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Population Status of Lesser Adjutant in Chitwan National Park, Nepal

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Introduction

Of the nineteen species of storks family (Ciconiidae) worldwide, Lesser Adjutant (*Leptoptilos javanicus*), a colonial tree nesting species, is distributed in India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Laos, Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam, Thailand and Bhutan with a world population about 6500-8000 individuals (BirdLife International 2009). In Nepal it inhabits in the riverbeds, floodplains, paddy fields, swamps, lakes and forest pools of Chitwan and Bardia National Parks and their buffer zones, Suklaphanta, Parsa and Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserves and their buffer zones, Jagadishpur Reservoir, Ghodaghodi Lake Area, Farmlands in Lumbini Area, and Mai Valley, Barandabhar, Nawalparasi, Dang Deukhuri and Uurlabari forests (Baral and Inskipp 2005). It is listed as a Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List (IUCN 2010) and Endangered in the Nepal Red Data Book (Baral and Inskipp 2004) because of its declining

population due to habitat loss and degradation, hunting and disturbances (BirdLife International 2001).

A study aimed to provide population status, habitat preferences and current threats of Lesser Adjutant in central Nepal was carried with nest search and individual count in the paddy field areas in and around the Chitwan National Park (CNP). This paper summarizes population status of this species in CNP.

Study Areas

Chitwan National Park (27°16.56'- 27°42.14' Latitudes and 83°50.23'-84°46.25' Longitudes) was set up in 1973 as Nepal's first National Park. It is situated in south central Nepal in the sub tropical lowlands of the inner Terai of Chitwan, Makawanpur, Parsa and Nawalparasi districts. Roughly 70 percent of park vegetative cover is Sal forest, a moist deciduous vegetation type



Lesser Adjutant in paddy field by Jyotendra Jyu Thakuri

of the Terai region. The remaining vegetation types include grasslands, riverine forests and *Sal* with *Chir* pine. Three major rivers Narayani, Rapti and Reu, and their floodplains; and several lakes and pools are the major water sources of the park.

In recognition of its unique biological resources of outstanding universal value, UNESCO designated CNP as a World Heritage Site in 1984. In 1996, an area of 750 km² surrounding the park was declared a buffer zone, which consists of forests and private lands including cultivated lands. The buffer zone contains a Ramsar Site – Bees Hazari lake within the Barandhabar forests corridor.

recorded in the past but there are no recent records (Baral and Inskipp 2005).

Methods

Preliminary survey of the study area was conducted to find the potential and previously recorded sites. This was done by questioning the park staff, elephant drivers and local people. Field verifications were repeatedly done by visiting those sites using motor vehicles, bicycle, elephants, and sometimes on foot.

