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1997 – 2017: 20 years ARCO-Nepal



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Membership Declaration are posted on our website and on Facebook and attached here on the last pages – just fill the form and send it to us by mail together with your membership fee.

ARCO-Nepal reg. soc.

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation of Nepal

c/o W. Dziakonski / Treasurer, Edlingerstr. 18, D-81543 München. w.dziakonski@yahoo.de

CEO & Editor: Prof. Dr. H. Hermann Schleich, Arco-Spain, E-04200 Tabernas/Almería

www.arco-nepal.de email: arco.nepal@gmail.com

Account-no. 1000099984 BIC SSKMDEMMXXX BLZ 70150000

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Editor's note



First there must come, of course, several personal notes and memories to record the development over the years but also I honour Dr. Maskey, Prof. K. Rai, greatest supporter friend and sponsor M.H. Pichler, Werner Kaestle, unforgettable Henk Zwartepoorte and Rudolf Hofmann, several students and all the many remarkable supportive persons from Nepal, people from remote areas, contributors for disseminating knowledge on conservation and wildlife herpetology in general, followers, Arco-members, students and interested persons. I cannot mention here everyone, but should not forget our treasurer Waldemar Dziakowski, and institutions who contributed over many years with their help, donations, suggestions and constructive criticism. I would like to express my sincerest acknowledgements to all of them.

Looking back at what had happened and finding often more than 1000 persons per month to link to and search on our website and so many facebook followers, we all from the ARCO board can feel happy and little bit proud, more than impressed, that we disseminated great and growing interest in the amphibian and reptilian wildlife and its possible, potential needs for its conservation in a fast growing country like Nepal. The neighbouring country Bhutan is a flagship partner for nature conservation and we hope that the future generations – and there we see great input, but regrettably cannot finance all wishes, demands and possibilities being a small association only – will follow that great example for nature and wildlife conservation.

Nepal's policy of continuous changing staff in whatever position is entirely understandable for avoiding corruption and looking for the very best possibility decision and stakeholders that can bring and contribute implementation into this country.

But such policy–regrettably– cannot always guarantee continuity and welfare for once started aid programs. To start again and again to introduce oneself, the aims and goals, achievements of an INGO and its future importance in whatever aspect for Nepal is a never ending challenging task.

But also we are happy and seeing great efforts that many suggestions and criticism of mal- or no understanding for conservation and protection became accepted and integrated and a stepwise positive development can be seen.

Of course, for nature and species conservation it never can be fast enough, seeing vanishing species, we never found existing or surviving in wild, being rescued, conservation methods being applied by law enforcement, but much more difficult, being followed by executive power in reality.

We designed signboards to protect turtles, we got the permit to execute their positioning at vulnerable places where turtles are poached and trafficked – but we don't have the man power to do all that we want. That is the reality, also open hands demanding money to help and realize in a so called “third world country” is a never ending challenge and game.

What we can see positively is, that there is so much interest from young people, students for master and Ph studies, and requests for collaboration and support –but we need also the enthusiasm that people start volunteering and altruistically – understanding the needs to rescue the nature and survival of long time disregarded species for future.

Our appeal goes to those persons and institutions or associations – who are not competing in who are applying for more international funding, who are contributing altruistically and are convinced to feel nominated and challenged for the fight for survival of remaining species and rescuing whatever is possible in an industrially and politically stressed country.

What we can do is to contribute modestly by our own experiences in such wonderful country with the biggest geographical extremities one can find on this globe.

Nepal is calling, challenging, not only for climbers, hikers, adventurers, believers, artists, whosoever has been there – but also for its own nature survival, of almost lost species and hidden places of nature.

My personal and Arco's appeal is to contribute as much as one can, mentally, physically and by any other means for the survival of its unique species and nature.

We are looking for followers with enthusiasm and altruism – for taking over this tremendous task and challenge – wanting all these young and interested followers to never give up what are our philosophies!

With this contribution of our newsletter no. 15 we also start a new episode, having our newsletter registered as an official publication organ granted with an individual ISSN number for further publications.

Arco-Nepal contributed for over twenty years with four pillars of its own Philosophy - "Education, Awareness programs, Scientific Basic Knowledge and Rescue & Conservation of Endangered Species" more than we ever expected since its foundation in 1997. And now we hope and look forward that the given seeds will germinate and bring the success for a country's nature conservation.

We are not tired yet to collaborate wherever is possible to continue our growth.

