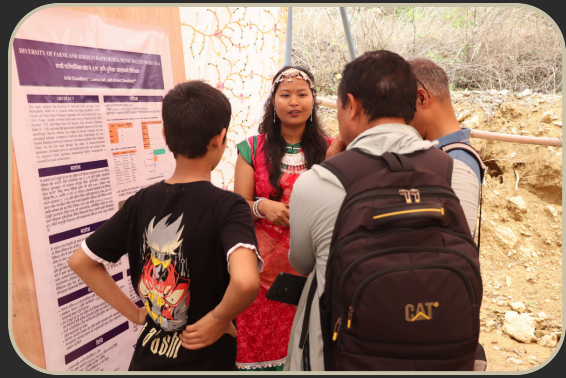


A DETAILED REPORT



NEPAL OWL FESTIVAL 2026

LAMAHI, DANG



Fusion of Conservation, Culture, and Entertainment

FESTIVAL AT A GLANCE

Celebrating Nature. Inspiring Community.



4,000+
VISITORS

Nature lovers, families, students, and communities came together.



12
SCHOOL CONSERVATION CAMPS

Engaging students in hands-on learning and conservation activities.



500+
FACE PAINTING

Adding color, creativity, and joy to the festival experience.



33
ORGANIZATIONAL STALLS

Organizations showcased their work, initiatives, and products.



8
CONSERVATION AWARDS

Honoring outstanding individuals and groups for their contribution to conservation.



6
POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Knowledge-sharing and awareness through impactful presentations.

ALSO FEATURED

 Owl Museum	 Bird Watching	 Conservation Drama	 Local Food	 Song & Dance
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HERITAGE • TRADITION • COMMUNITY

LOCAL CULTURE

A vibrant showcase of Tharu, Newari, and Nepali heritage celebrated alongside conservation.

-  Cultural Performances
-  Traditional Art & Craft
-  Local Cuisine
-  Community Participation



Together for Nature. Together for Tomorrow.

Acknowledgement

We sincerely appreciate the invaluable contributions of the organizers, supporters, partners, and well-wishers to the success of the Nepal Owl Festival 2026

In addition to the supporting organizations, we are deeply grateful to the individuals whose generous contributions helped make Nepal Owl Festival 2026 a success. We sincerely thank Mr. Sunil Thapa, Mr. Paul Marshall, Ms. Eve Marshall, Mr. Gopal Lama, Mr. Gopal Joshi, Ms. Carol Inskipp, Mr. Susan Oddsen, Mr. Bikash Ghimire, Ms. Collien Brietzke, Mr. Thomas Brietzke, Mr. Prashant Ghimire, Ms. Pamela Dimeler, Mr. Roshan Chhantyal, Mr. Tej Bahadur Basnet, Ms. Anisha Rana, Mr. Yadav Ghimirey, Mr. Bikalpa Gautam, Ms. Jessika Bergmann, Mr. Anuj Ghimire, Mr. Bikash Tripathi, Mr. Jiban Baral, and Mr. Rajesh Acharya for their generous support and donations.

ORGANIZER / आयोजक



अजम्मरी सामुदायिक वन उपमोक्षा समिति
लमही, देउखुरी, दाङ

FINANCIAL SUPPORT / आर्थिक सहयोग



PARTNER / साझेदार



ORGANIZER / आयोजक



Foreword

We successfully celebrated the 2-day Nepal Owl Festival 2026 at Lamahi, Deukhuri, Dang Ward no. 5, with the generous contributions and support from our partners and well-wishers. Friends of Nature (FON) Nepal is always indebted to all the partners, supporters, and participants for making this event lively.

Firstly, we extend our sincere gratitude to Ajambari Community Forest Users Group, Mr. Chiranjeevi Khanal, Mr. Pawan Rijal, Mr. Shivu Khanal, Mr. Ravi Shrestha, Mr. Pramod Gautam, and other respective members for their collaboration in making this event successful. We also appreciate Biodiversity Green Park for providing the space and materials to set up the temporary owl museum and for hosting the festival.

Special gratitude goes to Mr. Raju Acharya, Country Representative of the World Owl Trust and our Executive Director, for his exceptional leadership and fundraising efforts. We acknowledge Mr. Suman Sapkota, Program Coordinator at FON Nepal, Dr. Yadav Ghimirey, Director of FON Nepal, and Ms. Barsha Adhikari, Senior Officer of FON Nepal for taking lead from the start. Along with that, we acknowledge Mr. Bipin Adhikari for the logistics preparation from the beginning

We are also thankful to Mr. Krishna Bhusal and Mr. Bishal Gautam for their coordination. We also thank the Natural History Museum, Swayambhu, for providing specimens of owls and their prey, and Dr. Hem Sagar Baral for leading the birding team on both festival days.

We highly appreciate Cosmos College of Technology (ICT Club), Lalitpur, for providing volunteers for technical support and functioning of owl robots, one of the major attractions of the owl museum.

Ms. Tanisha Thapa Magar, Mr. Bipin Adhikari, Ms. Shikshya Gyawali, and Mr. Sumit Tharu deserve applause for their artistic contribution through face painting. We appreciate Professor Karan Bahadur Shah for the lyrics for composing music to make the welcome song magical. Also, Mr. Yash Maharjan, Mr. Bidhan Adhikari, and Ms. Chaya Budathoki get special mention for making the song special with music.

We are grateful for the volunteers from the Institute of Forestry, Pokhara: Ms. Tanisha Thapa Magar, Mr. Sumit Tharu, Mr. Dipesh Khatri Chhetri, Mr. Nirmal Pandey, Ms. Chitra Mahatara, Ms. Chandra Nath, Ms. Dipa Bhatt, Mr. Srijit K.C., Ms. Durga Devi Chaudhary, and Mr. Nirmal Thapa Magar for their support throughout the event and their participation in conservation drama and song.

We are thankful to Dark Sky Nepal, Nepal Astronomical Society (NASO), Snake Conservation Society Nepal, Self-Help Environment Awareness Camp (SHEAC) IOF Pokhara, Himalayan Raptors, Pokhara Bird Society, Chandra Gurung Conservation Foundation, Students Associations for Forest and Environment-Nepal (SAFE-Nepal), International Forestry Students' Association-Hetauda, Society for Wildlife Research and Conservation (SOWREC), Club for Wildlife Conservation (CWC), Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN), Bat Friends Pokhara, Mithila Wildlife Trust, Nature Conservation and Study Center (NCSC), Wild Care Nepal, Tiplekot Community Forest Users Group, Ghachok Vulture Restaurant, Teka Samuha Nepal, and We Work for Conservation (WWFC, Nepal) for participating through organizational stalls. Local organizations showcasing culture and food stalls are also greatly appreciated for adding vibrancy to the festival.

We are thankful to Mr. Abhishek Sapkota for capturing moments of Owl Festival.

