

Project Update: June, 2019

1. School Programme

The final day for school programme was held in 26 February 2019 in Kohalpur sector of Banke National Park. Chief guest was Mr. Yubraj Regmi (Park Warden). President of Community Based Anti-Poaching Unit Mr. Krishna Lal Chaudary was also the guest of this final programme. Students who had secured first, second and third position for each category in poem, essay and drawing were awarded from chief guest and guests. All together nine students were selected from four different schools from each category.



Left: School awareness programme in Kohalpur sector. Right: Student receiving prize from chief guest.

During the programme Mr. Yubraj Regmi (Park Warden) has highlighted the importance of conservation of top predators in order to secure the ecosystem. He has also mentioned that it is necessary to aware students regarding the conservation of tiger and leopard so that they could develop positive attitude towards conservation. President of Community Based Anti-Poaching Unit Mr. Krishna Lal Chaudary has provided some examples based on community anti-poaching works. Some local media had printed the news regarding the completion of student and community awareness programme.



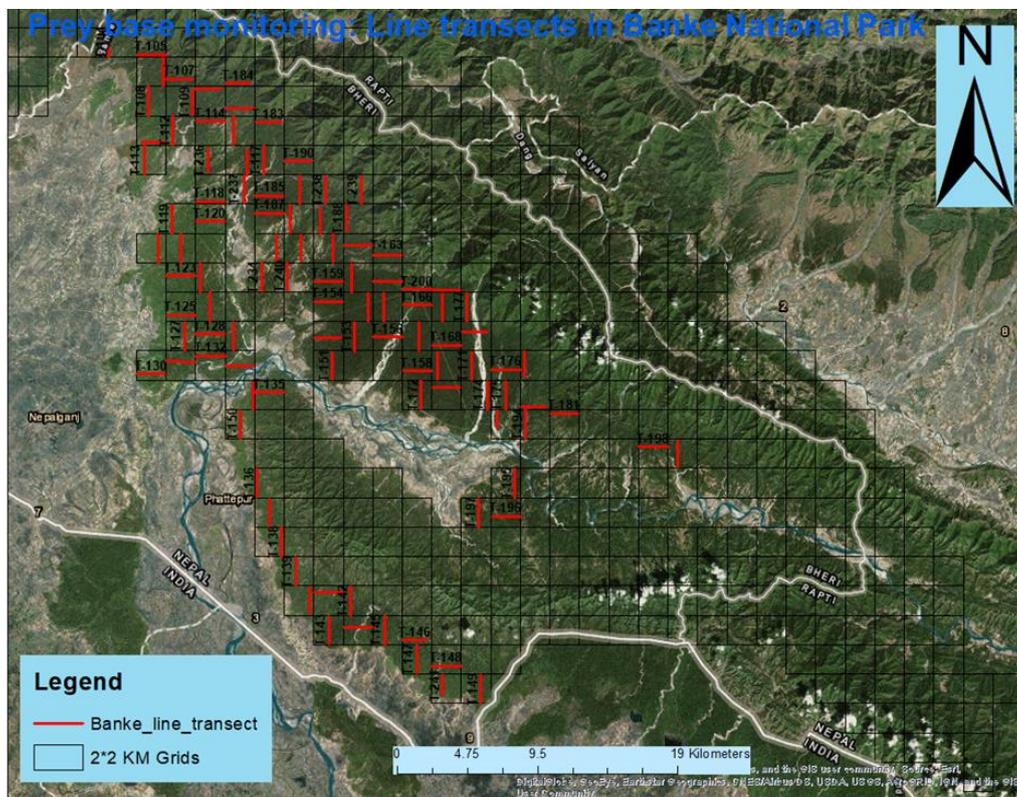
Left: President of Community Based Anti-Poaching Unit Mr. Krishna Lal Chaudary interacting with students. Right: Local media (Highway post) with the news regarding the successful completion of student and community awareness programme.

3. Line Transect

Distance sampling was carried out from March 26 to April 5, 2019 after 1-day orientation programme. Orientation programme was facilitated by Umesh Paudel. Twelve people were oriented to conduct the line transect. Ranger, senior game scout, game scout, and field assistance from NTNC were trained. On the same day of orientation and the next day intensive field practice was organised so, that no mistake occurs in data generation during fieldwork. The survey was conducted along the 105 line transects in both Banke National Park and Kamdi forest corridor. The length of line varies from 1.5 to 2 km respectively. The survey was conducted in morning between 7am to 10am and in evening from 4pm to 6pm. Time preference was preferred in order to have maximum detection of wild animals. During the line transect survey scats of tigers and leopards were also collected opportunistically. Maximum prey detected were chital, and wild boar followed by barking deer, hog deer, nilgai.



