

ANNUAL REPORT
2014



**RED PANDA
NETWORK**



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MESSAGE FROM COUNTRY DIRECTOR

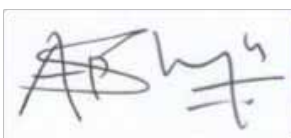
Dear friends,

2014 is an important year for Red Panda Network (RPN) and our efforts to preserve the endangered red panda. One of our significant achievements this year has been the extension of our programs to the entire Panchthar-Ilam-Taplejung (PIT) corridor and the establishment of the PIT Red Panda Protected Forest: the world's first protected area dedicated to red pandas.

These initiatives, which include research and monitoring, awareness-building, sustainable livelihood improvement and habitat management, have been very successful. The local people are supportive of our work and eager to get involved. This positive response from the communities of the PIT corridor has encouraged us to expand our work throughout all red panda habitat in Nepal and surrounding range countries.

On behalf of RPN, I would like to extend my appreciation to all of you for supporting RPN's mission to conserve red pandas and their habitat.

Sincerely,



Ang Phuri Sherpa
Country Director



Mission

Red Panda Network is committed to the conservation of wild red pandas and their habitat through the education and empowerment of local communities.

Vision

The Red Panda Network's vision is to ensure the survival of wild red pandas and preserve their habitat for future generations to study, experience, and enjoy.

We are committed to protecting wild red pandas and preserving their habitat through the empowerment of local communities by adaptive community based research, education, and sustainable development.

Our intention is to create country specific programs that will become locally managed and self sustaining by 5 years after operation has begun. We have initiated our programs in Nepal and will incrementally duplicate our efforts in India, China, Bhutan, and Myanmar.

Objectives

- Minimizing conversion of eastern Himalayan broadleaf and conifer forests to pasture and farmland;
- Identifying and preserving unprotected red panda "hotspots" (i.e., areas within red panda range countries having intact red panda habitat housing viable populations of 100 individuals or more);
- Continuing to build an anti-poaching network made up of local stakeholders, including Forest Guardians. Forest Guardians are RPN-trained workers who patrol red panda habitat, remove traps and snares, and report poaching activity to enforcement agencies.
- Assisting communities in devising socially responsible alternatives that are culturally and environmentally sensitive (sustainable livestock management practices, organic farming, etc.); and
- Increasing environmental awareness and appreciation of the fragile eastern Himalayan broadleaf and conifer eco-region and its wildlife among local villagers, decision makers, and government officials.

Assessment of Red Panda status in Panchthar-Ilam-Taplejung Corridor

We conducted a baseline survey to assess the status of red pandas in the red panda range areas of the Panchthar, Ilam and Taplejung (PIT) districts of eastern Nepal. A habitat suitability analysis indicated that there was 1383 km² of potential red panda habitat with 438 km² of highly suitable habitat. Our field data further confirmed this in 30 Village Development Committees (VDCs) of the entire PIT corridor (Figure 2).

The majority of this habitat is located in Taplejung district (226 km²), followed by Panchthar (70 km²) and Ilam (63 km²) districts. This assessment also showed that nearly 76% of red panda habitat in this region is located outside the adjacent Kanchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) and is not legally protected.

It has been estimated that, based on the ecological density of red pandas in this area, the carrying capacity of the PIT corridor ranges from 123 to 214 individuals. Abundance was assessed by estimating the encounter rate of red panda signs/sightings. A total transect length of 183.75 km was traversed while conducting this survey. Analysis of collected data showed an average encounter rate of 1.65 signs/km in the study area. The encounter rate was observed to be the highest (2.48 signs/km) in Ilam District, followed by Taplejung district (1.4 signs/km) and Panchthar districts (1.09 signs/km).

