

Conservation Bulletin

Celebrating World Wildlife Day 2018 in the lake city Pokhara

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On 20 December 2013, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 3rd March as "UN World Wildlife Day". This day is an important global conservation event to celebrate the presence of these magnificent beings and the wilderness they thrive in, and raise awareness to protect them and their habitat. This year's World Wildlife Day was celebrated under the theme "Big cats: predators under threat".

Big Cat is a typical term usually given to the large sized members of the Panthera genus, i.e. tiger, lion, jaguar, leopard, and snow leopard. However, the term has been used to include cheetah, puma, clouded leopard, and Sunda clouded leopard as of late. They are among the most widely recognized and threatened animals across the globe. Among them, tiger, common leopard, snow leopard, and clouded leopard are found in Nepal. Sitting at the top of the food chain, they balance the ecosystem and the flow of energy critical to the existence of varied life forms. However, these charismatic species are highly threatened due to anthropogenic interferences like habitat destruction, poaching, retaliatory killing, etc.

This year the undergraduates of Institute of Forestry (IOF), Pokhara took the opportunity of the World Wildlife Day to raise awareness for big cats' conservation in the lake city through a three-day event. This event was celebrated from 2nd to 4th of March 2018 with different conservation education related activities.



PHOTO 1: Conservation rally in Pokhara to celebrate the World Wildlife Day 2018.

The first day of the event was inaugurated with an essay competition on the wildlife day theme. More than 50 students of IOF enthusiastically participated. The second

day, 3rd March, was marked with a conservation rally and flash mob by approximately hundred students in Baidam Lakeside which is a popular tourist hotspot of Pokhara. The main objective of this activity was to convey wildlife conservation message to the public. An interaction program with the audience followed the flash mob performance to gather feedbacks and suggestions. On the final day, a talk program was held at National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) - Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) office where experts shared their views, experience, and challenges of big cat conservation.



PHOTO 2: Participants in IOF Pokhara.

Our activities were widely appreciated, and we feel that this event was successful in sending a strong message to the general people on the importance of protecting wildlife. The interest and dedication of the participating students brings hope for a better future of biodiversity conservation in Nepal. These aspiring conservationists have the passion, they just need proper guidance, and a push in the right direction as they start their own adventures.

The event was a collaboration of Alumni Association for Conservation and Development, Union for Nature Conservation, Himalayan Scholars Group, and CliMates Nepal which are the leading green organizations of IOF Pokhara. The major supporters of the program were NTNC-ACAP, Friends of Nature (FON), Third Pole Conservancy, Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC), Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) Annapurna Conservation Area Liaison Office, and Bakeland Biscuits.

Biosketch

APSANA KAFLE and KIRAN GURUNG are undergraduate students of Institute of Forestry Pokhara, Nepal.