

# Wildlife Times



## Contents

Editorial	2
Just to people, just to wildlife	3
SAVE- Saving Asia's Vulture from Extinction consortium	7
Islam Cares for Wildlife	9
Undercover Investigation Reveals Richmond Firm's Tiger-parts Trade	11
Army Deployed to Patrol the Kruger	13
Bear Bile and Gallbladder Products still Legal in New York	14
Singapore a Key Transit Hub for Wildlife Smuggling	15
The Faded King	16
Wildlife News	17
Snow Leopard Scouts from Mt. Everest	20



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### **Poacher who killed 15 rhinos arrested and tiger bones seized**

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Kathmandu, 27 February. The Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) of Nepal Police on Saturday arrested a notorious rhino poacher who killed more than 15 rhinos in Chitwan for the past few years. The rhinos, all from the Chitwan National Park, were killed for their horns that fetch high prices in the black market.

The convicted poacher is Kajiman Praja, 32, of Korak-9 in Chitwan and he has killed six rhinos in less than a year.

Praja employed his wives and two other female members of his family for rhino poaching. He had earned at least Rs 15 million by selling rhino horns.

The arrest of Parja, who hails from the backward Chepang community that chiefly resides in the periphery of the park, which is home to most of the country's one-horned rhinos, has raised hopes among conservationists and served a major blow to poachers.

"We are very happy that CIB has nabbed a kingpin who single-

handedly rendered conservation efforts ineffective," said Diwakar Chapagain, the wildlife trade program coordinator of WWF Nepal program.

DIG Rajendra Singh Bhandari, the CIB chief, says operation hunt is the first high-profile venture undertaken to fight organized crimes in the wildlife sector. "Now we will look into the arteries of wildlife crimes that portray Nepal as a major transit in the world," he said. "We see that our investigation into wildlife crimes could reveal their linkages to other organized criminal rings that thrive on smuggling."

Bhandari also holds that an integrated program should be developed targeting the backward communities residing alongside major wildlife habitats.

CIB has also cracked down on a major racket trading in tiger bones. A CIB team from Birgunj arrested three smugglers recently allegedly in possession of 15 kg of tiger bones, which could fetch around Rs 1.5 million in the black market. Two smugglers involved are still at large.

Shailendra Basnet, Dipendra Chaudhary and Jarsi Chaudhary were arrested from a guesthouse in Birgunj. Budhi Bahadur Rai and Arjun Chaudhary, who were also involved, have escaped.

According to CIB, Budhi Bahadur Rai had hunted tiger in Manahari. They had bought the tiger bones for sale in Birgunj.

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### **Forest and Home Ministry given direction about trench construction**

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Kathmandu, 11 March. The Natural Resource Committee of Constituent Assembly has given direction to Home and Forest Ministry to provide investigation report within 15 days regarding the trench construction in the Nepal-India border.

The Committee called upon Home Secretary Govinda Kusum, Forest Secretary Yuvraj Bhusal, Foreign Affairs Secretary Madan Bhattra and Chief of Police Ramesh Chandra Thakuri for the meeting.

The Committee also directed Forest Ministry for study on grassland overcross for wildlife on the highway as well as initiations of programs for



people living in the border zone dependent on Indian forests.

The trench construction is an obstacle for wildlife movement and for water flow in rainy season. The construction of trench in the border started in the last week of January. There is international law against construction of infrastructures in the border area. Foreign Affairs Secretary Bhattra said that the information have been sent to the Indian Embassy in Nepal and Nepalese Embassy in Delhi. He added that this is not acceptable work on part of India to construct trench without informing Nepal. Home Ministry Secretary Kusum said that meeting would be held regarding this action. Forest Ministry Secretary Bhusal said that this is condemning to international law and cooperation.

Chairman of the committee Shanta Chaudhary went for site visit to Bardia. The conservation activities have been going on in these area in joint cooperation with India since 2000. The objectives of these activities are

to improve habitat and prey base along with easy transboundary movement of animals. The construction of the trench violates the cooperation terms.

### Three captured with Musk pod

Hetauda, 12 March. Makwanpur police captured three people with pods of Musk deer. There were captured with three black and one light pink pod in Buddhachowk, Hetauda.

