



RED PANDA
NETWORK

20
20 ANNUAL
REPORT



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MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

I hope this message finds you safe and well as we continue to fight our way through the COVID-19 pandemic. We are grateful to have you standing with us as we begin to see through the darkness, to a brighter future for our planet, and all of its wondrous inhabitants.

One of these inhabitants is, of course, the red panda. Thanks to you — our incredible donors and partners from around the world — we are persevering through an unprecedented time to save this endangered species.

In 2019, we initiated Nepal's first GPS-collaring project for red pandas where we successfully equipped ten wild red pandas with GPS-satellite collars. This is already providing critical baseline data on red panda ecology, distribution, and behavior in the wild.

Speaking of unprecedented: A Bengal tiger was photographed at an elevation of 3,165 meters by one of our camera traps in a forest in Ilam district, eastern Nepal!

It is the highest elevation a tiger has been sighted in Nepal and the very first photographic evidence of this species in the country's eastern red panda habitat. The first-ever record of a tiger in Ilam district demonstrates the importance of the PIT corridor in landscape connectivity, and conservation on transboundary and even global scales. PIT is home to approximately 25% of Nepal's red panda population and connects India's Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuary and Singalila National Park with Nepal's Kangchenjunga Conservation Area.

The forests of Nepal side in the PIT corridor are severely fragmented due to human encroachment. To combat deforestation, the Red Panda Network (RPN) launched

the Plant A Red Panda Home Campaign and, in 2020, we purchased over 9.6 hectares of private land for restoration. We also restored 15 hectares of degraded red panda habitat in Nepal which is about the size of 37 football fields!

This year, we also published a five-year (2015-2019) impact report and video highlighting the exciting milestones we have reached, thanks to supporters like you.

Unfortunately, it hasn't all been good news. Deforestation, wildfires, and poaching and illegal trade are threatening the future of red pandas in Nepal.

The year 2020 and 2021 have been the worst years in terms of wildfire in Nepal. Massive wildfires turned hundreds of hectares of the high-mountain forest into ashes, where red pandas live.

RPN is honored to provide emergency assistance to the amazing firefighting teams who played a pivotal role controlling the wildfires. We have been supporting community wild firefighting teams since 2015. Our community-based wildfire management program in eastern Nepal has trained more than 250 local people. The firefighting teams consist of Community Forest User Group (CFUG) members trained in combating wildfires and educated on fire types, causes, effects and preventive measures. RPN also provides wildfire-fighting tools and personal protective gear to the team members. Additionally, we work with local partner organizations to restore and establish water holes to fight wildfires as well as to avail water for wildlife and livestock.

In response to an unprecedented rise in red panda poaching in Nepal this year — likely driven by poverty and exacerbated by the pandemic

Thanks to our incredible donors and partners from around the world, we are persevering through an unprecedented time to save this endangered species.



— we are committed to enhancing the capacity of local and national level law enforcement agencies on anti-poaching investigation skills. We are also working with popular Nepali actor, director, and playwright, Dayahang Rai, who has joined RPN as a conservation ambassador. Rai will help us raise national awareness on this endangered species and a rising threat to their survival — the illegal red panda trade.

Our work in Bhutan continues as we remain committed to working with local communities to bolster red panda conservation in southwestern Bhutan: an important transboundary location.

We are excited to announce that we are expanding our community-based programs in eastern Nepal this year to three new districts: Solukhumbu, Bhojpur, and Khotang district! This strategic extension will

help to ensure the connectivity of three protected areas: PIT corridor in the east, Makalu-Barun in the north, and Gaurishankar in the west. We are also planning on beginning our conservation efforts in India in 2021.

Our efforts demonstrate the importance of community engagement, government commitment, and sound partnerships to successful and sustainable conservation. Thanks to your support, generosity and dedication to weathering these unique times with us, we are achieving tangible and measurable results — and unprecedented impact — we will save our beloved red panda and this precious planet.

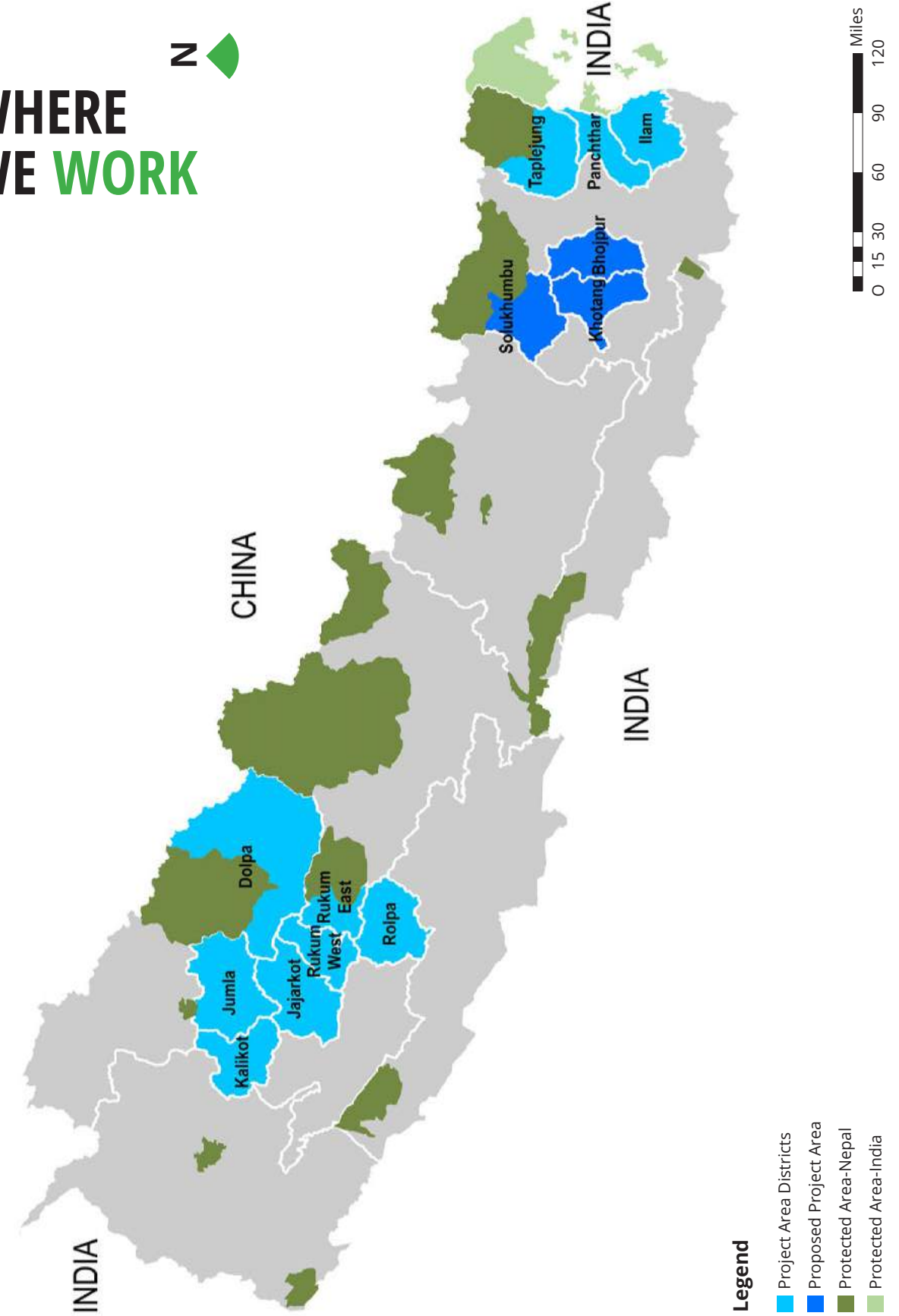
Ang Phuri Sherpa
COUNTRY DIRECTOR



ABOUT RED PANDA NETWORK

Through our holistic approach of community-based conservation, RPN envisions a secure, viable and thriving population of wild red panda. With over a decade of experience in scientific research and in situ conservation, RPN's expertise and impact ranges from grassroots to policy levels. Thanks to our supporters from around the world, we continue to deliver an outstanding track record of community-based red panda conservation.

