

## PRESS RELEASE

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Department of Forests and Soil Conservation  
and  
Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation  
Babarmahal, Kathmandu, Nepal

### **First Royal Bengal Tiger recorded at the highest-ever elevation in Nepal**

Never before has a wild tiger been spotted so high in the Eastern most part of Nepal as the one captured on camera for the first time in the country's well documented history.

The majestic Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*), the largest of all Asian big cats was captured on 13 Nov 2020 and 21 Nov 2020 at an elevation of 3,165 meters by a camera trap set up in a forest in the Ilam district in eastern Nepal. It is the country's highest-ever recorded tiger sighting and the very first photographic evidence in the mountains of the Eastern region. This record of the tiger in the Ilam district makes the total number of cats to eight species in the Kangchenjunga Landscape (KL) in eastern Nepal including leopard, clouded leopard, snow leopard, Asiatic golden cat, leopard cat, jungle cat, and marbled cat.

The images were taken by one of the 20 cameras set to monitor ten wild red pandas equipped with GPS-satellite collars in the KL. Red Panda Network (RPN) in collaboration with the Department of Forests and Soil Conservation (DoFSC) and Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) has been monitoring ten red pandas in the Ilam district since last year. The highest reported elevation records of the Bengal tiger are 3,630 meters along Dibang valley in Arunachal Pradesh in India and 4,038 meters from Bhutan. The species' highest recent elevation record was from the Dadeldhura district in far-western Nepal (2,500 meters).

The first record of the tiger in the Ilam district corridor demonstrates the importance of the KL in the eastern Nepal which needs special attention. The KL provides connectivity to the Singalila National Park in India and connected to the habitat in North Sikkim, Dooars and the Neora valley region of North Bengal where tigers have been reported. This finding broadens the opportunity for potential high-altitude tiger habitats in Nepal and highlights for the importance of ecological corridors for their safe dispersal and species conservation in the region (transboundary).

The Royal Bengal Tiger is categorized as "Endangered" in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species; listed under Appendix-I by the CITES and protected by the Government of Nepal. Tigers in Nepal are distributed to five protected areas of Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) covering 18 districts with 7 biological corridors in Nepal.

**For more information:** Madhuri Karki Thapa, Under Secretary, Department of Forests and Soil Conservation, Phone: +977 1 4221231, Email: madhureethapa@gmail.com