We acknowledge Dr. Manoj Sherpali, Ms. Kriti Chaudhary, Ms. Susmita Chaudhary, Mr. Utsab Raymajhi, Mr. Binit Timilsina, and Mr. Madhav Upadhaya for presenting their research and conservation works through posters. We are thankful to Mr. Krishna Mani Baral and Mr. Aman Sunar for the photo exhibition of the vulture and the butterfly.

We are obliged to Ajambari Community Forest Users Group, Deukhuri, Dang Ward no.5, for their warm hospitality and logistic arrangements, and grateful to the cooks for preparing delicious meals throughout our stay.

Lastly, we deeply appreciate the dedication of our volunteers: Mr. Chiranjeevi Khanal, Ms. Shusmita Basnet, Mr. Prabal Bir Jung Rana, Mr. Sudarshan Parajuli, Mr. Bipin Kumar Adhikari, Mr. Binaya Ghimire, Ms. Shiksha Gyawali, Ms. Shristi Sen, Ms. Shristi Baral, Mr. Krishna Prasad Devkota, Mr. Abhishek Sapkota, Mr. Keshab Raj Sapkota, Mr. Nawaraj Acharya, Ms. Rubi Giri, Ms. Palpasa Pandey, Mr. Ajay Saud, Mr. Damodar Bhusal, Mr. Subash Poudel, Mr. Anup Bhatta, Mr. Abishranta Dhamala, Mr. Bishist Pandey, and Dr. Manoj Sherpali. Thank you to everyone who made this festival a huge success.

Background

Since its inception in 2012, the Nepal Owl Festival has steadily grown into a dynamic and multifaceted event. It is celebrated in solidarity with the International Festival of Owls, held every March in Houston, Minnesota.

Our goal has been to bring the festival to various regions of Nepal, particularly where illegal hunting and trading pose significant threats to owl populations. By creating a lively and engaging festival atmosphere, we provide an opportunity for people to learn about owl species, interact with conservationists, and foster mutual understanding to promote the conservation of owls in Nepal.

Our team puts in months of preparation for the festival, starting with finding the perfect location and collaborating with local agencies. A month before the event, our team coordinates with the local organizer and handles all the necessary preparations. After reaching an agreement with a local organization or community, a festival management committee and seven sub-committees are formed.

We kick off our social media promotions a few weeks before the festival to reach people from all over Nepal.

Our dedicated staff and volunteers, who come from diverse professional backgrounds, work tirelessly to support and enhance our mission. Local community members, organizers, and representatives are vital to building and promoting the event.

A few weeks before the festival, we organize conservation awareness camps in schools near the festival site. Through engaging and interactive presentations by our experts, young students learn about owls and their ecological importance.

One week before the festival, the team travels to the event site to set up the venue. On the festival day, we come together to celebrate and enjoy the event.



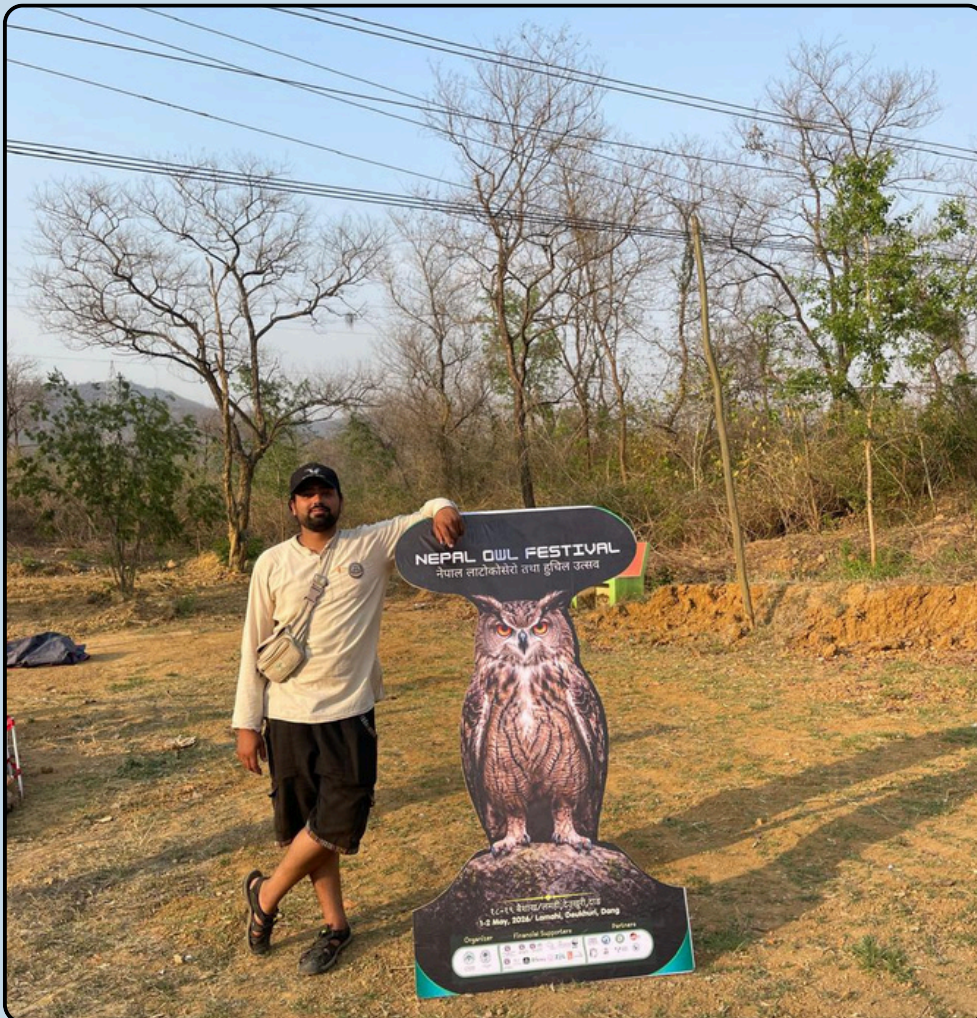
Inauguration of Nepal Owl Festival by Minister of Forests and Environment, Lumbini Province



Glimpses from the Nepal Owl Festival



Bus to departure at festival site



A perfect selfie at the Nepal Owl Festival

Goals & Objectives

OVERALL GOAL

To enhance public participation in owl conservation in Nepal.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 01** Discourage the hunting and trade of owls in Nepal by elevating conservation awareness of local people, media, and political leaders.
- 02** Enhance the local capacity in owl conservation via an education program.
- 03** Recognize the hidden conservation heroes of Nepal.
- 04** Promote traditional culture and games of the area.
- 05** Promote eco-tourism in the area.
- 06** Encourage and mentor young graduates for owl conservation via the opportunity of volunteering.

Promotion

Every year, we choose a different region to conduct the Nepal Owl Festival with the hope of spreading conservation messages to diverse communities. But it requires a great effort for the promotion and advertisement to cover a larger mass of potential visitors. We promote the festival and the festival site all year round through our official Facebook page and groups.

