

O - CONSERVATION RHINO IN THE EYE OF JOURNALIST**Mr. Prabhakar Ghimire and
Mr. Subodh Gautam**

Due to the Maoist insurgency, conservation in Nepal suffered heavy loss. Maximum numbers of rhinos were killed by the poachers manipulating the political situation in Nepal during these insurgencies. Now that the political situation is stable in Nepal, poaching still remains a threat, explained Mr. Prabhakar Ghimire. In 5 months, about 12 rhinos were killed by the poachers and three died from natural causes.

Mr. Prabhakar also informed that the poachers and traders often receive the political protection. Some wardens are also seen misusing their powers, and lack of proper investigation, commitment from the Government bodies and negligence of conservation staff are some of the reasons why the rhinos end up in the hands of wildlife traders and poachers. However, if provisions are made for punishing those officials misusing their powers, including severe penalties and punishments for those involved in trading rhino horns, with proper investigation, the poaching rate could certainly be less than at present. Mr. Prabhakar further added that the cooperation of local people living in the buffer zone and adjacent to protected areas will also be the key to achieving success in combating poaching.

One of the major roles played by media in the field of conservation is creating awareness to the people by giving conservation related news and programs that discourage poaching. Two senior conservation officer were suspended as a result of strong media reports. Despite that, there are various problems faced by the media, including obtaining proper information because the knowledgeable sources prefer to stay away from the journalists, difficulty of access to the concerned officials, lack of specialized knowledge among journalists, lack of coordination between local reporters and people, and that conservation issues are not the main concern among the people and the local level media is not influential enough. If we prevail over these limitations, then the poaching threats in Chitwan will indeed drop off.

P RHINO ACTION PLAN IN NEPAL**Mr. Puran B. Shrestha**

The main goal for the rhino action plan is to preserve the *Rhinoceros unicornis* and strengthen the recovery of rhino population in Nepal. It aims to build and maintain the population of rhino in Nepal through translocation, to develop the local guardianship, to continue scientific studies and monitoring, to develop human resources in wildlife management and most importantly to stop the illegal trade of rhino horn and products.

The main objectives are:

- Study biology and habitat and establish a database with a monitoring system by conducting essential research on rhino.
- Habitat expansion through rehabilitation, restoration of identified priority rhino habitats by maintaining forest corridor, and developing tourism plans for protected areas.
- Create viable population by translocating more rhinos and monitoring translocated rhinos.
- Improve rhino human relation through buffer zone development and conservation by implementing awareness programs, community development programs, trainings, and a community relief fund.
- Strengthen anti-poaching capabilities by establishing and equipping anti-poaching units, and supporting national legislation as well as CITIES..
- Build up institutional capacities by providing specific trainings, and strengthening infrastructure, including building orphanage centers in each protected area. Improve storage for rhino horn stock piles.
- Strengthen national transboundary, regional and international collaboration through organized periodic meetings which aim to develop an information-sharing mechanism.
- Continuous transfer of rhino for ex situ conservation from wild populations by preparing rhino transfer criteria, and a translocation schedule.