Left: Line transect orientation to team members. Right: Field practice for line transect.



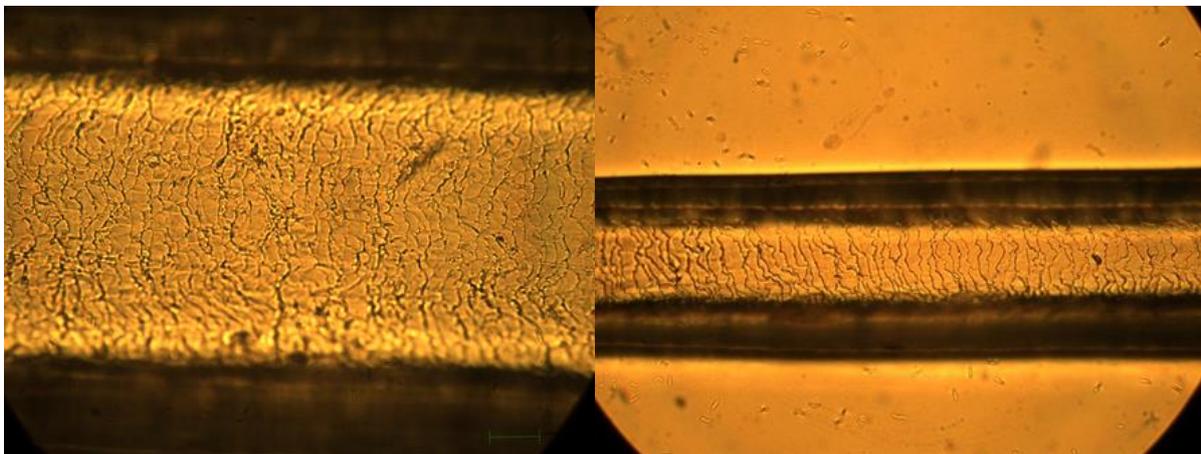
Map prepared for line transect in Bake National Park and Kamdi forest corridor.

4. Scat analysis

After the collection of each scat from different time of field visit, we have analysed the hair contents in scats to identify the prey species. All total 50 scats of tigers and 60 scats of leopards were collected till the end of first week of April, 2019. This will provide the winter season diet pattern of both felids from BaNP and Kamdi forest corridor.

The medullary and cuticle characteristics were taken into consideration while identifying the prey species. Sometimes the colour of the hair was also considered. The microphotographs developed thus, were compared with the former research articles. Species identification from guard hair of selected Indian mammals, a reference guide was preferred the most during this work. Some reference slides of wild prey were prepared from the site killed observed during the field work belonging to wild boar and chital. For domestic prey, specimens were prepared by ourselves and for convenient we have compared it with other research also.

Tiger has a very narrow range of wild prey as its food as compared to leopard. But, for both species wild boar and chital are the staple food. Domestic animals were killed as its prey by leopards rather than tigers revealed from scat analysis.



Left: Microphotograph (Cuticle) developed to identify the prey species from hair contents in scats, belongs to wild boar. Right: Microphotograph (Cuticle) developed as specimens for domestic animals, belongs to buffalo.

ADDITIONAL

Decline in prey species, habitat loss and poaching are the major threats to wildlife. Among the three factors that are associated to decline in tiger and leopard population is poaching, either directly or indirectly. The team has detected some incidence during their survey in chure section that the potential prey species were badly poached. Among two different species one species was conformed as sambar and the next was unidentified.



Left: Poaching detected during line transect work in Banke National Park. Right: Skull of sambar found at the poaching site.

For more visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2X8dcyJQ_w&t=8s

With this unexpected loss of wildlife despite our efforts and investments our team has thought to work on this aspect in future. Chure is one of the potential land that could harbor the population of tiger if such activities are checked. However, the study on chure section are found in low proportion because of topographic difficulties.



Left: Site kill detected in jungle belong to male chital. Right: Skull of unidentified specimens found at the poaching sites