The intense promotion for the festival started a month before the event by sharing promotional videos, photos of the venue, program details, and other materials on our Facebook page. We also invited national and international researchers to be a part of the event.

On April 22, a press conference was held inside one of the buildings of Biodiversity Green Park managed by Ajambari Community Forest User Groups, to reach a broader audience and share event information.

The conference was attended by 20 journalists from various local and national media outlets.

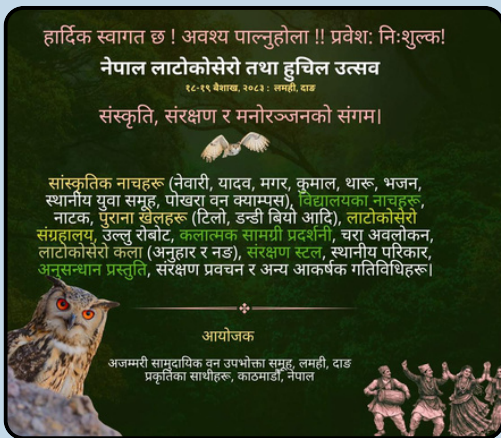
To expand our digital reach, we boosted our festival post on Facebook and Instagram for a week to reach the audience of Dang, Kathmandu, Chitwan, and Pokhara. Following the press conference, banners were displayed at the festival site, and photos of them were shared on Facebook groups.

Many well-known figures from Nepal and abroad helped promote the event by sharing it on their personal social media profiles.

We consistently provided updates on social media about festival preparations, weather forecasts, event schedules, and logistics and transportation information.



Main banner for the Nepal Owl Festival



Festival promotion across posters, invitations, and media

Festival Site

The Nepal Owl Festival 2026 was held on 1-2 May at Ajambari Biodiversity Green Park, Lamahi-3, Deukhuri, Dang, in collaboration with the Ajambari Community Forest User Group. The park's buildings housed the Owl Museum across four rooms, while its open grounds accommodated the main stage, organizational stalls, and approximately 4,000 attendees.

Lamahi, located in the Deukhuri Valley of inner Terai, is nestled between the Shivalik Hills and Mahabharata Ranges. It is recognized as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) and a critical wildlife corridor linking Bardiya, Banke, and Chitwan National Parks.



Site for Nepal Owl Festival 2026

NEARBY TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Dharapani Temple: A Hindu temple housing, the world's largest Panchadhatu trishul located ~9 km south of Ghorahi.

Bagar Baba / Rihar Dham: A sacred Tharu site approximately ~20 km west of Lamahi along the Rapti River.

Tengnaya Baba Dham: A revered religious site in Dang.

Jakhera Lake: A 3.73 ha forest lake at the foot of the Chure Hills famous for boating, picnics and birding.

Baghnath Baba JungleKuti: A forest hermitage established in 1878 BS and bounded by the Chimchime and Supaila rivers.

Kulpani Green Park: A tranquil park popular for nature walks and family visits.

Tourist Attractions & Travel

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

Koilabas Border Checkpoint: Nepal–India border village in the Chure Hills; scenic cultural gateway at the southern edge of the Rapti watershed.

Swargadwari Ashram, Bangaun: Branch of the renowned Swargadwari Ashram, minutes from the festival site; open daily 5 AM–10 PM.

Animal Old Age Home & Vulture Conservation Center: Conservation facility for aging animals and vulture protection in Dang.

Sunchhahuri Waterfall: Natural waterfall in the forested hills of Dang along the Sunpatri Khola.

HOW TO REACH at FESTIVAL SITE ?

You'll find buses to Lamahi from major cities across Nepal: Kathmandu, Pokhara, Butwal, and others.

From your departure city, head towards Lamahi, Dang. This is your main destination by long-route bus.

Get off at Lamahi Bus Park, your first major landmark and arrival point.

From there, take the road heading towards Biodiversity Green Park. It's within walking distance.

You'll reach Biodiversity Green Park, Ward No. 5, Lamahi, the festival site for Owl Festival 2026.

Preparation

Local partnerships played a vital role in organizing the Nepal Owl Festival. Our team visited the proposed venue multiple times, holding meetings with the local community to discuss festival plans. Ajambari Community Users Group partnered with FON Nepal to take charge of local arrangements. Following positive discussions, we finalized the festival schedule, work distribution, budget, venue, school competitions, conservation camp, and accommodation.

The Organizing Committee for Nepal Owl Festival 2026 was established in Lamahi, Deukhuri, Dang. Relevant subcommittees were formed to handle security, cultural programs, local games, sanitation, event management, and fundraising. Biodiversity Green Park was chosen as the museum venue, with its premises designated for poster presentations.

Two weeks after the initial meeting, a follow-up session was held to assess progress on preparations, including stage setup, cultural programs, and art, essay, and poetry competitions. Team members Bipin Adhikari and Shikshya Gyawali, under the supervision of Raju Acharya, conducted conservation camps around the festival site.

Meanwhile, the team in Kathmandu managed logistics, including packing curios, information charts, drawings, paintings, owl frames, books, banners, posters, stationery, electronics, certificates, awards, museum specimens, and owl masks.

Volunteers arrived at the festival site on 24th April, 5 days before the event. They immediately started unpacking and setting up the owl museum, working tirelessly to prepare for the festival.



Volunteers preparing exhibits, packing materials, and setting up the owl museum at the festival site



Volunteers preparing exhibits, packing materials, and setting up the owl museum at the festival site



Setting up displays, conservation materials, and the owl museum in the days leading up to the festival

Major Attractions

1. CONSERVATION CAMPS

1.1 School Conservation Camp

Sensitizing students and inviting them to the event are an integral part of the Nepal Owl Festival. The school camps are targeted to most of the schools around the festival site. During these camps, the students learn about owls, their ecological importance, and the threats they face through PowerPoint presentations and owl-related videos.

A total of 1,229 students participated this year from 12 different schools. The list of participating schools is in Appendix 1.

We hope our conservation messages resonated with the students and teachers, helping to reduce owl hunting and trade in the area.



Students attending the school conservation camp

1.2 Community Conservation

The opening ceremony featured a colourful community rally led by participating local groups, including Town Planning Ratodanda Swasthya Aama Samuh (Lamahi-5), Sahara Jyestha Nagarik Sanjal, Bhajan Kirtan Samuha, Subakamana Gau Samaj, Bachan Toli (60 volunteers), and 15 local business groups.

All marched with conservation banners bearing the message "वन वातावरण जोगाउँ, हुचील बचाउँ", which translates to "Save the Forest and Environment, Save the Owls".



Community rally with conservation banners during the opening ceremony

2. School Competition

An owl-themed school students' competition on poetry, art, and essay writing was organized to engage students of all levels. The art competition was targeted to the primary level, while the poetry and essay competition were for students from grades 9 and 10.

