GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT
GÖTTINGEN
Department of Conservation Biology

Project funded by:
HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG

M. Sc. Thesis

Comparing monitoring methods to assess blue sheep (*Pseudois nayaur*) populations

Background

Large carnivores play an irreplaceable ecological role but their biological traits make them particularly prone to extirpation and, hence, priority species for conservation. In declining populations of the snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*), the loss of wild prey is regarded a major threat and may also affect conflicts with humans over livestock depredation. Therefore, monitoring wild ungulate populations is crucial for several conservation purposes. Globally, various methods are applied to assess mountain ungulates but the comparability of their results has rarely been investigated.


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Topic and Objectives

In the framework of a project on human-snow leopard conflicts in the Annapurna Conservation Area, Nepal, we used various approaches to monitor blue sheep (*Pseudois nayaur*), the main wild prey of the rare snow leopard. By estimating blue sheep densities from total counts, distance sampling and double observer counts, we now want to draw conclusions about the reliability and comparability of these monitoring methods in mountain landscapes. The results shall assist wildlife managers and conservation scientists in choosing best options for assessments of mountain ungulates.

Your profile

We are looking for a highly-motivated master student who will analyze an existing blue sheep data set compiled in 2019. Good knowledge in and previous experience with R (Studio) and ArcGIS/QGIS are required. If possible, the thesis should start not later than February 2021. The publication of study results is encouraged and will be supervised.

Please send your application to Marc Filla: **marc.filla@biologie.uni-goettingen.de**

For further information on this project on human-snow leopard conflicts, please visit:
https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/conservation+ecology+and+mitigation+of+conflicts+between+livestock+owners+and+snow+leopards+%28panthera+uncia%29/602663.html