

# Danphe

Bird Conservation Nepal

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 17

BULLETIN NO. 1

MARCH 2008

## A substitute name for *Prinia burnesii nipalensis*

Hem Sagar Baral\*, Suchit Basnet\*\*, Badri Chaudhary\*\*, Hathan Chaudhary\*\*, Tika Giri\*\* and Som GC\*\*

In a recent paper (Baral *et al.* 2007), we proposed the trinomial *Prinia burnesii nipalensis* for a new subspecies of Rufous-vented *Prinia burnesii*. We have since been contacted by several ornithologists who have pointed out that the name *nipalensis* is preoccupied in the genus *Prinia* by *Drymoica nipalensis* (Moore 1854), a junior synonym of *Prinia inornata* (see Watson *et al.* 1986: 143). In the light of this we propose the following new name *Prinia burnesii nepalicola* for the **Nepal Rufous-vented *Prinia***.

The name *nepalicola* reflects the status of the taxon as a Nepal dweller, and is invariable.

The description of *Drymoica nipalensis* was first submitted to the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London* by Moore and duly appeared in 1855 on page 77 of the *Proceedings* in an article listed below. However, delays in publication led to the prior appearance of this name, drawn from a Hodgson MS name, on p. 329 with a description in the first volume of the *Catalogue* of Horsfield & Moore (1854). The *Catalogue* appears to credit the name to Hodgson, but since the end of the 19th century, or earlier, the credit for names has gone to the describer when the one who coined the name did not publish a description. In this instance it might be supposed that authorship would devolve upon Horsfield & Moore, but the description appears with a reference to "Moore, P.Z.S. (1854) p." (the page number was left blank as it had not appeared) which, contra the listing by Watson *et al.* (1986), sufficiently demonstrates that Horsfield was not involved and Moore alone should be credited (Dickinson 2004).

### References

Baral, H. S., Basnet, S., Chaudhary, B., Chaudhary, H., Giri, T. and GC, S. 2007. A new subspecies of Rufous-vented *Prinia*

*Prinia burnesii* (Aves: Cisticolidae) from Nepal. *Danphe* 16(4): 1-10.

Dickinson, E. C. 2004. Systematic notes on Asian birds. 46. 'A Catalogue of the Birds in the Museum of the Hon. East-India Company' by Horsfield & Moore. *Zoologische Verhandelingen, Leiden* 350: 149-165.

Horsfield, T. and Moore, F. 1854. A catalogue of the birds in the Museum of the Hon. East India Company. i-xxi, 1-451. – Wm. H. Allen & Co., London.

Moore, F. 1855. Descriptions of some new and little known species of birds from Northern India, contained in the Museum of the Hon. East India Company. *Proc. Zool. Soc. London*, 74-78 (1854).

Watson, G.E., Traylor, M.A., Jr., and Mayr, E. 1986. Passeriformes: suborder Oscines, family Sylviidae. pp. 3-294. In: *Check-list of Birds of the World*. A continuation of the work of James L. Peters, Vol. XI. (ed. Mayr, E. & Cottrell, G.W.). – Mus. Comp. Zool., Cambridge, Massachusetts.

### Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge help received from Edward Dickinson, Normand David, Carol Inskipp and Aasheesh Pittie, regarding the etymology of the new taxon. They have helped us with their critical comments and to bring out this paper.

\*Bird Conservation Nepal, PO Box 12465, Kathmandu, Nepal hem@birdlifeneal.org \*\*Nature Safari Tours, PO Box 21016, Kathmandu, Nepal. birdlife@mos.com.np



# Lower Mai Valley Forests: Urgent Need for Conservation Intervention

Yadav Ghimirey\*, Chandra Pokharel\*\*, Ishana Thapa\* and Hem Sagar Baral\*

## Background

Mai valley forest is an Important Bird Area (IBA) identified by BirdLife International lying in the eastern part of the country (Baral and Inskipp 2005). Mai valley extends from 26° 40'N to 27° 05'N and 87° 41' to 88° 10'E with a total area of 30,000 ha. Lower Mai valley forests lie in the lower part of the Mai valley with mostly tropical and sub-tropical forests (Baral and Inskipp 2005).

## Importance of the area

This area has rightly been identified as an IBA as it holds different bird species of national and global conservation significance like White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*, Slender-billed Vulture *Gyps tenuirostris*, Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*, Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*, Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* (Baral and Inskipp 2005). These globally threatened bird species and more than 27 nationally threatened species (Inskipp 1989, Baral and Inskipp 2004) found in lower Mai valley have increased its value as an important site for biodiversity conservation. Also it lies in the Eastern Himalayas Endemic Bird Area identified by BirdLife International and is recognized as a biodiversity hotspot for birds (Stattersfield *et al.* 1998). Not only birds, the area is also home to the nationally protected Asiatic rock Python *Python molurus*, which is also listed as near-threatened by IUCN (IUCN 2007). The area is also one of the most important remnant patches of the tropical evergreen forest in the Churia region of Nepal (Inskipp 1989).

Its importance could also be known from the fact that we could also witness globally threatened Lesser Adjutants frequently moving around the Mai river valley. There may be a nesting colony of this bird in the region which is yet to be confirmed.

## Conservation awareness in the region

The lower part of the Mai valley forests have been less studied than the upper part which makes it quite difficult to launch any

conservation initiatives in the region. The region is relatively new to different intervention programmes launched by government, NGOs and INGOs. This has resulted in relatively less conservation awareness among the locals here than upper Mai valley. As several biodiversity conservation projects are running in upper Mai valley such as the Red Panda Project, livelihood improvement project of The Mountain Institute and projects from other Ilam based non-governmental organizations, people there are more aware with the basic concepts of biodiversity conservation which is not the case with the locals residing within the vicinity of lower Mai valley forests.