As gratitude to our followers we are setting up free for download of books on the amphibians and reptiles of Nepal that are not so easily available on the open book market:

Anders, C. (2002); Schleich, H. (Ed.): Biologie und Systematik der Amphibien Nepals.- Veröffentlichungen Fuhlrott-Museum, 6: pp. 628

Schleich, H.H. & W. Kaestle (1998): Contributions to the Herpetology of South-Asia (Nepal, India): Veröffentlichungen Fuhlrott-Museum 4, pp. 322 pp.

You can download them now from our website www.arco-nepal.de.

Others available can be requested at arco.nepal@gmail.com and trcc.arco@gmail.com

We also posted two videos recently you can watch at youtu.be:

https://youtu.be/I5-Mi_jdbjk

Budoholi -First INGO Turtle Rescue & Conservation Centre in SE-Nepal

<https://youtu.be/ZtF2gQO7vDs>

ARCO-NEPAL: Research - Awareness – Education – Conservation

My sincerest thanks and best wishes to all who accompanied us for the many last years!

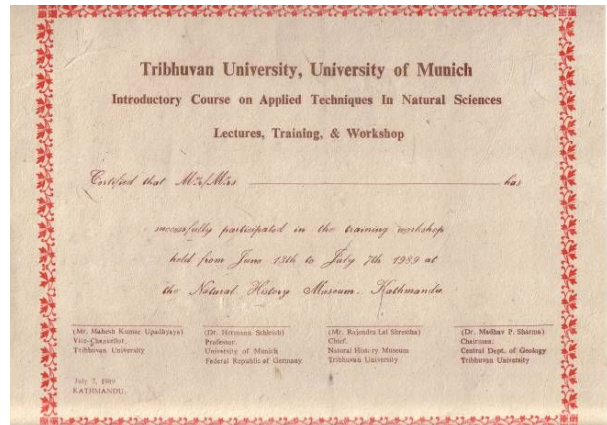
Hermann Schleich for ARCO-Nepal

Retrospective on History, Aims and Achievements of ARCO-Nepal

by Hermann Schleich (H.S.)

The beginning.....

The whole story started by a lecture program supported by DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) and Goethe Institute on “Museum Management, and Applied Techniques in Natural Sciences” in 1989 continued with seminars, workshops and lecture programs following years in India, too.



Renovation of Natural History Museum and Inauguration and seminars on museum management and applied techniques in Natural sciences.

It was in 1989 when H.S. renovated the Natural History Museum Kathmandu (NHM-KTM) and tried to collect material for the same accompanied by Dr. Tirtha Man Maskey and assistant Dieter Fuchs (Technical Secretary at ZSM-Munich) on a visit to Chitwan National Park.

There we saw and visited for the first time the Crocodile Conservation area at Kasarah (CNP) that had been supported formerly by the Frankfurt Zoological Society.



Above: H.S. and late Dr.T.M. Maskey

This was the time they had 2 gharials laying in an unsheltered concrete pool and Dr. Maskey explained to H.S. about their incapability to breed the gharials in captivity –others came from recollected eggs being brought to the “gharial island”- and what could be the reason for it. On this occasion, we one night together also caught a new species of *Sphaerotheca*, formerly called *Tomopterna*. We named the species after late Dr. Maskey *Sphaerotheca maskeyi*, who accompanied and collected with us that species and facilitated our activities at CNP. Dr Maskey also was the first Nepali herpetologist to have done a Ph thesis on the gharials in USA.

Although there was respect and friendship already before, from that time H.S. and Tirtha Man Maskey developed a really good personal relation and acceptance of each other.

H.S. promised Dr. Maskey to find out what could be the reason for the failed breeding of captive Gharials and studied several croc farms in Columbia/Cartagena, Zimbabwe, Madras and Orissa.

The main reason at the end for not breeding the shy gharials was neither having proper sandy substrate for egg laying, nor having provided a shaded and undisturbed place with shelter. After its improvements, the following years the Gharials started breeding at Kasarah/CNP.

H.S. sent a letter to the Frankfurt Zool. Society and asked them again for help for the Gharial breeding at RCNP but only got negative reply (by letter).

After Schleich's first visit to Nepal, a basic study had been undertaken to inform about the status of knowledge by publications on the amphibians and reptiles of Nepal what was published later by the Nepal Research Centre (see list at the end).

Not really much on the Herpetology of Nepal was known at that time and only detailed scientific studies had been undertaken by scientists from Munich (TU, ZSM) in the former years.

Schleich pledged to continue this Munich tradition and to come to more comprehensive results regarding the herpetofauna of Nepal.

From 1994-1996 H.S. received a very supportive grant from the Volkswagen Foundation for a joint project with NHM to work on the “Natural History of the Amphibians and Reptiles of Nepal”. At all the visits we presented lectures and at this time Mr. Peter Veith (Technical secretary) from the Bavarian State Collection (Institute of Palaeontology, Univ. Munich) accompanied a group of Schleich’s seminar students the first part of this venue.

