• Biodiversity
• Human-Wildlife Conflicts
• Sustainable development

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Green Caps in Suklaphanta Red Caps in Bardia

Learning with Awely’s Caps
As Awely’s Red and Green Caps, we are really pleased to introduce you to this booklet where you will find much information about your environment. Have fun reading it!
A Long time ago…

there were lots of wild animals roaming the whole Terai area of Nepal. The area from Pakistan to India up to Assam was covered with forests and vast grasslands, a perfect habitat for Greater One-horned rhinos, Asian elephants and Bengal tigers.

In those times, wildlife populations were healthy, and many animals were living peacefully together in the forest. There was good and abundant food for all of them. There were also lots of trees and grass, where tigers could easily hide for successful hunting! It was a very good home for animals.

Yesterday

With the control of malaria, more and more people moved into this wild area, cutting down the forest and cultivating the land. The soil was fertile, and the climate was ideal for farming rice and lentils, so the human population grew enormously. New villages and farmlands cut off the traditional corridors that animals had used for hundreds of years. Foreign hunters killed thousands of wild animals. By the 1950s, only a few hundred Greater One-horned rhinos were left in the wild, while many other wild species were disappearing too.

Nobody intended for this to happen. People began to realize that a big mistake was being made because many animals were now gone forever, and that the natural balance was not healthy anymore.
Today
To protect the last remaining wilderness, Protected Areas have been created, such as Bardia National Park or Suklaphantha Wildlife Reserve that are home to precious wildlife. Poaching remains a serious threat for animals, like rhino horn in demand in Traditional Chinese Medicine. Illegal activities like wood collection keep disturbing wildlife. But Bardia is not only home to endangered species. The areas around the National Park are home to many generations of people who work hard to make their living from agriculture. Living side by side with wildlife is not that easy. Encounters with animals are not that pleasant, and often result in food and household loses, injuries, or even death. People, just like animals, can and do suffer.

Tomorrow, Wildlife and People sharing just one world!
Wildlife and People are now sharing the same environment. Natural habitats shrink, and expanding human activities provoke conflicts. But a large part of these conflicts could be avoided just by changing a few simple things. Smart practices and adapted behaviour can help to reduce conflicts, keeping people safe and wildlife preserved.

In this booklet, you will learn how to limit conflicts with wildlife. You will discover the importance of nature conservation, and how we can act all together for a better future. Together with Awely’s Caps, find your own ways for reducing conflicts with animals within your village!
Biodiversity, the life on Earth

Biodiversity is the diversity of life on Earth, in rivers and oceans. It includes human beings, plants and animals, all ecosystems, and the diversity among each species.

The diversity of Nepal is amazing! Located among the southern slopes of the Himalayan mountains, Nepal has a unique geography. Ranging from mountainous Tibet to the Indian lowlands, Nepal's altitudes range from 60 meters in the Terai region, up to 8,848 meters at Mt. Everest's peak. This makes Nepal a very special place for nature conservation.

The country provides some of the last refuges for threatened wildlife species. It is famous all around the world for its Royal Bengal tigers and Greater One-horned rhinoceros.

Each individual is different. Do you notice differences between these tigers?

About 2 million species of plants and animals have been discovered on Earth. Do you know about these?

Even within a forest there are numerous smallest ecosystems. This is one of the reasons that explains the presence of so many different species in the forests.

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Bats help fruit production

Bats are very specialized animals. Some of them drink flower nectar. By flying from one plant to another, they pollinate flowers, allowing the fruit to develop. If bats disappeared, many trees would not produce fruit anymore.

Frogs limit insect populations

In Nepal, as in many other countries, lizards, birds and frogs help regulate the insect populations. If they disappeared, insects would increase dramatically and would devastate crops, and mosquitoes would multiply enormously.

Elephant plant trees

Inside the forest, monkeys or elephants often carry the seeds of trees. By eating fruits, they spread seeds in their dung, and so new trees take root. If large mammals disappeared, the diversity of the forest would be greatly reduced.

Everything is linked

Biodiversity is highly important for all living things, including us as human beings. It forms a single whole: one species never disappears without others disappearing too, because species depend on each other.

Some animals may have a specific diet. If the plants they eat disappear, they can’t feed themselves anymore, and so they may also disappear. At the same time, some plants depend on a specific animal for their own reproduction because their seeds must be digested to allow germination. Species extinctions always occur in chains, and we too might suffer from the consequences. Every species has a role to play. If one species dies out, the whole ecosystem becomes depleted and disturbed.
Bardia National Park and Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve

Teraí is home to the endangered Bengal tiger. On the far-western part of Teraí, Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve holds Nepal’s largest populations and world’s largest herd of swamp deer. For many years, this was also a perfect habitat for tigers. But illegal use of natural resources and organized poaching are now severely threatening its population.

