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## PRESS RELEASE

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# Nepal set to become first country to double wild tiger population

**23 September 2018, Kathmandu** – On the occasion of National Conservation Day today, Nepal announced that there are now an estimated 235 wild tigers in the country, nearly doubling the baseline of around 121 tigers in 2009. If these trends continue, Nepal could become the first country to double its national tiger population since the ambitious TX2 goal – to double the world’s wild tiger population by 2022 – was set at the St Petersburg Tiger Summit in 2010.

“Our commitment to the Global Tiger Recovery Programme gains new ground with Nepal’s growing tiger numbers and a successful implementation of Nepal’s Tiger Conservation Action Plan,” stated Bishwa Nath Oli, Secretary of the Ministry of Forests and Environment. “Protecting tigers is a top priority of the government, and we are thankful for the able support of our partners, enforcement agencies, local communities and the international community for a common purpose.”

Nepal conducted its national tiger survey between November 2017 and April 2018 in the transboundary Terai Arc Landscape (TAL), a vast area of diverse ecosystems shared with India. Camera traps and occupancy surveys were used to estimate tiger occupancy and abundance, while line transect surveys were used to derive prey density. The last tiger survey in 2013 had estimated the tiger population at 198.

“This significant increase in Nepal’s tiger population is proof that when we work together, we can save the planet’s wildlife – even species facing extinction,” said Leonardo DiCaprio, WWF-US board member and chairman of the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, which has funded tiger conservation in Nepal’s Bardia National Park and elsewhere since 2010. “Nepal has been a leader in efforts to double tigers within its own borders and serves as a model for conservation for all of Asia and the world. I am proud of my foundation’s partnership with WWF to support Nepal and local communities in doubling the population of wild tigers.”

The success in Nepal has been largely attributed to the country’s political commitment and the adoption of innovative tools and approaches towards tiger conservation. Nepal was the first country to achieve global standards in managing tiger conservation areas, an accreditation scheme governed by the Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA|TS). With four more years to go, the TX2 goal of doubling tiger numbers globally can only be achieved if all the tiger range countries step up and commit to a similar level of excellence.

In May this year, Nepal celebrated a new benchmark with the achievement of 365 days of zero poaching of rhinos on five occasions between 2011 and 2018. This is another excellent example of real conservation change that can be achieved when a country unites and coordinates the efforts of the government, enforcement agencies, conservation partners and local communities.

“Every tiger counts, for Nepal and for the world,” stated Dr. Ghana S Gurung, Country Representative, WWF-Nepal. “While Nepal is but a few tigers away from our goal to double tiger numbers by 2022, it also underscores the continued need to ensure protection, and improved and contiguous habitats for the long-term survival of the species.”



The tiger and prey-base survey was led by the Government of Nepal's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and Department of Forests, in partnership with WWF-Nepal, National Trust for Nature Conservation and Zoological Society of London (ZSL) Nepal. It was funded by WWF, ZSL Nepal, National Trust for Nature Conservation, USAID's Hariyo Ban Program II, KfW/IUCN, Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, Panthera and WildCats Conservation Alliance.

### **Notes to the Editor**

#### **Downloads:**

Camera trap images (credit: © DNPWC/WWF Nepal):

<https://bit.ly/2D2YXMB>

### **About Nepal's national tiger survey**

Nepal's national tiger survey was conducted between November 2017 and April 2018 in the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL), a transboundary landscape shared with northeastern India. The survey covered five protected areas together with corridors and adjoining forests, with an estimated 18 tigers in Parsa National Park, 93 in Chitwan National Park, 87 in Bardia National Park, 21 in Banke National Park and 16 in Shuklaphanta National Park.

The latest national tiger survey covered 16,261 km<sup>2</sup> for occupancy surveys, 12,356km<sup>2</sup> for camera trapping and 2,484km of line transects. Camera trapping effort of 27,829 effective camera trap days collected a total of 4,387 tiger images.

### **About Tx2**

In 2010, the governments of the world's 13 tiger range countries committed to TX2 at the St Petersburg 'Tiger Summit' – the global goal to double the number of wild tigers by 2022, the next Chinese Year of the Tiger. WWF is a key driver of the TX2 goal, working together with governments, businesses, development partners, local communities, and many others to ensure tiger conservation is given the priority and investment it requires.

### **About Nepal's National Conservation Day**

The Government of Nepal declared 23 September as National Conservation Day in 2008 in memory of the Conservation Heroes who lost their lives in the tragic helicopter accident on 23 September 2006 at Ghunsa, Kangchenjunga. National Conservation Day is organized under the leadership of the Ministry of Forests and Environment in partnership with a consortium of conservation agencies of Nepal.

### **About WWF**

WWF is the world's leading conservation organization, working in 100 countries for nearly half a century. With the support of almost 5 million members worldwide, WWF is dedicated to delivering science-based solutions to preserve the diversity and abundance of life on Earth, halt the degradation of the environment and combat climate change. WWF has been active in Nepal since the 1960s and remains committed to the vital work being done in the region to save its unique and irreplaceable biodiversity. Learn more at [www.wwfnepal.org](http://www.wwfnepal.org)

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