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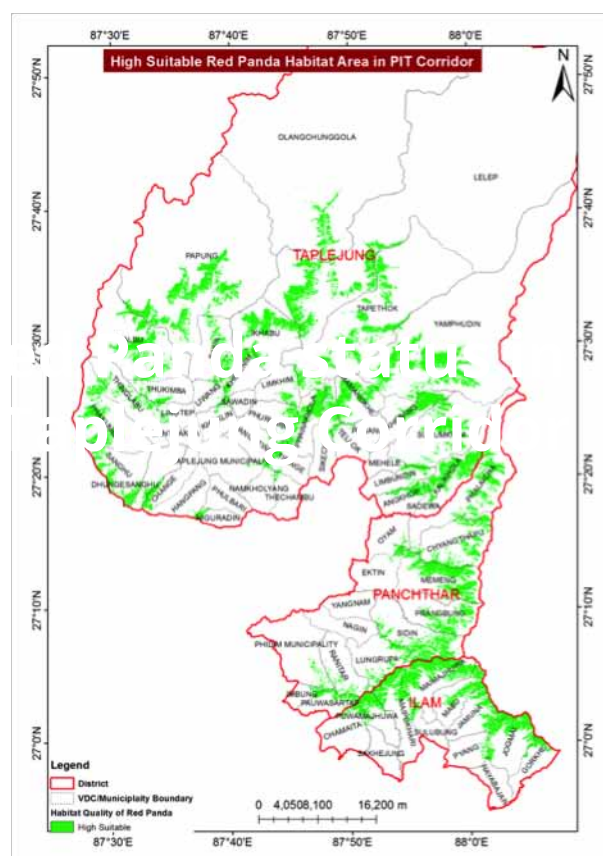


Figure 1 Suitable red panda habitat in PIT Corridor

Red Panda Monitoring Block Establishment

We worked with the people of the PIT corridor to identify potential habitat and confirmed presence/absence of red pandas. Confirmed red panda habitat was demarcated on a topographic map and divided into 1 km² grids. In collaboration with local partner organizations, Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) and Field Ecologists, we assessed the feasibility of potential monitoring sites before finalizing block locations.

In total, 49 monitoring blocks were established in the PIT corridor (Annex 1). There are 194 altitudinal line transects with a total length of 183.75 km. These transects range in elevation from 2200 meters to 3700 meters. These blocks are monitored once every month by Forest Guardians (FGs).

Community-based Monitoring of Red Panda Habitat

This project was implemented in collaboration with 32 CFUGs. A total number of 2057 households are affiliated with these CFUGs, and the total area of red panda habitat being managed by these groups is nearly 11,274 ha (112 km²).

Forest Guardian Recruitment

54 local people (52 men & 2 women) were recruited as FGs in 27 VDCs. Eleven two-day trainings on community-based red panda monitoring techniques were organized for 84 local people (many of whom were hired as FGs). Content covered in trainings included local ecology, threats to red pandas and their conservation importance, wildlife legal provisions, equipment handling and data recording. FGs will also be able to attend refresher trainings every six months.



Field Biologist during survey



FG during monitoring in Ilam

Sustainable Forest Management

Community Forest User Group Formation and Operation Plan Review

In order to help institutionalize red panda conservation initiatives at a local level, RPN has supported the formation of CFUGs in Ikhabu VDC of Taplejung and Maimajhuwa VDC of Ilam. We are also working with 16 CFUGS on integrating red panda conservation measures into their operational plans. Out of these 16, the plans of five CFUGs have already been endorsed by the District Forest Offices of Taplejung district, and the remaining groups in Ilam and Panchthar districts are under review.

Successful implementation of these plans will help ensure the long-term conservation of this rare species in 2712.61 ha (27 km²) of red panda habitat. The measures included in operational plans are:

- Baseline survey of red panda population and habitat.
- Red panda habitat zonation into restricted zones and buffer zones.
- Regulation of bamboo harvest by specifying harvesting season, age of bamboo, quantity of bamboo culm that a household can harvest in a year, etc.
- Habitat management through water conservation, planting of red panda food species, establishment of forest fire control mechanisms, prohibiting removal of old growth trees with potential nesting sites, regulation of grazing, firewood and fodder collection, etc.
- Minimizing disturbances during mating (December-February) and birthing season (May-September).

