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One-horned rhinoceros caught on camera in Royal Manas National Park

December 15th, 2018 | [post-views] |



Just as the Royal Manas National Park (RMNP) was planning to delist one-horned rhinoceros, it spotted one on a camera trap in May 2018.

It was captured multiple times in a camera trap set up for tracking tigers. Officials at the park said it has been nearly two decades since one of the jewels of the park had gone missing since the early 90's.

Sr Park Ranger Dorji Wangchuk said it was in February 1992 when the record of the last sighting of rhino in the park was excerpted from a diary of one of the retired foresters. "No record revealed or single evidence was sighted thereafter," he said.

He added that human predation and poaching was solely responsible for the extirpation of rhino from its habitat in the park and its surrounding areas.

"Reappearing of the one-horned rhinoceros in its habitat is a welcome news for the people of Bhutan," he said. One-horned rhino is listed as vulnerable species as per International Union for Conservation of Nature Red list.

To protect the vulnerable species, the RMNP through commitments and support will continue to implement various activities. One of the activities is smart patrolling and synchronised patrolling along the border with Indian counterpart. Habitat management through managing grass, saltlick and waterholes are some of the activities the park undertakes regularly.

Dorji Wangchuk said that at the moment the park is prioritising events and activities that support livelihood and engage park communities to make them realise and change their mindset towards the importance of environmental protection and biodiversity conservation. "This is to sensitise people against poaching," he said.

RMNP expects to spot the rhino in camera again when the annual (winter) camera-trapping programme is set up next month.

Nirmala Pokhrel | Tsirang

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