

ZSL SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION EVENT

Through the eye of the tiger: A future-focused vision for the next 12 years



© Tal Chohan

Tuesday 8 November 2022
5:00pm – 6:30pm UK Time (GMT)

Online event livestreamed to zsl.org/IOZYouTube

[Direct link: https://youtu.be/S_Ab-UeCtRM]

There is no charge for this event, and no need to register in advance

AGENDA

Keshav Varma, Program Director, Global Tiger Initiative

An overview of the Global Tiger Recovery Program (2022-2034)

Dr Hem Sagar Baral, Country Director, ZSL Nepal Office, ZSL

Conserving tigers in Nepal's Terai Arc Landscape

**Nathan Roberts, Postgraduate Researcher, Feline Research Center of National Forestry and
Grassland Administration, Northeast Forestry University, China**

Assessing tiger and prey populations at landscape scale

Debbie Banks, Campaign Leader, Tigers & Wildlife Crime, Environmental Investigation Agency

Ending tiger farming and trade

Chaired by Amy van Gelder, WildCats Conservation Alliance and ZSL

ABSTRACTS

An overview of the Global Tiger Recovery Program (2022-2034)

Keshav Varma, Program Director, Global Tiger Initiative

Keshav Varma has guided and coordinated some of the most ambitious and far-reaching conservation projects including the Global Tiger Initiative and the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program, bringing together 20 countries and more than 40 international organisations. He helped raise over US\$275 million for wildlife conservation by bringing various funding partners together. His contribution to development of Wildlife Business Councils, smart green infrastructure, and increasing the interface between private sector and wildlife conservation have been remarkable breakthroughs towards changing the conversation about conservation. Mr Varma served as the Indian Administrative Service officer in India between 1976 and 1997. He was the Municipal Commissioner of the city of Ahmedabad with a population of 6 million when it issued the City Bond, a first of its kind in South Asia without any state guarantees. He worked as the Sector Director of East Asia urban development and disaster management and headed the global urban programs at the World Bank for 16 years. Currently escorting the process of effective implementation of the projects to ensure impact in the frontlines of tiger and snow leopard conservation, Mr. Varma is the Chief Executive Officer of the GTI-Council, Senior International Advisor to the GSLEP program, and an honorary member of the GTF. His vast experience from the field of urban development enables him to bring innovative ideas into the field of wildlife conservation that aim to ensure sustainability and long-lasting impacts.

Conserving tigers in Nepal's Terai Arc Landscape

Dr Bhagawan Raj Dahal, Deputy Country Manager, and Dr Hem Sagar Baral, Country Director, ZSL Nepal Office, ZSL*

Momentum for tiger conservation picked up through Global Tiger Summit held in St Petersburg, Russia in 2010 where tiger range countries' (TRC) governments, including Nepal, committed to doubling tiger numbers by 2022. ZSL has been working in Nepal for the last 25 years, most recently with its fully-fledged Nepal office supporting government in its effort to restore tiger numbers. Nepal is the only TRC which met the committed target; in fact it has had a nearly 3-fold increase from 121 to 355. This is the result of coordinated efforts of the conservation partners, support from multi-stakeholder agencies including Nepali army and police, and community engagement with the government providing effective leadership and will to act. Strengthening law enforcement, species and habitat monitoring, improving habitats, and building partnership and mobilisation of local community were the main interventions for tiger conservation. The monitoring of tigers within and between the protected areas, the improvement of biological corridors and habitat, and restoration in both areas have been crucial. Similarly, activities supporting livelihoods, coupled with awareness and reduction of human-wildlife conflict were major actions carried out during this period. Investing in new technologies and ideas that help save the loss of livelihoods and people will be an important task for promoting human-tiger coexistence. Community members are the round-the-clock guardians of

biodiversity and having their support for tiger conservation is vital for a long-term sustainable conservation goal. ZSL's tiger conservation goal for future years should focus on working with impoverished communities to lift them from poverty and illiteracy and garner support for the conservation of this mega carnivore. At the same time, we continue to monitor and further research on tiger, their prey-base as well as ecological aspects.

Bhagawan Raj Dahal is the Deputy Country Manager of the Zoological Society of London – Nepal, and has been affiliated with the organisation since 2015, with almost 2 decades of experience in the conservation sector. He has extensive knowledge on the practicalities of conservation with this experience in ZSL and previously in the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), Birdlife Nepal, and the Red Panda Network. He got his PhD in Landscape Ecology and Conservation Biology from the University of Queensland, prior to which he studied Tropical Ecology for his Master from the University of Bremen, Germany.

Since 2013, **Hem Sagar Baral** has been working as the Country Director for ZSL's Nepal office. During these years, he has overseen several projects including those on tiger, prey-base and habitat conservation. ZSL's tiger conservation programme in Nepal means working with government of Nepal and community. During Hem's tenure at ZSL, Nepal has doubled its tiger numbers. It is the only TRC which has successfully more than doubled its tiger numbers as committed in the St Petersburg Tiger Summit in 2010. ZSL is recognised as an important conservation partner to the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, the federal government unit responsible for wildlife and park conservation.