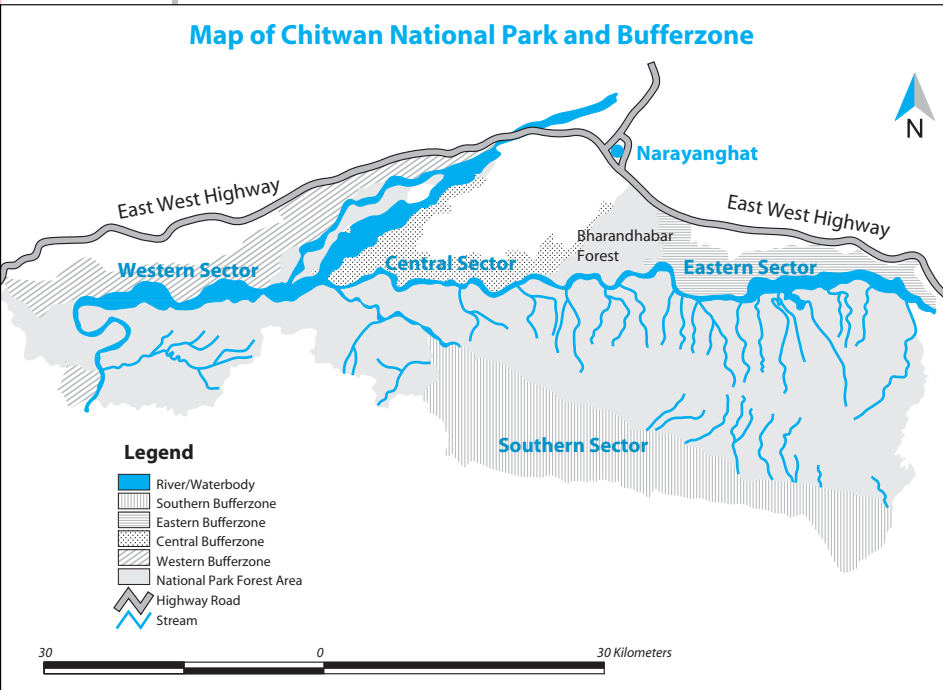
Nests Searching

Nest searches were conducted during January-March 2009 and the fledging birds were counted for three consecutive days in each colony. Care was taken not to disturb the birds. A nest was counted as occupied if the nestlings were seen in the nest and as vacant if otherwise.

Paddy Field Count

Individuals were counted in the paddy fields during the late summer (August-September 2009). The whole buffer zone area was divided into 21 survey units as the buffer zone was divided into 21 users committees. We took care to eliminate the duplicate counts. The enumerators walked along the cart roads/ foot trails to observe the birds. The maximum sighting distance was 100m in both sides from the center of the roads/trails. The individuals were counted for three repeated times deploying two enumerators in each survey units.

Map of Chitwan National Park and Bufferzone



A total of 544 species of birds has been recorded so far including 22 globally threatened species (Baral and Upadhyay 2006, Giri and Choudhary 2008, IUCN 2007). The park contains critically endangered Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis*, Slender-billed Vulture *Gyps tenuirostris*, White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* and Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus*. Endangered Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* is resident species, Lesser Florican *Eupodotis indica* is rare monsoon visitor to grassland and Greater Adjutant *Leptoptilos dubius* is vagrant species. Vulnerable Indian Spotted Eagle *Aquila hastata*, Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*, Gray crowned Prinia *Prinia cinereocapilla*, Jerdon's Babbler *Chrysomma altirostre* and Slender-billed Babbler *Turdoides longirostris* are resident species. Vulnerable Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*, Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*, Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*, Hodgson's Bushchat *Saxicola insignis*, Indian Skimmer *Rynchops albicollis* and Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* are rare visitors in the park. There are no recent records of the last two species. Vulnerable Kashmir Flycatcher *Ficedula subrubra* and Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* are rare passage migrant to open country; the first one is also a restricted range species. Vulnerable Bristled Grassbird *Chaetornis striatus* is a fairly common summer visitor to grasslands. Swamp Francolin *Francolinus gularis* was

Results

We observed the Lesser Adjutant at Rapti, Riu, Dhungre, Khageri, and Narayani rivers; paddy fields; and lakes such as Lami, Tamor and Bees Hazari Tal. But we found that the nesting colonies were restricted to isolated areas inside the Chitwan National Park apart from those at Gundre Khola, which lies in the Bufferzone community forest at Nawalparasi district. No nests were found in the Barandabhar forest.

Nest searching

We found 47 nests in total (with 4 vacant nests) at seven colonies with 2-12 per colony. The largest colony was at Tiger Tops- Tented camp area with 10 occupied (and 2 vacant) nests. Mostly the nests were on the top of the tree about 20m above the ground. All nests were found in Simal *Bombax ceiba*, a large deciduous tree, with 1-5 nests per tree. Total 71-75 nearly fledged nestlings were estimated in all seven colonies (Table 1). Count in the paddy field.

We estimated 228±40 individuals during the late summer in the cultivated lands around CNP (Table 2). Among the 21 survey units, we didn't find the adjutants in the Lother, Daunnevedi, Triveni, Ayodhyapuri and Nirmalthori. The eastern bufferzone of



the park comprised highest number of individuals (76.33 ± 13.49) followed by western (71.67 ± 10.30), central (52.00 ± 10.33) and southern areas (28.00 ± 5.74).

