

LANGTANG NATIONAL PARK

Langtang National Park, gazetted in 1976 with an area of 1,710 km² represents the central Himalayan ecosystem. Its buffer zone includes 420 km². With elevations ranging from 1,000 to 7,245m, as many as 32 species of mammals, 246 species of birds, and 15 endemic plant species are found. As Langtang produces food enough only to last a quarter of the annual per capita requirements, forests are seasonal source for food, medicine, fodder and fuelwood. A total of 172 plant species are used: food (22.7%), including 32 species of edible mushroom, medicinal plants (52.9%), fodder (5.8%), fuelwood (13.4%), utility (7.6%) and religious purposes (3.5%). Besides its biological riches, the park is used for subsistence by over 19,000 people for fuelwood, food and fodder. Because of the growing human population and increased deficit in food production, people rely on livestock to provide cash income. Thus, the park today has to provide fodder and grazing areas for some 29,000 livestock. Although the pastoral system is strongly influenced by tradition, the growth of cattle herds is a recent phenomenon with the setting up of cheese factories in the last 20 years. As a result, shortages of grazing area, even in summer, are reported. Crop depredation by wild pigs and langurs is on increase.

