

RESEARCH SEMINAR

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Trapping Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*): Community Participation in Monitoring and Conservation in Lapchi Valley

24 October 2024 (Thu)
4:30 – 6:00 pm (UTC+8)
Rm 221, Chen Kou Bun
Building, CUHK

Lapchi Valley, situated in the central Himalayas, serves as a critical ecological corridor connecting Nepal's Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) and Langtang National Parks with China's Qomolangma National Nature Reserve. People here are semi-nomadic yak herders who practice "Beyul", emphasizing spiritual harmony with and respect for biodiversity and nature conservation. They often experience livestock loss due to predation by snow leopards (*Panthera uncia* (Schreber)) and Himalayan bears (*Ursus arctos isabellinus* Horsfield). Nonetheless, the community remain deeply interested in the conservation of snow leopards and their prey species, reflecting a strong cultural commitment to wildlife conservation. To support the conservation ethos, the local community was enrolled in a monitoring program focusing on snow leopards and their prey species utilizing camera trap survey. A total of twenty-six camera traps (CTs) were installed over an area of 280 km² using 4*4 km² grid. The study was conducted over 15 months (October 2021 - January 2023), and involved 37 local participants. Notably, the camera trap study identified six individual snow leopards, including two females with cubs, one snow leopard with a blind eye and another with abdomen injuries. The study also revealed that wildlife frequently utilizes human-made infrastructure, such as bridges, water pools, and footpaths. Himalayan black bears were observed to frequently visit human settlements, raiding homes for ghee/butter, flour, and vegetables. Regular monitoring of movement and activity patterns of wildlife has helped the local community reduce direct encounters with wildlife, mitigating human-wildlife conflict. Conservation and monitoring of wildlife become more effective with the participation of the community.



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Dr Narayan Prasad Koju has over 15 years of experience in research and teaching in conservation biology, evolutionary biology, wildlife management and climate change. He is highly regarded for producing high-quality wildlife and ecology research in the Himalayan region, with extensive expertise in training both institutional researchers and local communities. He is actively involved in curriculum development for postgraduate courses with proven track record in field research, and lab work, having successfully published 22 articles in SCIMAGO-Journals and supervised more than 50 MSc and PhD theses. His international exposure includes being a visiting scientist in the USA and China, and collaborating with prominent university research teams from the USA, China, UK, Switzerland, Germany and India.



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