

Snow Leopard Conservation in Nepal: Peoples` Perception on the Verge of Rural Livelihood

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Abstract : Peoples` perception is reflected in their attitudes and presumably their behavior towards wildlife conservation. The success of wildlife conservation initiatives in the mountains of Nepal is heavily dependent on local people. Therefore, Nepal has emphasized the involvement of local people in wildlife conservation, especially in the mountainous region. Local peoples` perception towards snow leopard conservation in six mountainous protected area of Nepal was carried out conducting 300 household surveys and 90 face to face key informant interviews. The average livestock holding was 27.74 animals per household with depredation rate of 10.6 % per household per annum. Livestock was the source of 32.74% of the total mean annual income of each household. In average, the economic loss per household per annum due to livestock depredation was US \$ 490. There was significant difference in people`s perception towards snow leopard conservation in protected areas of mountainous region of Nepal. These differences were due to economic, educational and cultural factors. 54.4% local people showed preference for snow leopard conservation. The perception of local people toward snow leopard was significantly difference by the economic status of local people. Involvement of local people in conservation activities had positive impact towards wildlife conservation in the mountain region of Nepal. Timely introducing incentive programs can be a supportive way for sustaining the conservation of snow leopards in the Nepalese Himalayas.

Keywords : economic loss, livestock depredation, local people, perception, snow leopard

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