In Bardia, although poaching remains a real problem, the rhino population has been growing thanks to new protection programs. Bardia’s sal forest, grasslands and rivers are also home to over 400 species of birds and 53 species of mammals, including the Asian elephant, the emblematic Ganges River dolphin and within the reptile family, the famous gharial.

Protected Areas are essential

Previously, the Greater One-horned rhinoceros was found throughout the northern Indian sub-continent from Pakistan to Myanmar. Today, they are found only in scattered groups in northeast India and Nepal, and are concentrated in Protected Areas, under the strict protection of rangers. The Greater One-horned rhino is the largest of the Asian rhinos and it inhabits flood-plain grasslands and adjacent swamps and forests. People now come from many other coun-
tries to see them, but also to see the tigers and elephants.

In the Teraí region of Nepal, areas like Bardia National Park and Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve are very precious. Home to an astonishing diver-
sity of animals, they need to be protected with great care for our future generations.

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Major issue worldwide

HWCs do not occur only in Nepal, but exist almost all over the world. In Asia, large animals like elephants, tigers, and leopards, but also snow leopards and bears, create the main source of conflicts. In most of the tropical and subtropical countries, crocodile attacks occur. Across the African continent, crop damage is the most common form of Human-Wildlife conflict, and man-eating lions still exist.

The origins

Competition for resources and land has always existed between species. However, as our population expands, life becomes more and more complicated for both people and wildlife. Sometimes, expanding farms and villages have cut off pathways the animals have used for generations. Sometimes even human settlements have been built within the forest, and so wildlife has been forced away.

More people, smaller habitats: this is why they increasingly come into conflict and sometimes compete for similar resources. This is a Human-Wildlife conflict (HWC).

HWCs have become a significant problem for many humans, especially among the poorest, and are a major threat to many species, especially among the largest.
Wildlife is threatened by conflicts

HWCs are one of the main threats to the survival of many species, especially large mammals. HWCs result in wildlife population decline. Remember that the killing of wildlife not only affects the population viability of some of the most endangered species, but also has a broader environmental impact on biodiversity preservation.

Killing animals in retaliation for Human-Wildlife conflicts is a common reaction, even though the identification of the real culprit is rarely possible. With poisoning, snaring and trapping, we are killing many wild animals living peacefully in the forest.

People are suffering from conflicts

Human deaths and injuries are the most severe consequences of HWCs. Destruction of crops, property damage or loss of livestock result in threats to the food and economic safety of local communities. HWCs also have repercussions on health, nutrition, education and social opportunities.

There are about 232,000 more people on Earth each day. This increase directly threatens the future of so many species, because we always need more space and resources to live. We must preserve our biodiversity as destroying it means a great danger for the generations to come.
Do you know that...?

The farmers blame the wildlife for creating problems. In their opinion, animals should respect the National Park boundary and stay within it. They also blame those wildlife authorities charged with making sure that wild animals do not move into communal ground. But the farmers do not realize that it is themselves who allow or encourage those conflicts to occur. There are many ways to live peacefully with animals. By changing very simple things, it is easy to limit the problems, and even easy to live in harmony with nature.

But remember, there is never just one solution for HWCs. No one method will work alone. Combination is the key!

How can I protect my livestock?

Livestock herders

Domestic animals are easy targets for leopards. Livestock is often badly secured in open pens or left unwatched in pastures close to the forest. Set up a herder guard system with other breeders, and be vigilant when you see signs of predators!

Carnivore-proof shelter

Traditional and poorly-built corrals do not protect domestic animals from leopards. Build a strong predator-proof shelter. Gabion mesh wire can be used to make more efficient corrals! Ask the Red Caps about this.
How can I protect my crops?

Practice community guarding

Set up a guarding system, together with other farmers to give an early alert. Make noise to scare away animals by using bells, drums and shots. Frequently change your tactics. Watch out! Animals might also become irritated if noise comes from everywhere, and also if you shine light directly into their eyes.

Plan smart land-uses for your crops!

Elephants need 200kg of food per day! Maize, paddy, lentils and fruit trees attract animals outside the Park. They can smell these crops from a long way off! Don’t plant attractive crops next to the fence or too close to the forest!

Maintain electrical fencing properly!

Electrical fencing won’t work if not maintained! If one part gets damaged, the rest of the fence will not be electrified, and it will be easy for the rhinos and elephants to pass through. Organize regular monitoring with other villagers. Slash the grass touching the fence, and remove all objects that touch it.

