



NEPAL OWL FESTIVAL

The International Festival of Owls started in 2003 as a "hatch-day" party for Alice, the Great Horned Owl in USA. The idea was a successful one to help people learn about owls, raise fund for conservation, provide people with new recreational activities and promote tourism. The international festival of owls is now celebrated in three countries; USA, Italy and Nepal.

Nepal is a home to 22 species of owls, 10% of total owl diversity in

the world. Owl conservation initiatives in Nepal started from 2008. However, the first Nepal Owl Festival started in 2012 in Dhading. The festival was administered as an owl conservation program with an objective to make participants aware about habitat loss, excessive hunting and illegal trade of owls in Nepal. Till date, seven Nepal Owl Festivals have been celebrated in seven different districts in Nepal. One can experience the fusion of conservation, entertainment and local culture at the festival.

CONSERVATION

One of the major features of the festival is promoting owl conservation among the locals. Making people familiar with owl species and their importance is a great way to achieve this. A temporary museum is established on the festival day that includes audiovisual of owls, news articles on poaching and illegal trade, museum specimens of owls and their prey species, art, sculptures, t-shirts, bags and pretty much everything related to owls. Documentary on owl conservation helps the local public gain insight on owls' conservation significance. Conservation camps, poster presentations, bird watching, and conservation dances reinforce the message of conservation. Individuals and organization working on conservation are awarded with nature conservation awards for their valuable efforts in wildlife conservation.



CULTURE

Promotion of local culture is another major aspect of Nepal Owl Festival. It provides a platform to showcase forgotten traditions by encouraging local dance, song and cultural art from different communities of Nepal. Cultural foods of Tharu community in 2017, arts of Gurung community in Sikles 2016, cultural songs and dances (*Lama/Jhakri*, *Ghatu*, *Lingema*, *Sorathi* and *Lok-dohori*) in Barpak 2015 etc. were undoubtedly the charms of Nepal Owl Festival in their respective years. These art and culture are delights to visitors on one hand and motivate villagers for conservation on the other.



LOCAL GAMES

Local games are always a source of closeness, brotherhood, competition and recreation. However, these games are disappearing with time. Nepal Owl Festival has been acting as a stage to promote these local games and encourage participation from local youths. The *Bhodi* game was the major attraction of the festival in Nawalparasi (2014) allowing the tourists to know the least known aspect of the Tharu culture. Games such as *Topi jhikai*, *Bhurung* were hit among festival participants. The traditional games of the Gurung community in Sikles (2016) i.e. *Thelo*, *Hyakuche* and *Jhijhili* were also major attraction to the visitors and locals.

Other highlights of the festival include: owl-themed face painting and nail painting, a terrific chance to explore the communities and landscape, bird watching, and nature photo walk. The festival has so far been celebrated at seven different districts: Dhading, Chitwan, Nawalparasi, Gorkha, Kaski, Kapilvastu and Dolakha.



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WHEN DO WE CELEBRATE ?

FIRST FRIDAY AND SATURDAY OF FEBRUARY EVERY YEAR

WE DO ACCEPT ALL KIND OF SUPPORT

