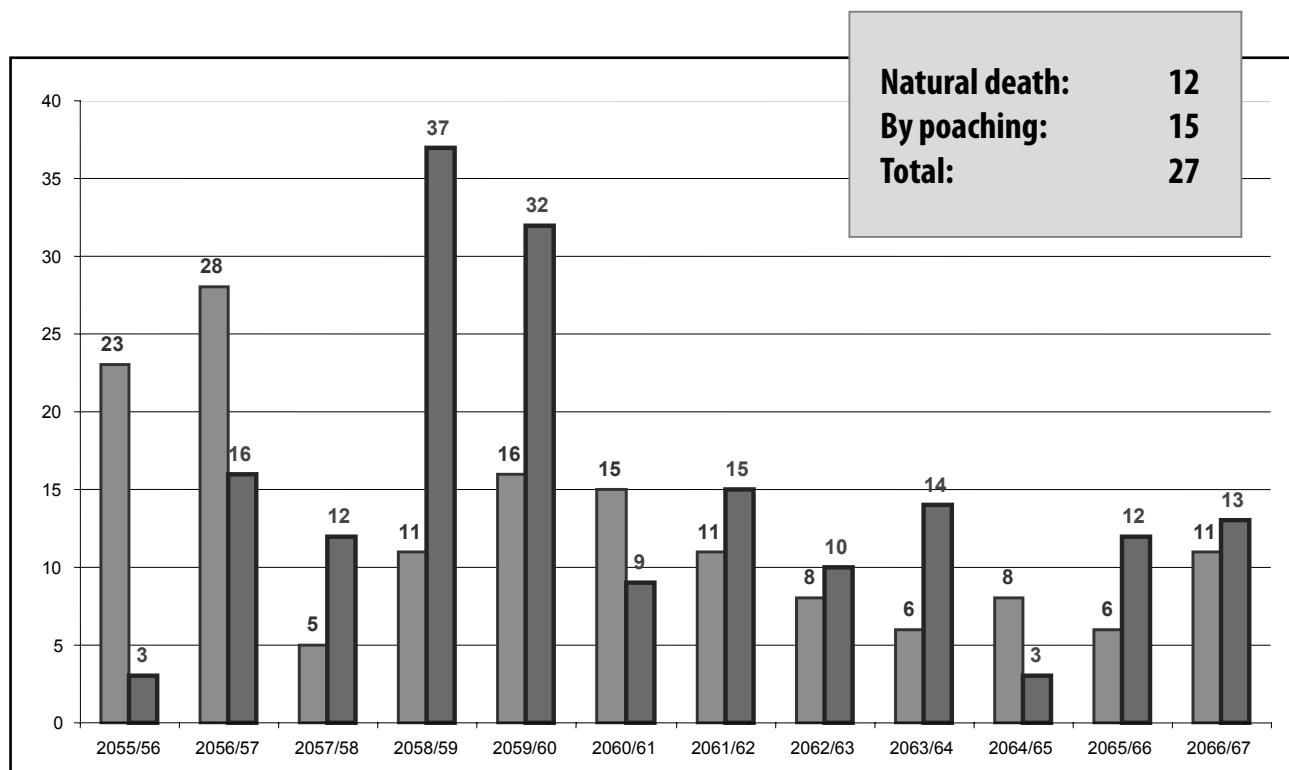
not sufficient to stop poaching. The new strategies and policies for conservation are made but they are not implemented. No proper investigation and no proper execution of the crime are done during the process of court verdict. The power of the traffickers to dominate the officers and local people prevent them from complaining. It is observed that the army often neglect the orders from the warden. No cooperation is seen between them and so the warden becomes helpless.

The problems in rhino conservation

The national park is dependent on the outdated equipments while the poachers use modern equipments for hunting. The politicians are pressurizing the legal authority to release the poachers. The number of

officers present on the park is not sufficient. In 2006, the government published an advertisement to cut off hundred army and to recruit 277 security personnel who will be trained. This action has not

yet been taken. The poachers and traffickers have such a vast network that they choose a place where there is no monitoring of the deployed security forces. The poachers stay at the hotels and move around the



jungle to locate rhino habitat. They then kill the rhinos after getting information from the paid informers sometime hotel workers.

Members of the parliament also observed some of the non-execution of rules and regulations of Park management. Of the revenues paid collected from the hotels, 50% was supposed to be used for buffer zone management but from 2007/08, the money has not been given to the buffer zone. In one of the incident cited during the presentation, in a hotel, an elephant was kept for guarding rhino but in the afternoon, the rhino was killed. This event aroused suspicion for involvement of even government officials in poaching. The maximum rhinos are killed near hotels and security check post but not around buffer zone and community forests. The traffickers illegally trade the rhinos' parts to China via Kathmandu, Nepalgunj, Dolpa, Darchula, Mahendranagar, Kakadvitta. The excess growth of *Micania (Micania mictantha)*, a type of grass which is South American invasive species, hampers the growth of food of Rhinos. The expenditure for the

management of national park exceeds the revenues collected. The pre-information about the poaching activities and the weak work of the intelligence leads to poaching of rhinos.

Actions way ahead

From the observation, the meeting made suggestions to control poaching and death of the rhinos as an outcome.

The regular and constant monitoring of the national park is necessary. A network of conservationists, police and local people should be made so that informants are wide spread and help to prevent poaching. Similarly, there should be strict quota for firewood and fodder collection for the local people.



