

Saving the Pangolins: Ethno zoology and Pangolin conservation awareness in Human dominated Landscapes

A Preliminary report to **The Rufford Small Grants Foundation**



Prativa Kaspal

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Executive Summary

Among the three species of pangolin found in Asia, two species are in Nepal which is both protected by national and international laws. However, they have received very little scientific attention. Local perceive pangolin to hold magical powers and also is taken with great delicacy in Nepal. In addition illegal forest exploitation and its trade due to lack of awareness in rural poverty and non-functional government are causing its survival in peril. Being the firsthand research, it will provide its ethno-information and uses in medicinal and ornamental forms along with its status and exploitation in Nepal. Analyzing socio-economic aspects, the project will conduct awareness campaign to conserve pangolins that frequently roams in human settlements. Traditional healers and local community elders were consulted using semi structured questionnaire. Education materials such as brochures will be produced based on these findings and widely circulated. Recommendations will be also made for relevant stakeholders to make their work more sympathetic towards pangolin conservation.

Introduction:

1.1 General Background

The characteristics of the ecological belts of any country determine the kind of biodiversity. About 75% of Nepal is covered by mountains, making it one of the most rugged mountainous countries in the world. It can be divided in its east-west axis into four geographical regions. In the south, along its border with India, lies the Terai, a low, flat and fertile landscapes that is the northern extension of the Gangetic plain, and which varies in width from about 25 to more than 32 kilometer. The southern part is a rich agricultural area, while the remaining northern area consists of forests and marshy river bottoms rich in wildlife. Immediately, north of the Terai are the steep, forested Churia ranges that rise in almost perpendicular escarpments to an elevation of nearly 2000m. Next comes midland region, a densely populated area with a complex mountain ranges up to 3000m. This region includes the Kathmandu and Pokhara valleys, and covers roughly 33% of the country. Finally along the northern border with Tibet, lies the Himalayan Mountain itself.

It is difficult to appreciate current rates of species loss unless we have some estimate of both the number of species alive today and their rates of decline. Unfortunately, only a small proportion of taxonomic diversity has been documented (May, 1988, 1995). So the indirect methods of estimating the number of existing species have been devised. These include the use of environmental variables, indicator groups, or higher taxa as measures of species diversity (Gatson, 1996). Environmental factors are viewed as a key to population persistence because they effect large and small population alike and nowadays many are human in origin. Such anthropogenic factors include habitat fragmentation (Harris, 1984), competition or predation by exotic species (Atkinson, 1989). Anthropogenically caused habitat loss and fragmentation are key problems affecting current populations and Meta Population Theory has been used to model population persistence in small, remnant pieces of habitat. As human population growth and resources are driving forces behind the biodiversity crisis, understanding the strategies by

which people produce and limit offspring and the circumstances under which they overexploit resources is critical to the conservation agenda.

Trade in wildlife and wildlife products is one of the greatest drains on biological diversity (Fitzgerald, 1989; Dobson, 1996). However, international laws such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) are in place to be regulated to control its trade.

The conservation of endangered fauna and flora species is an important and controversial issue at national and international level. Despite the concerted efforts of the independent organizations, government agencies and private individuals, many species still face the prospect of extinction due to environmental degradation and the threat of illegal trade of wildlife and its related products (Song, 2003).

1.2 Pangolin

Pangolin belongs to genus *Manis* Linnaeus, 1758. It is derived from Malayan phrase ‘Pen Gulling’ meaning ‘rolling ball’, while the term Pholidota came from a Greek word meaning ‘scaled animals’. They are also known as Scaly Anteaters because of their structure and food habits. Having no teeth and an inability to chew, pangolins feed mostly on ants and termites using their long tongue to catch them. They are solitary, nocturnal creatures and are known to be good climbers.

Nepal lies on the transition zone of the oriental and palearctic regions, so there is occurrences of both the Chinese and Indian species in Nepal (Shrestha, 1981).

The generic name of pangolin in Nepal is "Salak" although it has some local names that are popular in particular areas. For instance, it is called "Kaynaya" (Newari language), "Kose" (Tamang language) and "Hilemaccha" in hill by the virtue of its bronze like overlapping scales.