WHERE WE WORK



RED PANDA NETWORK'S 5 YEAR IMPACT (2015-2019)

RESEARCH AND MONITORING



104

Community Forests Adopted a Community-Based Red Panda Monitoring Program



1st

National Red Panda Status Survey Conducted in Nepal



10

Red Pandas Equipped with GPS-Satellite Collars for the First Time in Nepal



495

Members of Anti-Poaching Networks Trained in Anti-Poaching Patrolling Techniques

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



731,057

People Reached with Red Panda Conservation Education and Outreach Initiatives in Nepal



96

Conservation Billboards Installed to Raise Red Panda Awareness



94

Red Panda Conservation Scholarships Awarded to Students in Local Community Schools



1,181

Students Attended School with Environment Conservation Education



HABITAT MANAGEMENT



36

Forest Conservation Nurseries Supported in Nepal



12,000

Hectares of Community Forest Area Managed with Red Panda Conservation Measures



400,000

Native Tree and Plant Saplings Planted in Community Forests



66

Hectares of Prime Red Panda Habitat Restored



SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD



135

Improved Cooking Stoves Distributed to Local Communities in Nepal



50+

Locals Trained as Nature Guides



1st

Construction of Sustainable Living Center Initiated in Taplejung District



31

Homestays Supported by RPN to Provide Accommodations to Ecotourists



GOVERNANCE



1st

Red Panda Protected Forest Being Established in the PIT Corridor



2

National Red Panda Conservation Action Plans Developed for Nepal and Bhutan



10

Grassroots Organizations Partnered with RPN to Conserve Red Pandas in Nepal



653

Local Council Members Participated in Red Panda Conservation Workshops



RESEARCH AND MONITORING



1ST
RECORD OF
BENGAL TIGER
IN EASTERN NEPAL
AT 3,165M



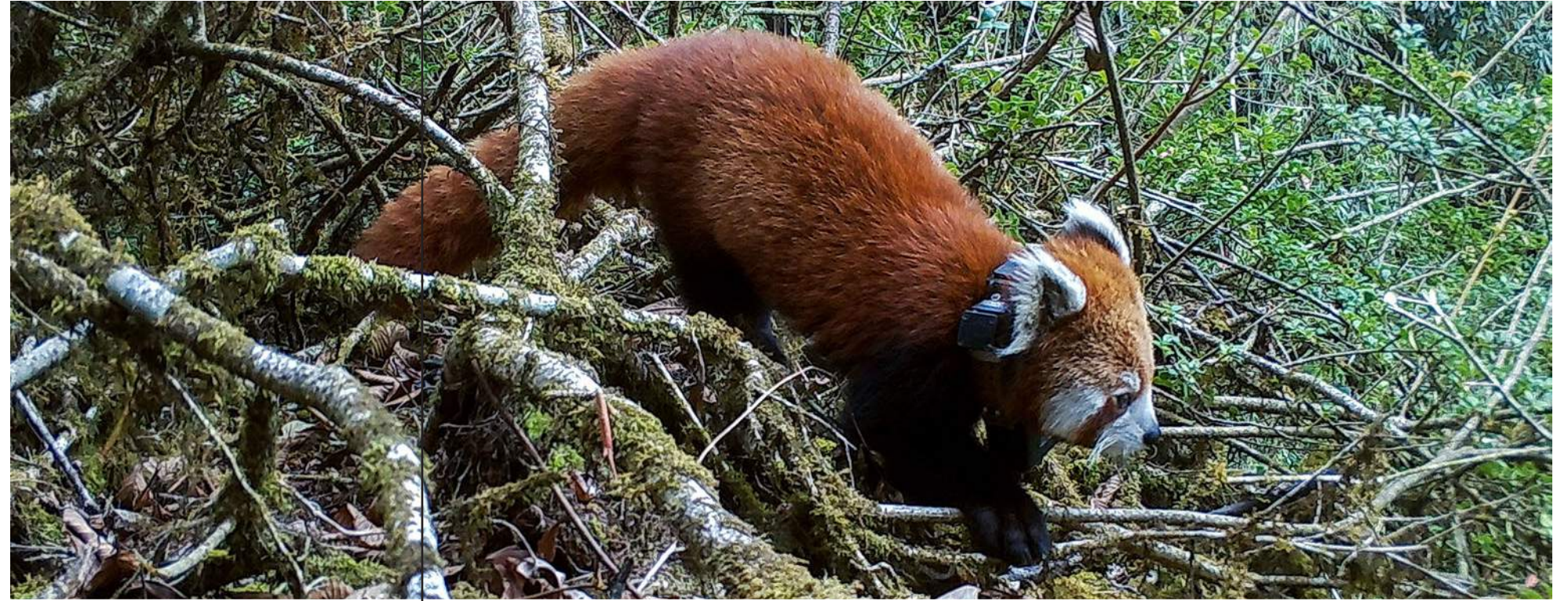
100+
FOREST
GUARDIANS

TEN GPS-COLLARED RED PANDAS SUCCESSFULLY MONITORED IN EASTERN NEPAL

Despite the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, RPN Forest Guardians were able to monitor and collect ecological data from the habitat of the collared red pandas in eastern Nepal. Between September and December of 2019, RPN successfully equipped ten wild red pandas with GPS-satellite collars in the PIT corridor. The four male and six female GPS-collared red pandas were monitored for a year. In addition, we installed motion-sensor camera traps in the area, which provided complimentary data. Three collared female red pandas also successfully raised their cubs during our monitoring and the cubs are happily living in the PIT forest.

Major objective of this study is to evaluate the effect of human disturbances and habitat fragmentation on red pandas. In particular, this study will examine the effects of roads, livestock grazing, human activities and habitat fragmentation on habitat utilization, space use and movement patterns.

This telemetry project is being implemented in collaboration with researchers from The University of Queensland, Australia. The study was facilitated by the Department of Forests and Soil Conservation in Nepal and was a part of an ex-situ red panda research collaboration with Rotterdam Zoo. The knowledge on trapping and handling techniques of red panda learned during the fieldwork of this project has already been published. The GPS data is being analyzed and the results will be available by the end of 2021. Information obtained from this study will help develop sound conservation strategies for the welfare of red pandas in Nepal and other range states.



HIGHEST EVER SIGHTING OF TIGER IN NEPAL

The Bengal tiger *Panthera tigris tigris* — one of the planet's most iconic large carnivores — was photographed at a record high elevation of 3,165 meters. Evidence of the Bengal tiger in eastern Nepal's red panda habitat emphasizes the need for high-mountain tiger conservation and opens up a multitude of research possibilities while validating the need for transboundary collaboration. This discovery also demonstrates the significance of the PIT corridor as a wildlife corridor that links the Kangchenjunga Conservation Area in Nepal and Singalila National Park in India with Wildlife Sanctuaries of West Bengal where tigers live.



COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH ON RED PANDA AND FOREST GOVERNANCE

RPN is collaborating with Griffith University, Kathmandu Forestry College, and University of Southern Queensland, on a research project (2021-2023) in red panda habitat to understand ecosystem services as well as the most effective governance standard to support red panda conservation. This project will help RPN improve its forest information-base and enable stakeholders to develop conservation policies and case

studies that provide national and regional context for identifying barriers and solutions to improved forest protection.

The engagement of stakeholders and building of their capacity, development of payments for ecosystem services, benefit-sharing, and incentive mechanisms for red panda habitat protection are the major activities of this collaborative project. This year, we have been able to identify the information gaps and needs, develop a stakeholder database, design and deploy training, and conduct online and telephone interviews with local, national, and international stakeholders.





EXPANDING COMMUNITY-BASED RED PANDA CONSERVATION

RPN is the world's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to red panda conservation. Originating in 2007 with "Project Punde Kundo" in two red panda range districts, RPN is now actively working in ten districts in Nepal and will soon extend to three additional districts in eastern Nepal: Solukhumbu, Khotang and Bhojpur.