Several collaborations with Nepali scientists started and invitations and visits to Germany were realized.

Dr. Tirtha Man Maskey was always official partner and collaborator, also coordinator of several projects and advisor for ARCO-Nepal. He also had great interest to arrange the collaboration between ARCO-Nepal and the Nepali government to work on Turtle conservation in Nepal.

Once on a private journey to France, I visited the there established Crocodile Zoo at Pierrelatte and got to know its owner. After some time of conversation he explained to me his interest in receiving live gharials. This interest I communicated to Dr. Maskey and ARCO brought them both together. This later resulted in a transfer of several Gharials to France accompanied by the acting Minister and Dr. Maskey himself.

I informed Dr. Maskey that Nepal also urgently needs conservation projects and centres for the endangered turtles similar to that for the gharials, to be situated in the several lowland National Parks. Dr. Maskey requested ARCO design such project areas and whether we also could give training to the park staff. At this time only 3-5 Turtle species were locally known but had not been proper scientifically documented.



The first Turtle Rescue & Conservation Centre had been constructed at CNP according to the planning by Arco-Nepal. As big surprise at one of H.S. visits to CNP the completely new built Centre had been presented to me by Dr. Maskey what followed a small inauguration celebration. Arco brought the first founder species to the TRCC and Mrs. D. Dubau took care about the species for several months.

So we (me with several different companions from Nepal and Germany) started visiting and planning TRCCs for the lowland National Parks from Koshi Tappu WR from the East to Suklaphantah WR in the Far West of the country.

For Koshi WR we have already since long time the planning on our web site, for Chitwan NP, too. The planning for Bardia NP we handed over to the Park’s warden after we received his cost evaluation which had been accepted by ARCO, more than 10 years ago.

For Godha Godhi Tal ARCO suggested to have it as a project area to study the turtle species there and for Suklaphantah WR we suggested a renaturation and cleaning program for the vanishing and overgrowing lake also more than 10 years ago. For all these projects we always offered that ARCO would take over their funding!

For Godha Godhi tal a master thesis had been carried out focusing on big river turtles regrettably (*Batagur*) but this is a swampy inland lake system – and the results could not prove these highly endangered species.

We also discussed if the lakes of midland Nepal still at altitudes with subtropical climates, would be feasible for introduction of several turtle species as they don't have own turtle fauna. Most of these endeavours had been supported logistically by late Dr. Maskey, mostly with free lodgements and food at the National Parks, Elephants and car access as well as staff assistance or even by his own accompaniment (<https://youtu.be/ZtF2gQO7vDs>).

During all these most active field investigations we also found several new species and new records for Nepal. (E.g.: below: *Cyrtodactylus nepalensis*, *Sphaerotheca maskeyi*, *Sitana fusca*)



ARCO's first big project planning was for Baghmara at Sauraha where Consul Ram Thapa offered that we could obtain with a Nepali partner a piece of land for a turtle farming project. But after all planning was finalized and ARCO wanted to come for signing the contract it turned out that the realization of the project cum acquisition of the terrain was not possible due to undefined property of that area. The money ARCO received for its realisation had to be given back to the donors.

Some years later Dr. Maskey told me to visit Kasarah HQ and that the chief warden should show me the entire building (headquarter) and would I have some ideas of how one could improve its use and situation. We came to the decision to convert it into "HQ and Education Centre" and that ARCO would have to take over the costs for it. A detailed planning of 2 years followed, a part of it we still show on the ARCO-Nepal website. Years later we presented it again in completely full fileholder to the acting DG of DNPWS, but his reply was that the building must be demolished and rebuilt one day.

Dr. Maskey visited me a third time in Germany in 2002. The last time at a big public event at the former Fuhlrott Natural History Museum where I presented him the first issue and printed book of "Amphibians and Reptiles of Nepal".

In 1997 ARCO-Nepal was founded

.... by its acting chairman, Prof. Dr. Hermann Schleich, and several other founding members at the University of Munich.

Publicity for starting to raise income was realized via exhibitions, talks, children events, publications, flyers, videos, website and others. Funding we received during the forthcoming years from membership fees, private and institutional donations as well as from itinerary exhibitions at several places, and via talks by the chair person.

The funding was used for publications, support for several Nepali master theses, Ph theses, travel expenses, printing costs of children's painting book (english/nepali), posters, flyers, material costs, distribution and awareness campaigns, turtle transport and introduction to Kasarah TCC, and latest for a seminar at NHM amongst others. First public exhibitions at the Jawalakhel-Lalitpur Zoo Kathmandu and Natural History Museum followed.