## Community forests in the region

Several initiatives have been taken by the government for the conservation of the forests. Handing of forests to the communities as community forests was one of such initiatives that is widely regarded as the most important step taken which guaranteed that the forests are conserved. Government of Nepal introduced community forestry during the late 70's as a strategy to preserve the degraded hills of Nepal and to provide basic needs of forestry products to the rural people (Acharya 2002). CFUGs have been formed to make local people's reach to the forests easy as most of the people depend upon forest for livelihood.



The community forests in Nepal are in general "protection oriented" type resulting in fewer benefits than otherwise could have. The term "protection-oriented" refers to the forest management system allowing only for the collection of dry wood and twigs as well as certain non-wood products such as leaf litter for animal bedding and compost (Branney 1996). Contrary to protection-oriented forest management system, "production-oriented" forest management system involves carrying out of silvicultural and harvesting operations as demanded by the forest condition to meet management objectives.

The CFUGs in the Churia region of Nepal have been actively managing their forests with the later of the above discussed motives. But most of the CFUGs have shown the tendency to bypass the conservation issues for earning money in a short term. Its inability to provide service for an infinite period of time has been overlooked. It is known during conversation with the locals that the issues such as biodiversity conservation have never been given priority by most of the CFUGs. As the forests of this region are blessed with Sal *Shorea robusta* and other economically beneficial tree species, CFUGs could earn nicely if they produce timber. This very reason has played a crucial role in deviating the interest of CFUGs from protection to the production which may not help the cause.

This trend may make the matter worse as the forests of the region are very crucial habitat for several species of globally threatened and near-threatened species..

### Conservation education - Need of the hour

As part of Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) project being implemented by Bird Conservation Nepal, we had the opportunities for several field visits and community interaction in these areas. We learnt that nationally important animals like Common Leopard *Panthera pardus*, Asiatic Rock Python *Python molurus* and Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* have been kept by several responsible members of the forest user groups in the area. Keeping of such animals without license is illegal according to prevailing law of the country.

These incidence show the ignorance of the local people and even of the people who are in the responsible positions in various CFUGs about the importance of biodiversity conservation. This attitude of the locals needs to be changed before it is too late. For doing this, a package of awareness programmes targeted for raising the conservation awareness of the locals and other conservation initiatives needs to be initiated in the region.

### Conservation support for the region

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) a joint initiative of Conservation International (CI), l'Agence Française de Développement, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank has extended its support in the Eastern Himalayan region to engage civil society in biodiversity conservation.

This is an invaluable initiative in safeguarding the flora and fauna of the region.

### BCN's conservation initiative

To address these issues, Bird Conservation Nepal with financial support from Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) has been implementing a programme for network building and strengthening of the local NGOs identified as Site Support Groups (SSGs) in the region. The aim of the programme is to enhance the knowledge of SSGs on biodiversity conservation as well as establish a well functioning SSG network for long term safeguarding of the IBA. The programme is well supported by the local communities and is in good progress. In the coming days we intend to get back to these communities through a well established network of SSGs to address some of these important conservation issues.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund for funding our work in the area. We also like to thank Dr Sarala Khaling, CEPF Regional Coordinator and Angphuri Sherpa, CEPF National Coordinator for their valuable guidance and support to our work.

### References

- Acharya, K.P. 2002. Role of forest research and survey in forestry development in Nepal. Our Forest in Nepali, Department of Forest, HMG
- Baral, H. S. and Inskipp, C. 2004. *The state of Nepal's birds 2004*. DNPWC, BCN and IUCN – Nepal. Kathmandu
- Baral, H.S. and Inskipp, C. 2005. *Important Bird Areas of Nepal: Key sites for conservation*, Bird Conservation Nepal and Birdlife International, Kathmandu and Cambridge.
- Branney, P. 1996. User groups as forest managers: the experience of the NUKCFP. In M. Hobley, ed. *Participatory forestry: the process of change in India and Nepal*. Rural Development Forestry Study Guide No. 3. London, UK, Overseas Development Institute.
- Inskipp, C. 1989. Nepal's forest birds: their status and conservation. ICBP Monograph No. 4, Cambridge, UK.
- IUCN 2007. 2007 IUCN red list of threatened species. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.
- Stattersfield AJ, Crosby MJ, Long AJ and Wege DC (1998) *Endemic Bird Areas of the world: priorities for biodiversity conservation*. BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK.

\*Bird Conservation Nepal, PO Box 12465, Kathmandu, Nepal

\*\*Human Right Consciousness & Development Center Nepal  
email: hucodec@yahoo.com



# The Decline of Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis* in Nepal

Laxman Prasad Poudyal<sup>1</sup>, Paras Bikram Singh<sup>2</sup> and Sujan Maharjan<sup>3</sup>

Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis* (Family Otididae, Order Gruiformes) is a highly threatened and rare ground nesting bird species inhabiting in Nepal, India, Cambodia and Vietnam with a world population of only 250-999. It is listed as a Critically Endangered species in the IUCN Red List category because of its small and rapidly declining population due to widespread loss of grassland habitat in its range (Birdlife International 2001 2007). This bustard occurs in the alluvial grasslands dominated by *Imperata cylindrica* of Chitwan National Park (CNP), Bardia National Park (BNP), Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve (SWR), Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR) and Koshi Barrage areas in Nepal (Inskipp and Inskipp 1983, Inskipp and Collar 1984, Weaver 1991) and is regularly recorded in first three protected areas ( Baral and Inskipp 2004). The legal status of this globally threatened species in Nepal is Protected (Appendix I) under the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973 and Appendix I in CITES law.