Eastern Nepal's Panchthar-Ilam-Taplejung districts, known as the PIT corridor, is significant to the Kangchenjunga landscape because it is home to over 25% of the country's total red panda population. Likewise, western Nepal has over 3,924 km² of red panda habitat; more than 90% lies outside protected areas (PAs). Tila Karnali River in Kalikot district is the westernmost distribution (81.66° E) of the Himalayan red panda.

The newly added districts will help us establish a critical biological corridor that connects

the PIT corridor with Makalu Barun National Park in the east, Sagarmatha National Park in the north, and Gaurishankar Conservation Area in the west.

MONITORING RED PANDA AND THEIR HABITAT

Fifty-one Community Forests (CFs), consisting of 76 monitoring blocks that expand 1,216 kms in transect length, are traversed by 88 Forest Guardians (FGs) every three months in eastern and western Nepal to monitor red pandas and

their habitat. The goal is to gain insight into the status of the red panda population and growing changes over time aggravated by anthropogenic activities. The data will also be used to document their presence and initiate an index of red panda population.

FGs observed two direct sightings of red panda in the PIT corridor: an adult red panda was photographed

foraging on the branch of *Betula utilis* at an elevation of 2,784 meters in Kalikot district. During habitat surveillance, natural and anthropogenic threats such as landslides, bamboo die-off, conventional livestock grazing, deforestation, and snares were encountered in eastern and western Nepal.



CAPACITY BUILDING AND REFRESHER TRAINING

Forest Guardians are wildlife protectors and trained citizen scientists who are the heart and pillar of RPN's community-based red panda conservation. They are dedicated stewards of red panda habitat, braving inclement weather and harsh terrain while also advocating for red panda conservation. In 2020,

77 FGs benefited from 6 training sessions organized to enhance their knowledge and capacity in red panda monitoring including establishing new monitoring blocks, red panda data collection, boundary surveys of CFs and more. FGs were also comprehensively instructed on proper use of field equipment (GPS, Camera Traps, Vernier Caliper, DBH Tape, etc.) and collecting and preserving red panda pellets for diet analysis and parasitic loads.



BASIC FIRST-AID TRAINING

A four-day training was conducted in Ilam district to equip 13 FGs with lifesaving skills to help injured persons in case of fractures, sprains or any medical emergencies. Participants also learned cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and received first-aid kits and certificates.

61

FOREST GUARDIANS
ATTENDED FIRST-AID
TRAINING SO FAR



ANTI-POACHING PATROLLING

Data shows an unprecedented increase in illicit trade of red pandas in Nepal — one of the most pressing threats to the survival of this endangered species. In collaboration with local stakeholders, including Community Forest Users Groups (CFUGs) and FGs, two anti-poaching networks have been formed in western Nepal. They patrol red panda habitat, remove traps and snares, educate locals on the importance of red

panda conservation, and report poaching activity to enforcement agencies. Meanwhile, 36 CFs are patrolled bi-annually by the anti-poaching units, which include representatives from respective CFs, as well as ward members, police officers and FGs. The patrol units traversed 197 km in 437 hours, in areas identified as high-risk for poaching activity, and dismantled six traps and snares set for wildlife in eastern Nepal. A gun and snare was also found in Kalikot and Dolpa district of western Nepal. Anthropogenic threats such as Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and fodder and

firewood collection; unsustainable grazing, forest fire, and deforestation — the pandemic has likely exacerbated these threats and local dependence on forest resources — were encountered at concerning levels by the patrol units in 2020.



RED PANDA PRESENCE-ABSENCE SURVEY IN WESTERN NEPAL

A presence-absence wildlife survey is crucial to devise an effective conservation species management strategy. The survey information provides a reliable basis to classify potential habitats, along with the distribution trend, habitat status, and extant threats to the Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE) species. Under the supervision

of local partner organizations, RPN FGs and CFUG members conducted red panda presence-absence surveys in two CFs of Jajarkot and Rukum districts. The field team used a land cover map and traversed 77 km transect length in search of indirect red panda signs (pellets, scratch and feeding marks), where red pandas were confirmed in both CFs. A georeferenced database of red panda presence/potential habitat was created from the survey information.

PANDAS IN THE CLOUD

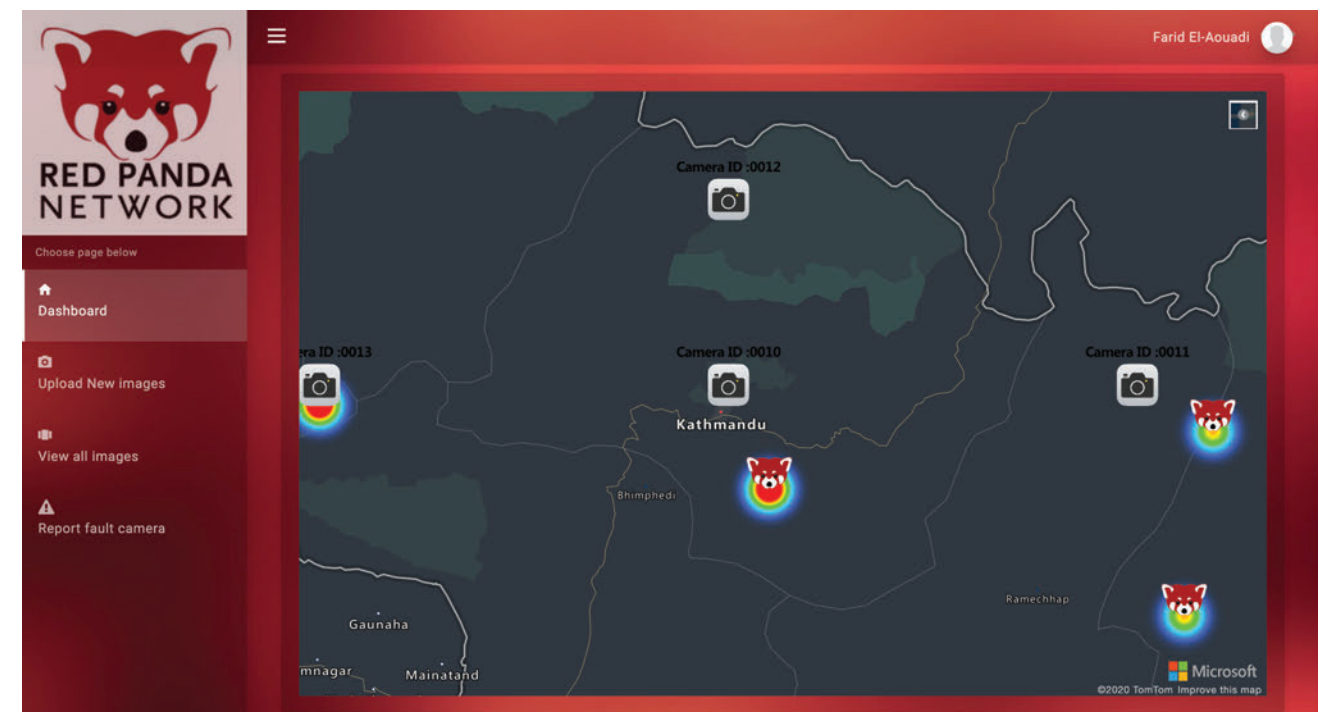
With the incorporation of the Red Panda Network Web App created via the Project 15 from Microsoft & University College London, this digital platform can automatically segregate photos gathered from camera traps as either Panda/Not panda. Additionally, Forest Guardians documented red pandas with camera or mobile phone cameras during their regular monitoring in their respective community forests. Both methods demand a significant amount of time to sort and verify the photos are in fact of red pandas as well as to physically transport the digital images back

to the office. It is estimated that the approximately 20 cameras take 55,000 photos over two months, so it is easy to see that a lot of employee time must be dedicated to the verification process.

