

World Rhino Day 2024 Celebrated at Siddhanath Science Campus

The Department of Zoology at Siddhanath Science Campus (SNSC) marked World Rhino Day 2024 on September 22, raising awareness about the threats faced by rhinos and the ongoing conservation efforts to protect these iconic species. The event brought together 100 participants, including faculty members, students, conservationists, and local media representatives, fostering discussions on rhino conservation and human-rhino coexistence. The program was jointly organized by SNSC, Shuklaphanta National Park (ShNP), the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)/Suklaphanta Conservation Programme (SCP), and the Buffer Zone Management Committee (BZMC), with additional support from the Microbiology Students' Association (MISA), SNSC IT Club, and SNSC Eco Club.

Distinguished Guests and Key Presentations

The event was honored by the presence of esteemed guests, including the event was graced by **Dr. Gaj Ram Damai** (Campus Chief, SNSC), **Dr. Bhawani Datta Joshi** (Professor, SNSC), and **Mr. Manoj Ayer** (Conservation Officer, ShNP), shared insights on rhino conservation, academic contributions, and community engagement.

Two key presentations provided valuable insights into rhino ecology, conservation challenges, and ecosystem services:

1. "Restoring Ecological Functions through Rhino Reintroduction in Nepal: Seed Dispersal and Nutrient Provision" – Dr. Balram Awasthi (Lecturer, SNSC) explored the ecological roles of rhinos, particularly in seed dispersal and nutrient provision.
2. "Status and Monitoring of Rhinos in Shuklaphanta National Park" – Mr. Manoj Ayer (Conservation Officer, ShNP) presented the current status of rhino populations in Shuklaphanta, emphasizing monitoring efforts and conservation strategies.

These discussions highlighted the importance of rhinos in maintaining ecosystem balance and addressed the human-rhino conflict (HRC) scenario in Far-West Nepal.

Closing Remarks and Community Engagement

The event concluded with remarks from Associate Professor Dr. Mahadev Bista (Head of the Department of Zoology, SNSC), who underscored the crucial role of student involvement in rhino conservation research. The successful organization of World Rhino Day 2024 at SNSC reflects the growing commitment of academic institutions, conservation organizations, and

local communities toward protecting Nepal’s rhino population and ensuring their long-term survival.



February 24, 2025: The Department of Zoology at Siddhanath Science Campus, Tribhuvan University, organized a special seminar on “*Human-Big Cat Conflict*”, bringing together 110 participants, including faculty members, students, conservationists, and researchers. The event focused on strategies to mitigate conflicts between humans and large carnivores.

Dr. Balram Awasthi, Assistant Professor at Siddhanath Science Campus, invited keynote speaker Professor Morten Odden from the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway. A distinguished researcher in big cat ecology and human-wildlife interactions, Professor Odden has an h-index of 29 with over 3,000 citations, significantly contributing to predator-prey dynamics, carnivore conservation, and conflict mitigation worldwide.

SNSC Special Seminar

📌 **Title: Human-Big Cat Conflict**

- ◆ **Speaker:** Morten Odden
- ◆ **Affiliation:** Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway
- ◆ **Host:** Department of Zoology, Siddhanath Science Campus
- ◆ **Time:** 11:30 PM, Monday, February 24, 2025
- ◆ **Venue:** The Seminar Hall in Siddhanath Science Campus



Professor Morten Odden is a distinguished researcher specializing in human-wildlife interactions, big cat ecology, and conservation science. His work has significantly contributed to understanding predator-prey dynamics, carnivore conservation, and conflict mitigation strategies between humans and large carnivores.

With a strong academic presence, Professor Odden has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications, earning over 3,000 citations and an h-index of 29, reflecting the wide impact and relevance of his research. His expertise in wildlife ecology, particularly in relation to big cats, makes him a leading figure in conservation efforts across different ecosystems.

The seminar, held at the Siddhanath Science Campus Seminar Hall, began at 11:30 AM. Discussions centered on community-based conservation strategies and policy implications for mitigating human-big cat conflicts.

Chief Guest Dr. Gaj Ram Damai campus chief, and Dr. Mahadev Bist, Head of the Department of Zoology, welcomed Professor Odden. In recognition of his contributions to conservation science, Professor Dr. Bhawani Datta Joshi presented him with a *Token of Love* and a *Letter of Appreciation* on behalf of the institution. This gesture underscored the importance of his research in addressing human-wildlife conflicts, particularly in regions affected by habitat encroachment and human expansion.

The seminar provided a vital platform for students, researchers, and conservationists to exchange knowledge and foster collaboration. Participants expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to engage with a global expert and pledged to apply key insights to their conservation efforts.

The event concluded with a strong call for continued research and collaboration to address the escalating challenges of human-wildlife conflicts in Nepal and beyond.