There are three species of pangolin found in Asia. Among them two species are found in Nepal. They are Chinese pangolin *Manis pentadactyla*, Indian pangolin *Manis crassicaudata*. Both species are threatened animals protected by National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973. Internationally, it is enlisted in Appendix II of CITES (Chapagai and Dhakal, 2002). It is enlisted as Lower Risk/Near Threatened in IUCN Red

Data Book. Animals are listed as Lower Risk when they are not critically endangered or vulnerable. Taxa included in the Lower Risk category can be separated into three sub-categories: Conservation dependent (cd), Near threatened (nt) and Least concern (lc). Near threatened are those taxa which do not qualify for conservation dependent but which are close to qualifying for vulnerable (Hilton-Taylor, 2000). To protect the vulnerable species, parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) called for a complete ban on international trade of pangolins in 2000.

Taxonomy of Chinese pangolin

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Pholidota
Family: Manidae
Genus: *Manis*
Species: *pentadactyla*

The Chinese pangolin is smaller than Indian pangolin. It differs from Indian sp. by the 15 to 18 scales around the body. It has shorter tail with a naked tip and protective ear-flaps are the only major anatomical difference in relation to the Indian pangolin (Baral and Shah, 2008). Chinese pangolin ranges westward through China, Nepal and Assam. *M. javanis* occurs in Malaya, Java and Indochina.

Taxonomy of Indian pangolin:

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Pholidota
Family: Manidae
Genus: *Manis*
Species: *crassicaudata*

Indian pangolin is found in extreme southern foothills of Nepal. It has large, overlapping scales (11- 13 around the body) on the body which act like armour. It rolls itself into an

inconspicuous ball to hide its soft under parts against any predators. It inhabits the foothills and plains of Nepal, India and Ceylon.

1.2.1 Evolution

The origin of pangolin is shrouded in mystery. The oldest bones of this animal have been unearthed from Pleistocene deposits of South India, which have been dated back to some hundred million years ago. According to the mammalogist, Theodar Haltenorth, this animal has evolved from early placental mammals having birth canal during Paleocene about 80 million years ago. Some fossil records of European Pangolin dating back 15-40 million years have been recovered from Oligocene and Miocene deposits in south Germany and Spain (Shrestha, 1981).

1.2.2 Global Distribution

Pangolins were once distributed widely throughout the world. About eight species of Pangolins are considered to be of the genus *Manis*, family *Manidae* and are found in the tropical Asia and Africa. However, only seven living species of mammal are included in the *Pholidota*, the pangolins or scaly anteaters.

There are still four noteworthy forms of pangolin in Africa, they include Long-tailed pangolin *M. tetradactyla*, Cape pangolin *M. temmincki*, Three pointed scale pangolin *M. tricuspis* and Giant pangolin *M. gigantean*.

Rationale of the study

Pangolins in Nepal have received very little scientific attention. The knowledge of ecological importance of pangolin is very few in local communities. The extent of illegal and unreasonable forest exploitation is nowadays causing a severe problem due to irresponsiveness in government chained with the poverty in rural localities. A complex chain of supply, partnered with diversifying consumer demand, makes effective conservation and management of wild species in the region extremely challenging. Consistent demand for traditional medicine practices, ornamental decorations of pangolin scales and as 'tonic food' items is now so high that the survival of many is in peril. Though government policy in the first instance is to prohibit exploitation of this rare and

endangered species, public support is another important conservation tool which seems to be the most effective one. The research project will encompass the socio-economic aspects and will conduct the conservation awareness programs by means of poster and brochure of pangolin at the last quarter of the study. Being a very firsthand research, it will provide the information regarding the species being used in medicinal and ornamental purposes along with their exploitation in trade. This research will make people realize why pangolins are important for their livelihood. It will make people understand the trade is illegal. The failure of captive rearing of pangolins in ex-situ clearly reveals that they should be left in wilderness. Finally, this research will focus on this very issue as well to safeguard the remaining pangolins amidst the human dominated society.