Topics of finalized* theses being supported by ARCO-Nepal: * non-finalized had been supported, too, but are not listed here anymore.

- General Study of Chelonian Populations from the Wetlands of Morang District, East Nepal (Hem Lal Acharya); master
- General Survey of Turtle Fauna from Koshi River (Dhan Prasad Siwakoti); master
- Study on the Ecological Profile of Turtles from the wetlands between Mechi and Kankai River in Jhapa District East Nepal (Ramesh Dahal); master
- General Survey of Anthropogenic Impacts on Chelonian Fauna from the Kankai (Mai) River and its Vicinities, Jhapa, East Nepal (Milan Kharel); master
- Biologie und Systematik der Amphibien Nepals (Christiane Anders); Ph
- Environmental Impacts, Systematics and Distribution of Herpetofauna from East Nepal (Kalu Ram Rai); Ph

ARCO did a lot of exhibitions on the country Nepal itself but also on its Amphibians and Reptiles and on ARCO's activities, in Germany e.g.: Zool. State Collection Munich, Nuernberg Zoo, University of Munich Vet. Department and in Netherland amongst several others. Also the former Crown Prince Bir Birendra came to visit the Exhibition "The other Nepal" at the Fuhlrott-Museum in Wuppertal, where Prof. Schleich acted as its director. Just few years ago followed a renovation of the herpetological section at Natural history Museum KTM being supported by ARCO having donated big sized wall posters of almost all the amphibians and reptiles of Nepal. (left: inauguration of the expo "Das andere Nepal" by former ambassador; right: inauguration at Munich University with Prof. R. Hofmann and H.S.)



Being supported by former ambassador Dr. Novel Kishore Rai we received always his very good constructive comments, collaboration and felt honoured by this splendid and surely the best ambassador Nepal ever had sent to Germany.

Since 2000, promotion and some financial help was given also by PRO TIER, Zuerich/CH.

It was also Dr. N.K. Rai who inaugurated several ARCO activities and exhibitions and presented KaluRam (Khambu) Rai to us. Latter did an excellent Doctor thesis during his time living in Germany and became the first Nepali at Tribhuvan University (TU) honoured by a Doctorate in Herpetology and, even more, he later became professor at TU.

All scientific collaborations, own field expeditions and experiences of almost 15 years activity for and in Nepal culminated in the comprehensive book on "Amphibians and Reptiles of Nepal" with 1200 pages(!) printed in 2002 and many other publications still followed.

ARCO – Nepal, under its chairperson Prof. Dr. Hermann Schleich and best and oldest friend Dr. Werner Kästle, were the initiators and carrier of this book with several other authors also contributing much to it.

ARCO – Nepal provided to DNPWS for their own use and for sale in the year 2000 and should be available at Department of National Parks, Babar Mahal, Kathmandu:

Turtle Poster "Save Us"

Posters: Amphibians of Nepal, Turtles and Crocodiles of Nepal, Lizards of Nepal, Snakes of Nepal

Publication: Necessity for a Turtle Conservation in Nepal.- in Schleich, H.H. & Maskey, T.M., 1998: 10p.

Flyers and brochures

February, 2002: Interim Report ARCO-NEPAL reg. soc.– looking back once again

Arco-Nepal presented for the first time an own website and started reporting about activities and issued annual reports to be sent to members and onto website (www.arco-nepal.de). Following is an instructive example copy of such report:

“ARCO-Nepal is glad to present an interim report of our activities realizing successively its several steps of our management & master plan. A first Turtle Conservation Centre (TTC) has been established at Kasarah Headquarter (RCNP) in Central South Nepal by DG Dr. Maskey according to our planning submitted.

During the few years of activities we also were successful to engage man / woman power for the conservation strategy not only in the country itself but also abroad.

For our conservation project work long held desires have become fulfilled, and we can happily present them here for the first time.

We followed the demands of the Department National Parks & Wildlife Conservation for continuous collaboration and for education campaigns regarding National Fauna of Amphibians and Reptiles as well as support for conservation strategies.

Last years we distributed –by the great engagement of Mr. K.R. Rai- our “Save Us” turtle conservation posters, together with a “Children’s Painting Book on Turtles” successfully throughout schools and National parks of the whole Terai, from East to Far West Nepal.

Thus we present our latest results and activities:

- **Amphibian & Reptile Colour Posters**

At the end of 2001 we printed a set of 4 posters comprising each one showing the amphibians, crocodiles & turtles, lizards, snakes in colour of high quality with surface protection. The posters can be received from: Department National Parks & Wildlife Conservation, Babar Mahal, Kathmandu, the „ICA-ARCO office” via Mr. Tatwa Timsina, Kathmandu and Fuhlrott-Museum Wuppertal (Germany);

note from editor: both latter ones are not existing anymore.

