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BHUTAN FOR LIFE

“The elusive cat returns”

Largely, solitary predator hate being seen but not this time.....

One of the major goals of BFL is to maintain stable and thriving populations of key species contributing toward national and global biodiversity goals. In pursuit of achieving this goal, this year we put in substantial effort to beef up protection of areas that are important to wildlife. Jigme Khesar Strict Nature Reserve (JKSNR) shares their amazing stories from the field of conservation.

Years 2014, 2016 and 2018 did not yield satisfactory result from camera trapping. The team intensified field surveys from October 2019 installing cameras in high potential areas in different locations. The habitat use probability map prepared by Nature Conservation Division, DoFPS in 2019 had also revealed high probability of tiger in some areas of JKSNR. The habitat is dominated by broadleaf forest with rhododendron species. Camera traps were installed above 2000 to 4000+ m within different forest habitats. The potential range of Tiger was identified using GIS (Geographic Information System) programs and Google Earth TM within JKSNR. Based on the potential areas and accessibility, a total of 12 grids, each measuring 4kmx 4km were selected, covering a total area of 192 km².



Photo1: Field staff of JKSNR setting up camera traps

This report confirmed the presence of tigers in JKSNR, the only strict nature reserve in Bhutan after a likely absence of **15 years**. The officials of JKSNR worked tirelessly for almost 6 years for confirmation of its presence validated its presence with camera images at N27°13'13.05" and E89°03'41.11" at 3370m.



Photo 2: Tiger image captured through camera trap



Photo 3: Tiger image captured through camera trap

Jigme Khesar Strict Nature Reserve, Haa serves as an important, promising area for global conservation of not only the Snow leopard but the Tiger too.

Spotting of the Tiger is a great win for conservation in JKSNR, and it gives JKSNR all the reason to monitor and ensure that these species are protected. Consistent monitoring is needed to detect population or range changes, vital for evaluating the effectiveness of conservation investments targeting Tiger and other wildlife species in JKSNR.

With the images captured, the presence of tigers at JKSNR is validated “It truly marks the dawn of the Tiger Conservation Efforts in JKSNR”.

The encouraging results validate Bhutan’s impressive investment in tiger conservation. In a fragile world, these are clear signs that conservation efforts are working. This majestic mammal is very much on the rise. The effort JKSNR team undertook to derive the tiger population estimate are nothing short of phenomenal.

This achievement was possible through fund support from Bhutan for Life.



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