Objectives:

- i. To identify the uses of pangolin and its products in Nepalese society
- ii. To know the status of pangolin in the study areas
- iii. To identify the trade related to pangolin
- iv. To provide and create Pangolin related conservation education and awareness among the people.
- v. To make recommendations to curb the illegal pangolin trade and relevant measures to safeguard the turtles of the country.

Methodology

To achieve desired results of the objectives of the proposed project following methods will be adopted.

1. Visits to traditional healer shops in the cities.
2. Questionnaire survey (Purposive Sampling)
3. Interviews with the shop owners, related vendors and others
4. Species identification through standard methods
5. Increase public awareness through publication and distribution of brochure and posters

Digital camera was used to store images of Pangolin in folk healer's shop and other commercial exploitation. Several snaps were taken from different angles so that these can be accurately identified later with reference to identification guides. Data gathered was stored in Excel Workbook and using its Data Analysis Toolkit, simple descriptive analysis will be performed.

Findings:

Preliminary Report:

According to the research plan, field visit of the second quarter was carried out from May to June 2009. During the first phase, many visits were made in different healer's shop of Kathmandu valley. Surveys were done in the major spots of the Kathmandu Valley as it is the main business market. They are Ratnapark area, Boudh Gumba, Bhedasingh, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur. It is found that people who believe in magical power of healing from the pangolin products used to visit traditional healers for cure. A total of 30 shops were visited and 10 shops contained pangolin products. Open display to indirect sale of pangolin products were observed frequently.

Pangolin Trade:

Ratnapark is one of the key sites where many incidence of trade of threatened species occur. One tail portion of pangolin was kept for sale during the present survey. The price of one single scale was NRs 100. From an interview with the local trader, it was found that the demand was quite high but the supply is reduced now days. He informed that most customers were foreigners from China and Tibet who used to buy in huge quantity with good price and Nepalese people.

In Bhedasingh of Ason, Kathmandu, there were no direct display and sale of pangolin as the local shop owners were quite aware of its legal status in the country. However, it was found that indirect sale still continued in these areas. During the first visit they denied to share information about pangolin. After frequent visits, there was evidence of pangolin for sale. The price of the single scale was NRs 50 in Bhedasingh.

In Bhaktapur, south from the capital, the local traditional shopkeeper were also aware of the protected status of pangolin so most of the shop owners agreed that they used to sell since many years back but nowadays they do not. Visits to some of the tourist destinations were also made within the capital to find out any curious items of pangolin. One of the local traders in Kathmandu informed that there were four live pangolins brought for sale each of NRs 10000 in January 2009. He refused them due to lack of money. But he bought the scales of dead pangolin which were brought by a Nepalese trader. According to him some foreigners used to collect the scales and body parts of pangolin and they provided good money. He informed that they were taken aboard for making mosquito incense, for making belts, bags and decorative items etc.

Ethnological importance of pangolin

One old traditional healer told that people seek it for many purposes. According to him, whole body of pangolin is very important in healing asthma, rheumatic fever, joint problem etc. According to the traditional practitioners, uterus of pangolin locally known as “garvello” is very important in avoiding the hazard of abortion. Scales are used in making garlands. It is believed that use of scale in children is a safety precaution from evils and bad spirits.



Figure 1 Display of Pangolin tail for sale



Figure 2 Local traders in the city

Field Survey:

Sipadol Visit

Sipadol is situated in the southern part from the capital, Kathmandu City. Altogether two community forests such as Sepilopakha and Suryabinayak community forests were surveyed. 31 burrows of pangolin were counted including both fresh and old. Burrows were found mainly in brown soil than in red soils. Among 31 burrows found in the field, 8 burrows were with pangolin scratches, 3 with scats were found. However, 20 burrows were devoid of scats and scratches.



Figure 3 Scratches of pangolin



Figure 4 Burrows arrangements of pangolin

Chitwan National park visit



On the month of June, field survey was conducted. This was made rightly after the trade survey in Kathmandu Valley. First field spot was Chitwan National Park and then to the community forests of Lumbini: An Important Bird Area: key sites for conservation.