- **Nepali ARCO Representative in Germany**

ARCO-Nepal representative Mr. Kalu Ram Rai has been granted by WWF Nepal and ARCO Nepal to come to Germany presenting his new results and for identification of material for his Ph thesis under supervision of Prof. Dr. H. Schleich and in collaboration with Dr. W. Kaestle and Dr. C. Anders.

- **New turtle records for Nepal**

Again, almost unbelievable but reality, additional new turtle species have been discovered in Nepal for the first time. These are from East-Nepal, discovered by Rai & Schleich 2001:

Cyclemys oldhamii

Pangshura tentoria circumdata

- **New Records of Amphibians, Lizards and Snakes for Nepal**

In the course of terminating our book on the “Amphibians and Reptiles of Nepal” we again found new records during last field trip in the Far West. These were collected by Schleich or/and Sah, Rai before 2001 and by Schleich & Rai 2001. The material was subsequently identified by C. Anders, W. Kästle and H.H. Schleich and three species new for Nepal were described: *Ichthyophis*, *Rhacophorus* and *Ophisaurus*.

- **New distribution records during last years**

°*Megophrys robusta*, °*Uperodon systomus*, °*Sphaerotheca rolandae*, °*Polypedates taeniatus*, °*Rhacophorus maximus*, °*Ichthyophis sikkimensis*, °*Cyclemys oldhami*, ~~°*Morenia petersi*~~, °*Pangshura circumdata*, °*Ophisaurus gracilis*, °*Gekko gecko*

°*Hemidactylus bowringii*, °*Oriotiaris dasi*, °*Sitana schleichi*, °*Draco novillii vel maculatus*, °*Eryx conicus*, °*Eryx johnii*, °*Python molurus bivittatus*, °*Elaphe porphyracea*, °*Rhabdophis subminiatus*, °*Gloydus himalayanus*,

°*Enhydryis sieboldii*, °*Lycodon jara*, °*Lycodon striatus*, °*Oligodon kheriensis*, °*Sibynophis sagittarius*, °*Spalerosophis atriceps*, °*Bungarus bungaroides*, °*Bungarus lividus*, °*Bungarus niger*

°reported in Schleich & Kästle 2002

- **New species during last years**

Polypedates spec., *Sitana sivalensis* Schleich, Kästle & Shah’98, *Sitana fusca* Schleich & Kästle 1998, *Sitana schleichi* Anders & Kästle 1998, *Cyrtopodion markuscombai*, *Cyrtopodion martinostollii*, *Cyrtopodion nepalense*, *Oriotiaris dasi*, °*Phrynocephalus* sp.

15 turtle species – 14 years ago only three had been known!

Order: **CHELONIA**

Family: **Bataguridae** (Asiatic terrapins)

Cyclemys oldhamii, **Geoclemys hamiltonii*, **Hardella turjii*, **Kachuga dhongoka*, **Kachuga kachuga*, *Melanocheilus tricarinata*

Melanocheilus trijuga, *Morenia petersi*, *Pangshura flaviventer*, *Pangshura tectum*, *Pangshura smithii smithii*, *Pangshura smithii pallidipes*

Pangshura circumdata

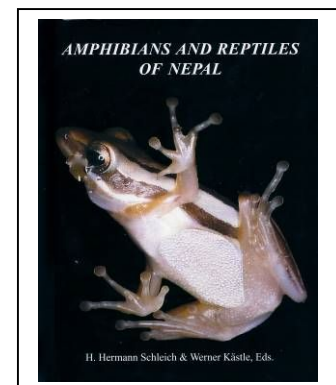
Family: **Testudinidae** (tortoises)

Indotestudo elongata

Family: **Trionychidae** (Softshell turtles)

Aspideretes gangeticus, *Aspideretes hurum*, *Chitra indica*, *Lissemys punctata*

marked with * are not proven by voucher material but its presence in Nepal may be probably.



- **Book on “Amphibians & Reptiles of Nepal” finished!**

Orders: Koeltz Verlag, Germany-Königstein; 1200 pages, 382 colour photographs, 1850 line drawings, distribution maps

Key persons having been enrolled in the past with Arco-Nepal & research on the herpetofauna



Dr. T.M.Maskey, Dr.C.C. Anders, K.B. Sah, Dr. K.R. Rai, H.S., Dr. W.Kaestle



Exhibition, Collection Management & Education Plans

Already one exhibition on Amphibians and Reptiles of Nepal has been permanently established in a separate show room at Kathmandu Natural History Museum in collaboration between Natural History Museum & Arco Nepal/Fuhlrott-Museum Wuppertal.