Discussion

Among the 43 active nests in different colonies in and around the Chitwan National Park, if each had a pair of adults tending their nestlings, then the total breeding population should be 86 individuals. We should not overlook the population of sub adults which were not ready to lay the eggs. It is unknown that the age of the birds which were ready to lay their first eggs, but we can assume that the first year chicks were not ready for laying the eggs. The individual counts in the open fields during the summer season included all sub adults and adults including last year's chicks. So the realistic population estimate of all aged birds in CNP was 188 to 268 individuals. There were no nesting colonies outside the park except Gundre Khola at Nawalparasi district, but the paddy fields in summer supported main feeding areas around the park. This showed that the agricultural lands around the national park were equally important as other habitats inside the national park.

Acknowledgements

This project was funded by Nagao Natural Environment Foundation Japan. Chitwan National Park, Bird Education Society and Bird Conservation Nepal made available local and technical support. Ms Carol Inskipp, Ms Ishana Thapa, Dr Hem Sagar Baral and Professor Dr Abhoy Kumar Das provided valuable comments and suggestions. Basant Devkota did very hard works during the paddy field count. We would like to thank Lal Bahadur Bhandary, Santosh Bhagat, Shanta Bahadur Magar and all crew members for their contribution.

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Additional Sightings!



Greater Flamingo by Carl D'Silva

One Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* was recorded on 7 December 2009 at Koshi Barrage (TG and NB). A rare species for Nepal!

One Small Niltava *Niltava macgrigorae* was recorded on 8 December 2009 at Koshi Tappu (TG, BC and NB). A new species for Koshi!

One Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* was recorded on 3 February 2010 at Rapti River, Chitwan (BL, HS, BB, RM, TG, BM, AG and HSB). A new species for Chitwan National Park!

One Short-billed Minivet *Pericrocotus brevirostris* was recorded on 26 February 2010 at Chitwan National Park (HSB). A new species for Chitwan National Park!

TG: Tika Giri; NB: Nick Bray; BC: Badri Chaudhary; BL: Bishnu Lama; HS: Hem Subedi; BB: Basu Bidari; RM: Ramgir Mahato; BM: Bishnu Mahato; AG: Anil Gurung; HSB: Hem Sagar Baral

Compiled by Tika Giri and Hathan Choudhary



Table 1: Colonies of Lesser Adjutant found in Chitwan National Park, 2009

Colony Location	Coordinates	Nesting Tree		Number of Nest			Nestling Observed	
		Number	Species	Active	Vacant	Total	Min	Max
Kachuwani/ Teak Ghari (Between Sauraha and Dumaria), Chitwan	27°33'N 84°27'E	3	Simal (<i>Bombax ceiba</i>)	6		6	11.00	13.00
Nearby the Dumaria Post (Between Dumaria and Jarneli), Chitwan	27°33'N 84°25'E	1		4		4	6.09	7.24
Bahapur Area (Between Dumaria and Jarneli), Chitwan	27°33'N 84°24'E	5		9		9	11.81	14.86
Island Jungle Resort area, Nawalparasi	27°35'N 84°09'E	2		6	1	7	8.00	10.00
Gundri Khola, Nawalparasi	27°33'N 84°06'E	1		2		2	4.09	5.24
Tigertops/Tented Camp area -1, Sukhibhar, Chitwan	27°31'N 84°14'E	2		6	1	7	7.00	9.00
Tigertops/Tented Camp area -2, Sukhibhar, Chitwan	27°32'N 84°14'E	4		10	2	12	18.14	21.19
		18		43	4	47	71.25	75.41

Table 2: Number of Lesser Adjutant during the paddy field count

SN	Buffer Zone	Comprised Survey Units	Comprised VDCs	Population	
				Lower limit	Upper limit
1	Eastern	Lother, Khagendramalli, Budhirapti, Mrigakunja	Manahari, Piple, Bhandara, Kathar, Kumroj, Bachhauri, Ratnanagar	62.84	89.82
2	Central	Kerunga, Patihani, Barandbhar, Kalabanjar, Meghauri	Bharatpur, Patihani, Jagatpur, Sukranagar, Meghauri, Dibyanagar, Gunjnagar	41.67	62.33
3	Western	Sisuwar, Lamichour, Sikhrauli, Nandabhauju, Gosaibaba, Amaltari, Daunne Devi, Triveni	Mukundapur, Amarapuri, Rajahar, Dibyapuri, Pragatinagar, Pithauri, Kawasoti, Argauri, Kumarbarti, Koluwa, Narayani, Prasauni, Nayabelhani, Dumkibas, Triveni	61.37	81.97
4	Southern	Rewa, Bagauda, Panchpandav, Ayodhyapuri, Nirmalstori	Gardi, Baghaurda, Kalyanpur, Ayodhyapuri, Thori, Nirmalbasti	22.26	33.74
			Total	188.14	267.86



