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## NOTE

### FIRST RECORD OF THE Dhole *CUON ALPINUS* (MAMMALIA: CARNIVORA: CANIDAE) IN BARANDBHAR CORRIDOR FOREST, CHITWAN, NEPAL

Saneer Lamichhane, Aashish Gurung, Chiranjibi Prasad Pokheral, Trishna Rayamajhi, Pabitra Gotame, Pramod Rai Regmi & Babu Ram Lamichhane,

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## FIRST RECORD OF THE DHOLE *CUON ALPINUS* (MAMMALIA: CARNIVORA: CANIDAE) IN BARANDABHAR CORRIDOR FOREST, CHITWAN, NEPAL

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Systematic camera trapping survey on the Barandabhar Corridor Forest (BCF), Chitwan District, Nepal recorded the presence of the endangered Wild Dog or Dhole *Cuon alpinus*. The Barandabhar Corridor forest was divided into 88 grids of 1km by 1km covering the total area of BCF (87.9km<sup>2</sup>). The pair of camera was systematically placed in each grid for 15 camera trap nights (15\*88= 1320 camera trap nights). A survey was conducted in two blocks between 15 December 2015 and 20 January 2016. A single picture of a Dhole was captured from a location on 11 January. The Dhole is sympatric with other large carnivores like Tiger *Panthera tigris*, Leopard *P. pardus*, and Golden Jackal *Canis aureus* in the area. This is the first record of a Dhole in the forest corridor outside the National Park (Image 1). It provides evidence of the healthy functionality of BCF.

This discovery has created interest among wildlife conservationists, researchers and wildlife managers to rethink the conservation of Dholes.

BCF connects Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) with Chitwan-Annapurna Landscape (CHAL; WWF Nepal 2013). It is the only remaining forest of Chitwan that connects Chitwan National Park of TAL in the south to the Mahabharat Mountain Range of CHAL in the north (Bhattarai & Basnet 2004). BCF has high human pressure from densely populated areas of Ratnagar Municipality in the east, Kalika in the north-east, and Bharatpur Metropolitan City in the west (Fig. 1). BCF is bisected by a national Highway. The forest south of highway falls within the buffer zone of Chitwan National Park whereas the northern part falls under the jurisdiction of the department of forests and is managed as a protected forest. There also lies a Ramsar Site (Site No, 1313; Beeshazar and Associated lakes) in the buffer zone part of the forest corridor. As in other protected area core, protection of the buffer zone part is provided by the Nepal Army. A recent survey of the Ramsar site found 33 species of mammals, 328 species of birds, 199 species of flora, 37 species of fishes, 16 species of butterflies, and 31 species of herpetofauna (Lamichhane et al. 2016).

The Dhole has been recorded in camera traps in Nepal from Kanchanjunga Conservation Area (Khatiwada et al. 2011) and Chitwan National Park (Thapa et al. 2013). In Chitwan National Park, the Dhole was found mostly in



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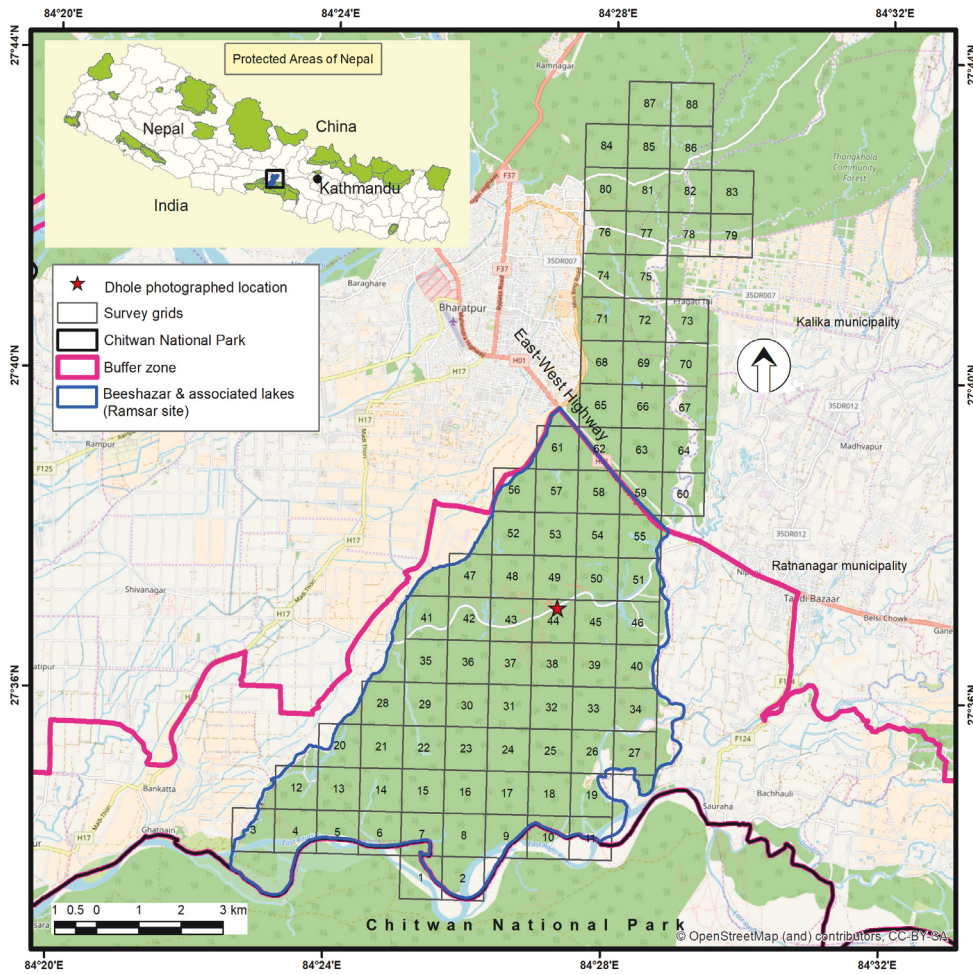


Figure 1. Barandabhar Corridor Forest with camera trap grid.



Image 1. Camera trap photo of *Cuon alpinus*

the southern part, which is dominated by Sal forest with open grasslands at the foothills of Churia. The present study extends the range of Dhole in the northern part of Chitwan District.

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#### Miscellaneous

##### National Biodiversity Authority

