NEPAL (CROSSBORDER INDIA)

Integrated Solutions to Combat Wildlife Trafficking in the 'Shivalik Hills

The Arc of Nature' Landscape in Nepal and India

Protected Areas & Project Sites
Parsa National Park, Chitwan National Park, Bardia National Park, Banke National Park, Suklaphanta National Park, Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (and across into Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary, India)

Donor
Zoological Society of London

Dates
Start: 01/1/2016
End: Ongoing

Project Status
Active

Donor Funding Amount
Total Amount (US$): $4,000,000
IWT Percentage: 40%

Primary IWT Intervention Type
Law enforcement

Integrated solutions to combat wildlife trafficking in the 'Shivalik Hills: The Arc of Nature' Landscape in Nepal and India is a multi-donor funded US$4,000,000 project that strengthens law enforcement capacity to combat illegal wildlife trade (IWT). It also enhances alternative livelihoods local communities and improves biological monitoring to improve understanding of the threats posed by IWT. Zoological Society of London implements this project in close collaboration with the Governments of Nepal and India. The project's success is closely tied to its strong partnerships with government, NGOs, national and local organizations, and local communities. From 2016–2017, project results included: 1,200 Protected Area and Nepal Army staff trained in patrol-based monitoring; over 70 IWT related arrests related to illegal wildlife trade. Key lessons learned from this active project include the importance of building a diversity of strong partnerships for effective capacity building and the need to develop institutional knowledge to reduce risk of losing knowledge due to staff turnover.

Project Objective

To strengthen law enforcement and biological monitoring capacity and promote sustainable development for local communities in the 'Shivalik Hills: The Arc of Nature' (SHAN) Landscape of Nepal and India

Photo: ZSL

A greater one horned rhino at Chitwan. ZSL Nepal has been supporting anti-poaching patrols and ID based rhino monitoring there.

Activities and Executing Partners

COMPONENTS

Component 1: Enhance Wildlife Protection Outside Protected Areas (PAs) and in Buffer Zones. Enhance wildlife protection by establishing community-based institutions, including 'Community-Based Anti-Poaching Units' (CBAPUs) and 'Community-Managed Pangolin Conservation Areas' (CMPCAs), around protected areas and in buffer zones. Leverage these institutions to raise awareness of wildlife conservation and the threat of trafficking and support biological monitoring efforts. This approach has also been extended into freshwater ecosystems with so-called 'Gharial Guard Groups' (3Gs), protecting both gharials from poaching and fish stocks from over exploitation.

Component 2: Build IWT enforcement capacity and strengthen coordination inside Protected Areas. Build IWT enforcement capacity and coordination inside protected areas through two complementary approaches: (i) patrol-based monitoring (e.g. the SMART approach); and (ii) rapid response mechanisms. In general, law enforcement training and equipment are provided to all frontline staff, including protected area staff, police, and the Nepal Army, all of which play a key role in anti-poaching efforts. Project investments also include construction and improvement of anti-poaching infrastructure including roads, watch towers, and guard posts.

Patrol-based monitoring training and equipment is provided to strengthen patrolling techniques within protected areas and allow for the evidence-led adaptive management of patrolling routes and schedules, based on rigorous data collection while patrolling. The Nepal army is now rolling out its bespoke SMART mobile application to strengthen these activities.

Rapid response mechanisms are being established in project sites. These consist of GSM-enabled real-time camera surveillance systems installed at vulnerable locations within the protected area. The output from these surveillance systems is monitored 24 hours a day from a command center established in each protected area. At the command centers, the visual information received is assessed and when threats are identified, a rapid response team is deployed, using a specialized rapid response vehicle, to intercept potential poachers.

Component 3: Supporting Activities. Biological monitoring through camera trap surveys, line transects, and opportunistic data collection in the project sites provides key information on hotspots of priority species such as tigers and enables anti-poaching resources to be efficiently targeted.

Livelihoods initiatives, which provide alternative, or enhance existing, sustainable livelihoods are implemented under the project. These initiatives deploy the sustainable livelihoods framework approach and aim to enhance the five key livelihood assets of the local communities: physical, financial, natural, human, and social. There are four broad aims of the livelihood work that are relevant to combating IWT: (i) provide direct incentives for community members to participate in community-based anti-poaching initiatives; (ii) link community well-being with healthy ecosystems and wildlife populations to provide incentives to combat the IWT; (iii) provide preferable alternatives to engaging in poaching, to reduce incentives to engage in IWT; and (iv) ensure communities, where dependent on natural resources, do not suffer economic losses from strengthened protected area enforcement, resulting in grievances and reduced support for conservation.

Judiciary training is also provided to enable an increased rate of prosecutions for poachers and traffickers who are arrested and passed to the court system effectively, with evidence in place.

KEY EXECUTING PARTNERS INVOLVED

Government of Nepal:

- Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC)
- Department of Forests and Watersheds (DoFW)
- Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE)
- Army
- Police
- Customs

Government of India

- Uttarakhand Forest Department
- Wildlife Institute of India

Authorities for the protected areas listed above and various buffer zone user groups and community forest user groups

Partner NGOs:

- National Trust for Nature Conservation
- Panthera
- Himalayan Nature

Donor Coordination

All donors that co-financed this project or related investments:

This project received significant funding from the Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme, a strategic funding mechanism implemented by IUCN and financed by the Federal Republic of Germany through the German Development Bank (KfW).

Additional funding came from:

- UK DEFRA IWT Challenge Fund
- Panthera
- USFWS Rhino-Tiger Fund and CWT Fund
- UK Trust for Nature Conservation in Nepal
- Regina Bauer Frankenberg Foundation
- WildCats Conservation Alliance (formerly 21st Century Tiger)

The DNPWC in Nepal and the Uttarakhand Forest Department in India coordinate donor investments and NGO activities within the landscape.

