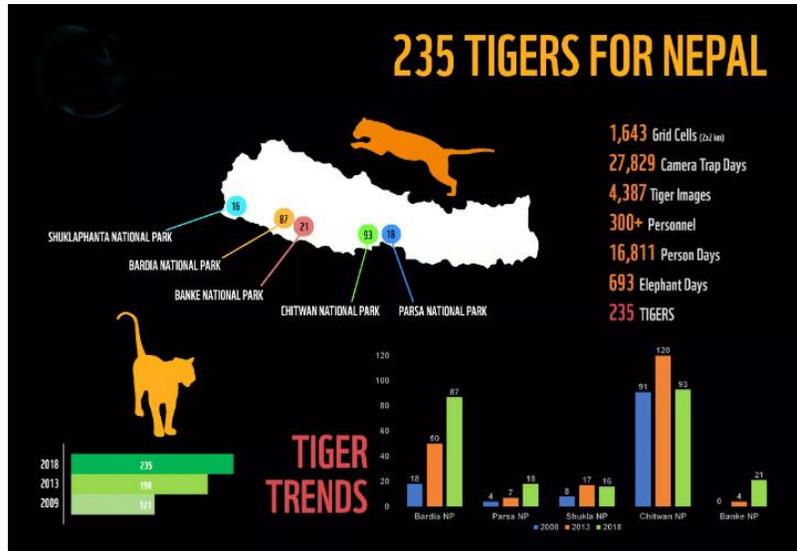


## Project Update: December 2018

### General updates:

The Government of Nepal conducted its national tiger survey between November 2017 and April 2018 in the transboundary Terai Arc Landscape (TAL), a vast area of diverse ecosystems shared with India. On 23rd September 2018, on the occasion of National Conservation Day, the Government of Nepal announced that there were an estimated 235 wild tigers living across five protected areas in the country, nearly



doubling the baseline of around 121 tigers in 2009. If these trends continue, Nepal could become the first country to double its national tiger population since the ambitious TX2 goal - to double the world's wild tiger population by 2022 - was set at the St Petersburg Tiger Summit in 2010.

Tiger (*Panthera tigris*) is a globally endangered species, and despite deploying extensive conservation efforts in the ground, tiger populations continue to decline in most of its global distribution range. Human-tiger conflict (HTC) has become one of the most critical issues in Nepal resulting into loss of livestock and even human lives too.



Accordingly, two unpleasant incidents happened in the buffer zone of Chitwan National Park where two people were killed by tigers in August 2018. To prevent further loss, the CNP authority has captured these problematic tigers and kept them at an animal rescue centre.

Nepal is known for its outstanding work on wildlife species conservation globally but it is not clear whether conservation is happening at the cost of peoples' livelihoods. Therefore, understanding the level of human-tiger interactions and intervening to reduce the negative human-tiger interactions to a level that enables people and tigers to co-exist in the shared landscape is essential.

## Project activity updates:

1. Research permission was given by Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and Chitwan National Park (CNP) on May 16th 2018 for the smooth implementation of the project. It is really a lengthy process herein Nepalese context.



2. While waiting for the research permission, we have coordinated with DNPWC, CNP and other concerned stakeholders, and shared with them the project aims and field level activities for the better coordination / collaboration during field level project activity implementation.

3. We have formed the project advisory committee with the engagement of national park officials for the monitoring and evaluation of field level project interventions.



4. A participatory mapping exercise such as key informant interviews, focus group discussion and household survey has started to understand the human-tiger interactions, identify the tiger victim families, and also assess the adaptive and mitigation measures applied by local communities to escape from tiger attacks in the study area. It is still ongoing.

Now we are also working in the field to collect tiger scats for stress monitoring of tigers in relation to anthropogenic disturbances. Though this activity is not directly mentioned in the original proposal, it seems very relevant to understand the human-tiger interactions in the study area. The stress monitoring technique using non-invasive techniques may necessarily help to identify the level stress and root causes of it. There are no study reports relating the stress mapping at micro-level in the Chitwan National Park, and other protected areas of the country. Such information are of key importance for the park management as it will provide

quantitative data on stress identification and further management and conservation of the species in CNP and other PAs too.

5. The project has also been supporting the Namuna Buffer Zone Community Forest User Group in its regular activities for grassland management and plantation work in degraded buffer zone forest in April and July, 2018. Some NRM initiatives are seasonal one, therefore now we are also planning to support few more NRM initiatives in April and July 2019.