Community Based Forest Fire Management

130 local people representing 15 CFUGs participated in four forest fire management trainings. Participants were trained on causes and impacts of forest fires as well as preventive measures. They also learned to use wildland firefighting tools and personal protective gear during the training. Sets of tools and protective equipment were given to Sudap CFUG – Taplejung; Kanyadevei CFUG – Panchthar; and Chintapu CFUG and Kalikhop Dadheli CFUG in Ilam.



Local forest users during forest fire management training in Taplejung

Ecotourism

Red Panda Conservation and Eco-tourism Promotion Committee Formation

A thirteen-member committee, including representatives from Mabu and Jamuna VDCs of Ilam, was formed. A TA District Forest Officer attended and assured locals that the government would support them in sustaining their initiative. This committee prepared its by-laws and was registered with the District Administrative Office (DAO) in Ilam on November 4th, 2014.

A two-day capacity-building workshop was organized for committee members, whose training included organizational development and financial management.

Homestay Management Training

28 participants from 28 families selected based on the Homestay Management Guide (provided by the Government of Nepal) participated in a five-day homestay management training in Jamuna village of Ilam district. Topics included cooking traditional food items, hygiene and sanitation, housekeeping, garbage and waste management, and eco-tourism and entrepreneurship. The Homestay Management Guide was also shared and discussed with them.

Nature Guide Training

A four-day capacity-building training for nature guides was held at Dobate village of Mabu, Ilam. A naturalist and nature guide, Mr. Ramesh Chaudhary, and RPN's Conservation Coordinator, Mr. Sonam Tashi Lama, facilitated the training, which covered bird watching and mammal tracking. A set of field guide books on birds and mammals of Nepal, a Red Panda Network t-shirt, and a pair of gumboots were provided to each participant.

Nursery Establishment

Six CFUGs were supported for the cultivation of high-value Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs). The selected varieties of MAPs were सतुवा love apple (*Paris polyphylla*), लौठ सल्ला Himalayan yew (*Taxus wallichiana*), and सेतो बखिमा members of the monkshood family (*Aconitum* spp.). Participating CFUGs are expected to produce nearly 45,000 saplings, which will be distributed to more than 1,000 local families.

In addition, two nurseries of red panda palatable tree species, including टेंगा Himalayan whitebeam (*Sorbus cuspidate*), भालु चदि (*Schefflera* spp.), and लसिसे Himalayan holly (*Ilex dipyrrena*), were also established. Plants from these nurseries will be planted in deforested and degraded red panda habitat. Establishment of these nurseries will reduce forest dependency among the local people while encouraging sustainable development.

Red Panda Habitat Enrichment

We implemented a restoration project in degraded red panda habitat within the Hile Community Forest in the Jaubari area of Jamuna VDC. 16,200 saplings of native plants species including लोक्ता/अर्घेली - Nepalese paper plant, *Daphne bholua*; गुर्साँस - *Rhododendron* spp. मालगिो (n=800) & टेंगा - Himalayan whitebeam, *Sorbus cuspidate* were planted. This patch of land provides connectivity between areas of fragmented red panda habitat in the region. The plantation area was protected by barbed wire fencing and another bio-fencing layer with लोक्ता/अर्घेली Nepalese paper plants. Local communities will be consulted and included throughout project implementation.

We worked with local people in restoring degraded ponds located within red panda habitat. These ponds are the major drinking water source for red pandas and other wildlife in the area.

Education and Awareness

Awareness-building of Local Forest Users

In collaboration with RPN's field partner organizations, we organized 23 awareness-building workshops in the project area. A total of 456 local people (328 men and 128 women) participated in the workshops, where they learned about red panda status, threats, conservation importance and strategies.



Awareness Campaign with Security personal

Awareness-Building of Security Personnel

A red panda conservation awareness workshop was held at Kangchenjunga Barracks, the headquarters of the Armed Police Force (APF) in Taplejung. The program was attended by 70 soldiers, including the District Superintendent of Armed Police and other directors. Topics discussed during the event included conservation importance and threats, red panda poaching and trade in Nepal, and major trafficking routes.