Assessing tiger and prey populations at landscape scale

Nathan Roberts, Postgraduate Researcher, and Professor Guangshun Jiang, Executive Director, Feline Research Center of National Forestry and Grassland Administration, Northeast Forestry University, China*

With most large carnivore populations and habitats suffering massive declines across the world, efforts to restore their populations in the wild are of high conservation priority. China attaches great importance to protecting Amur tigers and has made considerable progress towards this goal, but most efforts have been focused on a single landscape. Here we assess all four major forested landscapes that may be suitable for tigers in northeast China through a combined effort of over 2 million camera trap nights and 3,000 km of line transects surveyed on foot, among other sources. Between 2013 and 2018, in total 54 wild Amur tigers were recorded through camera trap surveys and 30 individuals were identified through genetic analyses. Only one landscape had a breeding population, and showed signs of population increase. Total habitat used by Amur tigers during this period amounted to 47,813 km². We estimated that based on density and home range sizes in nearby Russia, these landscapes could support 311 tigers, including 119 resident breeding females. However, prey density, especially of preferred prey, was extremely low, and likely a primary constraint to population recovery in three of the four landscapes. To achieve the goal of a large meta-population of Amur tigers across northeast Asia, in addition to prey restoration, we recommend extensive land-use planning, reducing

anthropogenic impacts, improving ecological connectivity, and extensive international cooperation, as well as a feasibility assessment for introducing orphaned cubs as a means of speeding recovery in landscapes without breeding females. The work presented is published online (“Open Access”) [here](#). Further related research work about Amur tigers, leopards, and their conservation, can be found on [ResearchGate here](#).

Nathan Roberts is a PhD candidate at Northeast Forestry University, China, where he works under the direct leadership of **Professor Guangshun Jiang**, Executive Director of the Feline Research Center of National Forestry and Grassland Administration. Nathan has worked with this team for over five years, supporting fieldwork across northeast China and the publication of scientific research in high quality international journals. His present research is an analysis of the relationships between tigers and their habitat, at scales from global to local. He also co-designed a long-term monitoring research plan in core conservation areas in China for tigers, habitat, and prey.

Ending tiger farming and trade

Debbie Banks, Campaign Leader, Tigers & Wildlife Crime, Environmental Investigation Agency

Wild tigers continue to be poached for illegal trade in their body parts used for a range of [ornamental, medicinal and status](#) purposes in the primary consumer country, China, as well as in Vietnam and other south east Asian trade hotspots. A minimum of [3,377](#) tigers have been confiscated in trade since 2000, including at least 744 from confirmed or suspected captive sources, but seizures only tell part of the story; many more slip through the enforcement net. In 2007, the international community adopted a decision at the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), that called for the phase out of tiger “farms” and stated that tigers should not be bred for trade in their parts and derivatives. Contrary to this, licensed and illegal captive tiger facilities keeping or breeding tigers for commercial purposes have increased. There are now over 8,500 tigers in captivity in Thailand, Lao PDR, Vietnam, China and even South Africa.

The trade in parts and products from captive specimens perpetuates the desirability of tiger parts, and in those countries where it is still legal, undermines demand reduction and enforcement. The proliferation of online tiger trade has also increased accessibility and perceived acceptability of consumption. “Farmed” tiger parts converge in the trade chain with those of wild tigers, other Asian big cats and illegal wildlife so brokers profit from both supply chains. The need for urgent action to phase out tiger “farms” is once again on the agenda for the forthcoming CITES CoP19. With recognition of the need to phase out tiger “farms” in the Vladivostok Declaration on Tiger Conservation it is hoped this reflects the political will to get tough on tiger-farming countries at CITES, and demand more time-bound, country-specific actions.

Debbie Banks is Campaign Leader on Tigers and Wildlife Crime for the Environmental Investigation Agency, an international NGO committed to investigating environmental crime and advocating for intelligence-led solutions. Since 1996, she has investigated Asian big cat poaching and trafficking, tiger farming and the role of organised crime in the trans-Himalayan and Mekong region, campaigning for more effective enforcement, policy reform and demand reduction. She has a BSc in Zoology from

Aberdeen University, an MSc in Conservation from University College London and in 2018 was presented with the WWF Dr Rimington Award, for outstanding contributions to the conservation of wild tigers.