The above map is of Chitwan National Park and the area circled is the survey area inside the park. The area was selected on the basis of discussion with the local nature guides and park officials who used to observe pangolin since some years back.

Reintroduction of pangolin in wild



One small baby pangolin was found in the Pithuwa Village development committee of Chitwan district. Counting of the overlapping scales around the body was done to identify the pangolin species. It was found that the overlapping scales was 18, it was confirmed that it is a female Chinese pangolin. It was found in the maize field while one local lady was working in the field. It was caught by the villagers and handed to the administration office of Chitwan National Park (CNP). The staffs from CNP released the pangolin in nearby Sal Forest with in the park

(Photo at left).

Before its release in the forest, its external measurements were taken which was as follows:

Colour: Blackish

Weight: 2.5kg

Body length: 1 feet 11 inches and its

Girth: 10 inches

In Chitwan it was locally known as “Sal macchha” and “Sal machhari” because of presence of scales, its structure and its occurrence in Sal forest.

Pangolin survey inside the park

Whole day survey was done in Chitwan National park by hiring a jeep. Survey was done from 6:30 am to 5:00 pm. Survey was conducted in the main spots with pangolin presence. In the forest numbers of termite mound, the main diet of Pangolin were encountered; however there were not any sign and symptoms of pangolin presence.



Figure 5 Termite hills inside the park



Figure 6 Researcher along with field assistant in a survey of pangolin inside CNP

Questionnaire Survey:

A set of semi- structure questionnaire was prepared and formal and informal interview were taken with the park officials, guides, local nature trekkers, hoteliers and local people.



Figure 7 Researcher doing semi structure questionnaire survey in CNP

Lumbini Visit

Lumbini has the birthplace of Lord Buddha. The sacred site of the Buddha's birth is at the southern end of Lumbini grove. Excavations have revealed a series of rooms and a stone slab, which is now believed to mark the exact location at which the Buddha (or Siddhartha as he would have been known then) was born. Farmlands of Lumbini have

been identified as an Important Bird Area (IBA) having high biodiversity and unique ecosystems in Nepal. Bird specialties include; Sarus Crane, Lesser Adjutant, Indian Spotted Eagle, Critically Endangered 2 species of Gyps and several birds of prey, owls, etc. Mammals include Nilgai, Asiatic Golden Jackal, Jungle Cat, Grey Mongoose etc.

Questionnaire survey:

Semi structured questionnaire survey was conducted in Bishnupura Village and Suryapura Village of Lumbini. Villagers had seen and taken the meat of pangolin in their area a decade ago. According to the respondents, the habitat loss and alteration in the way of land use pattern was the main cause of pangolin disappearance from their localities. Some had once kept its scales because of its medicinal value.



Fig 8 Questionnaire survey in Bishnupura VDC, Lumbini



Fig 9 Questionnaire survey in Suryapura VDC, Lumbini

Discussion

There is some news about the findings of pangolin in different parts of Nepal. These media coverage also have helped general people in identifying this least studied mammal. Most of the urban dwellers are unaware of the medicinal utilities of pangolin. It was because of the advancement of advanced medical centers, research centers and their cure. However, the news regarding the illegal trade of pangolin reveals that pangolins are still in trade. There may be the possibility of disappearance of pangolin

from wild. The study done by Kaspal 2008 found three scaly body cover of pangolin kept for sale. She found the price of single piece of scale was only NRs 50. Believing some magical healing power people seek for it. In the rural parts of Nepal, the meat of pangolin is taken with great delicacy. This is because of the poverty that people are forced to kill pangolin for sake of meat. Some people are unaware of its protected status thus kill it for the sake of money as poverty is another factor which force people to do anything. Accompanied by political instability open display to indirect sale of pangolin products prevails within Kathmandu Valley. Sipadol Village Development Committee was major study site selected by the study of Kaspal 2008. She had recommended that site as secure and good habitat for pangolin.

