

Strengthening People for Pangolin Conservation in the human-dominated landscapes of Nepal



4rd Project update

Submitted To

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Gaijatra Program: Linking Culture & Pangolin Conservation

Month of August was very special to us, we celebrated our festival Gaijatra, a religious roots are deeply tied to Hinduism and reflects the Newar community's resilience and humor in the face of adversity.

It is a traditional festival celebrated mainly in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, particularly by the Newar community. In general, the festival is a blend of humor, satire, remembrance, and celebration, marked by a deep cultural significance tied to the remembrance of the deceased ones, usually, marked by the parade through the streets in a procession, accompanied by children, youths, women from families who had lost their loved ones and interested people. It is believed that it helps the souls of the deceased reach to heaven.

Meanwhile, we took this as an opportunity to interact, engage and raise awareness with diverse groups of communities linking culture with conservation in Bhaktapur. It provided a unique platform to highlight the importance of protecting pangolins.

We took this an opportunity to showcase cultural performances with pangolin conservation message banners where local dancers with wooded stick were followed by musicians. This cultural dance is popularly known as Gintang Ghisi in Newari etymology. We had performed a day long activities to commemorate that day long different activities among the over 500 people.

Pangolin-Themed Procession

We had pangolin themed procession in which participants carried pangolin conservation themed banners During the Gai Jatra procession, we carry incorporate educational banners, t-shirts, caps and calendars about pangolin conservation and their endangered status to make the connection between the festival and conservation.



Fig: 1. Gaijatra procession with local Newar communities with pangolin caps & protecting the musical instruments with rain shower at Bhaktapur city



Fig: 2. Gaijatra procession with pangolin education banners helping to spread conservation message through pictures & messages



Fig: 3. People at festive celebration in Taumadi, front of Nyatapola, the tallest five tiered temple in the heart of Bhaktapur city

The Storytellers of pangolins

We had a wonderful session with the elder knowledgeable people who shared their story on pangolin sighting, capture and release over 20 years back in the areas. They shared us three such incidences and we had a story telling session from three people during that day. They also share tales that highlight the importance of nature, wildlife, and pangolins. We also distributed informational calendar that talked about pangolins, their conservation, and how local communities can contribute. Some glimpses are as follows



Fig: 4. Listening to pangolin tales of their times



Fig: 5. Group memory with the pangolin witnessed elder citizens after listening to their story

Feast program

After the procession, all the participants' helped had the local popular food called Samay Baji that consists of beaten rice, soybeans, buff meat, lentils, pickles and so forth.



Fig: 6. Samay Baji

Distribution of pangolin awareness outreach materials

We distributed pangolin calender were distributed to all the visitors and local watchers. The calender was very useul as per the communities and women. A total of 100 calenders were distributed in that day.



Fig: 7. Distribution in progress



Fig: 8. With happy faces

Eighth IUCN Regional Conservation Forum

The 8th IUCN Asia Regional Conservation Forum (RCF) is held every four years, took place from September 3 to 5, 2024, in Bangkok, Thailand. In the key event, discussion on conservation strategies across Asia was conducted with the theme "Reimagining Conservation in Asia: A Nature-Positive Future." The three day program brought more than 450 participants from various stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, and Indigenous communities, to evaluate conservation progress and set future priorities. The forum featured thematic discussions, side events, and exhibitions focused on biodiversity, nature-based solutions, and community empowerment. In one of the side event organized by Nepal member institutions, chaired by His Excellency Mr Dhan Bahadur Oli, we presented a presentation on the role of women, indigenous people in saving the culture, nature, wildlife and natural resources in Nepal. We presented our work on pangolins, Fishing cat and community conservation initiatives in Nepal. WE have acknowledged The Rufford Foundation and other conservation supporters for their invaluable support in scaling up our conservation programs in human dominated landscapes.

The forums served us as a platform for exchanging knowledge, fostering collaboration, and setting conservation priorities.



Fig: 9. Presentation in progress with Newari attire: locally hand woven sari, popularly called as Haaku patasi from Bhaktapur



Fig: 10. Q & A after the presentations from Nepal & with His Excellency Mr Dhan B. Oli in the forum



Fig: 11. Nepal at the side event during 8 th IUCN RCF & with the Regional Director, Dr. Dindo Campilan



Fig: 12. With IUCN Director General, Dr. Grethal Aguilar and IUCN Nepal National Committee members

Thank you so much!