We received the shortlisted essays, art pieces, and poems, which were evaluated by our panel of judges. The top three entries in each category were selected as winners, in the poem competition, two third prizes were awarded. The winners were announced and awarded during the festival on stage.

A list of winners is on Appendix 2.



Winners of the school competition in poetry, art, and essay writing being honoured during the festival

3. Bird Watching

Bird watching remains one of the most anticipated and celebrated activities of the Nepal Owl Festival. As part of this year's program, dedicated birding sessions of 2–3 hours duration were organized on both festival days, drawing enthusiastic participation from students, local community members, and nature enthusiasts alike.

The sessions were led by Dr. Hem Sagar Baral, a distinguished and internationally renowned ornithologist, whose expertise and guidance greatly enriched the experience for all participants. Both sessions collectively attracted over 50 participants, reflecting the growing public interest in avian biodiversity within the region.

985
TOTAL BIRDS

84
SPECIES

50+
PARTICIPANTS

BIRDING SESSION

DAY 1

The first day's birding trail started from Biodiversity Green Park to Ajambari Community Forest. A total of **429 individual birds** were recorded across **57 species**, offering participants a rich and diverse encounter with the local avifauna.

DAY 2

The second session covered the route from Biodiversity Green Park to Arjun Khola, Lamahi. Observations surpassed the previous day, with **556 individual birds** recorded across **73 species**, underscoring the remarkable biodiversity of the area.

Across both sessions combined, a grand total of **985 individual birds and 84 species** were documented, highlighting the ecological significance of the Lamahi region as a key habitat for avian wildlife. A comprehensive checklist of all recorded bird species is provided in Appendix 3.



Participants gathered before birding



Birders observing avifauna

4. The Owl Museum

One of the major attractions of the Nepal Owl Festival is the Owl Museum, set up temporarily at the festival site. We mostly choose schools or community buildings; this time we selected Biodiversity Green Park. The museum displays owl-related conservation materials and features decoratively printed owl items.

This year, the museum was thoughtfully designed and decorated by our dedicated volunteers, featuring exhibits spread across four creatively arranged rooms. Each room offered a unique glimpse into the world of owls, capturing the curiosity of local visitors throughout the festival.

Visitors, families, students, and community members explored the museum with keen interest. Many were drawn to specific exhibits, pausing to admire detailed displays and learn more about these fascinating birds.

Our enthusiastic volunteers played a crucial role in enhancing the experience by offering insights into owl species, their ecological importance, and ongoing conservation efforts. Through engaging conversations, they helped bridge the gap between curiosity and awareness.

The robotic owl captivated visitors of all ages with its lifelike movements. The owl call device allowed people to hear different owl sounds, adding an immersive audio experience. Documentaries showcasing the diverse owls of Nepal played continuously, drawing groups of eager onlookers.

Museum specimens of owls and its prey from the Natural History Museum captured the attention of thousands of visitors, who enthusiastically observed and learned the morphology of the owls.



Thematic owls displayed in owl museum

5. Owl Robotics Display

To enhance the visitor experience at the Owl Museum, we introduced owl robots accompanied by audio and visuals of different owl species. The owl call device features the hoots of eight different owl species, allowing people to hear their chosen species and adding an immersive audio experience.

The robotic owls captivated visitors of all ages with their lifelike movements, children especially delighted, frequently returning to the display to experience it again.

FEATURED SPECIES

- Barn Owl
- Eastern Grass Owl
- Mountain Scops Owl
- Little Owl
- Brown Wood Owl
- Spotted Owlet
- Collared Owlet
- Indian Eagle Owl



Visitors engaging with the robotic owl display in the Owl Museum



Children exploring the themed exhibit rooms at the Owl Museum



Owl Robot

6. Owl Documentary Room

The goal of the Nepal Owl Festival is to spread conservation messages to every individual attending the event. And what could be more effective than imprinting the owls in the minds of visitors? So we included a visual presentation about the ecology of owls.

A separate documentary room showcases owl-related films covering owls of Nepal, ecological importance, threats and myths, interesting behaviors, conservation measures, and previous owl festivals. The documentary runs all day and is often crowded. Visitors leave excited and concerned, and many discuss their queries about owls with our volunteers.



Visitors gathered in the documentary room watching films on owl ecology

7. Cultural Programs

The Owl Festival is a beautiful fusion of conservation, culture, and entertainment. Local culture has always been the soul of the festival, making it engaging and memorable for the audience. This year too, we included traditional dances, local songs, and performances representing the tradition of Lamahi, Dang like *Jhumra Naach*, *Panche Baja*, *Dholak*, *Lakhe Naach*, and *Bhajans*. Most performers were local people and students, including conservation dance and dramas, and a welcome song by FON Nepal.

PERFORMANCES

- Nepal English Boarding School, Gadawa-3, Deukhuri, Dang
- Rosy Buds Balbatika Secondary School, Lamahi-5, Dang
- P.D.H Dance Studio, Lamahi-5, Dang
- Nritya Nirdeshak Sangh, Dang
- Gorkha Model Secondary School, Lamahi-6, Dang
- Deukhuri Public School, Lamahi-6, Dang
- Institute of Forestry, Pokhara (Dance & Drama)
- Panche Baja, Nepal Magar Sangh, Lamahi, Dang
- Bhajan Program, Sahara Jyeshtha Nagarik Sanjal
- Newari Lakhe Naach, Newa Sewa Samiti, Lamahi
- Dholak Presentation, Yadav Samaj, Gadawa-4, Dang
- Tharu Jhumra Tharu Naach, Shubhakamana Gaun Samaj



Glimpse of cultureal performances during the event



Glimpses of cultural performances during the event

8. Welcome Song

Despite being busy setting up the museum during the day, our dedicated volunteers gathered each evening to practice the festival welcome song. Written by Prof. Karan Bahadur Shah and composed by Rajman Maharjan, the song beautifully blends Tharu and Nepali languages, celebrating the region's rich cultural heritage.

When the song played during the second day of the festival, it captivated the audience, drawing smiles and sparking joyful moments. Many attendees engaged with the performance, and some even joined in by dancing, adding a lively and festive spirit to the event.

• • •

• *written by Prof. Karan Bahadur Shah*



Volunteers performing the welcome song

9. Stalls & Games

LOCAL GAMES

Rumal Lukai was played by Mahila Samuha, with players felicitated for first, second, and third place. Winners received certificates and cash prizes .

From folk games to 33 organizations' stall, the festival became a platform for community and conservation.

ORGANIZATIONAL STALLS

The Nepal Owl Festival provided a vibrant platform for national and local organizations to showcase their work, sell products, and engage directly with the public — making it a unique meeting point for conservation initiatives.