Interview with the researcher was taken by national television regarding the pangolin status and its conservation threats in a country. Caution is needed in interpreting data derived from traditional healers' interviews, since respondents may have been reluctant to be honest about the magnitude of illegal activities. Pangolin populations clearly cannot stand the incessant poaching pressure, which can only be stopped by decisive government-backed enforcement action in the region. In other hand local people should be convinced that pangolins are the biological controllers of termites and ants and its vital ecological service. It should not be overlooked. The solution is raising awareness along with better enforcement of national and international laws designed to protect this threatened mammal, improved monitoring of the illegal trade and more research on existing pangolin populations which are native to south and south east Asia.

Press release of pangolin news till date

Research in progress:



8, 2009)

दुर्लभ सालक भेटियो



परेको	सालकलाई
जिल्ला	वनमा
बुभाएपछि	गणनजिक
सिमपानी	सामुदायिक
वन क्षेत्रमा	छाडिएको
हो ।	गणपति
यमबहादुर	थापाका
अनुसार	सोमबार
गणको	उत्तरपट्टिको
जंगलबाट	गणभित्र

दोलखा (कास)- दुर्लभ सालक हिड्दै गरेको अवस्थामा जवानले सोमबार यहाँ फेला परेको छ । फेला पारेका थिए ।
भीमेश्वर नगरपालिका १० मा फेला दुर्लभ मानिने सालकलाई
परेको जनवारलाई मंगलबार सामुदायिक वनका पदाधिकारीहरू
जंगलमा छाडिएको हो । रोहबरमा छाडिएको वन अधिकृत
बर्दबहादुर गणभित्र फेला गौरीशङ्कर तिमलाले बताए ।

दुर्लभ जन्तु सालक भेटियो

23rd June / Rajshree Pg. no. 3
भरतपुर, धापा / राजधानी
भक्तपुर, ६ असार

भक्तपुरको पित्तपोलमा दुर्लभ वन्यजन्तुभित्र पर्ने सालक भेटिएको छ । सोमबार भक्तपुरको त्रिचोपान गाविस-१ मा आधुनिक खेतमा खेती गर्न गएको विष्णु हुँफडुन सो सालक भेटेका हुन् ।

खेतमा काम गर्ने बेलामा छेउ नै कुनै जन्तु वीँदिएको देखे, गएर हेर्दा सालक रहेछ, उनले राजधानीलाई बताए । सुरुमा सो वन्यजन्तु हेर्दा डर लागेको उनले बताए ।

यसअघि सिपाडासको तीसलछापमा बेसी गौरीनाथि दुईवटा



सालक फरक फरक समय भेटिएको थियो । सामुदायिक वन उपभोक्ता समूह, भक्तपुरका सल्लाहकार रामेश्वर पोखरेल गएको फागुन महिनामा एउटा सालक सोही वनमा छुट्टिएको थिएर । १४ वर्षअघि पनि यसै क्षेत्रमा एउटा सालक भेटिएको थियो ।

धौहरासे करिब १० वर्षअघि पनि एउटा सालक भेट्टी जिल्ला वन कार्यालयमा बुझाएको, तर सो सालक अहिले कहाँ छ भन्ने कुनै जानकारी नभएको बताए ।

पटक-पटक वन क्षेत्रमा दुर्लभ वन्यजन्तु सालक भेटिरहने हुनाले यस क्षेत्रलाई सालक पकेट क्षेत्रको घोषणा गर्नुपर्ने उनले बताए ।

दुर्लभ वन्यजन्तु सालक भेटियो

5th July 2019 / Nepal Samachar Patra / Pg. no. 5

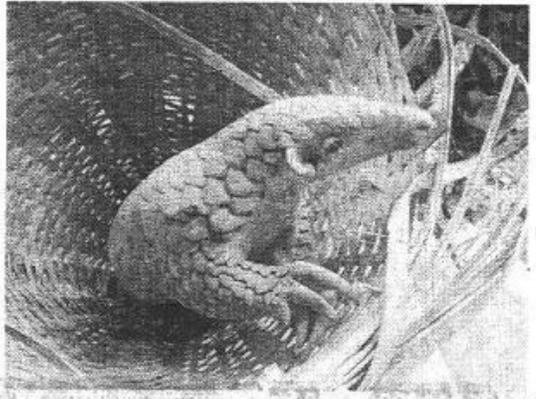
नेपाल समाचारपत्र
चरिकोट, (नेस)