A survey was carried out between April and May 2007 to determine the present status and distribution of Bengal Florican and to distinguish whether its population had changed or not since the last surveys in Chitwan, Bardia and Suklaphanta.

The methods involved counting birds at lekking sites and identification of territories as adult males are very territorial in the breeding season. Different display sites were assumed to fit in different males. Observations were carried out in the morning (0630-0930 hrs) and afternoon (1630-1900 hrs) when the species was more active. Binoculars (Avocet 10X 50 and Nikon 8X 40 Action UWV) and Spotting Scope (Swift 839 searcher 20x and 40x, 60mm) were used from view-towers and trees for a better view of the grassland. Some areas were observed from elephant back and from motor vehicles. Discussions were held with park officials and local people to gain information on the presence of Bengal Florican and its conservation in the area.

A total of 28-36 adult population of Bengal Florican was estimated in the three protected areas of Nepal. Inskipp and Inskipp (1983) estimated 60-86 adult population in 1982 and Baral et al (2003) estimated 32-60 adult population in 2001.



Bengal Florican by Som Bohora

Compared to past studies, the population has declined by 56% since 1982 and by 30% since 2001.

**Suklaphanta:** Eight males and two females were recorded at Suklaphanta, among which six males were found to have maintained their territory. The Floricans were not recorded from other grasslands. Inskipp recorded 13 males in 1982 (Inskipp and Inskipp 1983) and Baral recorded 12 males in 2000 at Suklaphanta (Baral et al 2003) whereas Weaver recorded 14 males in 1990 (Weaver 1991). Compared to those studies, the number has declined by 38% since 1982 and by 33% since 2000. Two territorial males were observed on newly managed grassland patches where bushes and trees

Protected area	No of Male Florican recorded				Population Estimated in 2007
	1982	1990	2001	2007	
SWR	13	14	12-14	8-9	16-18
BNP	8-9	5	3	1	2-4
CNP	8-19	-	3	5	10-14



were removed. The Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve authority had a plan to uproot and remove the bushes and the trees from 100 hectare of grassland in 2007. This is a good news towards the grassland dependent species conservation in Nepal.

**Bardia:** Only one male was recorded at Lamkauli grassland and no record from Baghaura phanta. Inskipp recorded 8-9 males in 1982 (Inskipp and Inskipp 1983). Weaver recorded five males and a female in 1990 (weaver 1991) and Baral et al (2003) recorded three males and two females in 2000 in these areas. Naturalist Mr Jeet Bahadur Khadka had been updating Bengal Florican numbers for the past few years. He recorded three males in 2005 and two males in 2006. When the survey results are compared, the number of Bengal Floricans has declined by 87% since 1982, by 80% since 1990 and by 66% since 2000. Bardia's grassland is undergoing plant succession changing consecutively to tall grasses, bushes and trees. Apart from the succession, predators were also found to be big threat to Floricans. During the study period, we observed a couple of Jackals 3 times out of a total of 9 visits.

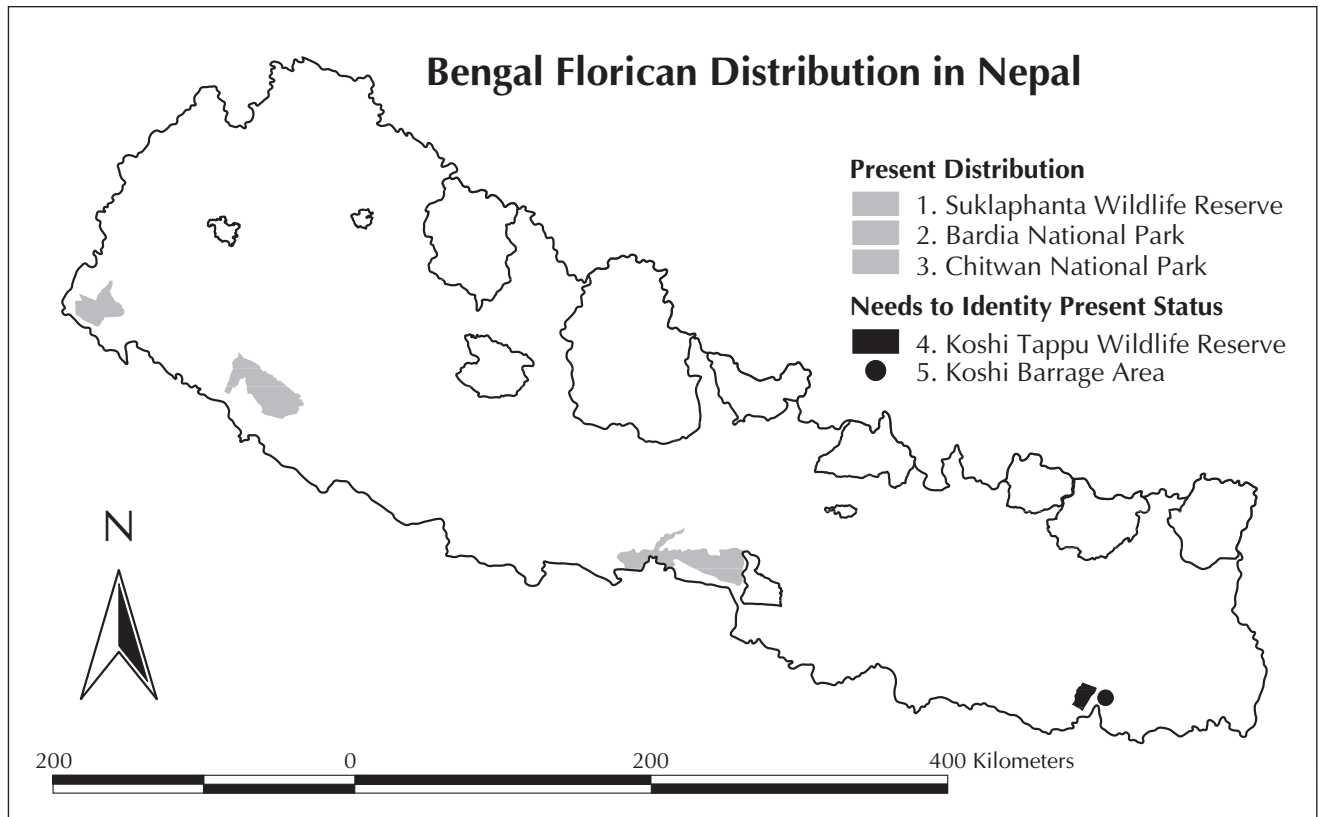
**Chitwan:** Five males were recorded at Chitwan. Of the ten grasslands we visited, the Floricans were absent from Khagendramalli, Jarneli and Dumaria grasslands. Two males were recorded from Amrite and Padampur, newly created grasslands which were settlements five/six years ago. Three males were recorded from Buddanagar, Budhirapti and Sukebar grasslands one male in each site. Chitwan National Park's Veterinary Doctor Mr Chitra Bahadur Khadka observed two sub adult males on 10 May 2007 at Bhimle grassland which suggests breeding success at Chitwan. Inskipp and