Media campaign for Red Panda conservation

Local FM radio is the most effective way to communicate with people in the rural areas. We collaborated with three local FM radio stations, including Radio Taplejung, Radio Nepal Bani and Singhalila FM in Taplejung, Ilam and Panchthar respectively. A half-hour program focusing on red panda conservation is broadcast biweekly from each radio station. It has been estimated that these stations reach up to 50,000 people residing in the entire red panda range area.

Production and Installation of Information Boards

We installed 27 information boards containing red panda conservation messages in strategic locations along the PIT corridor.

School Outreach Campaign

Roots & Shoots Group Formation

We adopted the methods of Roots & Shoots, a global youth-led community action program inspired by Dr. Jane Goodall and comprising thousands of young people working to make the world a better place.

28 Roots & Shoots Groups were formed in schools in 21 VDCs of the project area to connect youth with nature conservation. More than 6,543 students were educated on red panda conservation through classroom activities and ecotrips.

Red Panda Lesson Development and Integration of Conservation Manual

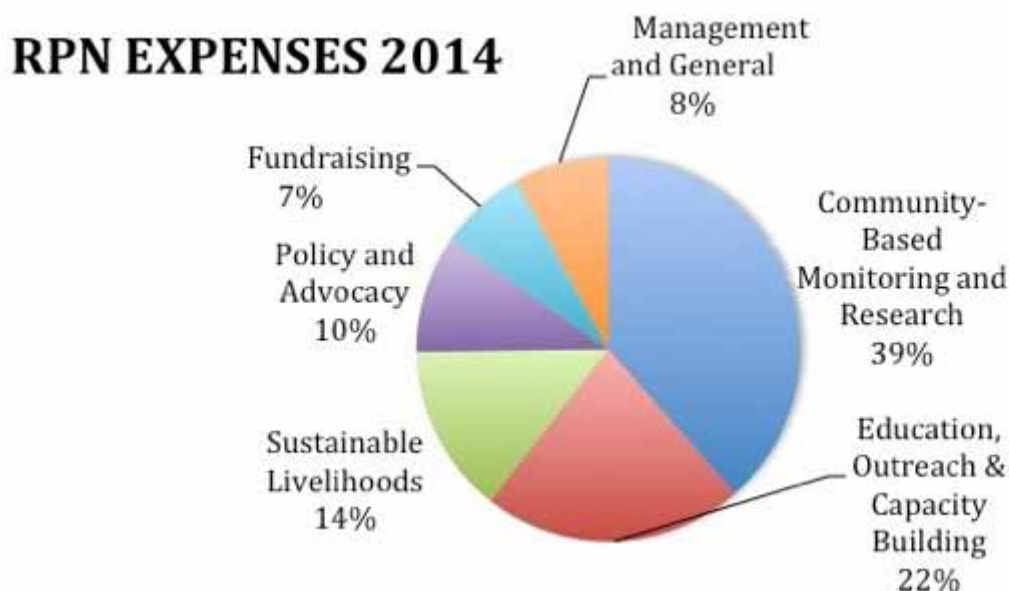
52 teachers from the PIT corridor participated in a series of “Teachers Training on Red Panda Curriculum Development” events. We worked with training participants in developing red panda lessons and a conservation manual, which were integrated into the curriculum of 27 elementary schools.

International Red Panda Day Celebration

The 5th International Red Panda Day (IRPD) was celebrated with the slogan “Conserving Locally Educating Globally”. Local forest users, conservation organizations, and students celebrated IRPD, which is crucial to the dissemination of the red panda conservation message around the world.