दुर्लभ वन्यजन्तु सालक सदरमुकाम चरिकोटमा भेटिएको छ । सोमबार नेपाल सेनाको बर्दबहादुर गणको उत्तरपट्टी रहेको खोर्खोली सामुदायिक वनबाट ब्यारेक परिसरमा आउंदै गरेको सालकलाई सेनाले समातेर जिल्ला वन कार्यालयलाई बुझाएको छ ।

दुर्लभ वन्यजन्तुको रूपमा रहेको सालक वन क्षेत्रबाट गणतर्फ आएकोले समातेर जिल्ला वन कार्यालयलाई बुझाएको बर्दबहादुर गणका गणपति यामबहादुर सापकाटाल, युवाजन्तुभया मंगलवार जिल्ला वन कार्यालय लुगिएको सालकलाई तत्कालै वन क्षेत्रमै लगेर छोडिने जिल्ला वन अधिकृत गौरीशङ्कर विमलाले बताउनुभयो ।

विश्व संरक्षण तन्धले दुर्लभ वन्यजन्तु भनेर आफ्नो रातो किताबमा दर्ता गराएको सालक महाभारत क्षेत्र र मध्य हिमालका ९ सय १५ देखि ७ सय ४५ मिटरसम्मको देशान्तरीय क्षेत्रमा पाइने बताइन्छ ।

माइक्रोसफ्ट कम्पनीले निकालेको



चरिकोटमा भेटिएको दुर्लभ वन्यजन्तु सालक । तस्वीर : नेस

उन्साइबलो पिडिया प्रोग्राममा उल्लेख भएअनुसार सालक एसिया र अफ्रिकामा पाइन्छ । भान्छेलाई कुनै बिगार नगर्ने सालकको टाउको कम्जोर हुने र यसले अगाडिको खुट्टा तथा बाहिरको खबटाले माटो खनेर जमिन प्वालपारी धमिरा आदि खाने गर्छ । दाँत नहुने सालकले जिब्रो निकालेर धमिरारु खाने यसका चिह्नहरू बताउँछन् । विशेष गरी फुट्टो,

सातो डुङ्गा मिसिएको माटो भएको ठाउँमा पाइने सालक आफ्नो सुरक्षाका लागि सुत्ने बेलामा र डराएको बेलामा टाउको लुकाएर बेरिएर बस्ने बताइन्छ । यसैबीच नुवाकोटको बड्ढार पुरानो बजारमा सोमबार भेटिएका दुईवटा सालकलाई इनारपाटीका कुमाल समुदायले मारेर खाएको राससले जनाएको छ ।

25th June 07, Annapurna post 1997
दुर्लभ सालक वनमा छाडियो

अन्नपूर्ण समाचारदाता

भक्तपुर, १० असार : दुर्लभ वन्यजन्तु सालक बुधवार सिपाडोल गाविसमा पर्ने तीडोल छाप सामुदायिक वनमा छाडिएको छ।

चित्तपोल-१ मा सोमबार स्थानीय बामिन्दाले फेला पारेको सालकलाई मंगलबार स्थानीयक रेन्जपोस्टका प्रमुख नुव्छोकृष्ण श्रेष्ठको रोहवरमा तीडोल छाप सामुदायिक वनमा छाडिएको हो।

स्थानीय तीडोलछाप सामुदायिक वन उपभोक्ता समूहका अध्यक्ष दीपन्द्रकुमार थापा, सालकसम्बन्धी अध्ययन गरिरहेको भक्तपुरको तुल्सीलक्ष्मी सुवाल, सञ्चारकर्मी र स्थानीय बामिन्दाको उजोस्वामीमा छाडिएको सालकसमेत यो वनमा दुई महिनामा चारवटा सालक छाडिएको छ।

