

Eastern Himalayas

Empowering communities
to protect sacred lands



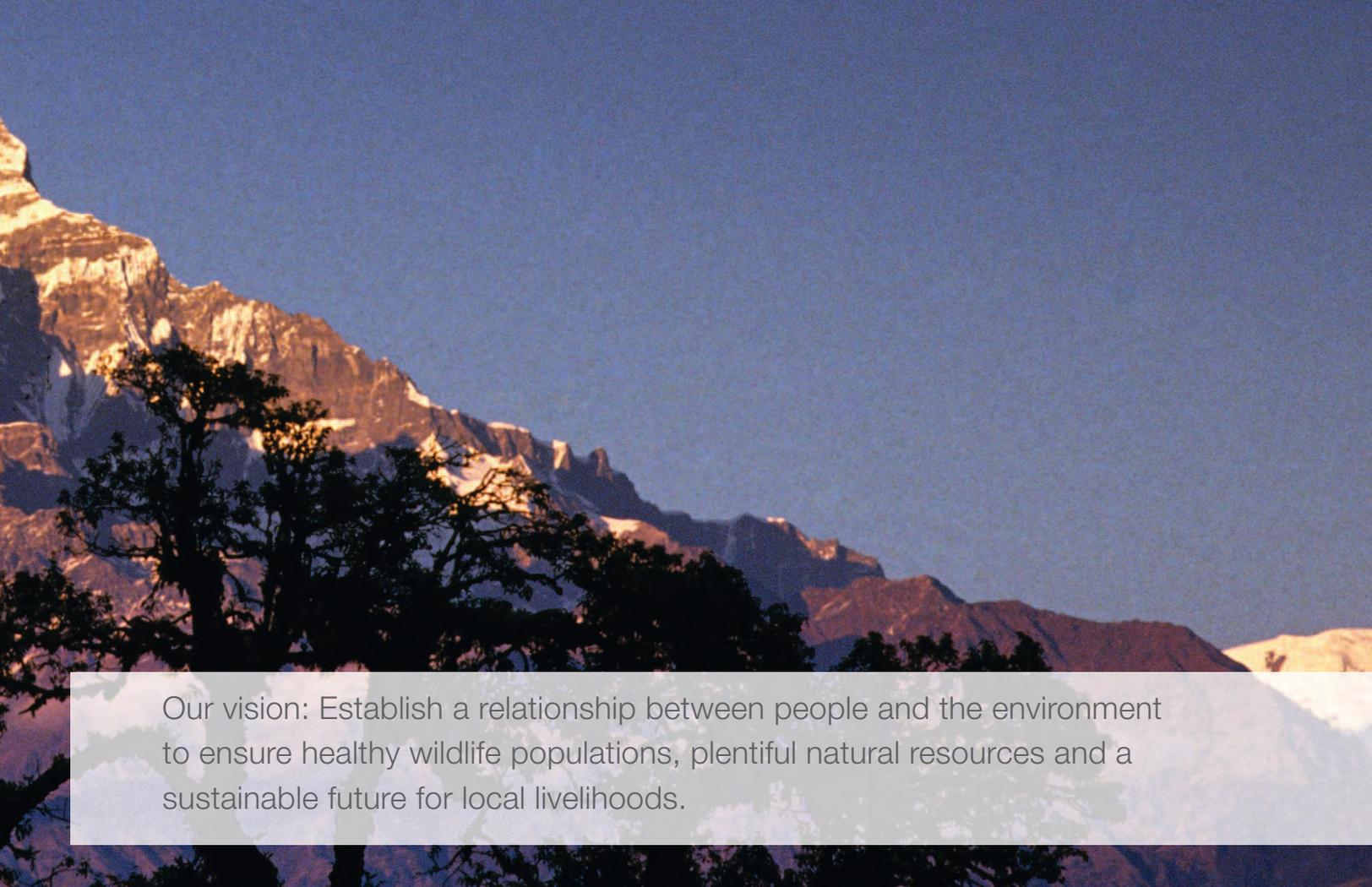


What makes the Eastern Himalayas extraordinary

Few places on Earth can match the breathtaking splendor of the Himalayas. Its towering peaks and secluded valleys have inspired naturalists, adventure seekers and spiritualists for centuries. Its diverse landscapes harbor exotic creatures such as red pandas, snow leopards and one-horned rhinos.



Although this region has been romanticized as a mythical paradise, it is a fragile land facing many challenges. Climate change is melting its mountain glaciers. Overharvesting for food and timber, intensive grazing, agriculture expansion, deforestation, and wildlife poaching are straining natural resources that people depend upon and threatening a number of endangered species.



Our vision: Establish a relationship between people and the environment to ensure healthy wildlife populations, plentiful natural resources and a sustainable future for local livelihoods.



The place. The Himalayan mountain range forms a 1,500-mile-long barrier that separates the lowlands of the Indian subcontinent from the high, dry Tibetan Plateau. Located in Nepal, Bhutan, northern Myanmar, southeast Tibet and northeast India, the region contains temperate forests, the world's highest mountain peaks and tallest grasslands, savannas, and rich alpine meadows.



