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Status, distribution and conservation of large carnivores in Nepal

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Mammalian large carnivores (LC) are wide ranging and play a crucial role in ecosystem structure and function. Most LCs have experienced decline in population and shrinkage of range throughout the globe and Nepal is not exception to such trend. Nepal is inhabited by eleven species of LCs, of which five are felid (tiger, leopard, snow leopard, clouded leopard and lynx), three each canid (gray wolf, dhole and striped hyaena) and ursid (brown bear, Himalayan black bear and sloth bear). I review the status of these carnivores, map their distribution, documents current threats to these taxa, and make recommendation for their conservation. These taxa have localized distribution mainly in the protected areas (PA) and the majority PA is unable to sustain viable populations of LCs under current conditions. Population size is yet to be estimated except tiger and snow leopard. Large carnivores are highly threatened and the primary threats to the persistence of these taxa include habitat loss and degradation, small population effects, lack of connectivity.

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