The captured trio include 27 years old Ompukar Bhagatbarai of Bhedihari, 40 years old Arun Kumar Chaurasiya of Jhauwaguthi and 35 years old Sonalal Chaurasiya of Birgunj. According to Makwanpur police Ram Prasad Shrestha, they were carrying six lakhs worth of pod in the bag. The police got suspicious after the strong odor came from the bag.

The accused will be sent to District Forest Office for appropriate action to be taken according to Wildlife

Conservation Act. Each pod cost one and half lakhs rupees. Accused will be imprisoned for five to fifteen years.

### Yak in danger of Extinction

Myagdi, 16 March. With the decrease in number of Yaks in Himalayan region of Mustang, there has been decrease in reproductive capacity of the species.

The yak owners complain that no one has given importance to the conservation of yak as improved breed bull is considered as alternative for reproduction.

In Nepal, there has been decrease in number of yaks in recent time. In Marche, there is no single yak, while in Thihi there are only three yaks. In Upper Mustang, speculation has been made about presence of few yaks.

In Nepal, there were eight thousand yaks and the recent studies show there are only three thousands left now. In 1982, book written by Durgadutt Joshi, it specified presence of eight thousand yaks. In 1999, the research was done by Joshi, which show presence of only three thousand yaks. The number has decreased more till date. In Marche, the yaks are bought from other places and the mating is done with bull said a local. He added it is difficult to save yak.

In Upper Mustang, there are nearly 500 yaks. In Lower region, only five are

domesticated of 700 yaks. With the mating of yak with bull, there is decreasing trend of pure yaks.

In recent times, the yaks are domesticated only for milk production. Nepal is known around the world as country of yak. With the decrease in number of yaks, the concerned people are worried about its extinction. Animal Care Department in Mustang said that yak should be promoted as a major element for tourism to save them.

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### **Decrease in sparrows**

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Kathmandu, 20 March. There is decreasing trend in number of sparrows in present time. On March 20, World Sparrow Day is celebrated. In Nepal, there was no interest regarding the conservation of sparrows. The main reasons for the decrease in the abundance of sparrows in Kathmandu are pollution, excess use of poisonous substances, habitat loss and the increasing number of mobile towers. The electromagnetic wave associated with mobile phone is the cause for decrease in sparrows. The electromagnetic waves affect its sense of direction and its reproductive system. The study done by 'Belgium Institute for Nature and Forest' came to this conclusion.

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### **Raju Acharya receives World Owl Hall of Fame Award**

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Kathmandu, 21 March. At the International Festival of Owls

held in Minnesota, the US, the World Owl Hall of Fame awarded Nepal's Raju Acharya with the Special Achievement Award on March 5, 2011.

Acharya, the director of Friends of Nature-a youth-led social and environmental organization - has been working in owl conservation for the past three years.

According to the Hall of Fame's website, there was limited research on the status of owl in Nepal until Acharya's efforts were highlighted, the site elaborates.

Among several other efforts that involve owl conservation, he has conducted awareness programs focusing on the bird's importance for an agrarian country like Nepal and is also helping schools to form eco-clubs. Currently, Acharya, 40, is also working to produce a field guide concentrating on the owls of Nepal.

A graduate in Environmental Management, Tropical Forestry and Agro-forestry, Acharya worked as a natural resource conservation assistant in the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) for ten years.

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### **One dead by elephant attack**

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Chitwan, 21 March. One person was killed when an elephant attacked a passenger-filled vehicle. Man Bahadur Pariyar of Ayodhyaypuri-9, Badarjhula died when the

elephant attacked the vehicle along the Madi-Thori Hulaki Road section. Pariyar died on his way to the hospital.

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### **Rhino count to start in April**

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Chitwan, 24 March. The rhino count in Chitwan National Park is starting from first week of April.

With the increasing poaching, there has been increase in death of rhinos. To understand the status of rhinos and plan accordingly, the rhino count is taking place after three years of the last census.

Ganesh Pant, Assistant Warden in Chitwan National Park said that the counting is going to take place in three years instead of five years. The census will start from 5 April and will take about twenty-five days to complete.

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### **More Snow Leopards now**

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Taplejung, 24 March. In Taplejung Himalayan region, there has been significant increase in number of snow leopards. After implementation of Animal Insurance Program by Kanchanjunga Conservation Area Project, the increase in snow leopards was seen.

Sujit Kumar Shrestha, manager of Kanchanjunga Conservation Area Project said that this year the number of snow leopard has rise to fifteen this year. Last year the number was seven.