



Event Report



NEPAL OWL FESTIVAL 2020



AWARDS AND FELICITATIONS

Four distinguished individuals who made significant contributions to biodiversity and nature conservation in Nepal were presented with the **Nature Conservation Award 2020**. Awardees for this year were Avinash Chaudhary, Bishwanath Rijal, Manashanta Ghimire and Laxman Prasad Paudyal.

Local conservation awards were presented to the Division Forest Office, Syangja and Basudev Poudel, Pokhara for their contributions through collaboration, coordination and advocacy of environmental and biodiversity conservation issues in Nepal.

Shree Deep Jyoti Yuva Club, Phalelung Rural Municipality, Panchthar and Bardia Nature Conservation Club, Thakurbaba Municipality, Bardia were felicitated for their continuous effort in elevating conservation awareness of people in their respective areas. Certificates and prizes were awarded to school children who attained 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, positions in inter-school competitions on art, essay, story and poem writing.



Nature Conservation Award winners 2020

WINNERS PROFILE

Avinash Chaudhary

Avinash Chaudhary has been working as a reporter based in Dhangadi for two daily newspapers namely, 'Gorkhapatra' and 'The Rising Nepal'. He is also the News Co-ordinator for 'Paschim Today', a local media. In the past, he has also worked as an editor for "Hamara Pahura Tharu" and as a reporter for "Shree Nepal Times" a daily newspaper. Chaudhary started his career in journalism writing news reports on environmental conservation and has had an experience of 13 years just by the age of 31. He has brought over six dozen of cases/issues related to conservation in the light of public via feature and news. He often writes about birds, which also includes Owls. He hasn't limited himself to news reporting but has worked actively in their conservation too.



Avinash Chaudhary is highly inspired by the works of Bhojraj Shrestha from Kailali district. He has a keen interest in photography, travelling to new places and communicating with local people. He regards human-wildlife conflict, poaching of wild animals and habitat destruction as major challenges to conservation compounded by low funding from government and lack of co-ordination between concerned stakeholders.

Bishwanath Rijal

Bishwanath Rijal lives in Tarkeshwor Municipality, Kathmandu and has been continuously working to conserve the environment for a decade now. He has been working as a Co-Ordinator in LVDI Inc. and President for Green Guard Nepal for the past three years.



Rijal has successfully rescued up to 60 animals including five owls. He has also written 30 articles on biodiversity conservation, three of which are on owls. While working as a science teacher for almost 17 years, he encouraged students to work for nature. He also worked as an editor for magazine, "Green Guard" which provided platform to a number of students to disseminate their opinions on conservation. He has also run over hundred awareness campaigns to sensitize students and general public on conservation issues. Rijal also led the celebration of 'Monkey day' for four years now. In recent years, Rijal has been working to control hunting and poaching of wild animals. Bishwanath Rijal is inspired by the works of Dr. Chia L Tan and Dr. Andy "John" Phillips. He expresses the need of a separate authority to work in the field of wildlife research and conservation. Rijal stresses over the need of attention and co-operation between concerned organizations and individuals in this region.

Manashanta Ghimire

Currently residing at Lakeside, Pokhara, Manashanta Ghimire is a well-known name in the field of bird conservation. He is the founding president of 'Pokhara Bird Society' and has been persistently working in the area of bird conservation for a decade now.

He is a birding guide by profession and also been working as visiting lecturer of Ornithology in the Institute of Forestry, Pokhara.



Ghimire has organized over 150 birdwatching events and has been involved in rescue and rehabilitation of over 40 wild animals, five of which include owls. Pokhara Bird Fair and Nepal Bird Fair, organized in his leadership, were highly commended for their success in propagating the message on the status and conservation of birds. He has been directly involved in research related to five birds and firmly believes in the need of disseminating such research works to the light of public. He has already published two bird books and is working on the next two. In addition, he has also published twenty technical reports and research articles

Laxman Prasad Poudyal

Laxman Prasad Poudyal lives in Tyanglaphaant, Kirtipur. He is currently based in Sukla Phanta National Park in Kanchanpur District as the Chief Warden. Poudel has been contributing to the field of conservation for 28 years now during his involvement in various positions at Annapurna Conservation Area, Chitwan, Sagarmatha and Shivapuri-Nagarjuna National Parks.

Poudyal has been directly involved in the research of Pheasants, Vulture, Lesser Adjutant Stork and Bengal Florican and has published over 15 research articles. He has authored three and co-authored two books. He has organized ten birdwatching events and conservation education programs in four schools. He had significant involvement during preparation of Red List of birds in Nepal. Furthermore, he also played a pivotal role in creating conservation work plan for Rhino, Gharial, Snow Leopard, Pangolin, Pheasants, and Red Panda. Poudyal is inspired by the works of Dr. Hem Sagar Baral. He relishes birding and travelling. Poudyal firmly believes the need to simplify the procedure involved in research permit and also stresses over the need of government to fund the research projects to facilitate the growth and ensure the future of research field.