Inskipp (1983) recorded 8-19 males in 1982 and Baral *et al.* (2003) recorded 3 males in 2001. Compared to past studies, the number has declined by 38% since 1982. Chitwan's grassland is also undergoing plant succession. Patches of *Imperata cylindrica* were surrounded by tall grasses and bushes.

Park authority removed trees and bushes from Suklaphanta, Padampur, Khagendramalli, Dumaria, Sukebar and Jarneli grasslands in 2007. This should be repetitively continued in all grasslands in the future. Not only bushes, but also saplings and trees should be removed from the Baghaura and Lamkauli phantas. Human disturbances are very high in Chitwan followed by Bardia. These should be reduced. The disturbances at Suklaphanta are very much less as it is far from human habitations.

Fires in the protected areas seem essential to maintain the grassland ecosystem (Baral 2001). Controlled cutting and prescribed burning should be done before March. Late fires can be detrimental to young birds (Inskipp and Inskipp 1983). Maintaining interspersed small patches of taller grasses on the shorter grassland dominated by *Imperata cylindrica* is crucial to the Bengal Florican conservation when conducting grassland management activities such as burning and cutting. Preventing succession from *Imperata* grassland to tall grassland seems challenging job. Researches should be carried out and grassland management plans should be prepared and implemented so that specialist grassland birds and other grassland dependent taxa survive with viable populations.

Some common predatory mammals such as Golden Jackal





*Canis aureus* and Mongooses *Herpestes sp.* should be controlled to minimize predation of Bengal Florican (Baral and Inskipp 2005). Park staffs play the vital role in implementing the grassland management practices. They have to know about the importance, status and behavior of this endangered bird. So the conservation education to staff, local people and school children is highly recommended. As this species has a very small and rapidly declining population, regular monitoring should be done in all potential habitats. Park staffs can do the monitoring regularly if they are well trained. There has not been any survey at Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve and Koshi Barrage since 1982 when Inskipp and Inskipp (1983) recorded 3 males and a female. As there is still evidence of existence of Bengal Florican (Giri and Choudhary 2003), surveys should be carried to find out its present status in these areas.

The species is easily detectable in the breeding season only and unknown in other seasons. Detailed ecological studies should be done to know its status in all seasons. Possibility studies on captive breeding and releasing chicks in their natural habitats are recommended for long-term conservation of this endangered bird. A conservation action plan should be prepared and immediately implemented.

## Acknowledgments

The fieldwork was funded by The Oriental Bird Club, UK and The Club 300 Foundation for Bird Protection, Sweden. Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation granted necessary permission to carry out the research. Chitwan National Park, Bardia National Park Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve and Bird Conservation Nepal made available local and technical support. Ms Carol Inskipp and Dr Hem Sagar Baral provided help from the very inception of this project to this manuscript writing. Dr David Buckingham, Dr Henrik Lind, Dr Frederic Launay and Dr Tom Gray provided invaluable help. Mohandev Bhatta, Chandra Bahadur Chand, Jeet Bahadur Khadka, Sunil Nepal, Lal Bahadur Bhandari, Ashok Bhandari, Shivakanta Suman, Ritesh Bhusan Basnet, Devraj Joshi and Baburam Lamichhane made contribution during the fieldworks.

## References

- Baral, H.S. 2001. *Community structure and habitat association of lowland grassland birds in Nepal*. PhD dissertation, Universiteit van Amsterdam and Cardiff University.
- Baral, H.S. and Inskipp, C. 2004. *The state of Nepal's birds 2004*. Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Bird Conservation Nepal and IUCN-Nepal, Kathmandu.
- Baral, H.S. and Inskipp, C. 2005. *Important Bird Areas in Nepal: key sites for conservation*. Bird Conservation Nepal and BirdLife International, Kathmandu and Cambridge.
- Baral, N., Timilsina, N. and Tamang, B. 2003. Status of Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis* in Nepal. *Forktail* 19 : 51-55
- BirdLife International. 2001. *Threatened birds of Asia: the BirdLife International Red Data Book*. Cambridge, U.K: BirdLife International.
- BirdLife International. 2007. Species factsheet: *Houbaropsis*

*bengalensis*. Downloaded from <http://www.birdlife.org> on 14/9/2007

Giri, T. and Choudhary H. 2003. Additional Sightings! *Danphe* 12(1/2): 3

Inskipp, C. and Collar, N.J. 1984. The Bengal Florican: its conservation in Nepal. *Oryx* 18:30-35.