With the incorporation of the Red Panda Network Web App created via the Project 15 from Microsoft & University College London, this digital platform can automatically segregate photos gathered from camera traps as either Panda/Not panda. These images are then available on the main map dashboard and associated with the specific camera that took them. A camera icon identifies the location and the user is able to see the images that were uploaded by clicking on the icon. Images

taken by Forest Guardians are uploaded in the same way and are differentiated on the map by a red panda icon. The specific location is accurately identified via the geographic metadata extracted from the photo.

This automatic classification of the photos into Panda/Not Panda will itself save countless hours of time and will be able to incorporate corrections made by the reviewers, making it even more accurate as more photos are taken. Being able to visually and accurately see the locations of sightings almost immediately will allow more comprehensive and swift analysis of the population and threats.



MAMMALS OF THE PANCHTHAR-ILAM-TAPLEJUNG (PIT) CORRIDOR

RPN has been monitoring mammals of the PIT region by deploying motion detected camera traps since 2018. The corridor harbors amazing wildlife besides red pandas.

PANDA SELFIES



Red Panda
Ailurus fulgens



Assam Macaque
Macaca assamensis



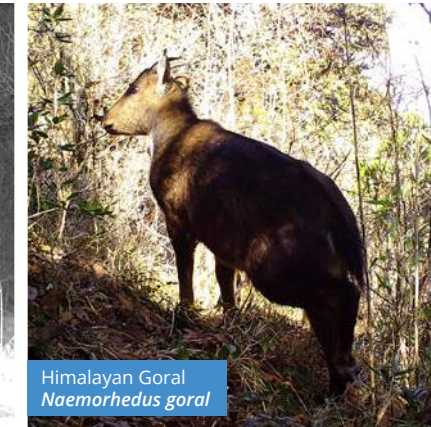
Bengal Tiger
Panthera tigris



Flying Squirrel



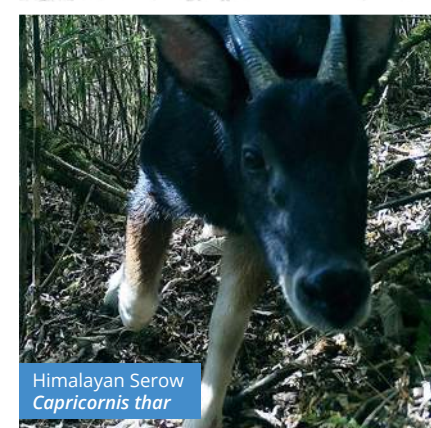
Himalayan Crestless Porcupine
Hystrix brachyuran



Himalayan Goral
Naemorhedus goral



Himalayan Palm Civet
Paguma larvata



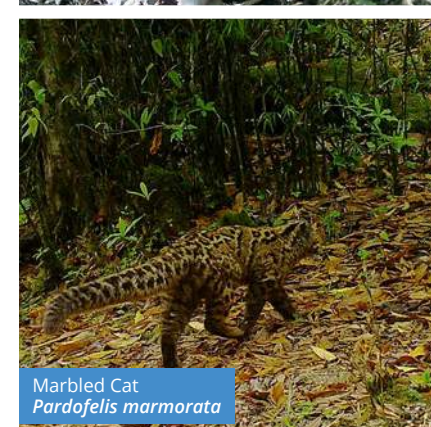
Himalayan Serow
Capricornis thar



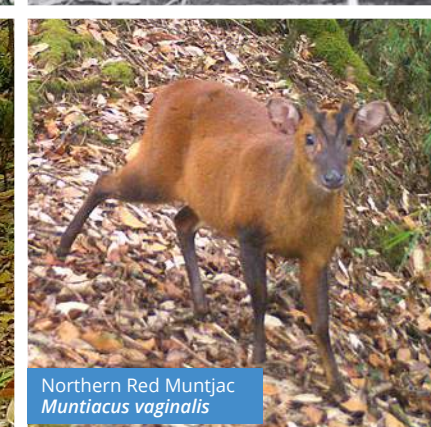
Leopard Cat
Prionailurus bengalensis



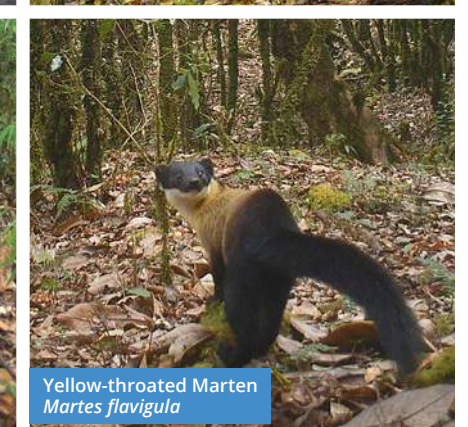
Leopard
Panthera pardus



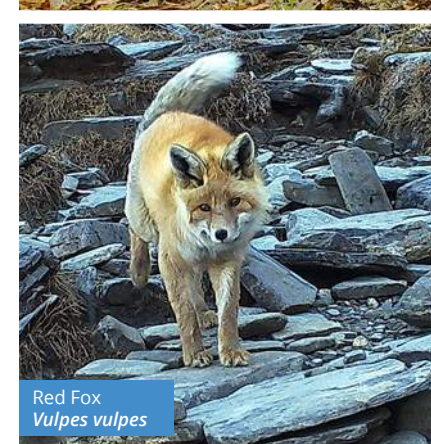
Marbled Cat
Pardofelis marmorata



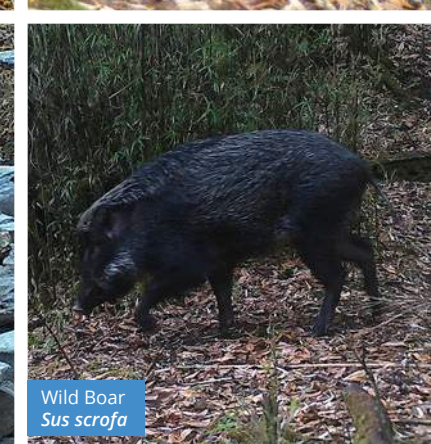
Northern Red Muntjac
Muntiacus vaginalis



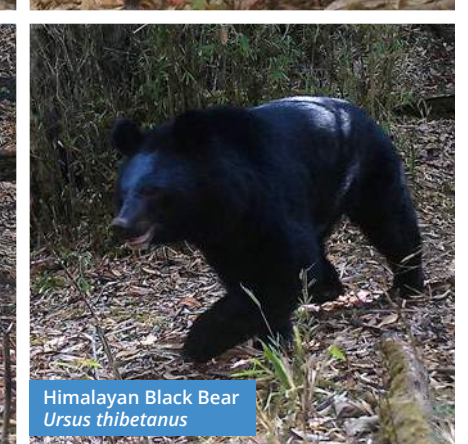
Yellow-throated Marten
Martes flavigula



Red Fox
Vulpes vulpes




Wild Boar
Sus scrofa




Himalayan Black Bear
Ursus thibetanus



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

 **900K+**
PEOPLE REACHED
WITH RED PANDA
CONSERVATION MESSAGE

 **100+**
STUDENTS STUDIED
RED PANDA CONSERVATION
TEXTBOOKS

 **14.9+**
MILLION DIGITAL
REACH via FACEBOOK

 **11.5+**
THOUSAND REACH
via FIRST PANDA FORUM



“ I thank Red Panda Network for sharing this global responsibility with me and for helping me build awareness in Nepal and across the world. We should be proud of this bipartite agreement. Let us unite together to conserve red panda.

DAYAHANG RAI

DAYAHANG RAI FIGHTS THE ILLEGAL RED PANDA TRADE

Dayahang Rai is a Nepali entertainment industry icon, actor, director and playwright who is a three-time recipient of national awards and has starred in over 40 Nepalese movies. Rai is featured in RPN's two-minute-ten-second Public Service Announcement (PSA) video to inspire people to conserve red pandas despite a growing illegal trade problem driven by misinformation and a fake market demand. The celebrity helped the PSA reach over 900+K on social media from remote villages in Nepal through South Asia.