The species. The Eastern Himalayas harbor 10,000 plant species, 240 mammal species and 750 bird species. Its grasslands are home to the densest population of Bengal tigers, living alongside Asian elephants and one-horned rhinos. The Himalayas offer refuges for snow leopards, red pandas and takins. The region's mountain forests sustain Himalayan black bears and golden langurs.



The people. The region is a rich cultural mosaic of Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and animists, all of whom have lived closely with nature for centuries. Many communities live in isolation, and their livelihoods and traditions deeply depend on natural resources, making an understanding of conservation essential for their continued survival.



WWF delivers lasting results

WWF has a deep, long-standing commitment to conserving the rich ecological heritage of the Eastern Himalayas. For more than 30 years, our conservation work has centered on making lasting change for local communities and wildlife. WWF partners with governments and conservation groups to address the region's most pressing challenges.



Notable Accomplishments

1970s

Initiated Project Tiger, securing government commitments to species protection and establishing a network of tiger reserves throughout Asia

1980s

Completed the first-ever translocation of rhinos from Royal Chitwan to Royal Bardia National Park in Nepal, reestablishing their population

Created the Annapurna Conservation Area in Nepal — a model of community collaboration in conservation — that funds conservation with revenues from tourism

1990s

Collaborated with the government of Bhutan to expand environmental protections in the country to 26 percent of its land

Created the Bhutan Trust Fund for Nature Conservation — one of the first trust funds of its kind — generating over \$30 million for its endowment

2000s

Contributed to the establishment of Wangchuck Centennial Park, a park in Bhutan that connects existing parks to its east and west, creating a contiguous protected zone covering the entire northern frontier of the country

Established network of biological corridors, connecting protected areas in Nepal, Northeast India and Bhutan



“Our work in the Himalayas is about ensuring the well-being of people and species through the conservation of entire ecosystem processes, such as the flow of fresh water from glaciers to the plains and the movement of species across their traditional ranges.”

Jon Miceler
Managing Director, Eastern Himalayas

WWF is committed to making our vision a reality

WWF is focused on five landscapes that present the best opportunities for altering the global forces that challenge the future of this magical place.

Conserving the Tibetan Plateau's vital ecosystem

The Tibetan plateau is a deceptively fragile ecosystem of immense biological and cultural importance. This high altitude Serengeti is home to the snow leopard, red panda and vast herds of wild yak, gazelle and antelope. The glaciers and wetlands of Tibet are the source of many of Asia's most important rivers, including the Yangtze, Mekong and Brahmaputra, all of which ensure fresh water to nearly half of humanity. These rivers and glaciers are now imperiled by climate change. Aside from our species conservation work, WWF's efforts in this region are focused on implementation of adaptation strategies aimed at ensuring the long-term viability of these river source areas.



Preserving the Sacred Himalayan Landscape

The snowpacks of the Himalayan Mountains are an important source of fresh water for millions of people in South Asia and its alpine meadows and conifer forests harbor an array of rare plant life and endangered species. WWF's Sacred Himalayan Landscape initiative leverages the spiritual beliefs and conservation ethics of local communities to restore essential habitats and protect endangered species such as the snow leopard. We help local communities and local governments manage their forests, streams, soils and wildlife more sustainably. We also directly improve people's lives through activities such as the establishment of women's groups that focus on literacy and sustainable income-generation skills.

Restoring the Terai Arc Landscape

Nepal's Terai Arc region is home to endangered rhinos and elephants, and the world's highest concentration of tigers. WWF is connecting 11 protected areas by restoring the forests between them, thereby providing habitat corridors needed for species survival. We are also empowering local communities and improving livelihoods by establishing community forestry groups that enable communities to benefit from forests by managing and restoring them.

Safeguarding Bhutan's natural landscape

More than 64 percent of Bhutan's land is covered by intact forests. Bhutan's Biological Conservation Complex is an ambitious plan that includes maintaining almost 400,000 acres of "wildlife highways" that connect protected areas across the country. As the only international conservation organization with a permanent presence in Bhutan, WWF collaborates with the royal government to address Bhutan's economic and environmental needs while engaging and raising the technical capacity of its local people through education.

Protecting northeast India's forests

Bhutan's old-growth forests extend into northeast India, where a growing population and infrastructure projects threaten some of the largest and last intact forests in Asia. WWF is applying its experiences from community-based conservation in the Terai Arc and Bhutan to protect the forests of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, restore critical elephant habitats, and reduce incidents of human-elephant conflict.

WWF builds strong partnerships

Lasting conservation is achieved by collaborating with a range of extraordinary partners, from governments to local communities and from businesses to generous individual supporters. By leveraging the strengths of our collaborations, we are able to accomplish our greatest successes.

CARE

Conservation International

Ford Foundation

The Government of India

The Government of Nepal

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Johnson & Johnson

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland

Save the Tiger Fund

The Royal Government of Bhutan

U.K. Department for International Development

United Nations

U.S. Agency for International Development

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Be part of our work

WWF is leading the most important and ambitious conservation effort the world has ever seen.

By 2020, we will conserve 19 of the world's most important natural places and significantly change global forces to protect the future of nature.

Together, with your generous support, we can directly influence the course of conservation.

To learn more, visit worldwildlife.org/EasternHimalayas



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