Inskipp, C. and Inskipp, T. 1983. *Report on a Survey of Bengal Floricans (Houbaropsis bengalensis) in Nepal and India, 1982*.

ICBP Study Report No. 2. Cambridge: International Council for Bird Preservation.

Weaver, D.J. 1991. *A survey of Bengal Floricans (Houbaropsis bengalensis) at Royal Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve and Royal Bardia National Park, western Nepal, 1990*. Unpublished report to Oriental Bird Club.

1. Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Babarmahal, Kathmandu, Nepal  
email: lppoudyal@yahoo.com
2. School of Science, Kathmandu University, Nepal  
email: ecoparas@yahoo.com
3. Chitwan National Park, Kasara, Chitwan  
email: su\_m@hotmail.com

आउनुहोस्,  
गिद्धहरूका बारेमा खोजी गरौं!

यिनीहरु किन लोप भैरहेका छन्  
र यिनको संरक्षणका लागि तपाईंले  
के सहयोग गर्न सक्नुहुन्छ ?



- नेपालमा आठ प्रजातिका गिद्धहरू पाइन्छन्। तिमध्ये दुई प्रजातिका गिद्धहरू अति नै संकटापन्न र थप दुई प्रजातिका गिद्धहरू संकटापन्न अवस्थामा छन्।
- प्रकृतिका कुचिकार मानिएका गिद्धहरू मरेका जनावरको सितो सफा गर्ने काममा अतिनै सिपालु हुन्छन्।
- जुन देशमा गिद्धहरू हुँदैनन्, त्यहाँ गन्हाउने सितो लडिरहेको हुन्छ, जसले वातावरणलाई दुर्गन्धित बनाउँछ र ठूलो संख्यामा खिगा, मुसो र छाडा कृकुरहरूलाई आकर्षण गर्छ। हेजा, रेबिज तथा विभिन्न प्रकारका महामारीहरूको प्रकोप बढ्नु गरी धनजनको ठूलो क्षति हुन्छ।
- अहिले गिद्धहरूको संख्या निकै घटेको छ। गाईवस्तुहरू विरामी हुँदा उपचार गर्न प्रयोग गरिने डाईक्लोफेनेक (Diclofenac) औषधिने गिद्धहरूको विनाशको प्रमुख कारण हो। यो औषधिले गिद्धको शरिरमा विषको काम गर्छ र सितो खाएको केही दिन भित्रै गिद्धहरू मरेका हुन्छन्। अहिले यो औषधि पशुहरूको उपचारमा प्रयोग गर्न कानुनी रूपमा समेत प्रतिबन्ध लगाईएको छ। त्यसैले पशुहरूको उपचार गर्न डाईक्लोफेनेक (Diclofenac) औषधिको प्रयोग नगरौं र यसको सट्टामा गिद्धहरू तथा अन्य वन्यजन्तुमा हानी नपुऱ्याउने, उतिकै प्रभावकारी औषधि मेलोक्सिथाम (Meloxicam) को प्रयोग गरौं।
- गिद्धहरूको संरक्षणले गर्दा अन्ततः हामीलाई नै फाइदा पुग्छ। त्यसैले आउनुहोस्, प्रकृतिका अभिन्न अंग यी गिद्धहरूको संरक्षणमा हतियारो गरौं। हाम्रो वरिपरिको वातावरणलाई सफा, स्वच्छ र रोममुक्त राखौं।



नेपाल पक्षी संरक्षण संघ

पोस्ट बक्स १२४६५, लाजिम्पाट काठमाडौं, फोन ४४१७८०४ / ४४२७२१२, फ्याक्स ४४१२८८४, ईमेल [bcn@mail.com.np](mailto:bcn@mail.com.np), वेब साइट [www.birdlifeneपाल.org](http://www.birdlifeneपाल.org)



# Largest breeding colony of Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* outside protected areas of Nepal

Dinesh Giri

The weather was cloudy and humidity growing throughout morning on 20 July 2007. Early at 07h00 I was escorting Sharada Paudel, student from Tribhuvan University studying vulture as part of her Masters in Science degree dissertation, from Lumbini Buddha Garden Resort.

We were following the direction towards the north from village called Mahajidia the road which leads through densely populated, typical settlements of Hindus comprising tribes Tharu, Yadab, Harizan, Karmi and Muslim communities. We were cycling through beautiful and rural landscapes with great zeal and enthusiasm in search and exploration of vultures. On the way we came across to see two large kapok trees *Bombax ceiba*. On these two trees and surrounding trees we saw more than 500 Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans*. Many of them also had nests in these two trees. The site lies 12 km far due north of Lumbini Buddha Garden Resort, Rupandehi District, Lumbini Zone. The village is called Dandachok and lies in Suryapura Village Development Committee Ward No. 3. This appears to be the largest breeding colony of Asian Openbill outside protected area in Nepal.

Near the breeding site there is no natural forest and vegetation to inhabit or refuge. The trees are surrounded by an extensive and open farmland on the edge of village. So close to village community it is clearly seen hosting more than 500 Asian Open billed Stork for breeding. When I observed the colony the tree was full of birds. Some of them were still carrying nesting material and flying above tree. Others were seen incubating.

The local communities in surrounding villages have very little knowledge about conservation of birds. Every body was amazed while we were looking at and trying to estimate the number of birds. We spoke to them and explained clearly how important these birds are for environmental protection. We emphasized mainly to protect all birds in general and save scattered big trees in surrounding rivers, lakes, farmland that are supporting big breeding birds like storks, vultures and eagles.