Use crops that animals don’t like and create a secure income in the vicinity of rhinos and elephants!

There are crops that elephants and rhinos do not like. Mentha, ginger, chamomile, turmeric or even chilli seem not to attract them. Cultivating alternative crops is a way to secure an income and without the risk of having them damaged by wildlife.

Elephants hate the odour of chilli!

In Zambia people are making large balls by mixing dried chilli and elephant dung. They burn them at the edges of the fields, and the noxious smoke drives away elephants! They also burn chilli leaves. If you would like to try those chilli bricks, contact the Red Caps!

In some areas people are digging wide and deep trenches so that elephants cannot cross over them!

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Watch out! You are crossing a wildlife area!
Rhinos have poor eyesight. If you come too close, they get very aggressive. Don't walk in areas where rhinos are often sighted without having good visibility to spot them from a long way off. If you encounter a rhino in an open place, walk backwards slowly, and never try to chase him.

Be vigilant during the day and at night!
Predators are hunting at night. People should never walk in the dark in wildlife areas. They are putting themselves in great danger if they do.

When scaring away elephant
Never get close to elephants. Always keep at a good distance from them, so that won't change you. Never make a circle around the animals, as they will most likely panic. Always leave space open between you, so that animals can escape!
Alive, living treasures can secure our future – dead, they can’t.

It is important to understand that wildlife belongs to our forests. It makes our country beautiful and diverse. In a world where wild places become fewer and fewer, where wild animals are rarely observed, wild places like Bardia and Suklaphanta remain a treasure. The possibility to observe rhinos, elephants and tigers in the wild attracts tourists and creates an income for many generations to come. Local communities also receive direct livelihood benefits from wildlife conservation through tourism and protected area revenue sharing.

Living with wildlife

It is possible to live from and with nature without destroying it. There are ways to benefit from natural resources now while insuring there will be enough for our children in the future. We need to understand that natural resources are limited, and that we can take only a part and not all of it. We need to act in ways that allow nature to regenerate after us, so that our children and their children can benefit from these resources as well.

This responsible use of resources is called sustainable management. By catching big fish only, smaller fish can grow up and breed. Some species are already endangered. We have to stop illegal fishing and poaching for trophies like rhino horn, ivory or furs. If we do not take care, these endangered species will quickly disappear. And once they are extinct, they are gone, forever.

Sustainable development what’s it all about?

Sustainable development is development that responds to present generation’s needs, without compromising the capacities of future generations to respond to their needs.
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IS GOOD FOR ALL

As a group member, you can develop activities to be less dependent on forest resources.

Feed your cows with nutritious grass to reduce grazing pressure on the forest.

Sewing and embroidering can bring in a safe income.

Using improved cook stoves reduces wood consumption.

SAVING RESOURCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

No grass and firewood collection in Bardia and Suklaphanta allowed; except during a specifically authorised period.

No cattle grazing allowed inside Bardia NP and Suklaphanta WR at all!

Cutting timber in the forest is strictly prohibited.

Hunting and killing wildlife is strictly prohibited.

Nature is our future. We need to protect it.

Entry to the Protected Areas is limited and the Wildlife Authority must acknowledge this, so that wildlife can develop undisturbed. There are rules for using natural resources. By respecting them, you are helping your community to boost tourism revenues. You will be doing your best to preserve natural resources for your children and their children.

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THE INDIAN RHINO

- **Species:** Rhinoceros unicornis
- **Weight:** 1,800 - 2,700 kg
- **Length:** 3 - 3,8 m
- **Height:** 1,75 - 2 m
- **Gestation period:** 15 - 16 months
- **Diet:** Herbivorous
- **Lifespan:** 40 to 50 years
- **Population:** 2,620 in India and Nepal
- **Status:** Vulnerable
- **Predators:** Human

- **Features:**
  - Trunk is used to explore, feed or drink
  - Trunk is a flexible muscular organ
  - Only male Asian elephants have tusks
  - 5 toes buried inside the flesh
  - Tip of trunk has one finger-like projection
  - Flapping ears regulate body temperature

THE ASIAN ELEPHANT

- **Species:** Elephas maximus
- **Weight:** Up to 4,1 t (F) - 5,4 t (M)
- **Height:** Up to 2,5 m (F) - 3,2 m (M)
- **Gestation period:** 18 - 22 months
- **Diet:** Herbivorous
- **Lifespan:** 60 to 70 years
- **Population:** 39,400 to 47,500
- **Status:** Near threatened
- **Predators:** Human