A poached rhino in CNP

The security personnel should be given training programs to enable them to carry out




Parliament team observing rhino death sites

the security operations. The security check post should have advanced communication kit, night vision and other accessories. The use of dogs and other modern mechanisms should be used for crime investigation. The hotels should be relocated outside the park so that the illegal activities and movements of the people are restricted. Most of the people of the Buffer Zone have requested to move the hotels outside the national park but no action has been taken. The photographs of the poachers and other related people should be posted at public places and newspapers. The issue of compensation is always an important issue as local people is promised compensation but they receive it either late or not at all. The compensation should be paid on time. In addition, the entry fee for foreigners should be


Rhino Translocation

S.No.	Translocated Year	Translocated National Park	Male	Female	Toal
1	1986	Bardia	8	5	13
2	1991	Bardia	8	17	25
3	1999	Bardia	4		4
4	2000	Bardia	8	8	16
5	2000	Suklaphanta	1	3	4
6	2001	Bardia	2	3	5
7	2002	Bardia	5	5	10
8	2003	Bardia	3	7	10
Total			39	4887	



Directive for wildlife damage relief 2066



वन्यजन्तुबाट हुने क्षतिको
राहत सहयोग सम्बन्धि
निर्देशिका
२०६६



विषाद सरकार
वन तथा भू-संरक्षण पन्चायत
राष्ट्रिय निकुन्ज तथा वन्यजन्तु संरक्षण विभाग



Wild animals (elephants, rhinos, tigers, leopard, snow leopard, bear, wild boar and gharial) move from natural habitats (national forests, national parks, wildlife reserve and buffer zones) to human settlements destroying the properties, which is very frequent. The government does not have provision for compensation to the victims of wild animals' intrusion. This has led to conflict between forest/park/reserve and the local administration. The provision of relief for the families of the victim can surely help in the conservation process.

The entry of wild animals in human settlement has led to damage in the livelihood of the local people. The local people protest in front of offices and administrations and pressurize to take action such that conservation cannot take place smoothly. Taking into consideration the damages on properties and human lives, ministry of forest and soil conservation and department of national parks and wildlife conservation (DNPWC) formulated this directive.

Damage from wildlife: It includes harm to human lives,

livestock, crops, houses/sheds from elephants, rhinos, tigers, leopards, snow leopards, and bears.

There are four different types of injury and damage: Human injury, livestock injury, storage damage, houses/shed damage, crops and fruits damage.

The document needed in case of injury due to wild animal attack, the documents needed are photo of the victim, doctor report, certificate from health post and medicine bills, certificate from related VDC or Municipality, certificate from buffer zone management committee or community forest management committee as per the requirement. The documents needed in case of death of Nepali citizen due to wild animal attack are same as the injury with addition of death

certificate, post mortem report and police report. Similarly, if the case is death of livestock or destruction of crops, fruits or sheds due to animal attack are letter from the owner, certificate from related VDC or Municipality, certificate from buffer zone management committee or community forest's management committee as per the requirement are needed document.

There is a provision for compensation for the victim. For minor injuries, the compensation is Rs. 5000 while for serious injury the amount is Rs. 50,000. If a person is dead, the family gets upto Rs. 1,50,000.

For the death of livestock, the owner gets upto Rs. 10,000. If a house or shed is destroyed by wild animal, the provision

is set to receive Rs. 4,000. For storage, it is up to Rs. 5,000. For destruction of crops and fruits, the compensation is Rs. 5,000.

Institutional set-up

The destruction and injuries due to wild animal attacks would be investigated by DNPWC and the money required for compensation should be managed before hand. The committee would be formed in every district to provide relief to the victims and injured. The committee would include one person from each of these categories; district forest office, member of buffer zone, member of community forest, representative from vdc or municipality, representative from agriculture development office or livestock development office (if available).

SAZARC Conference

On the bright sunny morning of 22nd November 2010, the inauguration ceremony of 10th Annual Conference of South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation (SAZARC) took place inside the Central Zoo premise at Jawalakhel. It was an event attended by national and international dignitaries. The SAZARC meeting is held every year with participants from SAARC countries; India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal. This year, Nepal was the host country. Central Zoo organized the conference in partnership with Department of National Park Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC).

Sarita Gyawali, Program Manager of Central Zoo welcomed the guests. Honorable Speaker Subash Chandra Nembang was the chief guest and inaugurated the ceremony. The students from Gyanodaya Bal Batika School performed on the occasion.

Zoo management is not easy task. The zoo director and staffs have to deal with endangered animals, nervous animals that are very delicate and other emergencies everyday. Zoo director has a very critical position. She said that the zoo management has to do better. We are facing crisis in biodiversity. We will not be able to see many animals in the future except in zoos. She added that the conference of SAZARC would deal mainly three topics: emergency response that includes animal escape, attack to visitors, vets, zookeeper's strike, feeding animals, animals' emerging diseases etc. Another topic is climate change as zoos have animals from different climatic zones. With the recent change of the climate, the animals are having difficulty to adapt.

Phanindra Kharel, officiating Director General of DNPWC said that this is a platform to share information among the participants from different countries for conserving animals whether ex-situ or in-situ.

Juddha Bahadur Gurung, Member Secretary of NTNC delivered his vote of thanks. Ram Prasad Lamsal, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation ended the ceremony by adding that this conference will set new dimension for zoo management.

SAZARC was founded on 4th August 2000 by Zoo Outreach Organization headed by Shelly Walker. She talked about her experience of first meeting of SAZARC, which was joint effort from Shelly Walker, R.K. Shrestha, founding member of SAZARC and other conservationists. The objective of SAZARC is to make zoos better.