

THOUGH HUNTERS LOSE INTEREST IN RED PANDA, TRAPS STILL SNARE ENDANGERED MAMMAL

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

At risk: The species has been hunted for meat and fur, besides illegal capture for pet trade. [file photo](#)

The iconic and endangered Red Panda (*ailurus fulgens*) has fewer hunters because of younger generation of people across its Himalayan habitat are losing interest in animal products, a new study by wildlife trade monitoring network TRAFFIC has found.

However, the reddish-brown arboreal mammal, not closely related to the iconic black-and-white giant panda, is falling to traps laid for other animals such as the musk deer and wild pigs, the report said.

“The news is both good and bad for the red panda, whose survival is crucial for the eastern and north-eastern Himalayan subalpine conifer forests and the eastern Himalayan broadleaf forests,” Saket Badola, the head of TRAFFIC’s India office, told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

The only living member of the genus *Ailurus*, the Red Panda is listed as ‘endangered’ on the IUCN Red List of threatened species. The animal has been hunted for meat and fur besides illegal capture for the pet trade. An estimated 14,500 individuals are left in the wild across Nepal, Bhutan, India, China and Myanmar.

The report titled “Assessment of illegal trade-related threats to Red Panda in India and selected neighbouring range countries” has looked at a ten-year period from July 2010 to June 2019, and analysed poaching and illegal trade of the species. Other than seizures, the researchers carried out market surveys, surveys of e-commerce websites and village level surveys where they spoke to hundreds of people in Red Panda habitat (only in India) to look into poaching.

During the study the researchers and authors found neither India nor Bhutan had reported any incidences of poaching or illegal trade in Red Pandas. “But in Nepal a total of 13 seizure records were reported between 2016 and 2019, accounting for a total of 29 pelts. All except two took place in Kathmandu,” the study said.

Mr. Badola, said that there was no evidence of targeted poaching in India and Bhutan during the study but there was accidental poaching reported due to traps laid out for Musk deer and other wild animals.

“Consultations with experts revealed a similar low-level incidence of Red Panda trade in Bhutan and India with one case of accidental trapping in a snare in Jigme Dorjee National Park from Bhutan and six incidents of poaching accounting for six individual animals in India, aside from a 1999 case involving more than 20 pelts,” the study said.

In contrast to India and Bhutan, experts from Nepal shared knowledge of about 25 incidences of Red Panda poaching, involving approximately 55 animals and also claimed to have witnessed and/or have confirmed reports related to poaching on six occasions involving 15 animals.

The detailed study carried out by TRAFFIC is significant not only because Red Panda, is an iconic species and classified as Endangered under the IUCN Red List but also because large

part of its habitat is restricted to inaccessible higher reaches of the Eastern Himalayas. A recent study has pointed out that the Red Panda is not one species but two based on the DNA evidence.

In India, the species is recorded in northern West Bengal, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

(With inputs from

Rahul Karmarkar)

Subscribe to The Hindu digital to get unlimited access to Today's paper

Already have an account ? [Sign in](#)

Find mobile-friendly version of articles from the day's newspaper in one easy-to-read list.

Enjoy reading as many articles as you wish without any limitations.

A select list of articles that match your interests and tastes.

Move smoothly between articles as our pages load instantly.

A one-stop-shop for seeing the latest updates, and managing your preferences.

We brief you on the latest and most important developments, three times a day.

*Our Digital Subscription plans do not currently include the e-paper ,crossword, iPhone, iPad mobile applications and print. Our plans enhance your reading experience.

To continue enjoying The Hindu, You can turn off your ad blocker or [Subscribe to The Hindu](#).

[Sign up for a 30 day free trial.](#)

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com