- **Features:**
  - Single horn made of keratin
  - Poor eyesight
  - Good sense of hearing
  - Skin up to 4cm thick
  - Prehensile upper lip
  - Good sense of smelling
  - Reaches speeds of 40km/h
  - Reach trunk under the floor
  - Trunks of Asian elephants are flatter than the African elephant
  - Its cousin, the African elephant is the largest land-living mammal on Earth

SOME AMAZING ANIMALS OF NEPAL

- **Asian Elephant**
- **Indian Rhino**

Nepal is home to a variety of amazing animals, including the Asian elephant and the Indian rhino. These animals are not only important for their natural beauty, but they also play a crucial role in maintaining the biodiversity of the region. Conservation efforts are crucial to ensure their survival and the preservation of their habitats.
**THE BENGAL TIGER**

*Panthera tigris tigris*

- **Weight in kg**: 125 - 160 (F), 180 - 250 (M)
- **Length in m**: 2.7 - 3.1 (tail included)
- **Height in m**: 0.90
- **Gestation period**: About 100 days
- **Diet**: Carnivorous
- **Lifespan**: 10 to 15 years
- **Population**: 3200
- **Status**: Endangered
- **Predator**: Human

**THE LEOPARD**

*Panthera pardus*

- **Weight**: 23 - 60 (F) - 30 - 91 (M)
- **Length**: 0.95 - 1.65 m
- **Height**: 45 to 80 cm
- **Gestation period**: 106 days
- **Diet**: Carnivorous
- **Lifespan**: 15 - 20 years
- **Population**: 3,200 in India and Nepal
- **Status**: Near threatened
- **Predator**: Human

**THE LEOPARD**

*Panthera pardus*

- **Weight**: 23 - 40 (F) - 30 - 92 (M)
- **Length**: 1.2 - 1.6 m
- **Height**: 45 to 80 cm
- **Gestation period**: 116 days
- **Lifespan**: 12 - 20 years
- **Population**: 2,000 in India and Nepal
- **Status**: Near threatened
- **Predator**: Human

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SOME AMAZING ANIMALS OF NEPAL

**THE SNOW LEOPARD**
Panthera uncia
- Weight: 28 - 55 kg
- Length: 0.75 - 1.30 m
- Height: 0.6 m
- Gestation period: 90 - 100 days
- Diet: Carnivorous
- Lifespan: 15 to 18 years
- Population: 3,500 - 7,000
- Status: Endangered
- Predator: Human

**THE GHARIAL**
Gavialis gangeticus
- Weight: 160 - 180 kg
- Length: 3.6 - 4.5 m
- Incubation time: 70 days
- Diet: Fish
- Lifespan: 40 to 50 years
- Population: A few hundred (102 in Nepal)
- Status: Critically endangered
- Predator: Human

**Physical Characteristics**
- **THE SNOW LEOPARD**
  - Pale green or grey eyes
  - Small ears for minimum heat loss
  - Wide paws for walking on snow
  - Thick fur for cold environments
  - Fat and furry tail to protect the face while asleep
  - Largest teeth at the front
  - Razor-sharp teeth
  - Elongated narrow snout
  - While not agile on the ground, the gharial is the quickest of all crocodiles in the water
  - Flatened tail provides great manoeuvrability in deepwater habitat

- **THE GHARIAL**
  - Reaches speeds of 40km/h
  - Large nasal cavities that help to breathe cold air
  - Sharp nasal flaps
  - Skin is free of scales but has rough nubs on it
  - Skin scales are rough and grey in color
  - Skin texture is rough and grey in color
  - Teeth are flat and serrated
  - Teeth are very sharp and pointed
  - Teeth are large and sharp
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Who is Awely?
Awely is an international conservation organisation based in France and working in several countries of Asia and Africa. While our local coordinators, the Red Caps, work on Human-Wildlife conflicts resolution, the Green Caps work to improve the situation for an emblematic threatened species. In both cases, we put People at the centre of our work and we see Development as an aspect as important as conservation issues.

In Nepal, Awely is working with its partner organisation, the National Trust for Nature Conservation.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED?
If you encounter problems with wildlife and you would like to contribute to the sustainable development of your homeland, Awely Caps and NTNC can help you. The program is under constant development and anyone from the local communities adjacent to Bardia National Park and Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve may join in to push it forward.

You can report every Human-Wildlife conflict to the Awely Red Caps. They collect detailed information on what has happened, in order to get a clear picture of the conflicts in your area. Together with your local communities, they will help to identify the best solutions and to describe any activities that should be going on.

With Awely Caps, you can find your own ways to live in harmony with wildlife. Nature is ours - protecting it is protecting us.