RED PANDA CONSERVATION SCHOLARSHIP

Since 2019, RPN has been providing Red Panda Conservation Scholarships to students of Eco-Clubs/Roots and Shoots Groups at local schools as well as children and siblings of FGs. The scholarship is merit-based and available to the students in grades two to ten. This year, 78 students from 15 schools of marginalized communities in Dolpa, Jajarkot, Jumla and Kalikot districts were provided with in-kind scholarship support such as stationery materials, backpacks, and books.

ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION EDUCATION

RPN has supported 49 Red Panda Roots and Shoots Groups partner schools in integrating red panda conservation education since 2018. This year, RPN supported grades 6 and 7 of 21 schools in the integration. This initiative has benefited 793 sixth and seventh grade students of the PIT corridor as well as provided salary for 21 school teachers.

RED PANDA BULLETIN

Youth are the future of conservation. Involving students of schools in red panda range is critical to our long-term success in protecting red pandas and their habitat. For the past several years, students of Roots and Shoots groups have been publishing a red panda bulletin every three months. This year, we published and distributed 2,000 copies of annual bulletins (a compiled version of monthly bulletins) to District Education Offices, Rural Municipalities, Division Forest Offices and Roots and Shoots Group/Eco-club schools of the project area.

INTERNATIONAL RED PANDA DAY

Despite the pandemic, many zoos and individuals from all over the world participated in our virtual International Red Panda Day (IRPD) event in support of our Plant A Red Panda Home campaign in Nepal. \$12,080 was raised during the IRPD celebrations.

Akron Zoo, Happy Hollow Zoo, John Ball Zoo, Melbourne Zoo, Nordens Ark, Omuta City Zoo, Oregon Zoo, Paradise Wildlife Park, Parc Animalier d'Auvergne & La Passerelle Conservation, Rotterdam Zoo, and San Diego Zoo took part in the virtual IRPD celebration. The following zoos organized keepers talks and other activities to disseminate awareness to their visitors -

Brasov Zoo, Espace Zoologique de Saint Martin la Plaine, Galleries Zoo, Le Pal Animal Park, Lee Richardson Zoo, Monde Sauvage, Toronto Zoo, Parc animalier de Sainte-Croix, Parc de Clères, Parc de Clères, Poznan Zoo, Rosamond Gifford Zoo, Scovill Zoo, Seneca Park Zoo, Società Zoologica di Pistoia Srl, Touroparc Zoo, Trevor Zoo at Millbrook School, Utica Zoo, Wagor International School of Excellence, Wildlife Safari, Zoo d'Amiens, Zoo de Bordeaux Pessac, Zoo De La Boissière Du Doré, Zoo Montana, Zoo Mulhouse, Zooparc de Trégomeur.

20+
THOUSAND REACH
via IRPD LIVE CHAT



MINI ECOTRIP

RPN provides a first-hand experience of red panda habitat to local school students with short ecotrips that help to increase their appreciation of biological diversity while educating them on the importance of environmental

conservation. In 2020, 42 students from two eco-club schools in the PIT corridor and western Nepal's Dolpa district participated in a day-long red panda mini eco-trip. The ecotrips also encouraged students to adopt eco-friendly practices during their daily life.

CONSERVATION AWARENESS WORKSHOPS

Increasing human encroachment and disturbances like agricultural and settlement conversions, overgrazing, and unsustainable resource collection and developmental projects (hydropower, mining) are the primary causes of human-wildlife-conflict and habitat loss. This destructive activity also poses a direct and persistent threat to livelihoods, security and well-being of the local communities.

While there is no evidence of conflict between humans and red pandas, other species such as bears and leopards have been accused of damaging crops, killing domestic animals and threatening or injuring people. Therefore, in order to maximize our conservation success, RPN collaborates with the Division Forest Office in organizing workshops on human-wildlife-conflict for the local people of our project area. In total 176 herders and CFUG members of 9 CFs in Jajarkot, Dolpa, Jumla and Rolpa districts participated in these workshops, which covered causes and consequences of human-wildlife-conflict, as well as mitigation measures.



INFORMATION BOARDS

In collaboration with the local council agencies, RPN installed 62 information boards with red pandas and environmental conservation messages in strategic locations of the project area. These boards are helping to augment local conservation interventions and ecotourism promotion.

RADIO CAMPAIGN

In 2020, RPN signed a one-year media partnership with seven FM radio stations in the red panda range. In total, 50 episodes were broadcasted that raised awareness of endangered red pandas, threats to their survival, their conservation importance — to biodiversity and local, sustainable livelihoods — and how we can protect them. It is estimated that more than 50,000 people are being reached in western Nepal through this radio campaign.

50+
THOUSAND PEOPLE REACHED IN WESTERN NEPAL THROUGH RADIO CAMPAIGN



HABITAT MANAGEMENT



15

HECTARES OF
DEGRADED FOREST
RESTORED



116,500

SAPLINGS RAISED IN
FOREST CONSERVATION
NURSERIES



LAND PURCHASE FOR CONSERVATION

The PIT corridor harbors the densest population of red panda in Nepal. The PIT is an uninterrupted stretch of protected land extending for 11,500 Km² and bridging Nepal's Kangchenjunga Conservation Area with India's Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuary and Singalila National Park. Unfortunately, this region along the border of the two countries is considerably fragmented into

patches — a dire threat to red panda population. To address this issue, and as a critical component of red panda habitat management action, RPN has been purchasing fragmented private land and working to restore and convert the land back to a functional corridor.

The focus is to reduce threats and drivers of habitat degradation leading to this fragmentation.

Two key interventions - rehabilitation through the plantation of native species and construction of fences for protection and facilitation

of natural regeneration were adopted. This year, RPN purchased approximately 9.6 hectares of private land in Jaubari, Ilam. Meanwhile, RPN is continuously monitoring its restoration impact on formerly purchased land through camera traps.

30
HECTARES OF
LAND PURCHASED
SO FAR

PLANT A RED PANDA HOME (PARPH)

To address the challenges of habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation in critical red panda habitat, RPN promotes active reforestation and natural regeneration. In 2020, 15 hectares of degraded forest and

barren lands were effectively restored through the planting of 20,200 seedlings. Most of the seedlings are contributed by forest conservation nurseries. In the PIT corridor, 138 local people were mobilized for the planting program. Also, 7.5 km of fences were constructed to protect new plants while promoting stall feeding of cattle to reduce grazing pressures in the planting sites.





WATER HOLES FOR WILDLIFE

Red pandas need to live within close proximity to water sources in order to survive. In collaboration with local organizations in eastern and western Nepal, RPN has created and restored 23 water holes/small ponds in potential red panda habitat, which all serve as a drinking water source to local wildlife, including red pandas.



SUPPORTING FOREST CONSERVATION NURSERIES

RPN is working with local CFUGs along with municipalities to establish and manage nurseries where Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs), NTFPs and native species (including red panda food species) are cultivated. In

2020, RPN supported five forest conservation nurseries in the PIT region and three in western Nepal, producing around 116,500 saplings. *Sorbus cuspidate*, *Magnolia champaca*, *Schefflera impressa*, *Paris polyphylla*, *Actinidia deliciosa*, *Lithocarpus pachyphylla*, *Rhododendron arboreum*, *Cedrus deodara*, *Taxus walliachiana*, *Zyanthozylum armatum*, *Juglans regia*, *Diploknema butyracea*, and *Cupressus torulosa*, Bamboo *Yushania maling* are some of the

species nurtured in the nurseries. The saplings are later planted in restoration sites and distributed to CFs to address the prevalent threat of forest fragmentation in core red panda habitat.

FOREST FIRE: FANNING THE FLAMES FOR RED PANDA CONSERVATION IN NEPAL



I led a firefighting response team of local people with support from RPN. We provided food and medical supplies, as well as drinking water, for the firefighting team. Absence of local water sources was a significant challenge in stopping the fire. The team lacked enough firefighting tools, gear and emergency supplies (limited to tree branches to contain the fire).