National organizations represented:

1. Dark Sky Nepal, Kathmandu
2. Nepal Astronomical Society (NASO), Kathmandu
3. Snake Conservation Society Nepal, Pokhara
4. Self-Help Environment Awareness Camp (SHEAC), IOF Pokhara
5. Himalayan Raptors, Bhaktapur
6. Pokhara Bird Society, Pokhara
7. Chandra Gurung Conservation Foundation, Lalitpur
8. Students Associations for Forest and Environment (SAFE-Nepal), IOF Pokhara
9. International Forestry Students Association, Hetauda
10. Society for Wildlife Research and Conservation (SOWREC), IOF Pokhara
11. Club for Wildlife Conservation (CWC), Central Department of Zoology, Kirtipur
12. Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN), Hetauda
13. Bat Friends Pokhara, IOF Pokhara
14. Mithila Wildlife Trust, Dhanusha
15. Nature Conservation and Study Center (NCSC), Kathmandu
16. Wild Care Nepal, Lalitpur
17. International Forestry Students' Association, IOF Pokhara
18. Tiplekot Community Forest Users Group, Hemja
19. Ghachok Vulture Restaurant, Kaski
20. Teka Samuha Nepal, Kathmandu
21. We Work for Conservation (WWFC, Nepal), Dang
22. Friends of Nature (FON) Nepal, Kathmandu



Visitors gather around the festival mascots in one of the stall



Friends of Nature Stall



Volunteers engaging visitors at an organizational stall



Curious visitors exploring exhibits and conservation games

A list of local stalls:

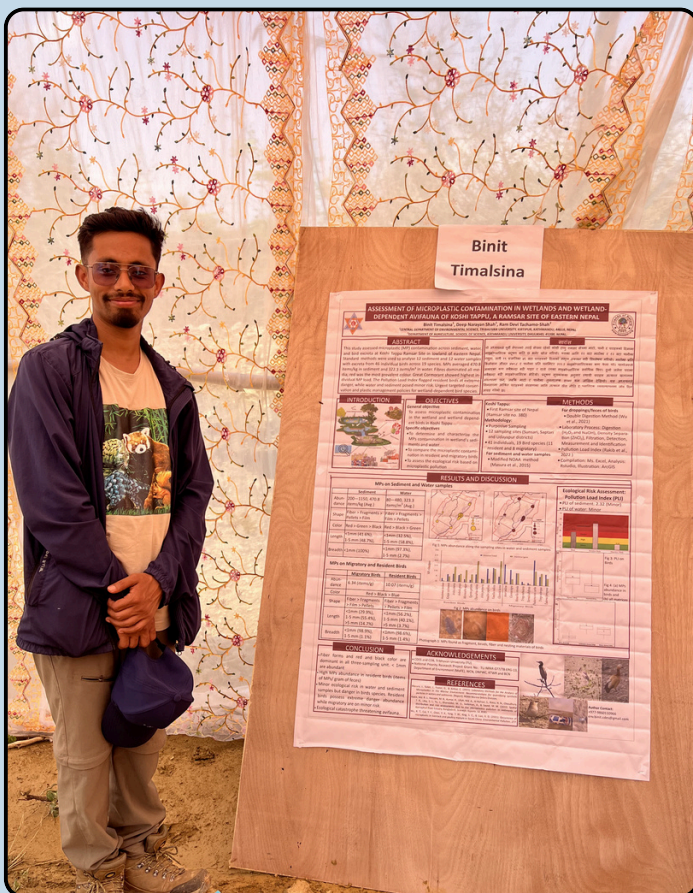
1. Kalawati Chaudhary
2. Aasha Chaudhary
3. Lalguras Nursery — Hari Bhusal
4. Hiralal Chaudhary
5. Deukhuri Bahumukhi Campus
6. Gorkha Modern Secondary School
7. Rosy Buds Balbatika Boarding School
8. Budan Bahu Udhashya Krishi Farm
9. Ujayalo Mahila Hastakala Udham
10. Division Forest Office, Dang (Deukhuri)
11. Ajambari Samudhyak Ban Upobhokta Samuha, Lamahi, Deukhuri, Dang



Local stalls

10. Poster Presentation

The Nepal Owl Festival brought together researchers and conservationists from various regions across Nepal, offering a platform to present and share their work through engaging poster presentations. These presentations highlight a broad spectrum of research and conservation initiatives across Nepal and beyond. Posters that were displayed in the festival are in Appendix 4.



Researchers presenting their findings

11. Face Painting

One of the liveliest and most crowded spots at the Nepal Owl Festival was the Face Painting. The vibrant corner quickly became a major attraction, drawing school children, local villagers, visitors, and even distinguished guests, all eagerly waiting their turn to showcase their personalized designs. More than 500 participants had face painting of owls.

Our talented artists Shikshya Gyawali, Bipin Adhikari, Tanisha Thapa Magar, and Sumit Tharu worked tirelessly to meet the demand. Despite the bustling crowd and the challenge of managing such enthusiasm, the team skillfully completed face painting. Their creativity and dedication not only added color and joy to the festival but also left lasting memories for all who participated.



Children and visitors enjoying the face painting corner at the festival

12. Owl Conservation Grant

Ms. Fija Thapa, currently pursuing her M.Sc. in Zoology, has received an owl conservation grant for her study titled "Assessment of Owl Diversity and Population Density in Two Community Forests of Syangja District, Nepal." She was awarded an owl conservation grant of NPR 50,000 to support the completion of her field work.



Ms. Fija Thapa receiving the Owl Conservation Grant from festival officials

13. Owl Photo Booth

Photos and videos serve as cherished memories of any event. To enhance engagement and bring the festival to life, we set up photo booths with owls and a stunning natural backdrop. These booths attracted not just children but people of all ages, eager to capture special moments. The festival grounds buzzed with excitement as attendees lined up for their turn to take photos. Many were also seen enthusiastically creating TikTok videos and reels around the booths, adding to the lively atmosphere.



Visitors enjoying the owl photo booth at the festival grounds

14. Conservation Speech

Nepal Owl Festival brings together conservationists, researchers, government officials, and community leaders to promote biodiversity conservation and environmental awareness. This year, the program was attended by distinguished guests including Mr. Jograj Chaudhary, Mayor of Lamahi Municipality; Ms. Laxmi Yogi, Deputy Mayor; Mr. Gehendra Bahadur Dangi, Chief Administrative Officer; Mr. Om Prakash Subedi, Ward Chairperson; Mr. Ganesh Kumar Tharu; Mr. Devkaran Prasad Kalwar, Minister for Forest and Environment, Lumbini Province; Mr. Pawan Sharma Rijal, Chairperson of Ajambari Community Forest; and Mr. Ram Dhnyan Kumar Shah, Acting Divisional Forest Officer, Division Forest Office Dang-Deukhuri.

Conservation speeches were delivered by Mr. Raju Acharya, Country Representative of the World Owl Trust, who highlighted the ecological importance of owls and their role as natural pest controllers; Dr. Roar Solheim, internationally renowned owl researcher and recipient of the Nature Conservation Award 2026; and Dr. Hem Sagar Baral, who emphasized the importance of bird conservation and ecosystem health.

