



**RED PANDA
NETWORK**

Greetings!

Thanks to you, our impact is bigger than ever.

As our partner in conservation, you helped ensure that 2017 has been a year of progress and milestones. There are increased red panda sightings in the Panchthar-Ilam-Taplejung (PIT) corridor of Eastern Nepal. This is one of the most biodiverse areas in the world and red pandas are one of many rare and unique species found here. Clouded leopards, Himalayan black bears, and hundreds of bird species also inhabit what we are establishing as the [PIT Red Panda Protected Forest](#): the world's first protected area dedicated to red pandas!

And this is just the beginning! *Together, we have been able to:*

Expand our Forest Guardian Team and Anti-Poaching Network

Our national [Forest Guardian](#) team is growing! We now have 72 members and have expanded our community-based red panda monitoring and outreach programs to new locations in Eastern Nepal. Members received capacity-building opportunities including red panda monitoring, anti-poaching investigation and nature guide trainings.

Forest Guardians also play a key role in our anti-poaching network which has patrolled and investigated 23 Community Forests in the PIT corridor. They located and dismantled snares and reported poachers to local enforcement agencies (*Learn more about our anti-poaching efforts [here.](#)*)



Forest Guardians during training.

Restore Habitat and Improve Local Livelihoods

"Conservation cannot happen on an empty stomach."

Ang Phuri Sherpa, Country Director - Nepal, Red Panda Network

Poverty is very prevalent among the communities of the PIT corridor and it is difficult for local people to make wildlife conservation a priority when they are struggling to feed and warm themselves. Our mission is to mitigate red panda habitat loss while enhancing local livelihoods.

58 local families received 4,850 native seedlings which can be sold and provide alternative income generation opportunities. Over 4,000 seedlings planted in Community Forests of Taplejung district. These young plants will help restore degraded forest that we have identified as core red panda habitat.

We were also able to..

Establish three locally managed nurseries containing fodder and red panda food species.

Complete plantation and fencing projects for afforestation program in Jaubari, Ilam.

Restore six degraded ponds located within red panda habitat. Two of these ponds are drinking water sources for nearly local 40 families and a local school.

Provide 18 local families with improved cooking stoves that replaced their wood-intensive and air-polluting traditional stoves. (Check out '[Improved Cookstoves for Red Panda Stewards](#)'!)

Organize a three day "Bio-briquette production training" in Panchthar district where 42 local people learned who use bio-briquette as an alternative source of energy for cooking and heating.

Support three local families in poly house (or "greenhouse") construction and in improved herding shed construction.



Plantation project in Jaubari.

Threat to Red Pandas - Unsustainable Herding Practices

Livestock herding is one of the major drivers of red panda habitat loss and degradation in Eastern Nepal. Each herder has between two and four herding stations which they rotate seasonally with their livestock throughout the year. These stations require consistent maintenance, which results in an increased demand for timber.

Current herding practices are unsustainable and have been identified as a major cause of habitat degradation in the region. Livestock not only degrade habitat quality as they graze in the forest but directly compete with red pandas as they eat bamboo and other red panda food species.

Your Impact

Your support has allowed us to design a transportable herder's tent to replace the existing wooden sheds. The prototype is currently being tested at a herding station in Ilam.

57 livestock herders and Community Forest User Group (CFUG) members attended two red panda conservation workshops.

We are supporting sustainable herding practices by providing fodder seedlings to local herders. This will encourage stall feeding of livestock and reduce the need for forest grazing. Herders in Eastern Nepal have received 1,600 seedlings.



Herder tent installed at herding station.

Thanks to you:

Ecotourism is Flourishing

This is great news for everyone: the people of the PIT corridor, the red pandas, and those traveling to Nepal to see a red panda in the wild. Local livelihoods are improved as sustainable income sources are created through an economy strengthened by a thriving ecotourism industry. Through this growth, local people are given "a practical incentive to keep wild spaces wild."

► Check out [A Unique Strength: How Ecotourism Can Save The Wild](#) to learn more about our ecotourism initiatives and the importance of environmentally and economically responsible traveling!

► Interested in joining us for an adventure-of-a-lifetime to visit red pandas in the wild? Check out our 2018 [ecotrip dates](#) to Nepal and send any questions to ecotrip@redpandanetwork.org.

Did you know? As a member of Red Panda Network you can receive a

voucher for a \$100 discount on an upcoming ecotrip (except Eco Zoo Trips)!

In 2017, homestay management training was provided for 55 local people who can now provide lodging and accommodations for ecotourists, and have a sustainable way to support their families.

An Ecotourism Management Committee was formed and a Red Panda Ecotourism and Homestay Management Guide was prepared for Gorkhe, Ilam district.

We also expanded our red panda ecotrips program! Click [here](#) for more information.



Nepali homestay hostess.

Communities are Committing to Red Panda Conservation

We are establishing a "Community Red Panda Conservation Network" and held a meeting in Panchthar district. This network consists of local Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) and will be responsible for sustainably managing all Community Forests in the PIT corridor.

Red panda conservation initiatives were also integrated into the operation plans of 8 CFUGs and endorsed by District Forest Offices.

Did you know? Nepal has a unique "Community Forest" system of forest management? This means local people form CFUGs and are responsible for managing their Community Forest and forest resources.

RPN is currently working with 45 CFUGs in monitoring red panda populations, increasing local red panda awareness, and protecting and

Red Pandas have a Brighter Future

Saturday, September 16th was [International Red Panda Day](#) (IRPD) 2017. IRPD is a day of global celebration and education and nearly 100 zoos and schools hosted events where thousands participated and hundreds of youth became [Red Panda Rangers](#).

Red Panda Ranger is a special title given to children who help spread the word about red pandas. Youth engagement is key to red panda conservation and is part of what IRPD is all about.



IRPD celebration at Mayam Secondary School, Taplejung, Eastern Nepal.

We also engaged youth of the PIT corridor by:

- Publishing a red panda bulletin in Roots & Shoots (R&S) Groups of 21 schools.
- Organizing mini ecotrips for students of 10 R&S Groups.
- Integrating conservation manual into the curriculum of three schools.

Threat to Red Pandas - Free-ranging Dogs

Feral, hunting and herding dogs have been identified as major threats to red pandas in Eastern Nepal. Herders can have up to four dogs guarding their livestock and hunters often have dogs to help them flush-out and retrieve their catch. We have received reports of these dogs killing red pandas. Dogs can also carry rabies and canine distemper which are fatal to

red pandas and other sympatric species.

Your Impact

Your support has allowed us to work with the District Livestock Care Centre of Taplejung in administering 53 dogs with anti-rabies vaccine.

A Brighter Future

With you by our side, the future is looking bright for red pandas.

The Himalayan communities of Eastern Nepal are committing to protecting this species and their habitat. Increased red panda sightings in the PIT corridor are an indicator that our community-based programs are working.

Our goal now is to replicate this model to Western Nepal where red pandas were confirmed during our [national red panda survey](#). Local conservation efforts are lacking in this region and we have identified five districts in Western Nepal that are critical to the survival of this species. This expansion initiative will include hiring and training local people to monitor and protect red panda habitat and nearly doubling our national Forest Guardian team!

We couldn't have done this without you. With your generosity, our red panda conservation work will continue to be impactful. From our staff in Nepal and the US, we thank you.

Here's to a brighter future for red pandas!



Red pandas photographed by Ashley Bowen during 2017 ecotrip.

Red Panda Network is committed to the conservation of wild red pandas and their habitat through the education and empowerment of local communities.

See what's happening on our social sites