Exhibition plans for Kasarah-Headquarter Education Centre will be realized on demand of DNPW by ARCO-Nepal for cost compensation of the Turtle Conservation Centre. First planning was achieved in November 2001, a realization might be possible in 2002. But we received no reply since political troubles and instability started (see www.arco-nepal.de).

- Lectures, Seminars

Under public education programs we would like to mention also the several lectures on “Principles of Herpetology with Conservation Aspects and Preservation Technics” and “Herpetofauna of Nepal” held by Prof. Dr. Schleich in November 2001, e.g. in DNPW-Babar Mahal, Royal Chitwan National Park, Kasarah, Bardia National Park & Faculty of Science-Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu.



Left: seminar program at Nat. Hist. Museum/TU.

Right: lecture program at Bardia National Park

Several others followed in Europe and at the Natural History Museum (TU) Kathmandu.

- First Monitoring on Karnali River Sections
- Proved New Records for Bardia National Park and Chisapani:

Aspideretes gangeticus, *Chitra indica* vel *Aspideretes hurum*, *Sitana schleichi*, *Sibynophis sagittarius*, *Lycodon striatus*, *Python molurus*, *Elaphe helena*, *Indotestudo elongata*, *Melanochelys tricarinata*, *Melanochelys trijuga*, *Lissemys punctata*

- Help for Kasarah – Gharial and Turtle Conservation Centre

First stocking and inauguration of Turtle Conservation Centre at Kasarah/RCNP by DNPW & ARCO Nepal in November 2001: One breeding group of adult *Indotestudo elongata*: 2 males, 7 females could be brought to the tortoise enclosure for the first time. Three specimens of *Lissemys punctata*, 1 male 2 females, were added to one of the big ponds in the new enclosure, where *Melanochelys* already was bred first time last year.

K.B. Shah (NHM/KTM) had been accepted at Munich Univ. for Ph and was supported by a two years grant, also a technician Mr. Shrestha for one year. Regrettably results never had been shown or presented.

Most Recent Running Activities:

- A Master Thesis will be carried out at Kasarah Turtle Conservation Centre for monitoring, behavioural studies and maintenance of Turtles at Kasarah TCC/RCNP.
- Field surveys for West and Far West Nepal, South Central Nepal.
- Planning for a Turtle Conservation Centre at Bardia National Park
- Community District Turtle Breeding Centres
- Volunteers wanted in Biology, Fish farming, Engineering, fund raising

The Sad Kathmandu Turtle Story

Kathmandu has many beautiful places and many attractive things for tourists to buy. But, finally, one might even not know what to do with certain “souvenirs” when brought home, and one also may run the risk of getting severe problems at customs or airports.

ARCO provided several information material in different campaigns to airport and DNPW custom authorities. Regulations as well as confiscations are strict and even may incur fine and punishment. Leaving Kathmandu, a stopover in Delhi, or arriving in any European Airport may cause the same problems resulting in confiscation of material e.g. of the decorated turtle masks. All of these masks were gained by killing live turtles. None of them showed signs as they are known from specimens being eaten. Thus this is an additionally destructive impact on the turtles otherwise serving as food for the locals. This is a really senseless cause to kill some of the very last specimens of vanishing wildlife.



Photos: turtle masks found at Durbar Marg; right: *Indotestudo* + two *Melanochelys tricarinata* (Editors, note this nl.15: Happily almost all such types of masks disappeared during last years and were replaced for plastic masks)

The Temple Story

In several Hindu temples in the Kathmandu valley the rare tortoise *Indotestudo elongata* and the highly endangered Tricarinate turtle *Melanochelys tricarinata* are brought by religious people as a gift of thankfulness for good events in life like in business, wealth, cure of illness and many others. Tortoises are brought as donations to these temples and are kept there. After many years of hope and preparation last autumn we succeeded with the encouraging help of Mr. and Mrs. Amatya to get for the very first time three specimens from the Patan temple for release in the Turtle Conservation Centre. A lot of convincing and demonstration that the welfare of those tortoises will be guaranteed finally resulted in the transfer of those specimens. Regrettably, one specimen was already so extremely dehydrated that it died after some days, but the other ones seem to feel well. An explanatory note together with a donation to the temple hopefully may ensure such conservation programs also for the future.



Munich, in December, 2003

Our new address: University of Munich, Kaulbachstr 37, D-80539 Munich

ARCO Nepal has moved to Munich to the site of its association foundation. Soon a new duplicate annual report should appear to report about the last events.

