



NAAYA AAYAM NEWSLETTER

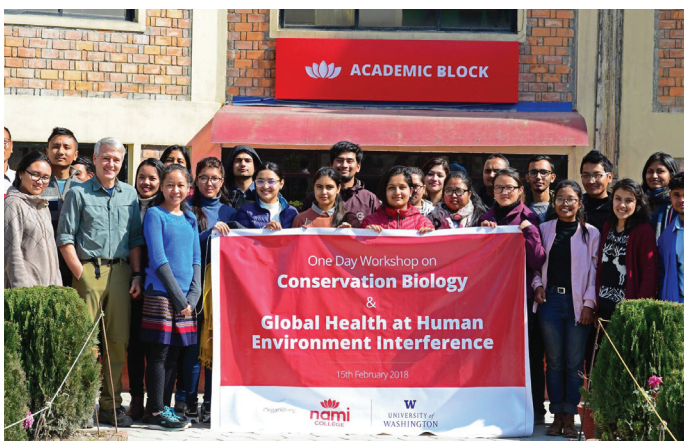
Volume III | Issue I | July 2018



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Biodiversity Workshop

*Tsering Ongmu Sherpa,
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A one-day workshop on Conservation Biology and Global Health at Human Environment Interference was conducted by two professors from University of Washington within the premises of NAMI College. The workshop was attended by Level 6 students, Programme Leader, Head of Research and Development and module leaders. The workshop kicked off with presentation by Dr. Randall Kyes on the factors affecting biodiversity along with emphasizing rapid population growth as the root cause behind threats to biodiversity. The workshop was followed by presentation on importance of benthos in understanding ecological health of lotic water bodies by Dr. Pensry Kyes. After the presentations, participants were made familiar with different equipment used for field and sampling technique including radio-collar, using a rangefinder, darting and camera trapping. After talking about the purpose of the equipment

and giving instructions on its use, Participants were taken to the garden area for practical application of their theoretical knowledge. They were divided into groups within the premises of NAMI College. The workshop was attended by Level 6 students, Programme Leader, Head of Research and Development and module leaders. The workshop kicked off with presentation by Dr. Randall Kyes on the factors affecting biodiversity along with emphasizing rapid population growth as the root cause behind threats to biodiversity. The workshop was followed by presentation on importance of benthos in understanding ecological health of lotic water bodies by Dr. Pensry Kyes. After the presentations, participants were made familiar with different equipment used for field and sampling technique including radio-collar, using a rangefinder, darting and camera trapping. After talking about the purpose of the equipment

Graduate Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development

*Tsewang Nuru Sherpa
B.Sc. Environment Science*



The final year students of B.Sc. Environmental Science participated in the 4th Himalaya Knowledge Conclave: Graduate Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development, organized by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST), Central Department of Environmental Science (TU-CDES), Institute for Social and Environmental Transition-Nepal (ISET-Nepal), Resources Himalaya Foundation (RHF) and School of Environment Science and Management (SchEMS). The conference was held on 5th and 6th of April 2018.

Nine NAMI students presented their research posters on different topics such as freshwater ecosystem

assessment, climate modeling, macroinvertebrates, as well as on groundwater. Three students from NAMI were also felicitated with the best poster presentation : Ayush Adhikari, Nischal Devkota, and Tsering Ongmu Sherpa. Tsewang Nuru Sherpa, one of the presenters at the conference said, "The conference was a great platform for all of us to share our research findings and get feedback from professional researchers and environmental experts".

In addition to the poster presentation, 2nd-year B.sc Environmental Science students performed several traditional dance and song n the cultural programme.

Trekking in the Himalayas: Langtang Valley.

