

WEDNESDAY, 18 JANUARY 2023

STUDENTS TRAVEL TO NEPAL TO GAIN NEW INSIGHT INTO WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Seventeen students from Federation University Australia are currently in Nepal for a three-week study tour focussed on exploring the approaches used in the conservation of iconic wildlife species.

Hosted by the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), the students will focus on community conservation techniques applied to the conservation and management of species such as the Bengal Tiger and One Horned Rhinoceros in Chitwan National Park.

The students are undergraduates enrolled in either the Bachelor of Environment and Conservation Science or the Bachelor of Veterinary and Wildlife Science, and the visit to Nepal allows them to see and experience an alternative approach to wildlife management to that applied in Australia.

Professor Wendy Wright and Dr Ashley Olson are leading the tour. Wendy is Professor, Conservation Biology and Dean, Graduate Studies. Ashley is a Scholarly Teaching Fellow with Federation's Institute of Innovation, Science and Sustainability. Professor Wright has been working in Nepal since 2014 and is excited to now be sharing the experience with her students.

Following the study tour, six of the 17 students will stay in Nepal for a further three weeks to complete internships with the NTNC veterinary team, living and working with conservation and veterinary staff members.

The tour has been made possible thanks to funding from the New Colombo Plan - a signature initiative of the Australian Government which aims to lift knowledge of the Indo Pacific in Australia by supporting Australian undergraduates to study and undertake internships in the region.

It is the third time the University has offered the Nepal tour to students. Previous tours took place in January 2019 and 2020 and involved 12 and 18 participants respectively.

Quotes attributable to Federation University Professor, Conservation Biology and Dean, Graduate Studies, Wendy Wright

"This is an amazing opportunity for our students. The trip exposes them to a very different model of wildlife and forest conservation – one that is managed and driven by local people living in communities adjacent to the National Park. It's very different to the approach we see in the west."

"In Nepal, many of the conservation methods reflect the fact that the people managing the process are very connected to forest areas. They rely on the forest to provide food for themselves and their livestock and for materials for housing."

"The trip exposes students to life in a developing country. Some of the participants have not previously travelled outside Australia and others may not have visited subcontinental Asia, so it is educational for them in many ways."