The comprehensive book the “Amphibians and Reptiles of Nepal” with 1200 pages, numerous illustrations and hundreds of colour prints has been issued and is offered internationally from the bookstore Koeltz. The thesis of Christiane Anders covering more than 650 pages about the “Amphibians of Nepal” has been published as a monography still in the Fuhlrott Museum and also the thesis of Kalu Ram Rai about the “Herpetofauna of east Nepal and their anthropogene impacts” was concluded successfully.

“Khambu” Rai could also finish a training period at the Zoo Blydorp in Rotterdam, being supported by Henk Zwartepoorte. Mrs. Dubau provided valuable engagement and brought numerous results of her barely one-year stay in the TCC at Kasarah; we hope the results within the scope of her doctoral thesis will be reported soon.

The first Field guide „Amphibians and Reptiles of Nepal“, by Werner Kästle & Hermann Schleich, and in the Nepali translated by Kalu Ram Rai will soon be issued. It shall be the first specialist book on the zoology in Nepal in national language and contribute increasingly to the educational work also for those population parts not English speaking. (nb/it was issued indeed in 2013 finally!)

An assent also occurred by the National Park Management for the construction of the first satellite station in the Koshi Tappu Wildlife reserve. The plans (see www.arco-nepal.de) were, just as for the Kasarah-HQ enlargement by the general manager of the national parks submitted, its realisation depends, however, on future development and working possibilities due to terrorism and corruption of the afflicted country. However, there are also less positive subjects with ARCO Nepal which have occurred during last years on which ARCO had to fight:

All works by Mrs. Dubau, investigations and stock-takings in the TCC at Kasarah, were not admitted, in the end, so that she had to change without further possibilities to another subject. But at least after her one year work, structural improvement of the arrangements together with enlargement plans and numerous behavioural observations in the TCC expect continuance.

The long planned and well prepared application of Mrs. Alina Kurz at schools in Nepal such as a contribution to "Education Centre Kasarah" had to be called off on account of national terror activities, also the stay of ARCO's chairperson and other members.

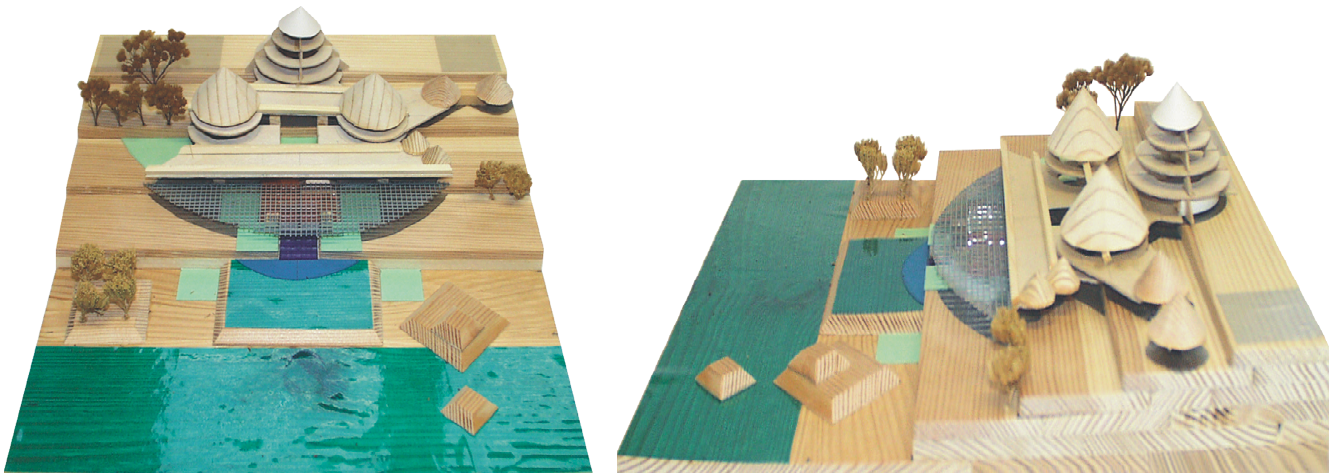
The former general manager of the national parks showed since his designation no interest in active cooperation, at least our writings remained about a year unanswered.

Now Dr. Maskey is once more back as DG in the office, let's see what hopes arise for future cooperation. A relatively largely comprehensive DFG – research project of stock-taking in the considered non-national parks which are at higher mountain altitudes could have been established as another important project extension:

2003 Application to DFG by H. Schleich for a project about new NHM and research in Nepal for following persons: Rai, Karki, Khanal, Shah, Shrestha, Tripathi, Lausberg, Diener, Pradhan, Walther, Giri. The project was not granted at the end.