- **RAMESH RAI**, Program Coordinator, Himali Conservation Forum, Taplejung

On January, 2021 when wildfires burned through the high-mountain forest near the summit of Pathibhara hill in eastern Nepal's Taplejung district, RPN mobilized emergency relief support for the firefighting response team. The wildfire raged for sixteen days, burning nearly 100 hectares in

Pathibhara-Simbu, Sunpati, and Mayam Patal Community Forests — core red panda habitat where we have been implementing our community-based monitoring program since 2010. In order to alleviate the threat of human-caused wildfires to red panda habitat, populations and other

threatened, sympatric species, RPN has been organizing community-based firefighting training since 2015. More than 250 local people have been educated on fire types, causes, effects and preventive measures, and wildfire-fighting tools and personal protective gear has been distributed to response teams. Every year, RPN collaborates with local partner organizations to restore and create water holes — creating 10 water holes in Taplejung district alone — for wildlife, livestock, herders and communities, which have also been critical to the success in containing wildfires and protecting red panda habitat in the PIT region.

Another wildfire burned in red panda habitat in Basapachal Jharna Community Forest of Kalikot district in western Nepal. Fortunately, it was contained by local people, including our FGs, who had received community-based wildfire management training just two days prior.





FOREST FIRE MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Kalikot district is in the Karnali Conservation Landscape (KCL), which is critical to protecting a viable population of red pandas in western Nepal. It is also a place where climate-induced disasters — such as drought, landslides, and especially wildfires — can frequently occur. Kalikot experiences low average annual precipitation (i.e. 830.9 mm)

which makes this district prone to wildfires. From November 22, 2020 and March 22, 2021 Kalikot experienced 242 VIIRS fire alerts.

This impacts the disadvantaged rural communities of the KCL which are highly dependent on forest resources and ecosystem services for their well-being. Unfortunately, this dynamic puts unsustainable pressure on the environment and makes local people vulnerable when biodiversity is lost or when disaster strikes. In response, RPN conducted a two-day community-based forest fire management

training in Kalikot to educate and prepare local CFUGs and FGs for wildfire fighting and prevention. They were also provided with firefighting tools and personal protective gear.

CURBING RABIES

The booming population of feral dogs threatens red panda conservation efforts. Feral dogs can threaten red panda through direct predation, potential disease transmission (rabies and canine distemper), and parasitic infections. To reduce rabies transmission, RPN led an “anti-rabies vaccination” campaign. The results of this campaign were to vaccinate 1,709 free-ranging as well as domesticated dogs in and around red panda habitat. RPN is aiming to administer canine

2,610
DOGS VACCINATED
SO FAR

distemper vaccines to dogs. Canine distemper is a contagious and serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems of dogs. The virus can also be transmitted to livestock and wildlife. To help reduce this threat, RPN organized a 5-day free livestock medical campaign for the marginalized communities of Kalikot district in western Nepal. This campaign benefited 67 households whose 123 livestock were vaccinated and medicine were provided.





SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD



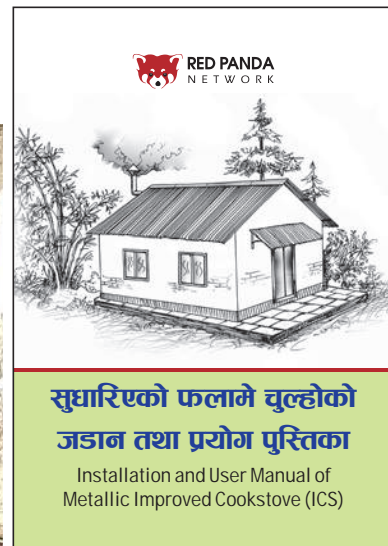
45

HOUSEHOLDS
BENEFITED FROM
IMPROVED METALLIC
COOKSTOVES



10,000

NATIVE SAPLINGS OF
NON-TIMBER FOREST
PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTED
TO MARGINALIZED
COMMUNITIES



सुधारिएको फलामे चुल्होको
जडान तथा प्रयोग पुस्तिका
Installation and User Manual of
Metallic Improved Cookstove (ICS)

PROMOTING CLEAN COOKING TECHNOLOGY WITH IMPROVED METALLIC COOKSTOVES

RPN has been working to reduce fuelwood dependency through a solution that aids communities and the environment - increasing access to improved cookstoves (ICS). This year, 45 households in the PIT corridor were supported with such stoves. The cookstove is designed according to

communities' suggestions for better thermal efficiency, a built-in water boiling system, and an attached chimney. The improved cook stoves culminate in societal and health benefits, especially for women, while further contributing to healthier forests that are more resilient to the impacts of climate

change. The installation of a single ICS is estimated to save around 18.83 kg of firewood per day, over a year this avoids 3.30 metric tons of carbon being emitted. A manual titled, *Installation and User Manual of Metallic Improved Cookstoves* was also developed. This provides effective installation of the ICS at the local level for the correct installation and management of the stove.

HOMESTAY MANAGEMENT AND COOKING TRAINING

RPN has been supporting indigenous communities with training and knowledge to operate and manage homestay programs. By establishing local, tourism-based enterprises, RPN aims to diversify livelihood opportunities that enable the sustainable use of forests, and their resources for forest-dependent communities residing around red panda habitat. With RPN's support, 30 households were trained on ecotourism and homestay management. The training covers an assortment of topics from basic homestay hospitality,

etiquette, laws, and regulations of homestays, and even preparing different cuisines. Certificates of validation for future registration procedures are also provided. RPN aims to empower local communities around integrated biodiversity conservation; aligning red panda-based ecotourism and economic development through the sustainable use of local resources. Homestay programs can unite the people and wildlife, thus incentivizing conservation.

43
HOMESTAYS SUPPORTED TO REGISTER



TRAINING TO PROMOTE GOTH-STAY TOURISM

RPN continues to support herders with many initiatives such as access to clean drinking water, improved technologies (such as canvas tents and metal cooking stoves), and opportunities for herders to adopt sustainable herding practices, including Goth-stays. Goth-stay tourism is an ecotourism model within pastureland. The Goth-

stay initiative is unique in that it is an alternative source of income for livestock herders of the eastern Nepal. The initiative is also adventurous as visitors get to shelter beside Yak/Dzomul cow herds while experiencing the nomadic lifestyle of the mountain region and enjoying the spectacular beauty of local forests, landscapes, wildlife, and birds. This year RPN supported 15 herders in cooking and goth-stay management training. The objective is to qualify herders in basic hospitality techniques and etiquette to comfortably host

future guests and visitors. This will create alternative income for local herders and their families while providing incentives to preserve local forests and wildlife. Goth-stays will also ensure a unique and culturally immersive experience for the visitors.



SUPPORTING HERDERS LIVELIHOOD

*Water for herders;
Protection for red panda*

Highland herders are the closest ally for red panda conservation but pastoral life for them is challenging in many ways. Their pastoral livelihoods support the communities in the PIT corridor, but living in this harsh environment and relying on

unsustainable herding practices is a major driver for red panda habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation. Alongside sporadic weather patterns, a changing landscape, and lack of basic services, one of the challenges that pastoral communities face today is limited access to clean drinking water. RPN supported access to a clean drinking water tap for nine herders residing in the Harkate area, Taplejung district. To lead, RPN formed a livestock herding management committee that overlooked environmentally sustainable herding practices

in the PIT corridor, conducting numerous workshops to promote actions such as stall-feeding, improved sanitation, and proper management and disposal of livestock waste.

50
HERDING STATIONS
ARE SUPPORTED TO
IMPROVE SO FAR



NATURE GUIDE TRAINING

As a part of RPN's sustainable livelihood program, 25 individuals, forest guardians, and homestay owners in the PIT corridor completed training about being an effective nature guide. This five-day comprehensive instruction covered a range of theoretical and practical sessions from the purpose, roles, and responsibilities of a guide, to bird identification, tracking mammalian signs, and fundamental knowledge of the geography and vegetation status of the area. This beneficial training is expected to be instrumental in diversifying livelihood options, help generate multifold income while also building community stewardship and reducing dependence on natural resources.



