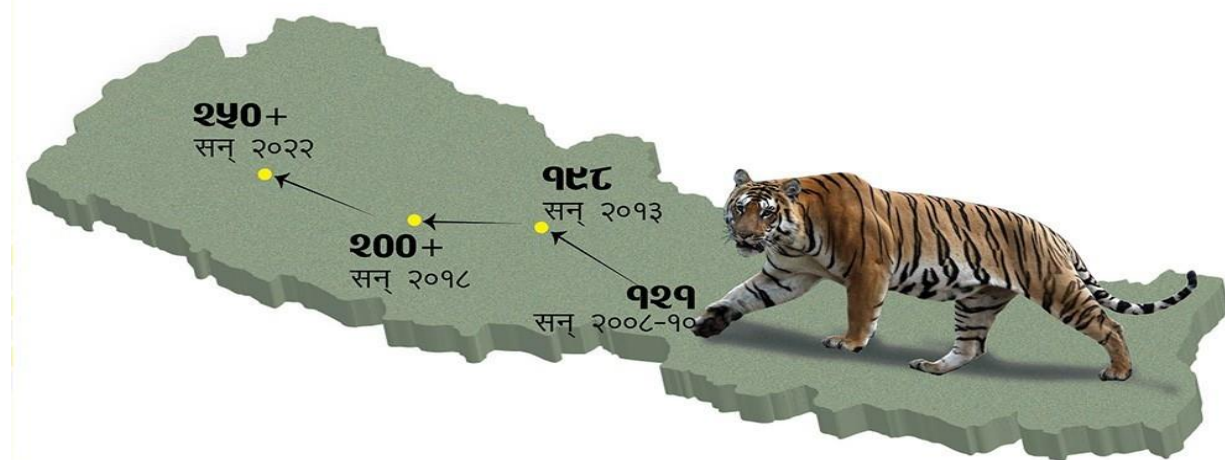


Project Update: November 2017

The blue bull *Boselaphus tragocamelus*, locally called Nilgai, is Asia's largest antelope. A sexually dimorphic ungulate of large stature and unique coloration, it is the only species in the genus *Boselaphus*. Blue bull is widely distributed in the southern plain Terai region of Nepal. They occurred in the Chitwan National Park, Kosi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Parsa Wildlife Reserve, Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve and Bardia National Park. Outside the protected areas they are found in Rupandehi, Kapilbastu, Bardia, Kailali, Kanchanpur and Nawalparasi districts.

My study area represents the Chitwan National Park, Parsa Wildlife Reserve (now upgraded to national park), Banke National Park, Bardia National Park and Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve (now upgraded to national Park). Our team is conducting questionnaire surveys and random transect surveys in selected areas. Our preliminary survey shows that the population is sparsely distributed, mostly in the lowland Terai areas and outside of Nepal's protected area. Conflict with local farming communities because of crop damage by blue bull has created conservation challenges and our aim was to document the blue bull's conservation status and its conflicts with local communities in the Western Terai Arc Landscape of Nepal.

It is well known fact that blue bull is the preferred prey species of the Bengal tiger. Tiger population is in increasing trend in Nepal. Based on the recent survey at Chitwan National Park on tiger prey species it was found that the Bengal tiger is now attracted to domestic livestock though the prey species of tiger are ungulates such as deer, sambar, gaur, water buffalo, blue bull etc. The survey was conducted by pellet sampling and laboratory test. In these protected areas tiger suffer from loss of natural prey. Prey numbers are declining because of habitat loss, flooding, forest fires and livestock pressure in many areas as well. From this it is concluded that it is very important for habitat management and conservation of preferred prey species of tiger including blue bull for better management of tiger as well as to minimise the human-wildlife conflict.

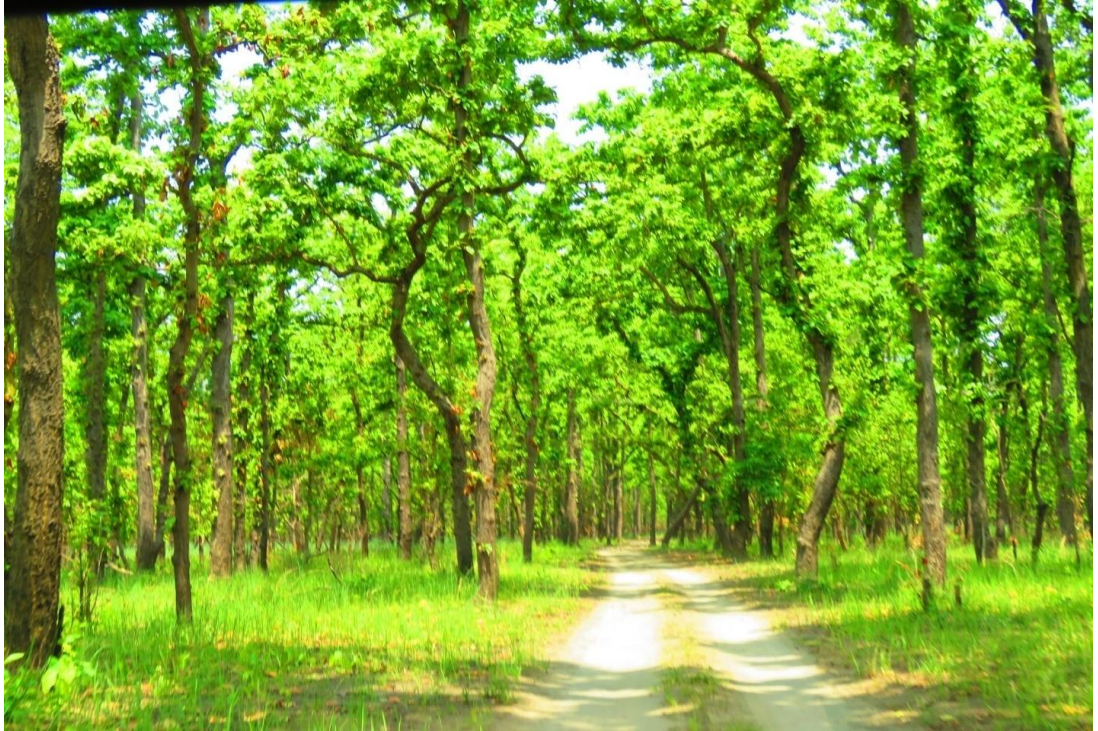


Based on our ongoing survey crop raiding damage by blue bull created a serious problem in the study areas which are located close to potential blue bull habitat. As blue bull continue to lose their habitat they are increasing coming into conflict with humans. In relation, blue bull are often killed by angry villagers. The most negative views were held by people who had experienced some extent of crop loss. Suitable protective measures to minimise crop loss are required such as changing cropping patterns, control of livestock into the blue bull habitat. The study noted that there were many threats to blue bull including illegal hunting, poisoning, electric fences and habitat deterioration. Successful blue bull conservation will require which includes the blue bull conservation strategy, awareness and possibly new crop management techniques.





Blue bull captured at Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve



Blue bull habitat



Awareness Programme