Additional remarks were shared by Mr. Deepak Sharma, while conservation award recipients Dr. Hum Bahadur Gurung, Dr. Tulsi Ram Subedi, and Mr. Dadi Sapkota shared their experiences and commitment to conservation. The session was hosted by Mr. Anup Buda Magar, who highlighted the connection between culture, community, and conservation.



Conservation speech at the Nepal Owl Festival, Dang

15. Nature Conservation Award

This year, Dr. Roar Solheim, Mr. Dadi Sapkota, Dr. Tulsi Ram Subedi, and Dr. Hum Bahadur Gurung were awarded the Nature Conservation Award 2026. These outstanding individuals have made remarkable contributions to nature conservation, wildlife research, and environmental advocacy over the course of their career.



Nature Conservation Awardees



Dr. Roar Solheim

ZOOLOGIST · OWL RESEARCHER

Grimstad, Norway

Recipient of the Champion of Owls Award 2024 — over four decades of owl research and nature communication.

BIOGRAPHY

Roar Solheim is a zoologist, owl researcher, writer, editor, and nature communicator. Born in 1956 in Hamar, Norway, he has spent more than four decades working on birds, wildlife, ecology, and public education. He studied zoology at the University of Oslo in 1984 and completed a PhD in Applied Ecology in 2021.

Owls have remained at the center of Dr. Solheim's work. It all started at the age of 10 when he used to collect bird feathers. The turning point came when he saw a Pygmy Owl outside his classroom at the age of 12. Since then, he has written more than 800 titles, including 115 owl publications.

He has also produced about 125 radio programs for Norwegian Broadcasting, delivered more than 370 public talks, and served as Chief Editor of Bird Friends magazine since 2004.

Through the Bird Friends website, he has answered almost 48,000 public questions about birds out of more than 53,000 total questions — one of his biggest public education contributions. He has also contributed to three major bird book projects, greatly increasing public knowledge of owls and birdlife.

Dr. Solheim's research has covered various species of owls, especially Great Grey Owl and Snowy Owl. He has led long-term studies on owl breeding, molt, age determination, nestboxes, and migration. He currently chairs the International Snowy Owl Working Group, which contributed significantly to improving the Red List status of the Snowy Owl.

Beyond academia, he has helped save birds in distress, and his lifelong work earned the Champion of Owls Award 2024.



Dr. Tulsi Ram Subedi

RESEARCHER · CONSERVATIONIST

Suryabinayak-03, Bhaktapur, Nepal

South Asia's first PhD scholar focused on the Bearded Vulture, pioneering satellite telemetry studies on raptors in Nepal.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Tulsi Ram Subedi is a Nepali conservation scientist, raptor ecologist, and the CEO of Himalayan Raptors. He has 15+ years of experience in wildlife research, conservation leadership, project management, and public outreach, with major work on vultures, eagles, hawks, owls, and other birds of prey. His journey in raptor conservation began in 2003, followed by work as a Vulture Field Biologist (2007-2009) and international raptor training at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, USA, in 2010.

Dr. Subedi has been guided by several mentors throughout his career, including Prof. Dr. Madan Koirala, Dr. Hem Sagar Baral, Dr. Keith Bildstein, Dr. Laurie Goodrich, Dr. Munir Virani, Simon Thomsett, Prof. Dr. Shahrul Anuar Mohd Sah, and Prof. Dr. José D. Anadón.

Dr. Subedi's achievements include 13 peer-reviewed scientific papers, 3 book chapters, 5 popular articles, 2 books, 8 conference proceedings, and around 20 conservation posters. He has also conducted 90+ awareness camps, delivered 20+ conference presentations, led 10+ rescue and release activities, trained 50+ national and international students, and supervised 3 theses.

Beyond research, his work has created visible impact in both conservation and public engagement. His migration research helped establish Thoolakharka as a raptor-watching destination, and his field and community programs have contributed to vulture conservation, rescue, awareness, and habitat protection. His long-term vision is to establish a raptor centre in Nepal for rescue, rehabilitation, and public education.



Mr. Dadi Sapkota

JOURNALIST & WRITER
Ratnanagar-05, Chitwan, Nepal

A storyteller bridging journalism and conservation — giving voice to Nepal's wildlife through words.

BIOGRAPHY

Mr. Dadi Sapkota, originally from Sauraha, Chitwan, began his career as a birdwatching and nature guide near Chitwan National Park and later worked as a trekking guide. While working in tourism, he continued studying English literature and moved into investigative journalism. By 2000, he had already become a recognized writer and journalist in Nepal. He now lives in France but remains closely connected to Nepal.

For more than 25 years, Mr. Sapkota has worked in wildlife conservation, environmental journalism, and nature communication. He has written six books on birds, wildlife, forests, conservation, society, and diaspora life.

His book Panchi Jagat is especially important for birdlife, and Gyanika brings forward the life stories of 21 conservationists, researchers, and environmental workers whose work is often overlooked in Nepal.

Mr. Sapkota has worked with Kantipur Daily and Chitwan Post, and is the Founder and Editor of Nepalplus online news. Through his media career, he has published more than 2,000 articles, with over half focused on wildlife, birds, and nature. His reporting has covered human-elephant conflict, human-tiger conflict, owl conservation, and habitat protection, raising public awareness and inspiring future generations to value nature.



Dr. Hum Bahadur Gurung

CONSERVATION ADVOCATE

Madi-01, Kaski, Nepal

Three decades of grassroots conservation leadership, from ACAP's earliest days to BirdLife International's Asia partnerships.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Hum Bahadur Gurung is a conservation leader with more than 30 years of experience in natural resource management, climate change, sustainable tourism, environmental education, and community-based conservation.

Dr. Gurung helped establish Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) and strengthen its Conservation Education Unit from 1986 onward, a landmark initiative in Nepal's grassroots-level protected area management. He now serves as Senior Asia Partnership Manager at BirdLife International, supporting conservation partnerships across 14–15 countries in Asia.

As former Chief Executive Officer of Bird Conservation Nepal, Dr. Gurung helped build strong partnerships for bird conservation. He led The State of Nepal's Birds 2010, co-authored climate change impacts on 370 bird species, and was instrumental in establishing the Vulture Safe Feeding Site at Ghachowk, Kaski.

A strong proponent of owl conservation, he has raised awareness about the impacts of artificial light on owls and fireflies, supported the first Birdwatching Tourism Guides Training in Pokhara, and mentored young conservationists.

He has received the Australian Alumni Award for Community Service, Griffith University's 2019 Outstanding International Alumnus Award, and Asia Impact Game Changer recognition. Born in 1965 in Sikles, he plans to establish a School of Sustainable Living in Thak, Kaski.

16. Local Conservation Award

This year, Kul Dip Nyaupane and Kalika Community Forest User Group were awarded the Local Conservation Award. They have made remarkable contributions to wildlife rescue, forest conservation, vulture protection, and community-based environmental stewardship. Their dedication is an inspiration to us all.