Format of Live Events

- This interactive online event will be livestreamed to our YouTube channel here: zsl.org/IOZYouTube. A direct link to the livestream will also be shared on the event web page before the event.
 - Before attending this event, please read our Code of Conduct found [here](#).
 - This event will run from 5:00pm – 6:30pm, and will be available to watch afterwards on our YouTube channel.
 - Each event will comprise of short presentations from the speakers, followed by interactive Q&A and panel sessions. Viewers are encouraged to join the event live and ask questions using an online platform.
 - If you wish to submit a question to a speaker prior to the event, please send it to scientific.events@zsl.org. Please be aware we may not be able to answer all questions.
 - There is no charge for this event, and no need to register in advance.
-

ZSL Wild Science Podcast

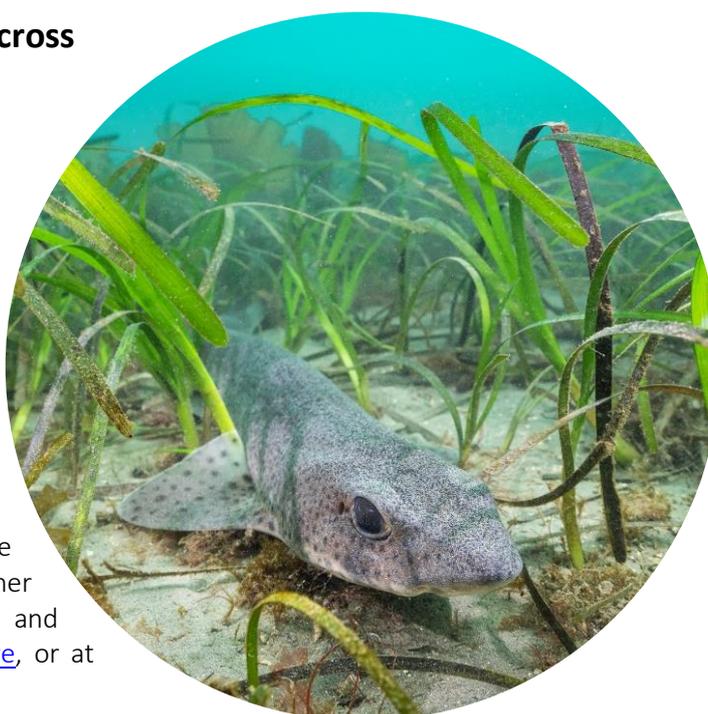
Listen to our award winning ZSL Wild Science Podcast [here](#) or on your favourite podcast app - don't forget to **rate** and **review** to help boost us in the charts, and [subscribe](#) so you don't miss any future episodes!

[Join our upcoming ZSL Science and Conservation Events](#)

Symposium: Ecological connectivity across temperate coastal habitats – moving towards seascape scale restoration

22 – 23 November 2022; 2-day in-person event; registration required

This symposium will provide a comprehensive review of the current state of science surrounding habitat connectivity in temperate coastal systems and provide a firm basis for discussion and networking relating to the policy and practical importance of this understanding. It will bring together a varied audience of scientists, policy makers, restoration practitioners and interested parties looking to provide evidence and delivery of seascape restoration. All further information including ticket links, programme, and details of poster submissions can be found [here](#), or at zsl.org/Science/Whats-On.



Saving coral reefs one species at a time

10 January 2023, 6:00pm – 7:30pm (GMT); In-person event; registration required

Coral reefs are the most biodiverse marine ecosystems, yet they are highly threatened by local pressures such as overfishing, climate change-induced disturbances, and increases in sea temperatures. Whilst there is a colossal ongoing effort to protect reefs globally, the vast majority of the conservation techniques are applied at an ecosystem level. But there are some instances where targeting conservation interventions at a species level are valid, to protect their critical role, evolutionary distinctiveness, or to maintain reef biodiversity. This event will explore different conservation methods focusing on individual species from across the globe – all classified as ZSL EDGE species – and discuss how these exciting developments could be the future of conserving coral reefs. **This is a free, ticketed in-person event.** Keep an eye on our [What's On page](#) for further information soon.

Further Information

- Please contact the Science Communications and Events Manager, Eleanor Darbey (eleanor.darbey@zsl.org), if you have any queries about our Science events or podcasts.
- For press enquiries, please contact the ZSL Press Office: press.office@zsl.org.
- For more information about how to join as a ZSL Fellow from only £48 and enjoy a year of wonderful wildlife, live from our Zoos, field programmes and scientists – bringing you closer to our global conservation and world leading science – please visit: www.zsl.org/membership/zsl-fellowship.
- To receive email updates about forthcoming ZSL Science and Conservation Events, please visit: www.zsl.org/science/whats-on/science-and-conservation-events-email-updates
- Read the latest blog posts from our scientists and conservationists here: www.zsl.org/blogs/science.
- Follow us on Twitter [@ZSLScience](https://twitter.com/ZSLScience) to hear about new publications from our researchers, upcoming events and podcast episode releases.
- Join us on our Facebook page [@ZSLScienceAndConservation](https://www.facebook.com/ZSLScienceAndConservation) for announcements of each event.

Help us care for our amazing animals and continue our global work protecting wildlife.
Support us today – [Join](#), [visit](#) or [donate](#).