Financial Summary

Thanks to our growing group of supporters from around the world, RPN was able to increase funding and bolster the impact of our red panda conservation initiatives.



| EXPENSES | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Program Areas: | Amount | Contribution % |
| Community- Based Monitoring and Research | \$69,554 | 38% |
| Education, Outreach & Capacity Building | \$39,714 | 22% |
| Sustainable Livelihoods | \$25,724 | 14% |
| Policy and Advocacy | \$17,901 | 10% |
| Total Program Services | \$152,893 | 85% |
| Support Services: | | |
| Fundraising | \$13,182 | 7% |
| Management and General | \$14,404 | 8% |
| Total Support Services | \$27,586 | 15% |
| Total Expenses to RPN 2014 | \$180,479 | |

| REVENUE AND SUPPORT | | |
|---|------------------|--------|
| Grants and donations | \$143,993 | 80% |
| Program Services income | \$35,094 | 19.59% |
| Other income | \$83 | 0.05% |
| Total Revenue and Support RPN 2014 | \$179,170 | |

Conservation Partners

Akron Zoological Park
Animal Centre at Sparsholt College
Assiniboine Park
Auckland Zoo
Banham Zoo
Binghamton Zoo at Ross Park
Birmingham Zoo
Blue Heron Academy
Brandywine Zoo
Brookfield Zoo
Cape May County Zoo
Carnegie Museum of Natural History
Charles Paddock Zoo
Chattanooga Zoo
Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding
Chiba Municipal Zoo
Cincinnati Zoo
Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
Columbus Zoo
Colchester Zoo
Cornelle Animal Park
C.P.P.R
Discovery College
Disney Conservation Fund
Dudley Zoo
Duquesne University Office of Residence Life
East Tennessee State University Natural History Museum
Edmonton Valley Zoo
Elmwood Park Zoo
Erie Zoological Society
Flamingo Land
Fota Wildlife Park
Franklin Park Zoo
Friends of Zoo Boise
Fuutaas
Giardino Zoologico di Pistoia
Great Plains Zoo & Delbridge Museum of Natural History
Greensboro Science Center-
Greenville Zoo
Hamilton Zoo
Happy Hollow Zoo & Park
Helsinki Zoo (Korkeasaari)
Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium
Henry Vilas Zoo
Houston Zoo
Jackson Zoo
Jardin Zoologico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires
Juniata College
Kansas City Zoo
Knoxville Zoo
Kolmarden Wildlife Park
Lake District Wildlife Park
Lee Richardson Zoo
Longleat Safari Park

Conservation Partners (cont.)

Memphis Zoo
Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden
Miller Park Zoo
Milwaukee County Zoo
Minnesota Zoo
Miyazaki Municipal Zoo
Mesker Park
Nashville Zoo
Naturschutz-Tierpark Görlitz e.V.
NEW Zoo
Newquay Zoo
Oklahoma City Zoo and Botanical Garden
Paradise Park
Paradise Wildlife Park
Parco Natura Viva – Garda Zoological Park
Philadelphia Zoo
Pittsburgh Zoo
Port Lympne Reserve
Potawatomi Zoo
Potter Park Zoo
Prague Zoo
Pragya Jyoti Boarding School
Prospect Park Zoo
Pueblo Zoo
Queensland Zoo
Rosamond Gifford Zoo
Rotterdam Zoo
Sacramento Zoo/ Greater Sac AAZK
Saitama, Japan
San Diego Zoo
San Francisco Zoo
Saskatoon Zoo Society
Scoville Zoo
Sequoia Park Zoo
Shepreth Wildlife Park
Taipei Zoo
Tiergarten Berlin
Taronga Zoo
Toronto Zoo?AAZK Southern Ontario Chapter
Trevor Zoo
Turtle Back Zoo
Woodland Park Zoo
Utica Zoo
Virginia Zoo
Welsh Mountain Zoo
Zagreb Zoo
Zoo Aquarium Madrid
Zoo Atlanta
Zoo Boise
Zoo de Granby
Zoo Dortmund
Zoo Hannover
ZOO Liberec
Zoo Miami
Zoo New England
ZOO Wrocław

Thank you to our individual supporters, or Red Panda Stewards and Guardians, for your ongoing support and commitment to preserving this beloved species.



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