

PRESS RELEASE

Environment Protection and Study Center (ENPROSC)
Phone: +977-1-4564997
Email: info.enprosc@gmail.com,
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Turtle Talk (IV) : A symposium on Turtles of Nepal

Kathmandu, Bagmati, May, 2023, "Turtle Talk (IV): A symposium on Turtles of Nepal" has been successfully organized by Environment Protection and Study Center (ENPROSC), Companions for Amphibians and Reptiles of Nepal (CARON) and GoldenGate International College (GGIC) on Tuesday (May 23, 2023). Altogether five presentations were done out of which 2 were done by undergraduate students, two by researchers and one by the key-note speaker on different aspects of turtle conservation in Nepal which was followed by guided discussion session.

The master of the ceremony, Manisha Sherpa, started the program with the chairing session. The program was chaired by Shashank Sharma, Co-chair of ENPROSC and CEO of the GGIC, Ramesh Kumar Silwal, was the chief guest. The session was followed by a welcome speech given by Narayan Niraula, treasurer of the ENPROSC. He welcomed all the participants highlighting the need of the turtles and importance of celebrating the turtles' day.



Pooja Paudel, an undergraduate student of Department of Environmental Science, Padma Kanya Multiple Campus presented a research on the aspect of turtle exploitation and peoples' perception at Buffer Zone of Chitwan National Park. She shared that turtles are heavily exploited by peoples of buffer zone. Chitra Rekha Bashyal, a forestry graduate- shared her research findings on the diversity and status of turtles at Betana Wetland Area of Morang. Her research had found four species of the turtles in the wetland among which *Nilssonia hurum* was the most abundant. Manju Shree Thakur, secretary of the ENPROSC, presented culture and conservation in regard to conservation. She highlighted challenges and opportunities in conservation of the turtles from cultural perspectives. Prabin Lama presented the context of media and turtle in Nepal. His findings showed that the mainstream media

(mainly newspapers) of Nepal are giving turtles a very less priority as compared to other charismatic species. Online newspapers were found to be covering more news regarding the turtles rather than the National daily newspapers. Each of the presentation was succeeded by a short interactive question-answer session.

Anders Rhodin, the keynote speaker of the Talk program presented his works while sharing the global scenario. Furthermore, he pointed out that the turtles are in terrible trouble and appealed everyone to join hands in the conservation. He also showed his affiliations, publications and the organizations providing funding for turtle researches. He funneled down his presentation and talked about the context of Nepal as well. While sharing his experiences from Nepal, he started from 1992 when he had worked for the first time in the Nepal. He also stated that there is a good diversity of turtles in the Terai region of Nepal.

The presentation session was succeeded by 'guided discussion session' which was facilitated by Chandramani Aryal, Assistant Professor from Padma Kanya Multiple Campus, TU, Kathmandu. Views from participants of the various sectors were asked for and brought into the limelight for the discussion amongst all the participants. Students, researchers, news reporters, conservation workers and other participants took part in the session.

Lastly, chair of the program Shashank Sharma delivered his closing remarks summarizing the whole program and briefing on possibilities of getting involved in conservation related researches and works for the upcoming generations.



The program also highlighted photograph and art demonstrations for turtle conservation alongside face paint program to raise awareness. A selfie booth created from eco-friendly materials were put for display where enthusiasts took pictures and were encouraged to post them with relevant hashtags so as to stir a turtle conservation trend in social media platforms. Nearly 450 people clicked a picture in the selfie booth and got a turtle painted on their faces or hands in the program. The symposium got a coverage from NEB Result and News channel in Facebook which is followed by nearly 420,000 people. Participation of local government representative from elected representative (Sreeram Rai) from Ward 9, Kathmandu Metropolitan City Ward-9 provided enthusiasm to conservation stakeholders.



We would like to thank the participants, presenters, artists, organizing committee, volunteers, supporting partners, media representation, social media influencers and all direct/indirect hands of support which might have remained unnamed for their contribution without which the program would not have been successful.

Environment Protection and Study Center is a not for profit organization working on the research and conservation of non-charismatic species like herpetofauna. Croaking Monsoon and Nepal Turtle Talks are its two flagship programs which are primarily focused on herpetofauna. Furthermore, organization works in capacity building of researchers' particularly young researchers and conservation professionals.