60

NATURE GUIDES TRAINED SO FAR



SAPLINGS DISTRIBUTION

In an effort to promote and motivate farmers in planting NTFPs and fodder cultivation, RPN conducted a series of sapling distribution programs (N=4) for 160 marginalized households in the working districts Jajarkot (n=65), Rukum (n=50), Rolpa (n=10) and Kalikot (n= 35). In total 10,000 saplings of different plant species such as *Juglans regia*, *Zanthoxylum armatum*, *Thysanolaena sp*, *Choerospondias axillaris*, *Ipil Ipil*, *Bauhinia variegata*, *Melia azedarach*, and *Pennisetum purpureum* were distributed. Looking forward, the initiative can be an alternative income stream for those marginalized communities.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE WITH OFF-SEASON VEGETABLE FARMING

RPN has always strived to diversify livelihood options that generate income for local communities and link back to conservation. This work continues into the off-season for growing vegetables. More than 90 marginalized households of Kalikot district benefited from the poly house construction and an off-season farming program. To support this alternate livelihood option, farmers are provided with vegetable seeds such as coriander, tomato, turnip, spinach, carrot, beans, and more, complemented

with skill-based training for the construction of poly houses. These combined techniques allow for the off-season production and cultivation of food. This work creates positive associations within local communities towards red panda conservation, garners community appreciation, and further reduces dependency on the forest.



GOVERNANCE



4,960

HECTARES OF COMMUNITY FORESTS ALIGNED WITH RED PANDA CONSERVATION MEASURES



452

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES AND OFFICIALS ATTENDED RED PANDA CONSERVATION WORKSHOPS



ALIGNING RED PANDA CONSERVATION MEASURES

Working within the larger “Project Punde Kundo” (a community-based monitoring program of a red panda population in eastern Nepal), RPN initiated the establishment of or renewal of Operational Plans (OPs) for community forests. This year, revisions were made to 22 Community Forests OPs to include more red panda conservation-

friendly provisions. These provisions included clarifications on habitat zonation within the CFs, regulations on harvesting forest resources like firewood, bamboo and its shoots, engaging CF users in regular meetings and workshops to review and monitor ongoing conservation measures of red panda, and other sympatric wildlife. This work supports 4,960 hectares of CFs in project districts — with more than 14,000 forest users — aligned with measures that support red panda conservation. Annually, RPN organizes regular consultation meetings on effective forest

management and biodiversity conservation practices, institutional development, and good governance. The meeting primarily focuses on strengthening existing collaboration between CFUGs, rural municipalities, and Division Forest Offices (DFO), creating a collaborative environment for discussing emerging challenges that could have a probable impact on the project.

ALIGNING CONSERVATION AGENDAS

RPN remains committed within the newly federated Nepal, towards developing an effective environment for sharing agendas while also cultivating constructive relationships at local, state, and federal levels. Continuing with this commitment, consultation meetings were held with government and forest officials, locally elected representatives,

and other stakeholders on topics of red panda conservation and emerging site-specific threats, field achievements, and challenges, discussion for potential collaboration, feedback on tentative work plans, and more. In total, 43 consultation meetings were held in the PIT region which were attended by 452 selected officials and representatives at the local level, reinforcing the need for coordinated efforts in red panda conservation.





WORKING TOWARDS FIRST RED PANDA PROTECTED FORESTS IN THE PIT REGION

RPN's long-term priority is establishing the world's first protected area in the PIT corridor dedicated to red pandas. The PIT corridor — one of the most biologically diverse places on earth — is an important part of the Kangchenjunga landscape including the densest population of red panda and home to hundreds of other sympatric wildlife species. RPN's target is to create a protected forest managed by a network of CFs. This protected forest will also be the largest in Nepal and the first to be dedicated to red panda conservation. The goal is certainly ambitious, but RPN has been constantly striving to fulfill it.

"RPN is making efforts to establish the world's first protected area dedicated to red panda; the Panchthar-Ilam-Taplejung (PIT) Red Panda Protected Forest is a high priority project."



CONSERVATION IN BHUTAN

RPN has been collaborating with Royal Society for Protection of Nature Bhutan and Bhutan's Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Nature Conservation Division (NCD) for red panda research and conservation project in Bhutan's Samtse Forest Division and Jigme Khesar Strict Nature Reserve. The goal of the Bhutan project is to strengthen the conservation of red pandas in southwestern Bhutan and the transboundary area. With this project, NCD developed a Red Panda Monitoring Protocol and trained both trainers and field staff on the new process. The survey team was also trained on data compilation and management to be done once the fieldwork is complete and this work is expected to conclude in May 2021.

Objectives of this project is to ascertain the relative abundance, habitat use, and conservation threats to red pandas in the southwestern part of Bhutan including the bordering area with India along with conducting community awareness activities. In total 135 grids were identified for red panda sign and vegetation surveys. Red

panda signs were sought out within each 25 m radius plot along with the recording of disturbances and the laying out of vegetation sampling plots. Tree, bamboo and shrub, and herb layers were measured and counted as well as other physical parameters such as aspect, elevation, slope, and distance to a water source. Camera traps were installed in fifty percent of the survey grids in order to confirm the presence of red panda and complement the data gathered through the sign survey.

We also want to enhance awareness on red panda conservation in the local communities. Social surveys were conducted to understand the local perceptions on red panda conservation in the communities in and around the red panda habitat. Additionally, discussions were held to better inform the population about the importance of red panda conservation. Informational materials on the red panda are under development and will be disseminated as part of an awareness campaign.



2020 SUPPORTERS



RPN is deeply grateful to the dedicated partners and donors of 2020 who made our work possible. Your generosity is helping to ensure a brighter future for red pandas and people living adjacent to their habitat. We have made every effort to be as accurate as possible in this report to recognize our donors for their generous support. If an error comes to your attention, please let the Development Office know by emailing development@redpandanetwork.org

CONSERVATION PARTNERS ORGANIZATION/GIVING LEVEL (In USD)

\$50,001 +

 Anonymous donor	 *as part of €400,000 multi-year support	 *as part of €250,000 multi-year support	<h3>\$40,001-\$50,000</h3>  where nature needs us most International Conservation Fund of Canada
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\$30,001-\$40,000

	 rotterdam zoo		<h3>\$20,001-\$30,000</h3>  *as part of \$222,500 multi-year support
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\$10,001-\$20,000

	 Fonds de dotation	 Vers les sommets du monde	
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\$5,001-\$10,000

	 SAVING WILDLIFE			 Görnitz-Zgorzelec
		 WILDLIFE PARK		

\$2,501-\$5,000

- 🐾 AAZK - Seneca Park Zoo Chapter
- 🐾 Assiniboine Park Zoo
- 🐾 Body Shop
- 🐾 Conservation Association Beauval Nature
- 🐾 Connaître et Protéger le Panda Roux
- 🐾 Henry Vilas Zoo
- 🐾 Safari Zoo - Cumbria Zoo Company limited
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- 🐾 Zoo de la Barben

\$1,001-\$2,500

- 🐾 AAZK - Indianapolis Zoo
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- 🐾 Akron Zoo
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- 🐾 National Zoo & Aquarium
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- 🐾 Parc Animalier de Sainte Croix (Sainte-Croix Biodiversité)
- 🐾 Parc Zoologique des Sables d'Olonne
- 🐾 Parco Natura Viva Garda
- 🐾 Zoological Park
- 🐾 Parco Zoo Punta Verde
- 🐾 Suncoast Nursery
- 🐾 Tiergarten Nürnberg
- 🐾 Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center
- 🐾 Zoo Atlanta