We also found some fresh eggshell under the tree when we approached at the bottom. Eggshells were dropped on the ground after young ones were hatched.

The adult birds were relying on wet farmlands to get their food. In the fields, food is likely to be affected due to increasing use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. Use of such chemicals in large scale must be destroying all kinds of insects and naturally grown edible weed and other aquatic vegetation. All these are good food source for farmland birds.

The related national body and organization like Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) and other existing local NGOs should encourage and focus properly in conservation and plantation of big and fast growing trees and should conduct conservation awareness particularly in rural areas to educate and aware the feeling of conservation and ownership.

I would like to thank Sharad Kumar Singh, Director of Himalayan Nature and Dr Hem Sagar Baral of BCN for their encouragement and help to write this article.

*Lumbini Buddha Garden Resort, Lumbini Parsa, Rupandehi*  
*rubythroat11@yahoo.com*



Asian Openbill by Paul Sterry



# News

## Membership

Mr Daya Ram Chaudhary, a teacher by profession has joined BCN as a Life Member. Mr Chaudhary is a conservationist and also Chairman of Ghodaghodi Samrakchan Manch. This organisation is the most active site support group working actively to safeguard the biodiversity of Ghodaghodi Lake Complex, an Important Bird Area. He has keen interest in all kinds of work related with biodiversity conservation and community involvement in nature conservation.

Mr Sanjay Khetan joined BCN as a Life Member. He is an engineer by profession and also a social worker. Currently he is Multiple Council Chairperson and past district governor of Lions Club Multiple District 325 Nepal. He keeps deep interest in the conservation of Nepal's environment.

## Policies of BCN

BCN Executive Council meeting held on 9 February 2008 approved various BCN policies. These policies include Administrative Policy 2064, Financial Policy 2064, Human Resource Policy 2064, Publication Policy 2064 and have been made effective from 1 March 2008. These policies were prepared by the Organisational Development Centre (ODC) in consultation with BCN Executive Council and staff members.

## Revised Globally Threatened Bird Poster

BCN produced 5000 copies of revised GTS poster. The poster consists of 33 globally threatened bird species that occurs in Nepal. The printing of the poster was partially supported by The Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, Koshi Camp Pvt Ltd, Himalayan Nature, Wildlife Conservation Nepal (WCN) and Social Welfare Association of Nepal (SWAN).

## Events

### Book Fair at Central Zoo

Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) participated in the "Grand Book Fair" organized by National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) on the premises of Central Zoo from 29 to 30 December (14 to 15 Poush 2064) to mark 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Central Zoo under NTNC management. More than 2000 visitor visited Central Zoo during book fair. Vulture posters were distributed among the visitors.

### Taudaha Jamboree

On the occasion of World Wetland Day on 2 February 2008, BCN participated Taudaha Jamboree organized jointly by Bird Conservation Nepal and Wildlife Conservation Nepal (WCN) in association with Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), ICIMOD, WWF Nepal and IUCN Nepal. Around 300 to 400 people visited Jamboree. Many of them participated in birdwatching programme facilitated by



BCN and also helped in raising funds. BCN volunteers and members showed active participation during the Jamboree.

## Meetings and Workshops

### Workshop on Development plan for Mustang and Manang Districts

Ms. Menuka Bansyat, Membership and Education Officer, attended technical consultation workshop on sustainable development planning for Mustang and Manang Districts organized by National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) on 28 December 2007 at Radisson Hotel. The workshop aimed to receive critical comments and suggestions on vision, goal, objectives, activities and strategies of the draft master plan document



*Tune in to*

## Panchhi Sansar

*on IMAGE FM 97.9*

*at 7.45 am*

*Second and Fourth Saturday  
of Nepali Month*



## Ramsar Asia Regional COP 10 preparatory meeting

CEO, Dr Hem Sagar Baral participated in Ramsar Asia Regional COP 10 preparatory meeting from 13-19 January 2008 in Bangkok. The meeting was useful in sharing BCN's work at Jagdishpur Reservoir funded by the Ramsar Secretariat.

## International Conference on Managing Wetlands for Sustainable Development

Project officer, Mr Bhagwan Raj Dahal, visited Thailand to attend the International Conference on Managing Wetlands for Sustainable Development from 6-12 January 2008. Paper about the comprehensive work of the Koshi project was presented at the conference. The conference was useful to establish link with International wetland communities' collaboration.

## CEPF Annual Grantee Meeting

Dr Hem Sagar Baral, CEO and Mr Dev Ghimire, Administrative Officer took part in the CEPF Annual Grantee Meeting held on 24 January 2008 in Kathmandu. Dr Baral made a presentation about the work progress and also took up BCN project related questions raised by the members of National Advisory Committee, CEPF.

## 24th Warden Seminar

Membership and Education Officer Ms Menuka Basnyat and CEO Dr Hem Sagar Baral attended 24<sup>th</sup> warden seminar at Madi, Chitwan on 4 February 2008. Revised globally threatened bird poster was released by Honourable Forest Minister Mr. Matrika Prasad Yadav during the inaugural ceremony. During the seminar, Dr Hem Sagar Baral also presented a paper on challenges of vulture conservation in Nepal.



## National Workshop in Lumbini

National Seminar and Training workshop was organised in Lumbini from 6 to 8 December 2007 which was jointly supported by Ramsar Bureau and Darwin Initiative. In this programme, BCN's work funded by Darwin Initiative to

work with CBD focal point was highlighted. Guest lectures were delivered by Mr Jhamak Karki, Assistant Ecologist at the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and Dr Rebat Man Shrestha, Project Director, Department of Livestock Services of Nepal Government. Dr Hem Sagar Baral highlighted the findings and also requested participants to share their biodiversity issues close to their IBAs for national level advocacy. Programme included extensive discussion to improve data quality and coverage of midwinter water bird count programme. Two important wetlands sites were visited by the participants, Jagdishpur Reservoir, a Ramsar Site and IBA, and Gaidahawa Tal, a nationally important wetland within Lumbini IBA. A total of 28 participants took part in the programme.



