

Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, Nepal More Than 50 Years of Giving Back to Nature

Besides adhering to rigorous environmental standards in its own operations, Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, which has been operational since 1980 in Nepal's Chitwan National Park, extends their support to a range of local conservation efforts.



Jatayu Vulture Restaurant is located in Kawasoti Nawalparasi district along the buffer zone of Nepal's Chitwan National Park.

Jatayu Vulture Restaurant – Increasing Wildlife Populations

The Jatayu Vulture Restaurant in Kawasoti Nawalparasi district along the buffer zone of Chitwan National Park is worth a special mention. The brainchild of D B Chaudhary, manager at the Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, this community-managed vulture restoration project has helped revive populations of eight endangered vulture species leading to a 150% increase in their buffer zone populations and a 200% increase in nesting. This unique vulture feeding centre provides multi-faceted benefits: rescue and care for old cattle, supply

of a non-toxic food source to vultures and village income from home stays and guiding.

To free low-income families of the burden of caring for ailing cattle, the initiative buys unproductive cattle from surrounding villages at 250 NRS a piece and keeps them at a hospice for at least seven days to ensure they are free of diclofenac, a veterinary product toxic to vultures. When the cattle die naturally, the carcass is fed to the vultures at the restaurant.

The restaurant is being promoted as an eco-tourism initiative creating local jobs and spreading conservation awareness through a Community Learning Centre. The clearance of invasive plant species on surrounding land has seen the population of critically-endangered Bengal Floricans increase.



Conservation of surrounding wetland.

The Tiger Tops Swiss Air School Tree Nursery Project helps children imbibe lessons on responsibility for their natural resources. Tree seedlings are sold to villagers, providing them with alternative sources for fodder, fuel and building materials.



Tiger Tops staff taking part in the Asia waterfowl census count.

Conservation of surrounding wetland and grassland for wild inhabitants including deer, rhino, birds and many herbivores is also underway.

Education

Seven in-house naturalists enable the lodge to act as a centre of nature excellence for visiting guests, educational groups, the surrounding community and conservation initiatives.



Students taking part in the TTSA School Tree Nursery Project.

Wildlife Monitoring and Anti-Poaching Initiatives

The Tiger Tops Long Term Tiger Monitoring Project, launched in 1980 and funded by ITNC, FFNC and the [Nepal Tiger Trust](#), has resulted in the collection of the largest set of data to-date on tiger ecology, territorial dynamics, turnover, reproduction and tiger survival. The Smithsonian Institution's long-term tiger monitoring project used Tiger Tops' trackers to pioneer the use of camera-trapping. Camera-trapping has been ongoing since 1995 and has helped to inform official tiger protection strategies.



Tiger photographed on camera trap.

Tiger Tops provides the salaries of two buffer zone guards in Chitwan working closely with local authorities on anti-poaching activities. They lend cars, boats, and manpower for patrols and wildlife monitoring and provide logistical support for the annual Asian Waterbird Census January counts.



Elephants are not used for safaris at the Tharu Lodge. Housed in five spacious enclosures, they are allowed to follow their own routines.

Elephant Welfare

Tiger Tops has pioneered elephant welfare projects and is setting an example on how to ethically treat captive elephants. At their Tharu Lodge Camp, resident elephants are kept free of chains in five large enclosures and are not used for safaris. These twelve elephants now follow their own routines and have formed their own natural groupings. Guests are given a chance to observe these animals, interact with their mahouts, and learn from their experiences.

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Dhan Bahadur Tamang, a local from Tharu Village, Chitwan, is recognised as one of Nepal's best and longest serving naturalists. His world class knowledge of tiger populations was built up through his field research over 40 years contributing to the work of pioneer wildlife researcher, Dr Chuck McDougal. A Tiger Tops naturalist for 50 years, his commitment to communicating his love of nature to visitors is second to none.