

## Alpine Musk Deer *Moschus chrysogaster* conservation outreach program in Khaptad National Park, Nepal

The Alpine Musk Deer *Moschus chrysogaster* has been classified as an 'Endangered' species on the IUCN Red List, listed in Appendix I of CITES, and protected by the Government of Nepal because of its declining population trend. It is endemic to the Himalayan region and is distributed in the altitudinal range of 2,500–4,500 m (Green 1986; Zhixiao & Helin 2002; Lamsal et al. 2018).

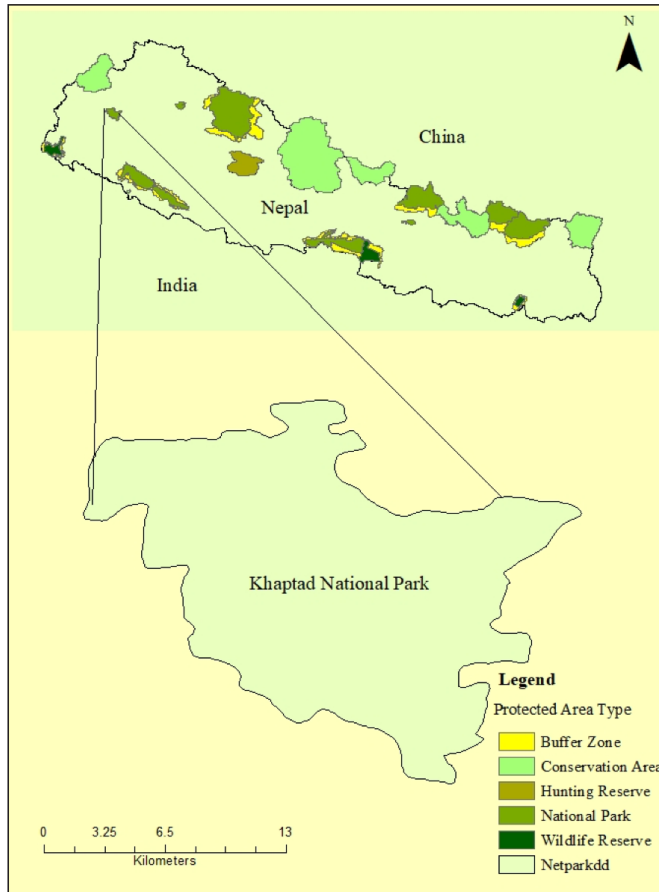
The species is facing massive threats from humans such as poaching, habitat loss, and unmanaged livestock grazing. In addition, feral dogs are an emerging threat in most parts of the country (Thapamagar et al. 2018). Developing conservation knowledge to the rural people towards wildlife conservation is a way to conserve such endangered species (Zhixiao & Helin 2002; Bhandari et al. 2019). We conducted the conservation awareness



Alpine Musk Deer (© Tek Gharti Magar).

programme in Khaptad National Park (KNP) of western Nepal. The Park is a prime habitat for musk deer, Himalayan Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus*, and Wild Dog *Cuon alpinus* (Thapamagar et al. 2019). Most of the local people in those areas are dependent on agriculture and livestock farming. In such a landscape, the local people are a key factor for nature conservation (Bhandari & Chalise 2016). Conservation outreach programmes for musk deer conservation were done in Chhanna Khaptad rural

municipality of Bajhang District between October and November 2018 through group discussions in the villages, poster presentation and distribution of outreach materials such as posters and t-shirts. Around 150 people including school students were directly benefited from this. We made people aware of the ecology and behaviour of the musk deer and its importance in the Himalayan landscape. This programme was so helpful to develop a positive conservation attitude towards the musk deer



The study site location, Khaptad National Park, Nepal.



Participation of local people during Musk Deer conservation outreach program in KNP.

conservation in the KNP and its surrounding areas. Further, the programme motivated others for

further conservation work which might be significant in the Alpine Musk Deer conservation in Nepal

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