यसअघि यसै वनमा भेटिएको सालक जिल्ला वन कार्यालयमाफेल सटर बिडिबाखाना जाउलाखेलको जिम्मा सहाइएको थियो। त्यस्तै स्थानीय बामिन्दाले भेटिएको भाले सालकलाई पनि सोही वनमा छाडिएको थियो। त्यसको एक सातापछि सालक अध्ययनको क्रममा तुल्सीलक्ष्मी सुवालले काभ्रे बुढागाउँमा भेटिएको वनवासहितको माउ सालक पनि सोही वनमा छाडिएको थियो।

सोमबार चित्तपोलमा फेला परेको पोथी सालकको लम्बाइ ७० सेन्टिमिटर मोलाइ ५८ सेमि र वील तीन किलो नौ खप प्राप्त रहेको अध्ययनमा संलग्न सुवालले



छवि : अनूप

सिपाडोलस्थित तीडोल छाप सामुदायिक वनमा छोडनुअघि सञ्चारकर्मीलाई सालक देखेउँदै स्थानीयक रेन्जपोस्टका प्रमुख नुव्छोकृष्ण श्रेष्ठ।

बताइन्। उनको अनुसार विनियौ प्रजातिको सालकको जोडमा प्रोच सन् १२ कल्ल रहेको छन्। विज्ञानमा स्नातकोत्तर तहअन्तर्गत सालकको विषयमा बेसिस गर्दै राको तुल्सीलक्ष्मी सुवालका अनुसार सम्प्री सहरदेखि एक

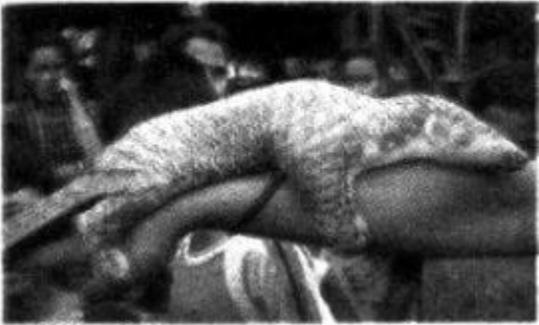
हजारदेखि दुई हजार भित्र उफार भएको खैरो मलिलो माटे प्छने ठाउँ सालकको लागि उपयुक्त वासस्थान हो। कमिला धमिय खाने र लजालु रूपभावको सालक दुलो खनेर जमिनीभित्र चल्ने गर्द।

I June Dy vagant.
दुर्लभ सालक भेटियो १: ४

चितवन, जेठ १७ (नागरिक)- दुर्लभ वन्यजन्तु सालक आइतबार छान पूर्वी चितवनको पितुवामा फेला परेको छ।

पितुवा सारुचोककी बिन्दा श्रेष्ठले बिहान ८ बजे शालक फेला पारेकी हुन्। खेत हेर्न गएका बेला नहरमा बसिरहेको शालक उनले भेटेकी हुन्।

स्थानीयवासीले सालकलाई आइतबार नै जिल्ला वन कार्यालय चितवनमा बुझाएका छन्। एक फुट ११ इन्च लम्बाई र १० इन्च मोटाइको सालक अन्दाजी ३ किलोग्रामको छ।



दुर्लभ वन्यजन्तु सालक भेटियो

♦ प्रकाशबाबु खनाल/कायाकर्तब पिठुवा/मानव अतिक्रमणका कारण लोप हुँदै गएको वन्यजन्तु सालक पछिल्लो समयमा पिठुवा गाविसमा देखा परेको छ ।

गत आइतबार स्थानीय विन्दा श्रेष्ठ मर्कौवारीमा घाँस काट्न जाँदा सालक भेटेकी थिइन । शुरुमा अनौठो जन्तु देखेपछि उनले स्थानीय सवैलाई खबर गरेपछि दुर्लभ वन्य जन्तु सालक भएको पत्ता भएको थियो । करिब साढे दुई किलो तौल भएको सालकको लम्बाई एक फिट एघार इन्च र मोटाई दश इन्च थियो । सो सालकलाई स्थानीयवासीले जिल्ला वन कार्यालयका कर्मचारीलाई बुझाएका थिए । करिब सात महिनाको बच्चा सालकलाई सोही दिनमा नै राष्ट्रिय निकुञ्जमा लगेर छाडिदिएको जिल्ला वन सहायक अधिकृत इन्द्रमणि सेट्टाईले बताउनु भयो ।