One of the recipients receiving a local conservation award



Kul Dip Nyaupane

SNAKE RESCUER & JOURNALIST

Ghorahi-15, Dang, Nepal

A volunteer rescuer who has saved more than 1,000 snakes — turning fear into understanding through field work and journalism.

BIOGRAPHY

Kul Dip Nyaupane, originally from Rapti Rural Municipality-2, Lalmatiya, and currently living in Ghorahi Sub-metropolitan City-15, New Road, has been actively involved in wildlife rescue and conservation for about five years. Although he is a medical distributor by profession, he has been making an important voluntary contribution to snake rescue, public awareness, and conservation.

In coordination with the Division Forest Office, Dang, Ghorahi, he has been continuously involved in snake rescue work. He has rescued more than 1,000 snakes by himself, and together with Basanta Subedi, more than 4,000 snakes have been safely rescued and released in Dang.

He also works as a photojournalist for Naya Yugbodh National Daily and the National News Agency (RSS). During snake rescue, he not only helps people identify whether a snake is venomous or non-venomous, but also raises awareness in local communities about where and how to get treatment after snakebite.

His interest in nature, wildlife, and birds began at an early age. At present, he is especially focused on snake rescue and conservation, and continues to make an inspiring contribution to society through voluntary service.

Kalika Community Forest User Group

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION GROUP

Rapti Rural Municipality-2, Deukhuri, Dang

Established 25 Asar 2055 B.S.



Managing 464 hectares of forest while running an animal care home, vulture conservation, and education programs.

OVERVIEW

Kalika Community Forest User Group is an exemplary community-based organization in Dang-Deukhuri, officially registered on 25 Asar 2055 B.S. The group manages 464.41 hectares of forest and has made important contributions to forest conservation, biodiversity protection, vulture conservation, animal welfare, environmental education, and nature tourism promotion.

Since 22 Kartik 2065 B.S., the group has been operating an Animal Care Home and Vulture Conservation Sub-committee, working to provide safe food for vultures and care for rescued cattle. At present, the animal shelter is home to 104 cows and oxen, and the group has rescued and rehabilitated 15 vultures.

The forest area supports wildlife such as barking deer and spotted deer. The group runs community-based programs, rallies, awareness campaigns, school education activities, and field visits. In collaboration with Bird Conservation Nepal and the Division Forest Office, it takes part in the annual winter waterbird count. So far, the site has welcomed more than 500 international visitors and around 5,000–6,000 domestic visitors.

Its lifetime membership program has attracted more than 600 national and international members. The group has received the Abraham Conservation Award from WWF Nepal and grant support from Bird Conservation Nepal.

17. Organizational Felicitation

This year, Bird Conservation Nepal – Pokhara Branch and Khaireni Community Forest Users Group, Rampur, Palpa were honored with the Organizational Felicitation. Both organizations have demonstrated outstanding commitment to bird conservation, culture protection, and community-based conservation efforts. Their inspiring work continues to strengthen Nepal's conservation movement and serves as a model for community-led environmental stewardship.



Felicitations ceremony at the 13th Nepal Owl Festival, Deukhuri



Bird Conservation Nepal

Pokhara Branch

GREEN ORGANIZATION

Institute of Forestry, Pokhara

Established 2058 B.S.

A student-based platform developing young ornithologists through field research, awareness programs, and bird rescue.

OVERVIEW

Bird Conservation Nepal, Pokhara Branch is a student-based conservation organization established in 2058 B.S. at the Institute of Forestry, Pokhara. It was formed to engage students in bird identification, research, conservation, and field-based learning, and has become an important platform for developing young ornithologists in Nepal.

Its key achievements include weekly birdwatching and identification programs, an annual 3-day ornithological training, and Neighborhood Bird Count orientations. It reaches around 18 schools each year and conducts about 5 community awareness programs annually.

The branch also organizes the online series "Chara Ka Kura," runs "Owl Night" since 2025, and leads art competitions and the "Love Letter for Birds" campaign. It regularly marks International Vulture Awareness Day, World Wetlands Day, World Sparrow Day, Wildlife Week, and World Mountain Day.

The branch initiated 7 bird rescue and support cases from 2021–2026, including 4 owls. It is also an important supporter of the Nepal Owl Festival, contributing through volunteering, conservation drama, songs, stalls, fundraising, and owl awareness.



Khaireni Community Forest Users Group

VULTURE CONSERVATION SITE

Rampur-8, Palpa, Nepal

Important Bird & Biodiversity Area (IBA)

One of Nepal's most important White-rumped Vulture sites — home to 350 vultures and 34 active nests.

OVERVIEW

Khaireni Community Forest, located in Ward No. 8 of Rampur Municipality in Palpa, is an important community forest and a key center for vulture conservation. Its natural resources, rich biodiversity, and active community involvement make it a strong example of conservation and sustainable development. A Detailed Project Report (DPR) has also been prepared to support its proper conservation, infrastructure development, and long-term management.

This forest is recognized as a safe habitat, feeding ground, and breeding site for threatened vultures. Between 31 and 34 vulture nests have been recorded here, making it one of the most important White-rumped Vulture conservation sites in Nepal.

In recent years, the vulture population has increased with strong support from the local community, and around 350 vultures have now been recorded in the area. Regular monitoring of nests and population numbers, safe food management, and public awareness activities are among the major efforts taking place here.

The forest is also rich in biodiversity. It supports 105 species of birds, 13 species of mammals, 8 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 30 species of butterflies. It is also part of the Rampur Valley, recognized as an internationally important Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA).

18. Long Term Volunteer Recognition

We are proud to have dedicated volunteers and participants who never want to miss the Nepal Owl Festival. To appreciate their efforts and continued participation, they are felicitated for their special contributions to the festival.

Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) Pokhara Branch was felicitated in recognition of its dedicated engagement and voluntary support for the Nepal Owl Festival over the past eight years.

Mr. Aman Sunar and Mr. Krishna Mani Baral were also felicitated for their valuable contributions and continued support in making the Nepal Owl Festival successful over the last four years.



Mr. Krishna Mani Baral receiving the long-term volunteer award

19. Owl in News

Media Coverage Nepal Owl Festival 2026 received extensive coverage from both local and national media. Numerous individuals and media outlets highlighted the event through news reports and video broadcasts.

ONLINE NEWS

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19. Owl in News

ONLINE NEWS

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LIVE AND SPECIAL POST

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 Voice of Nature



eSewa is likely one of the first private-sector organizations in Nepal to support wildlife conservation through the Nepal Owl Festival, contributing to promotion and outreach activities that directly reached over 100,000 people.