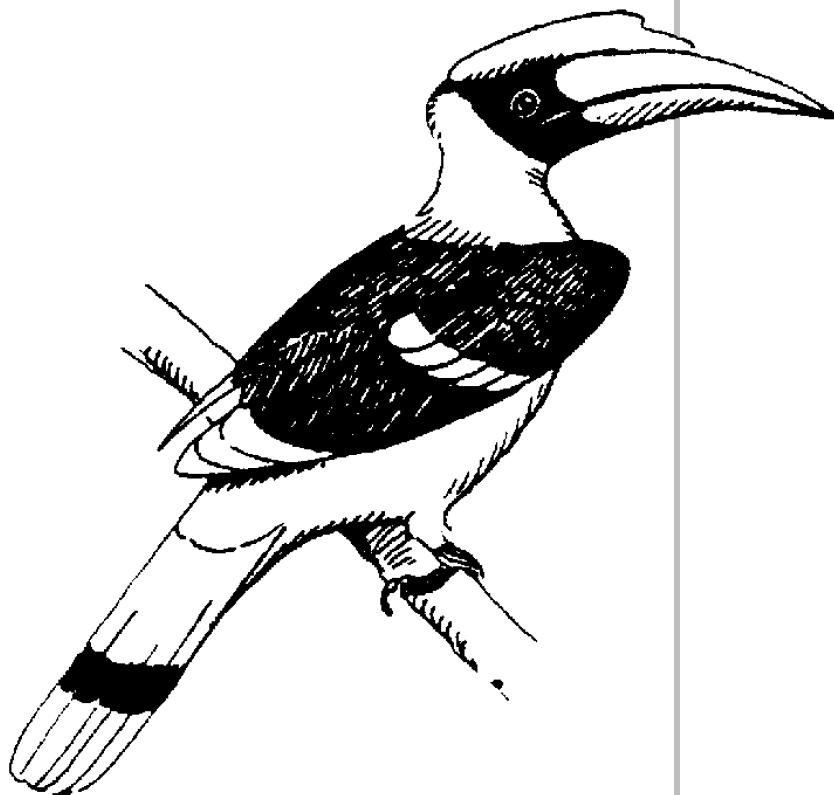
An unusually large flock of Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis* seen in Chitwan National Park

Basu Bidari

On the evening of 21 March 2009 I was on a jeep safari in the western sector of Chitwan National Park for bird watching with keen birders Lars Grzegorz, Todd and Anil Gurung. As we were scanning the riverine forest 5km east of Temple Tiger Jungle Resort, at around 1715hrs I caught sight of hornbills flying in a big flock and coming towards us. When I first saw the birds from distance they looked like Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracosceros malabaricus*. As the bird approached us flying from one tree to another at a height of 30m looked obviously different than the Oriental Pied Hornbill and identification was confirmed as Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis* on following features. We could hear loud flight sound and see their huge size with massive yellow casque and bill. At the closest distance from us we could easily see white tail with black sub-terminal bands, white neck and wing-bars. We followed the birds with our binoculars and visibility was clear. We were very curious to know the number of birds and we started to count. We were able to count 53 Great Hornbill in this flock.

This is the highest number of Great Hornbill recorded so far in the country and in a flock. The Great Hornbill is included under the category of protected birds in National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973 of Government of Nepal. It is listed as globally near-threatened (BirdLife International 2009) and endangered on a national level (Baral and Inskipp 2004). This species has undergone an alarming decline throughout its range due to mainly alteration of habitat (BirdLife International 2001).

Chitwan National Park is situated in south-central Nepal with subtropical lowlands of the inner terai. The major habitats in the park include *Sal* forest, grassland, riverine forest with scattered pools and lakes. The park is famous for birding therefore always remains as one of the dreamlands for bird lovers visiting Nepal.



