

# **Nepali Snake Festival Report**



**An update submitted by**

**Kamal Devkota**

## **Naag Panchami (Nepali Snake Festival) Celebration in Nepal**

We have celebrated Naag Panchami (Nepali Snake Festival) at Kawasoti, Nawalpur, Gandaki Province, Nepal by conducting "Let's Unite to Celebrate Naag Panchami" program with themes; "I Speak for Snake Conservation, and You?" and "Save The Lives" and "Save The King".

Panchami is the 5th day among the 15 days of the moon's waxing and/or waning. The Naag Panchami always falls on the 5th day of the moon's waning in the Lunar in July/August (Nepali Shrawan month). On the Naag Panchami, images of snakes made by paintings, posters, wood, stone, etc., are worshipped by Hindu people in Nepal. People stick images of snakes on the doorways and walls outside the house. They also spell the mantras written in the poster/images. It is believed that by worshipping snakes in this special day, snakebite can be avoided, diseases can be cured, and rain will be assured for their growing crops. On other days, when encounter, most of the people kill the snakes whatever the snake is either venomous or non-venomous due to fear of being bitten and due to lack of awareness but on this special day, people generally try to avoid killing the snakes.

The 1-day workshop was conducted on this special occasion with the guidance of Dr Chhabil Thapa, President of Nepal Toxinology Association. The Project leader Mr Kamal Devkota shared his knowledge and experiences on snake conservation in Nepal and the importance of educational programmes to mitigate human-snake conflicts in the communities. He also enlightened about our ongoing projects, "I Speak for Snake Conservation, and You?", "Save The Lives" and "Save The King". Dr Amod Ghimire talked about medical importance of snakebite and its management. Mr Keshab Chapagain, District Health Officer was invited as a Chief Guest of the programme who has delivered his speech on the public health issues of snakes and snakebites. We also have invited Dr Gopal Khanal, Chairman of the Midpoint District Hospital Management Committee as a Special Guest who talked about the role of management team to reduce human-snake conflicts in the communities. Approximately 60 participants were present in this programme including medical personnel, students, biologists, stakeholders, local leaders and media personnel. Some of our team members also got an opportunity to go for a rescue call while we were conducting workshop and rescued spectacled cobra which we displayed in the programme to show that snakes do not harm us until it is provoked or threatened. We displayed venomous spectacled cobra under the supervision of snake experts with the help of trained professional rescuers by following the rescue guidelines and applying safety measures. Our team members not only rescued the king cobra from the district but also educated community people on the spot and distributed our brochures and posters to them and later safely released it into its nearby natural habitat under the presence of forest officials. Some of our team members were interviewed by various newspapers, television and FM radio.



Group photo after the Naag Panchami celebration



Worshipping the snake posters with the cultural and religious point of view to save the snakes



Project leader **Mr. Kamal Devkota** sharing his knowledge and experiences on snake conservation in Nepal and the importance of educational programs to mitigate human-snake conflicts in the communities.



Project leader **Mr. Kamal Devkota** talking about our ongoing projects, "I Speak for Snake Conservation, and You?", "Save The Lives" and "Save The King".



Mr. Keshab Chapagain, **District Health Officer** who was invited as a Chief Guest, giving the speech on the public health issues of snakes and snakebites.



Dr. Gopal Khanal, Chairman of the **Midpoint District Hospital** Management Committee, talking about the role of management team to reduce human-snake conflicts in the communities.



Dr. Amod Ghimire talking about medical importance of snakebite and management.



Staffs from the Division Forest Office, Nawalpur, talking about the rules and guidelines about rescue and relocation of snakes and the problems they are facing while rescuing the snakes.



We displayed venomous Spectacled Cobra (*Naja naja*) under the supervision of snake experts with the help of well-trained professional rescuers by following the rescue ethics and applying safety measures.



Participants from various fields and from various districts from Nepal.



Project leader **Mr. Kamal Devkota** explaining the ecology and behavior of Spectacled Cobra (*Naja naja*) while displaying the snake to the participants for the educational and awareness purposes with the help of well-trained professional rescuers by following safety measures and safe distance.

**I Speak for Snake Conservation, and You ?**



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Let's Unite to Celebrate **NaagPanchami**

**Discussion Topics:**

- Snake Identification
- Human-Snake Conflict Mitigation
- Snakebite Management
- Snake Rescue & relocation
- Snake Conservation

**Who Can Participate?**

- Snake Conservationists
- Snake Rescuers
- Health Personnel
- Snake Charmers
- Snakebite Traditional Healers
- Snake enthusiasts

Venue:Kawasoti, Nawalpur, Nepal (Hotel Blue Heaven)  
Date:29 Shrawan  
Time: 10am-4pm

**SAVE THE KING**  
Human-King Cobra Co-Existence



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Naag Panchami Celebration Posters