राष्ट्रिय निकुञ्ज तथा वन्यजन्तु संरक्षण ऐन २०२९ ले यसलाई संरक्षित वन्यजन्तु भित्र राखेको छ । सालक लोप हुँदै गएको संरक्षित वन्यजन्तु भित्र परेपनि संरक्षणमा लागेकाहरूले यस जन्तुको संरक्षणका लागि कुनै कदम चालेको देखिदैन ।

गाउँघरमा सालमाछाको रूपमा चिनिने सालकको मासु र खबटा । शरीरमा हुने कल्ता) दम, मर्का तका जस्ता रोग भएका विरामीहरूको लागि औषधि हुने जनविश्वास रहेको छ ।

मध्य पहाडको फेदी र तराइको माथिल्लो भागमा हुने जंगलमा पाइने सालकले दुर्लभ भित्र बच्चा पाउँ । विदेशतिर घनाद्वय परिवारले यसको आकर्षक छान्ना शौखको रूपमा अवैध खरिद विक्रीकालागि चोरी शिकारी हुने गरेको संरक्षणकर्मीहरूले बताएपनि नेपालमा भने हालसम्म सालकको चोरी

शिकारीको घटना बाहिर आएको छैन ।

लजालु स्वभाव र एकान्तप्रेमी यस दुर्लभ वन्यजन्तु सालकको चोरी शिकारी गर्नेलाई ४० देखि ४२ हजार, सम्म जरिवाना दुई देखि दश वर्षसम्म जेल सजाय हुने कानुनी प्रावधान रहेको छ । छिमेकी देश भारतमा पनि दुर्लभ वन्यजन्तुको सधैं २७ मा पर्ने सालक नेपालमा त्यति नै संख्याको हाराहारीमा छ भन्ने कुनै तथ्यांक नभएको निकुञ्जका सहायक संरक्षण अधिकृत बुद्धिराज पाठले बताउनु भयो । जंगलछेउमा मानव समुदायको अतिक्रमण हुन थालेपछि गाउँ वस्तीमा प्रवेश गर्न थालेको सालक यस भन्दा अघि भक्तपुरमा देखिएको थियो ।

दैनिक आहारको रूपमा कमिला र धमिरा खाने सालकको प्राकृतिक

दुर्लभ.....

शत्रु नभएपनि यसलाई अजिगरले खान सक्ने संरक्षणकर्मीहरू बताउँछन् । वन भित्र सुकेका र ढलेका रुखहरू सामुदायिक वन माफत बाहिर ल्याउन थालेपछि कमिला र धमिरा घट्दै जान थालेको छ । आफ्नो आहार खोज्दै सालक पछिल्लो समयमा गाउँ वस्तीमा देखिन थालेको छ । न्याउरी मुसा जस्तै देखिने तर शरीरैभरी कल्ता नै कल्ता हुने सालक संरक्षित वन्यजन्तु राष्ट्रको सम्पत्ती भएकोले यसको संरक्षण गर्न हामी सबैको दायित्व हो । गाउँवस्तीमा कतैले सालक देखेमा नजिकको प्रहरी चौकी, वन कार्यालय वा राष्ट्रिय निकुञ्जमा खबर गरिदिनु निकुञ्जका प्रमुख संरक्षण अधिकृत डा. नरेन्द्र बाबुमान प्रधानले सवैलाई अनुरोध गर्नुभएको छ ।



Research in progress:

1. Visit to Balthali, Kavrepalanchok for pangolin survey
2. Final collection of questionnaire
3. Data Analysis
4. Preparation of brochures
5. Launching of awareness programme
6. Final Report to Rufford