Greater Hornbill by Mike Parker

More than 565 species of birds have been recorded from Chitwan District (Bird Education Society 2010).

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Conservation status of Wood Snipe *Gallinago nemoricola* in Langtang National Park, Nepal

*Janak Raj Khatiwada, Hathan Chaudhary, Dev Ghimire, **Jyotendra Jyu Thakuri, ***Mukesh Kumar Chalise
and ****Randall Charles Kyes

Introduction

Wood Snipe *Gallinago nemoricola* is listed as vulnerable in the IUCN Red List (IUCN 2008). It breeds locally in the Himalayas of northwest and northeastern India, Nepal, Bhutan, and China in the regions of southeast Tibet, central Sichuan, and perhaps Yunnan (Birdlife International 2001, Grimmett *et al.* 2000). In winter, it occurs at lower altitudes in the Himalayas, as a regular visitor in small numbers to North Vietnam and as a vagrant (or perhaps irregular visitor) to the hills of central and southern India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, north Thailand and Laos (Birdlife International 2001). Historically, it was considered rare and local across much of its range. It appears to have declined in traditional wintering areas in parts of India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand and Laos, from where there have been few recent records. It breeds from April-June in alpine meadows and marshes with scattered low bushes, or in dwarf scrub in barren, boulder-strewn areas, generally between 3000m - 5000m. In winter, it frequents swampy ground in and at the edge of evergreen forest and marshy grassland and scrub, below 3000m, sometimes down to lowland plains (<100 m). Populations are partially migratory, with some birds traveling from the Himalayas to south India (Birdlife International 2001). In Nepal, six species of snipes have been recorded – the Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, Solitary Snipe *Gallinago solitaria*, Wood Snipe (*Gallinago nemoricola*), Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura*, Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimeus*, and Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula bengalensis* (Grimmett *et al.* 2000). With regard to Wood Snipe populations in Nepal, the information is limited. This species is known to occur from the eastern border in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area to Shey-Phoksundo National Park in western Nepal (Birdlife International 2001). The presence of the species in the Gosainnkunda area of Langtang National Park was confirmed over 15 years ago by Buckton and Morris, 1993. Hence this study was carried out during March-July 2007 to assess the conservation status and distribution of the Wood Snipe, and identify the existing threats to their existence in the area.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Langtang National Park (hereafter, Langtang NP) which lies in the central Himalayan region of Nepal bordering the Tibetan Autonomous region of China (Fig.). It is the second largest mountain national park of Nepal, covering 1710 sq. km. and extending over three districts, Rasuwa, Nuwakot, and Sindhupalchowk (Khatiwada 2004). The primary study area comprised two major valleys of the park, i.e.

Kyangjing and Gosainkunda Lake Complex located at the altitude of 3900m and 4300m respectively (see Fig.). Gosainkunda Lake has been recently designated as a Ramsar site of international importance (Kafle 2008). This treeless region, with shrub land interspersed by rocky slopes and alpine pasture, and a complex of at least 15 lakes and ponds at 4054m-4620m altitude, provides water for the Trishuli tributary of the Narayani River system.

The National Park comprises rocks and ice (60.7%), forests (29.9%), grassland (4.9%), shrubland (2.8%) and cultivation (1.7%) (Baral and Inskipp 2004). A wide variety of habitats exist within the park; Tropical forest of *Sal Shorea robusta*, subtropical forest of *Schima wallichii/Castanopsis indica*, Chir Pine *Pinus roxburghii*, lower temperate forests of *Quercus lanata*, *Q. lamellosa* and *Pinus wallichiana* and upper temperate forests of *Q. semecarpifolia* (often with *Tsuga dumosa*) cover. Subalpine forests are of *Abies spectabilis*, *Betula utilis*, *Tsuga dumosa*, *Larix* spp., *Rhododendron* spp., and *Juniperus* spp. (Green 1993). Hemlock forests characterise the riparian floodplains along the river valley of the Langtang Khola. Higher up, Silver Fir and Blue Pine form large expanses of forests in places (Baral and Inskipp 2004). There are some remarkable contrasts in vegetation patterns in Langtang valley according to the aspect of slopes. The vegetation of the south facing slopes consists of alpine pastures with sparse vegetation, patches of juniper, isolated pine trees on grassy slopes, and rock-and-grass slopes from Ghodatabela (3040m). On north-facing slopes, the area of forested land extends up to 4300m at Langsisa Kharka. The Langtang NP is important for number of threatened mammals and (e.g. Musk Deer *Moschus chrysogastor*, Snow Leopard *Uncia*

