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**Human-wildlife interactions in the Western Terai of Nepal. An analysis of factors influencing conflicts between sympatric tigers (*Panthera tigris tigris*) and leopards (*Panthera pardus fusca*) and local communities around Bardia National Park, Nepal**

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# STELLINGEN (Propositions)

Behorende bij het proefschrift:

**Human-wildlife Interactions in Western Terai of Nepal  
An analysis of factors influencing conflicts between sympatric tigers  
(*Panthera tigris tigris*) and leopards (*Panthera pardus fusca*) and  
local communities around Bardia National Park, Nepal.**

- 1 People with higher level of education and self-sufficiency are more positive towards nature conservation, probably because they know the importance of living nature and are not much affected by human-wildlife conflict (this thesis).
- 2 Tigers are being blamed for human-wildlife conflicts, while they are not the main cause of these conflicts (this thesis).
- 3 The results of the Jacobs index should be interpreted with caution and a significance test should always be applied because the Jacobs index alone may give misleading results (this thesis).
- 4 The non-significant level of spatial avoidance between tiger and leopard in boundary zones can be explained by the fact that in the human disturbed boundary zones tigers are usually young and therefore not dominating the leopards (this thesis).
- 5 The composition of the prey base, in terms of species diversity and biomass, is key to understanding the interaction between sympatric tigers and leopards (Odden et al., 2010).
- 6 Even when suffering losses of crops and livestock by wildlife, people living in the buffer zones of protected area may have a positive attitude towards conservation and protection of wildlife, due to cultural and educational factors (Bhattarai & Fischer, 2014; Kolipaka et al., 2017).

- 7 The chital (*Axis axis*), which is the staple food of tigers, is likely to be negatively affected by the succession from grassland to shrub land in protected areas. A decline in this species can have cascading effects on the composition of the mammalian community, including other ungulates and top predators (Wegge et al., 2009).
- 8 Wildlife populations that are isolated or have a reduced probability of exchanging at least one individual per generation with other population are vulnerable to inbreeding depression (Mills & Allendorf, 1996).
- 9 Farmers may opt for alternative oil yielding cash crops like Mentha and Chamomile in order to mitigate crop losses from elephants (Gross et al., 2017).
- 10 The way in which people interact with organisms and their habitat is key to nature conservation (Loveridge et al., 2010).
- 11 Aggression by top predators can create a “landscape of fear” in which subordinate predators and herbivores restrict their activity to low risk areas or times of the day (Swanson et al., 2016).
- 12 Diseases such as Canine distemper virus (CDV) can pose a serious threat to tiger populations (Gilbert et al., 2015).
- 13 The use of molecular forensic tools should play an important role in strengthening law enforcement to address wildlife related crimes (Karmacharya et al., 2018).