## Staff Appointment

Mr Suman Sharma with Bachelor in Forestry Science was appointed as short term Field Biologist for Vulture Conservation Programme. Likewise, Mr. Mitra Pandey, with Masters in Zoology was appointed as Field Officer for CEPF. Ms Sharada Paudel with Masters in Environment Science was also appointed as short term Research Officer.

## Donation

Mr. Valdemar Homgren, general member of BCN, kindly donated NRs. 1350 to support our conservation activities.

## Project Update

### Bagmati River Nature Park (BNP)

#### Cleaning

The weeds around the young plant, planted this summer were cleared. Similarly clearing of walking trail was also done. To reduce the excess herbs at the boarder of walking trail digging is going on, where other attractive herb plantation will be done in future.



### Reed-bed construction

Untreated sewerage flow openly through the park to the river. We are planning to establish a natural reed bed water filtration system to treat the water to some extent. A Reed-bed of 10 × 6.5 m is constructed and planted reeds as per the standard.

### Placement of board, dustbin and painting

An updated board of BNP is placed close to the visitor center. Metal Dustbins are placed at different location of the park which will help to control solid waste pollution (plastics and Bottles) thrown by the visitors.

### School visit and awareness

Since August 45 different schools have been visited as part of our conservation education on birds and biodiversity. Among these schools 30 Schools (1195 students and 78 teachers) have made their visit to BNP for field based education.

Similarly on invitation of School for community (NGO) at Pharping on 13 December 2007, a special class on birds and biodiversity conservation was conducted. About 60 students and 15 teachers were present during the talk.

### Bird survey

Monthly Bird survey was carried out; total of 41 species has been recorded to date. Birds like Blyth's reed Warbler, Common Stonechat, Olive-backed Pipit, Pied Bushchat, Eurasian wryneck, Dark-throated Thrush and other winter migratory species have been recorded. Presence of birds like these shows Nature Park is becoming good habitat for wildlife especially bird.

### Visitor survey and involvement of community

To know the perception of visitor and local communities towards the BNP, two separate questionnaire survey forms are used. Survey is ongoing, initial report of the survey shows respondents are impressed with the management of the Park and their suggestion is for more constructive work like building sitting places, toilet etc.

## Koshi Wetland Project

### Fish pond management

Four ponds (each 10 kathha) are leased for the 40 *malaha* community. The project is supporting lease cost and other necessary fishpond management cost.

### Bird Fair

Bird fair was organised to raise awareness of the importance of Koshi wetland habitats and aquatic birds. The Darwin project developed a community focus program jointly with wetland user committees, community forest committees, village development committee and school management committee. A number of wetland-themed activities were conducted, including a musical chair game, and essay, quiz

and art competitions. Hundreds of school children, teachers and local people participated in these activities. Distinguished personalities including political leaders, school management committees and school headmaster were also present in the bird fair.

### Mat weaving training

6 day long training on mat weaving was conducted at the Haripur Buffer Zone. A total of 22 local women participated in the training. Training is being provided to the local community as an alternative income to fishing.



### Radio Programme

In order to highlight the importance of Koshi Tappu and its wetlands among local people, the project has started airing the **Koshi wetlands conservation radio programme** in collaboration with the DDC and other developmental partners which are working in Sunsari District. The DDC is the main lead organization for this radio programme. The outreach of Saptakoshi FM covers 16 districts including the buffer zone of the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve. The programme is broadcasted every week at 7:00- 7:30 pm on Sunday.

## Jagdishpur Wetland Project

### Fisheries and Water Quality Survey

A team including water quality and fish biodiversity experts from Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science (IAAS), Rampur visited the Jagdishpur Reservoir site on first week of January 2008. The purpose of this study was to monitor the water quality, explore its fish biodiversity and assess fish culture activity. A total of 23 different species representing 5 orders, 10 families and 16 genera were collected.

### Assessment of Invasive Alien Plant Species

A short field visit was conducted by plant expert, Dr Mohan Siwakoti from TU, during the first week of January 2008 to assess the threats in the Jagdishpur reservoir and associated wetlands from the invasive alien plant species.



## CEPF Project

Proposal and report writing training to SSGs were organized for knowledge enhancement in tapping funds at local, national and international level.



Ms. Nina Marshall from CEPF US was briefed on project activities during the field visit to Ilam. Interaction with our SSGs at lower Mai valley was also organised.

## Vulture Conservation Programme

### NSAID monitoring

A repeat survey of NSAID has been completed in all previously covered districts. A compiled report is being prepared.

### Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre

BCN signed a MoU with DNPWC and NTNC on 13 January 2008 to jointly work on the Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre. Initial infrastructure has been set up at Kasara, Chitwan and also birds have already been placed.

### Vulture Restaurant

Work at Vulture Restaurant has gone well. Visitor Centre, Vulture Hide, trails to hide are complete. Visitor numbers have increased and a total of Rs. 15,000 has been already collected from visitors. Project has been widely covered by national and international media.

#### *Editorial Board*

**Dr Hem Sagar Baral** (Chief Editor),

**Ishana Thapa** (Sub Editor),

**Suchit Basnet, Yub Raj Basnet, Dev Ghimire**

Copyright © 2008 Bird Conservation Nepal.  
All rights reserved. The opinions expressed by  
the authors do not necessarily express  
the policies of the Bird Conservation Nepal.



