

### KHAPTAD NATIONAL PARK

Khaptad, a Hindu religious site, and gazetted in 1984, represents Nepal's Mid-Hills in an area of 225 km<sup>2</sup>. Areas towards the northern fringe of the park are cleared for cultivation and the agriculture practice has almost reached the upper limit (above 2,700m). As Khaptad experiences snow in winter, many ungulates end up in farms as there is no winter range for free-ranging ungulates. Also, there are no alternatives for park extension. Therefore, buffer zone management is essential because the bordering forest areas are small, patchy and much degraded. Conversely, wildlife-related crop damage and depredation have created major conflicts between the park and people. Leopard, wild dog, and bears are reported to have killed cattle, especially when they are brought into the core region for grazing.

Some 22 villages of four districts ( Bajhang, Bajura, Doti and Achham) are directly affected by the park. Although traditional use and rights of local people need to be maintained, an ecological limit to resources use is much needed. All traditional rights of resource use need to minimize their conflicts with the management objectives. For example, cattle grazing is common in Khaptad for 4 months. With some 29 different cattle sheds in the park, grazing is intense and degradation of the land is much evident.

