

Tutor's evaluation of the PhD studies and of the thesis of Bishnu Prasad Bhattarai

Bishnu Prasad Bhattarai was born in 1976 in Chitwan, Nepal. He lived in a village situated in the core area of the Chitwan National Park for many years. Based on this experience, he understands very well the importance of balance between people and wildlife and need of cooperation between local communities and park authorities.

Bishnu completed his university studies of zoology at the Tribhuvan University in Nepal. During these studies, he also worked as a researcher of conservation biology at the Department of Zoology of the Tribhuvan University. In his master's study, he worked on population and conservation threats of wild ungulates in the Chitwan National Park. Besides, he was also involved in several research collaborations with NGOs and INGOs, e.g., cleaning campaign of wetlands, wildlife orphanage management, bird and mammal monitoring. This provided him with a very good theoretical and practical background. His main interests involve conservation of big cats and their prey, human-wildlife conflict, protected areas management, landscape level conservation approach and global change impacts on endangered species.

In 2007, he joined my team at the Biodiversity Research Centre, which is one of the few centres of excellence supported by the Czech Ministry of Education. Starting from 2010, he works with me on the project *CzechGlobe*. His involvement in this project in the recent years is really exceptional.

In 2007, Bishnu enrolled PhD studies at the University of South Bohemia under my supervision. The topic of his thesis is *Challenges of Bengal tiger (Panthera tigris tigris) conservation in the tropics: lessons learned in the Chitwan National Park, Nepal*. Here he got the opportunity to combine his achievements gained during his work on the international projects named above with other research that he performed exclusively for his Thesis. As a result, the scope of his Thesis is quite broad in terms of challenges of tiger conservation in Nepal and split into many topics.


During his PhD studies, Bishnu was actively involved in public awareness campaign to train the local people (stakeholders of buffer zone areas) and school students in the buffer zone areas of the Chitwan National Park about the importance of nature conservation.

Bishnu gave oral presentations during the international conference 2nd European Congress of Conservation Biology (Prague, Czech Republic). He also participated in the 4th International Orchid Conservation Congress and in the 2nd Meeting of the IOBC/WPRS Working Group "Benefits and Risks of Exotic Biological Control Agents in Hluboka, Czech Republic.

Bishnu's Thesis consists of nine papers, five of which are already published, one is in press: two of them in internationally acknowledged journals (*Acta Theriologica*, *Biodiv. & Conserv.*), four as chapters in the above-mentioned book published in Springer. The sole fact that these papers successfully passed the strict reviews now usual in such journals and books, speaks volumes. Apart from these papers, he also published one article, not included in the Thesis, as chapter in a book. Several other papers are in the pipeline. I feel that his findings published in all these papers represent a really good contribution to science and put forward a lot of new ideas.

During his studies he has shown enormous skills in empirical research, based on his previous experience from Nepal, and an exceptional patience and consistence in data mining. I can confirm that Bishnu Prasad Bhattarai has performed the ability to work independently in science and publish his empirical results. The amount and quality of the papers he has published vastly exceeds that of a PhD student. As the tutor, I appreciate above all his enthusiasm for scientific work and skills in the field work. He has fulfilled all the requirements of the PhD studies. I am unequivocally recommending his thesis for defense and feel he should be awarded the title "PhD".

České Budějovice, April 17, 2012



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