

Wildlife - 10 mg 1991/2

the post office of remote district of Humla was found with tiger bones in 1989.

### GANESHJI DEAD

Ganeshji, a captive male elephant turned semi-wild since last two and half decades in the east succumbed to an injury on its genitals. The elephant was reportedly speared on the genitals by some mischievous person and putrefaction of the part proved to be fatal for the elephant. Despite many efforts by the local veterinarians no treatment could be done at an early stage. Treatment of such semi-wild elephant is not an easy job. Ganeshji was a potential male elephant in breeding the domestic female elephants of Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve. Keeping aside the issues of crop damage, Ganeshji had sired altogether 14 baby elephants. However, only 6 babies are surviving at present and one female is expecting the baby at the Elephant Breeding Center.

### FUTURE OF BLACKBUCKS

Survival of the only remaining population of blackbuck *Antelope cervicapra* at Khairi Panditpur of Bardia (outside the RBNP) is under threat currently due to various human pressures. The species was thought to be extinct from Nepal until two separate populations with a total of 25 animals were located in Banke and Bardia Districts in 1975. The Banke population has already disappeared. The Bardia population has increased from 11 individuals to 200 in an area of 0.84 sq. km surrounded by a vast agricultural land. The population possibly had been thriving in the area due to low predation by big cats but they have to compete with the local cows, buffaloes and goats. Crop raiding is the main foraging behaviour of these animals. Although they are rarely physically harmed by the people due to its protected status, they often fall prey to domestic dogs. In 1980 eight blackbucks were released in Baghoraphanta in the RBNP translocated from Kathmandu Zoo, however, not a single individual survived possibly due to heavy predation by tigers and jackals. Exact identification of the reason of disappearance would help for translocation programs in the future. Recent encroachment of their habitats at

Khairi Panditpur has reached to such an extent that the animals can be seen in the agricultural field as any other domesticated ones. Consequently, the crop raiding is maximum. This may annoy the people provoking them to kill the animals. Few blackbucks were reportedly seen in the adjoining Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary of India where they were not reported in the past. Since, the animal is endangered, the protection of the species by whatever means is urgently required. A few individuals could be translocated in Lumbini Development Area and Babai Valley in the RBNP.

### RARE BENGAL FLORICAN

Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis* is possibly the most endangered among the 22 bustard species of the world. Perhaps only 350-400 birds survive today. Once fairly common all along the alluvial grasslands in the plains along the foothills of the Himalaya, now it has become restricted to a few isolated pockets of protected areas of Nepal and India. In Nepal the species has been recorded from Royal Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve, RBNP, RCNP and Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve. However, there is no recent record from the KTWR. It is a bird of flat, moist, short, open, large and undisturbed grasslands dominated by *Imperata cylindrica*, *Saccharum narenga*, *S. spontaneum*. The species is rapidly becoming rare mainly due to habitat alteration and its preference to specific grassland type. Bengal Florican has lost most of its habitats to spreading cultivation, human habitations and pressures from grazing livestock. Proper protection and management practices including controlled and timely burning and/or cutting are essential for preserving the remnant habitats. Male develop territoriality during breeding season (March-July) and has conspicuous plumage. Although slightly larger than the male, the female is difficult to locate mainly due to its cryptical colour. Bengal Florican is protected under Wildlife Act, 2029 (1973).

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