\$501 - \$1,000

- 🐾 AAZK - Greater Cleveland
- 🐾 AAZK - Green Bay
- 🐾 Armathwaite Hall Hotel - Lake District Wildlife Park
- 🐾 Axel Gebauer
- 🐾 BNF Kombucha & Jun Brights Zoo
- 🐾 Drayton Manor Theme Park
- 🐾 Korkeasaari Zoo
- 🐾 Omuta City Zoo
- 🐾 Paradise Wildlife Park
- 🐾 Saitama Children's Zoo
- 🐾 Woodland Park Zoo

UP TO \$500

- 🐾 AiYuDesigns
- 🐾 Collegiate School Wildlife Conservation Club
- 🐾 Cute Pawz
- 🐾 Earth Play Studios
- 🐾 Erie Zoological Society
- 🐾 Fort Wayne Children's Zoo
- 🐾 Hitachi City Kamine Zoo
- 🐾 Homefield Preparatory School
- 🐾 Jihlava Zoo, Czech Republic
- 🐾 Merjent Inc.
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- 🐾 Trail Lodge Tea
- 🐾 Wildlife Safari
- 🐾 Woburn Safari Park
- 🐾 Zoo de Granby

IN COUNTRY CONSERVATION PARTNERS

- 🐾 Himali Conservation Forum - Taplejung
- 🐾 Deep Jyoti Youth Club - Panchthar
- 🐾 Mountain Organization Nepal - Ilam
- 🐾 Danfe Yuwa Club - Jajarkot
- 🐾 Human Rights and Environment Development Center - Kalikot
- 🐾 Himalayan Community Resource Development Center - Kalikot
- 🐾 Karnali Development Cooperation Service Society - Jumla
- 🐾 Human Rights Awareness Center Rolpa
- 🐾 Destitute Castes Revoking Forum - Dolpa
- 🐾 Human Rights Environment and Development Campaign and Research Centre - Rukum

THE RED PANDA EEP FOREST GUARDIANS INITIATIVE

- 🐾 Beauval
- 🐾 Leipzig
- 🐾 Nuremberg
- 🐾 Welsh mountain zoo
- 🐾 Ste Croix
- 🐾 Shepreth conservation
- 🐾 Mulhouse
- 🐾 Antwerp
- 🐾 BMC
- 🐾 Ouwehand
- 🐾 Aachen
- 🐾 Avifauna
- 🐾 Boras
- 🐾 Brasov
- 🐾 Chester
- 🐾 Chorzow
- 🐾 Colchester
- 🐾 Cologne
- 🐾 Cumbria
- 🐾 Edinburgh
- 🐾 Eskilstuma
- 🐾 GI skid
- 🐾 Hellabrun
- 🐾 Ille de France
- 🐾 Krakow
- 🐾 La Cornelle Merveilleux
- 🐾 Opole
- 🐾 Parques Reunidos
- 🐾 Pyrenees
- 🐾 Salzburg
- 🐾 Shepreth
- 🐾 Woodside Falconry
- 🐾 Wroclaw

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

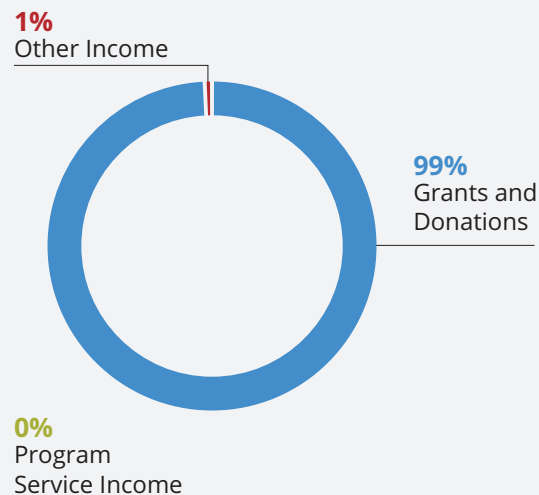
Ministry of Forests and Environment; Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen; Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forests and Environment (Province No. 1, Lumbini Province, & Karnali Province); Department of Forests and Soil Conservation; Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation; Social Welfare Council; Nepal Police, Central Bureau of Investigation; Division Forest Offices – Dolpa, Ilam, Jajarkot, Jumla, Kalikot, Panchthar, Rolpa, Rukum (east), Rukum (west), & Taplejung; Education Development and Coordination Unit – Ilam, Panchthar, & Taplejung; Kangchenjunga Conservation Area, Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Management Council; Rural/Urban Municipalities; Stock Photography Nepal, Microsoft Project15, University College London; University of Southern Queensland, Kathmandu Forestry College, Nature Conservation Division Department of Forests and Park Services, Bhutan, and Royal Society for Protection of Nature, Bhutan.

RPN would like to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to our individual supporters and monthly donors (“Panda Guardians”) for your 2020 support and generosity.

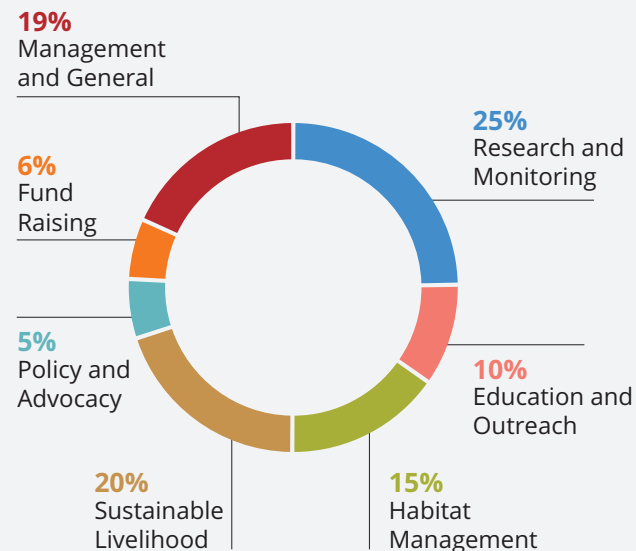
FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Organizational financials (including RPN US and RPN Kathmandu Nepal operations) for 2020.

2020 TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT



2020 TOTAL EXPENSES



STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES

As of 31 December 2020

REVENUE AND SUPPORT	
Grants and Donations	\$ 973,313.42
Program Services Income	\$0
Other Income	\$13,425.85
Total Revenue and Support	\$986,739.27

Support Areas	
Fundraising	\$50,202.00
Management and General	\$160,631.37
Total Support Services	\$210,833.37
Total Expenses 2020	\$867,631.79

EXPENSES	
Program Areas	
Research and Monitoring	\$216,074.11
Education and Outreach	\$84,432.08
Sustainable Livelihoods	\$175,235.51
Habitat Management	\$133,689.64
Policy and Advocacy	\$47,367.08
Total Program Services	\$656,798.42



RPN achieved the Gold Seal at GuideStar. GuideStar is the world's largest and independent source of information on non-profit organizations and maintains profiles on 2.7 million nonprofits.



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Sherpa ©Ang ~ **Page 6:** Triplet red panda cubs photographed in Ilam district ©RPN/Lex Limbu ~ **Page 10 & 11:** Field data collection via GPS: an important conservation tool ©Rashik Maharjan/RPN ~ **Page 12 & 13:** One of the GPS collared red pandas capture by a camera trap (top) ©RPN; A GPS-collared red panda mother with her cub (bottom) ©RPN/Ngima Dawa Sherpa ~ **Page 14:** Tiger photographed by camera trap for the first time in eastern Nepal at the highest ever elevation for Nepal ©RPN ~ **Page 15:** The red panda named Mechhachha was collared in December 2019 ©Damber Bista/RPN ~ **Page 16:** A red panda cub in a Community Forest in Ilam district ©RPN/James Houston ~ **Page 17:** Field enumerators during red panda habitat survey in eastern Nepal (top) ©Wangchu Bhutia/RPN; RPN Forest Guardian, Ngima Dawa Sherpa with VHF antenna tracking GPS-collared red pandas (bottom left) ©Sonam T. 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RED PANDA
NETWORK



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