*Tshering Tenzing Sherpa,
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On 21st February 2018, ten of us from NAMI college along with Dr. Narayan Prasad Koju were excited to head for the Langtang Valley Trek for the first time with our duffel bags packed and loaded with snacks, extra pair of clothes and medicine. We were joined by professors and students from the University of Washington which made us more excited, because learning about new culture and sharing experiences along the trek was sure to be. With 3 Scorpio jeeps, we started heading for Khamjim village, the starting point of the trek via Dhunche, the capital of Rasuwa District. The roads were fine with lots of entry points as the highway is the route to Kerung, the Nepal-China border, until we reached the bumpy off-road and our vehicle was just inches away from the steep cliffs – a terrifying experience. We reached Khamjim in the evening, had dinner at Tibet Hotel, and we could already face the food getting scarce at 2000 m elevation, as meals were basic and we knew right away that we had to eat to survive - no more delicacy meals.

Next day, we had breakfast and headed for Lama Hotel with lunch stop at Sherpa Gaun. The trails were magnificent with steep hills, amazing landscape and the national flower, rhododendron blooming. We were lucky to catch sight of the Bearded vulture (lammergeier), which has an amazing feeding behavior as it cracks bones by carrying the bone to a height of 50-150 metres and dropping it on the rocks to expose the bone marrow. It was a tough 7 hours walk with ups and down, and finally we reached Lama Hotel (2500 m). We refreshed ourselves in the river taking pictures and selfies, after which we had dinner and went to beds . Our leader Dr. Narayan Prasad Koju informed us that the hike to Langtang the next day would be easier.

The next day, we left Lama Hotel for Langtang (3400 m) with lunch stop at Ghoda Tabela (3008 m) and the trails parallel to Langtang River were easier compared to the previous day, but the wind was chilly. The tree line was approaching fast, and only shrubs could be seen. We could see Gray Langur in nearby trees and Himalayan Tahr could be seen in the steep hills. The population of Himalayan Tahr, prey species is on the rise according to locals and we could already predict that predator species, snow leopard number had gone down. When we reached the “Old Langtang valley”, we were shocked to see the devastation of the 2015 mega earthquake, as hotels, houses and people were buried by a massive landslide. Just across the debris of the landslide, new Langtang Village could be seen with few new houses and the reconstruction work was going on. We stayed overnight at a new hotel in





Langtang and the tales of the earthquake were shocking to hear as 173 local people lost their lives and many dead bodies were still underneath the rubbles. With our tummies full, we went straight to bed feeling lucky enough to survive from the massive earthquake.

Next morning, the weather was beautiful and the sight of Langtang Lirung Mountain just above the hotel was truly mesmerizing with the stone and wood built houses spread across the valley adding even more beauty. There was even more Himalayan Tahrs on the steep mountains. We had breakfast and headed for Kyangjin (3800 m) which was the last stop of the trek. We had to walk slowly to cope with the altitude as high-altitude sickness was in the fear book for everyone. The short 3-hour walk to Kyangjin was beautiful with stone carved prayer stones, stupas and prayer flags. We paused many times just to watch the panorama of the mountains and the ambiance was such that we just did not want to go back home. We had lunch at Nurling Hotel, which was by far the best meal, as Kyangjin is more commercial with bakery and multi-storied hotels. A two-hour break was given and everyone was free to climb the Kyangjin Ri or just roam around the village. We returned to Langtang and stayed at Sunrise Hotel, which was better than the one we had stayed in the previous night.

The next day to Syabrubesi (1500 m) was mostly downhill with lunch stop at Lama hotel. As we moved down, the altitude was changing fast and it was getting hot. From alpine vegetation we were already moving to a temperate zone. We stayed at Syabrubesi and had an extra day at Syabrubesi as a refreshment before heading back to Kathmandu.

The trek was related to our Biodiversity Module and we could see changes in trees, animals and birds along the altitudinal gradient. In addition, we also learnt about the Tibetan culture, way of living and the hardships in the mountains. On the downside, the plan of expansion of road into the Langtang National Park was an issue of concern as fragmentation of habitats and destruction of natural resources could be a threat to biodiversity and the mountain environment. Solid waste problems can still be seen on the trails with no waste bins or solid waste committees looking after this problem. Public awareness on solid waste and climate change seem lacking in Langtang National Park. The trek was filled with sweet memories, newly made international friends and knowledge on various aspects of the environment plus a perfect getaway from the dusty capital city, Kathmandu.