Key project benefits resulting from donor coordination and areas for improvement:

As the result of donor coordination through the DNPWC in Nepal and Uttarakhand Forest Department in India, ZSL avoided the duplication of resources in certain areas. It also achieved more effective planning and management of the project activities and secured better information sharing, through discussion and consultation with other actors in the landscape. The ownership of activities by the relevant enforcement agencies allowed for enhanced donor coordination and oversight.

Results

KEY OUTCOMES

Nepal has achieved four years of zero poaching, demonstrating the impact of close partnerships between IWT actors. Results from year 2016–2017 include:

- Trained over 1,200 Protected Area and Nepal Army staff in patrol-based monitoring, with SMART patrols rolled out in Parsa and Bardia National Parks.
- Adopted the SMART approach for an area that covers over 1,000 km^2, with two protected areas regularly analyzing SMART patrolling data to understand threats and to adaptively plan responses. Use of SMART has contributed to over 70 arrests, nine poaching traps confiscated, 22 weapons seized, and at least three poaching camps destroyed across the landscape.
- Launched an insurance policy, currently covering 372 frontline staff, which the government has since adopted and is now rolling out to all frontline staff in the country.
- Operationalized 34 CBAPUs that are feeding valuable information into the wider IWT system and engaging communities with IWT and conservation more generally. This has resulted in a remarkable improvement in coordination between protected areas and communities (CBAPUs), which is serving to further improve communication.
- Constructed and renovated vital protected area infrastructure was including eight guard posts, four security posts, two veterinary centers, four watch towers, 80 km of patrol roads, and one tiger holding cage.
- Established rapid response anti-poaching networks or anti-poaching task forces in five tiger bearing protected areas, resulting in 48 arrests in 2017.
- Delivered direct livelihood benefits to 4,500 households in protected area buffer zones.
- Supported DNPWC in extending Parsa National Park to include an additional 128 km^2 of high-quality habitat.
- Provided policy support to the Government of Nepal for the formulation of Species Conservation Action Plans (vulture, tiger, rhino) and management guidelines, plans and protocols.

KEY CHALLENGES

Effective implementation of patrol-based monitoring approaches requires integrating training, implementation and coordination to ensure that the tool becomes a part of day-to-day operations and planning—not just a static database. In addition, finding ways to effectively integrate and utilize the multiple patrol-based monitoring approaches present in the landscape is key, as the range of options have different features and histories, and in some cases, are embedded in particular protected areas or administrative areas.

Balancing an increasing tiger population (as a key species targeted under the project) with community needs is critical to success. A core concept of the project is the prevention and mitigation of human-wildlife conflict and the enhancement of community livelihoods alongside supporting tiger population recovery. This is critical if conservation success is to be sustained.

Using conservation technology effectively on the frontline is not about supplying gadgets but about building institutional capacity such that high-tech and low-tech solutions can be deployed and sustained. The most important technology is effective institutions.

Balancing law enforcement with community rights is important to maintain support for conservation. This is aided in this landscape by Nepal's strong legacy of protecting livelihoods through effective law enforcement that is neither heavy-handed nor unnecessarily/inequitably restrictive.

Lessons Learned

Top three lessons learned:

1. **Establishment of multi-sector partnerships enhance capacity building.** A range of partnerships, which provide both a diversity of skills, and access to institutional levers, are important for effective capacity building. The army, police force, local and national government and local communities are all important partners in capacity building, enabling knowledge exchange and improving coordination. In this context, a genuine collaboration between partners enabling each to play an active role in project design and decision-making, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation is vital.
2. **Use of dedicated units promote success.** ZSL has experienced remarkable success in Nepal developing dedicated units with specific responsibilities and based in specific organizations or constituencies. This helped improve coordination and communication between groups and afforded effective division of responsibilities and skills, supporting greater efficiency and effectiveness.
3. **Institutionalizing knowledge helps sustain law enforcement capacity.** Employing techniques to ensure that new skills become institutionally embedded and are not lost over time due to staff turnover. ZSL provided 'training of trainers' in various law enforcement techniques to give staff the skills to train others, thereby establishing a long-term approach to strengthen capacity. Refresher trainings have also been helpful in maintaining skills up to date.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES & OTHER INFORMATION

Webpages:

Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (Nepal): http://www.dnpwc.gov.np/

Department of Environment and Forests of the State of Uttarakhand: http://forest.uk.gov.in/

Wildlife Institute of India: http://wii.gov.in/

ZSL Conservation Initiatives: https://www.zsl.org/conservation/conservation-initiatives

Report:

Interim project progress report: http://21stcenturytiger.org/assets/21tiger/Project_PDFs/Nepal/ZSLNepalStrenghteningAntipoachingMeasuresInterimReport2016-2017editedforweb.pdf

Media:

Roaring success as tiger population rises in Nepal. ZSL. July 29, 2016: https://www.zsl.org/conservation/news/roaring-success-as-tiger-population-rises-in-nepal

ZSL flagship site upgraded to National Park. ZSL. June 22, 2017: https://www.zsl.org/blogs/conservation/zsl-flagship-site-upgraded-to-national-park

Launching the World's First Community Managed Pangolin Conservation Areas. ZSL. February 15, 2018: https://www.zsl.org/blogs/asia-conservation-programme/launching-the-world%E2%80%99s-first-community-managed-pangolin

Community-Crocodilian Coexistence. ZSL. February 22, 2018: https://www.zsl.org/blogs/asia-conservation-programme/community-crocodilian-coexistence

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german cooperation
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

The Global Wildlife Program is a global partnership on wildlife conservation and crime prevention for sustainable development. To learn more, visit the Global Wildlife Program webpage or contact them at gwp-info@worldbank.org.