Together for birds and people

BirdLife International is a global conservation federation with a worldwide network of Partner organizations, Representatives and committed individuals.

BirdLife International seeks to conserve all bird species on earth and their habitats and, through this, it works for the world's biological diversity. It recognizes that the problems affecting birds, their habitats and our global environment are linked inseparably with social, economic and cultural factors and that these can only be resolved if human societies function in an ecologically sustainable manner and if the needs, welfare and aspirations of people form a part of all conservation action.

Birds provide BirdLife International with a uniquely valuable focus: they are sensitive indicators of biological richness and environmental trends and fulfil many key ecological functions; they contribute greatly to our understanding of natural processes; they are an important economic resource; and they have inspired and delighted people of many cultures for centuries, which makes them excellent ambassadors for the promotion of conservation awareness and international collaboration.

#### **BirdLife International pursues a programme of:**

- = Scientific research and analysis to identify and monitor worldwide the most threatened bird species and the most critical sites for the conservation of avian diversity;
- = Advocacy and policy development to promote the conservation of birds and biodiversity through sustainability in the use of all natural resources;
- = Field action and country conservation programmes, ranging from community-based land-use and management projects to species recovery programmes benefiting both wildlife and humans;
- = Network and capacity building to expand and strengthen the global partnership of conservation organizations and to promote worldwide interest in the conservation of birds and the wider environment.



The newsletter is produced quarterly for members of Bird Conservation Nepal. The aim of the newsletter is to inform BCN members on the recent development of ornithology in Nepal and any other relevant news on birds. It is circulated to all members free of cost. The individual annual membership is NRs. 200 for any SAARC nationals and equivalent Nepali rupees of US\$ 10.00 for others.

Those who would like to donate to or be a member of BCN can do so by a direct bank transfer, to the bank details below, or via cheque. Cheques should be made payable to Bird Conservation Nepal and sent to the address below.

Bank: Himalayan Bank Limited, Tridevi Marg, Thamel  
A/C No: 172510J  
Account Holder: **Bird Conservation Nepal**  
SWIFT CODE: HIMANPKA

Founder President  
**Hari Sharan Nepali 'Kazi'**

Patrons

Mr. Karna Shakya, Nepal  
Mr. Rajendra Lal Shrestha, Nepal  
Miss Michie Kashiwabara, Japan  
Mr. Shyam Khattri, Nepal  
Field Marshal Sir John Chapple GCB, CBE, DL  
Mrs. Nicole Nooren, Netherlands  
Mr. Yozo Koshiyama, Japan  
Mr. Lalit Jung Lalchan, Nepal  
Mr. Bishwa Tuladhar, Nepal  
Mr. Tara P. Lama, USA  
Mr. Krishna Karki, Nepal  
Mr Uttam Raj Kayastha, Nepal  
Mr Sarbendra Pachhai, Nepal  
Mr Deepak Chettri, Nepal  
Dr Joel T. Heinen, USA  
Mr Lok Nath Wosti, Japan  
Mr Rajendra Gurung, Nepal



गर्कन कऱल ; आऱफ ; ३

## Bird Conservation Nepal

Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) is the largest and oldest civil society organization dedicated to the interests of ornithologists, birdwatchers and conservationists in Nepal. It seeks to promote an interest in birds among the general public, encourages research on bird biology and ecology, identifies the major threats to birds' continued survival, and acts to conserve birds and their habitats. It also provides the most authentic information on birds and their habitats all over Nepal.

BCN is a membership based organisation. At present it is supported by a Founder President, 17 Patrons, 120 life members and several ordinary members. Members are the major strength of this organisation and people from various backgrounds viz. students, teachers, professionals, bird enthusiasts, conservationists, and the general public are involved.

It is committed to educate the public on the value of birds and the relationship between birds and people. It has also prioritized the significance of peoples participation as future stewardship to attain long term conservation goal.

Our staff form the heart of BCN but the lifeline is provided by the invaluable contributions of volunteers and supporters. Both financial and in-kind support is greatly appreciated and we welcome any kind of help that can be offered. For further information please write to:

**Bird Conservation Nepal**  
Post Box 12465, Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Tel 4417805, 4420213, Fax 0097714413884  
Email [bcn@mail.com.np](mailto:bcn@mail.com.np)  
[www.birdlifeneपाल.org](http://www.birdlifeneपाल.org)



**Tiger MOUNTAIN.**

## Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge



Lodge in Royal Bardia National Park. For high altitude birding expeditions, ask Mountain Travel - the pioneers and leaders of Himalayan trekking.

*Tiger Mountain Central Reservations:*

We are honoured to sponsor the publication of Danphe Newsletter for Bird Conservation Nepal.

Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge is the ultimate relaxing retreat just outside Pokhara. Winner of several sustainable tourism awards with delightful, secluded rooms, award winning cuisine and a fully stocked bar; the lodge makes an ideal base for bird watching walks in the surrounding forest and farmland. Our bird list stands at some 135 species positively identified. Culture walks and visits to Pokhara are also easily arranged. All rooms have attached bathrooms and mountain views.

Special rates are available for Nepalis and expatriate residents at the Lodge and at other Tiger Mountain Properties - Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge, Tented Camp and Tharu Lodge in Royal Chitwan National Park and Karnali Jungle

01 436 1500

[reservations@tigermountain.com](mailto:reservations@tigermountain.com)

GPO box 242, Dhapasi, Ring Road, Kathmandu, Nepal

[www.tigermountain.com](http://www.tigermountain.com)

Part of the **Tiger MOUNTAIN.** group of companies.

PUBLICATION OF THIS NEWSLETTER IS KINDLY SPONSORED BY TIGER MOUNTAIN POKHARA LODGE