The request of museum Director Dr. K. Shrestha and TU authorities cum rector during an unfinanced guest professorship of Prof. Schleich at TU to help for the planning of a Natural History Museum at the TU camp site had also been done by ARCO and its members (see www.arco-nepal.de).

It was presented at the Embassy in Bonn to His Excellency Dr. N. K. Rai and entitled "Museum of the Himalayas" to have Nepal a meeting point for all Himalayan countries whatever politics or religion they have and to make it also biogeographically to the Central point for all Himalayan research – being an attraction to visitors from all over the world and a scientific communication Centre cum collection Centre for species of plants, animals, fossils and stones and ethnicities and all information for it.



Model built by Prof. A. Schröter, concept and planning H.S & A.S.

There were 10 years of almost inactivity for ARCO regarding work in Nepal due to the political instability and impossibility to travel and work in the southern parts of the country. In 2010 a first visit of Arco chairman H.S. took place giving a seminar at NHM.

Most data and recent most updated information is given on our website www.arco-nepal.de!!!!

Mr. Kaluram Rai became examined at Tribhuvan University for Doctor degree and in following years he was nominated as Arco-Nepal Country representative and continued contributing a lot to the conservation and education in Nepal. In 2010 he studied a government forest area for the feasibility to establish an in situ and ex-situ Turtle Conservation project. His report was accepted by the government authorities and also submitted to Arco-Nepal.

Finally, in 2012 H.S., accompanied by D. Josemari Rodriguez Linde (Tabernas/Almeria) and Prof. Christian de la Fe (Murcia University) signed a MOU with the Nepali joint venture partner SUMMEF (Sukhani Martyrs Memorial Foundation).

In 2012 Arco-Nepal also started issuing for the first time an own newsletter following the former annual reports. Its primary aim was to inform about the development and progress of the Turtle Rescue & Conservation Centre in SE-Nepal. The whole construction phases and activities during the five years of the first MOU were described and illustrated in detail. In 2013 the Fieldguide to Amphibians and Reptiles of Nepal could have been published in English and Nepali by Kaestle, W. Rai, K & Schleich, H.

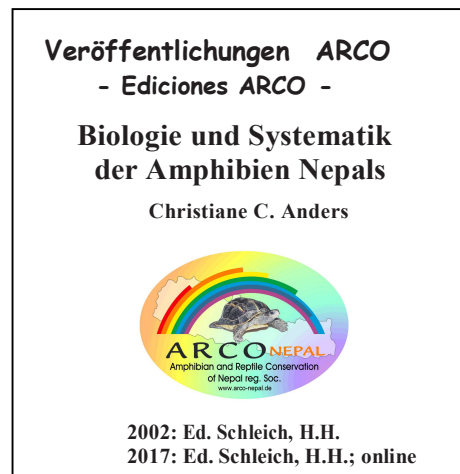
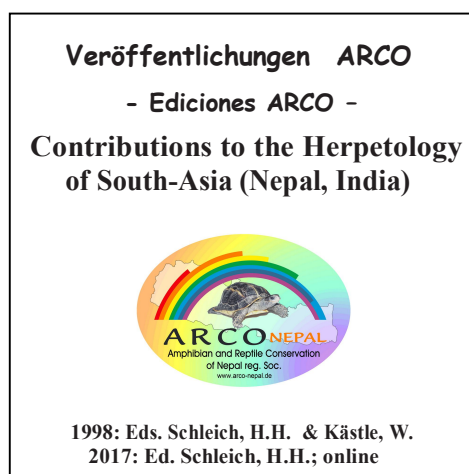
In 2017 Arco-Nepal signed another MOU to accompany and foster the situation of the TRCC. By this year and the end of the first MOU the TRCC became fully depending on the owners, SUMMEF and the Community Group.

Also this year our newsletter became registered with an international ISSN publication number and we offer interested scientists to publish their articles in the upcoming Arco-Nepal Newsletters.



Above: Budoholi Turtle Rescue & Conservation Centre. View from the main building to the breeding centre, education centre and terrestrial enclosures for tortoises.

**For ARCO-Nepal's twentieth anniversary we offer to all our members:
Free download of two of our publications @ www.arco-nepal.de.**



Arco has till now three honoured life time members :

Dr. Werner Kaestle, Mario. H. Pichler and Prof. Dr. K. Rai

We are much grateful and indebted to these great, long time friends and supporters.

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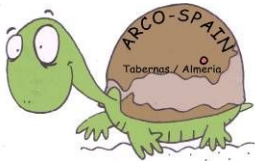
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