Moments of the Nepal Owl Festival



Moments of the Nepal Owl Festival



Moments of the Nepal Owl Festival



Moments of the Nepal Owl Festival



Moments of the Nepal Owl Festival



Appendix 1: School Conservation Camp

S.N.	Name of School	No. of student participants
1	Shree Aadarsha Naumna Ma. Vi.	156
2	Gorkha Model Secondary School	247
3	Rosy Buds School	127
4	Deukhuri Bahumukhi Campus	68
5	Gorkha International Higher Secondary School	153
6	Balbikash Ma. Vi.	67
7	Rajhena Ma. Vi.	92
8	Ganga Ma. Vi.	89
9	Padhmodaye Public Ma.Vi.	43
10	Sarswati Ma.Vi.	56
11	Gyansndhu Secondary School	58
12	Namuna Adharbhut	73
	Total	1229

Appendix 2: Winners of School Competition

Competition	Winner/School Name	First Runner	Second Runner
Art	Aarati Chaudhary (Jyotismati Vidyapeeth)	Prashant Chaudhary (Shree Adarsha Namuna Secondary School)	Anjali Pokharel (Shree Surya Binayak Secondary School)
Essay	Samikshya Chaudhary (Shree Janata Secondary School)	Yaman Jung Sah (Gurukul Academy)	Swikrit Pokharel (Jyotismati Vidyapeeth)
Poem	Karan Thakur (Jyotismati Vidyapeeth)	Sonam Chaudhary (Gurukul Academy)	Sujal Rokaya & Sapana Chaudhary (Jyotismati Vidyapeeth & Janta Secondary School)

APPENDIX 3: BIRD SPECIES OBSERVED (Day 1)

S.N.	SPECIES	COUNT
1	Black Francolin	2
2	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	3
3	Eurasian Collared-Dove	5
4	Red Collared-Dove	6
5	Spotted Dove	12
6	Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon	1
7	Asian Koel	3
8	Gray-bellied Cuckoo	1
9	Indian Cuckoo	1
10	House Swift	18
11	Red-wattled Lapwing	2
12	Little Cormorant	3
13	Indian Pond-Heron	2
14	Shikra	2
15	Asian Green Bee-eater	6
16	Coppersmith Barbet	2
17	Brown-headed Barbet	2
18	Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	2
19	Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	2
20	Black-rumped Flameback	1
21	Alexandrine Parakeet	4
22	Rose-ringed Parakeet	48
23	Plum-headed Parakeet	2
24	Indian Pitta	3
25	Oriental Cuckooshrike	2
26	Black-winged Cuckooshrike	2

S.N.	SPECIES	COUNT
27	Indian Golden Oriole	1
28	Ashy Woodswallow	10
29	Common Woodshrike	1
30	Common Iora	8
31	Black Drongo	2
32	White-bellied Drongo	3
33	Hair-crested Drongo	2
34	Indian Paradise-Flycatcher	3
35	House Crow	40
36	Large-billed Crow	2
37	Asian Tit	5
38	Common Tailorbird	4
39	Jungle Prinia	3
40	Ashy Prinia	1
41	Gray-throated Martin	6
42	Barn Swallow	20
43	Red-whiskered Bulbul	40
44	Red-vented Bulbul	60
45	Greenish Warbler	1
46	Indian White-eye	6
47	Large Gray Babbler	8
48	Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	4
49	Chestnut-tailed Starling	8
50	Common Myna	5
51	Indian Robin	1
52	Oriental Magpie-Robin	3
53	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	4

S.N.	SPECIES	COUNT
54	Purple Sunbird	9
55	Scaly-breasted Munia	4
56	House Sparrow	8
57	Yellow-throated Sparrow	20
TOTAL — 57 SPECIES		429



Crimson Sunbird

BIRD SPECIES OBSERVED (Day 2)

S.N.	SPECIES	COUNT
1	Black Francolin	3
2	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	7
3	Oriental Turtle-Dove	1
4	Eurasian Collared-Dove	5
5	Red Collared-Dove	4
6	Spotted Dove	26
7	Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon	4
8	Greater Coucal	1
9	Sirkeer Malkoha	1
10	Asian Koel	5
11	Common Hawk-Cuckoo	2
12	Indian Cuckoo	2
13	Himalayan Swiftlet	7
14	House Swift	4
15	Indian Pond-Heron	3
16	Eastern Cattle-Egret	60
17	White-rumped Vulture	22
18	Slender-billed Vulture	2
19	Shikra	2
20	Black Kite	1
21	Jungle Owlet	2
22	Spotted Owlet	2
23	Indian Gray Hornbill	1
24	Indian Roller	1
25	Brown-headed Barbet	5

S.N.	SPECIES	COUNT
26	Alexandrine Parakeet	6
27	Rose-ringed Parakeet	12
28	Plum-headed Parakeet	5
29	Indian Pitta	2
30	Small Minivet	4
31	Oriental Cuckooshrike	2
32	Indian Golden Oriole	4
33	Black-hooded Oriole	8
34	Ashy Woodswallow	3
35	Common Woodshrike	2
36	Common Iora	8
37	Black Drongo	2
38	White-bellied Drongo	14
39	Hair-crested Drongo	5
40	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	2
41	Black-naped Monarch	2
42	Indian Paradise-Flycatcher	7
43	Rufous Treepie	6
44	House Crow	26
45	Large-billed Crow	16
46	Asian Tit	4
47	Common Tailorbird	8
48	Gray-breasted Prinia	4
49	Jungle Prinia	2
50	Ashy Prinia	3

S.N.	SPECIES	COUNT
51	Plain Prinia	2
52	Barn Swallow	15
53	Black-crested Bulbul	2
54	Red-whiskered Bulbul	24
55	Red-vented Bulbul	40
56	Himalayan Bulbul	5
57	Greenish Warbler	1
58	Indian White-eye	10
59	Puff-throated Babbler	2
60	Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	4
61	Chestnut-tailed Starling	8
62	Common Myna	4
63	Indian Robin	2
64	Oriental Magpie-Robin	7
65	White-rumped Shama	4
66	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	1
67	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	12
68	Purple Sunbird	9
69	Crimson Sunbird	3
70	Golden-fronted Leafbird	4
71	Scaly-breasted Munia	1
72	House Sparrow	50
73	Yellow-throated Sparrow	16
TOTAL — 73 SPECIES		556

APPENDIX 4: POSTER PRESENTORS

S.N.	Name	Topic
1	Utsav Raymajhi	Winter Diet and Threat Assessment of Himalayan Musk Deer (<i>Moschus chrysogaster</i>) in Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve, Nepal
2	Susmita Chaudhary	Rare Vagrant to Nepal: First Documentation of Red-necked Grebe
3	Kriti Chaudhary	Diversity of Farmland Birds in Rapti Rural Municipality Ward No. 6, Dang
4	Binit Timalisina	Microplastic Footprint in Wetlands and Wetland-dependent Avifauna of Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Nepal
5	Madhav Upadhaya	Avifaunal Diversity with the Elevational Gradient of Chandragiri Hills, Kathmandu, Nepal
6	Manoj Sherpali	Burmese Python and Butterfly



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