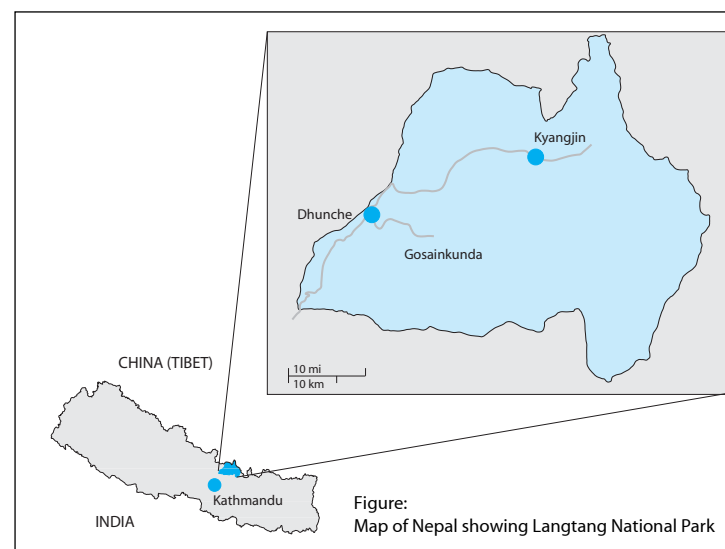


Figure:
Map of Nepal showing Langtang National Park



uncia, Red Panda *Ailurus fulgens*, Serow *Capricornis sumatraensis*, Assamese Macaque *Macaca assamensis*, Himalayan Black Bear *Selenarctos thibetanus* and Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* and birds (e.g. Wood Snipe *Gallinago nematicola*, Satyr Tragopan *Tragopan satyra* and Yellow-rumped Honeyguide *Indicator xanthonotus*).

Methods

The study was conducted between March and June 2007 comprising three field sessions: 13-23 March; 20-30 April; and 21-29 June 2007. Observations were conducted using the Point Count Method at designated locations/points in the Kyanjing and Gosainkunda lake system (hereafter Gosainkunda). These sites were chosen based on published articles and information gathered from ornithologists, birdwatchers and local people. At each point, the observers waited for at least 30 minutes for species activities. The observations were carried out from 06h00 to 18h00. Eight observational stations were established, two in Kyanjing and six in the Gosainkunda. The birds' locations, feeding sites and roosting sites were all surveyed. Whenever the species was sighted, the time, bird's activity, elevation, vegetation type and other topographic features were noted. Vocalization of the Wood Snipe and also Solitary Snipe were identified as using Inskipp (1996). Key informants and informal interviews with local residents and herders were carried out to supplement the information on the conservation status of the species in the area.

Results and Discussion

Status and distribution

The survey covered two different valley of Langtang NP in five observation points (Table). Most of the wood snipes were sighted at the altitude of 390-4520m (eight individuals), mostly in marshy grassland with patchy rhododendron scrub. This is a much greater number than previously recorded in Langtang NP (Buckton and Morris 1993) or indeed elsewhere in Nepal where previous records have been limited to sightings of one or two individuals. The highest concentration of the species (seven individual) were recorded around Gosainkunda Lake system (Lauribinyak, Naukunda, Agnikunda and Phedi) and single individual was recorded from the Kyanjin area of way to Ganjala Pass (across the Langtang Khola).

Table: Details of Wood Snipe observation at Langtang National Park, 2007

Place	Location (Latitude/Longitude)	Altitude (meter)	Sighting (N)	Habitat type
Kyanjing	N28°12.480' / E85°33.810'	3940	1	Marshy place with rhododendron scrub
Lauribinyak	N28°05.019' / E85°22.994'	4020	2	Rhododendron scrub
Naukunda	N28°04.422' / E85°24.065'	4240	2	Marshy lake with gravel substratum
Agnikunda	N28°04.408' / E85°25.796'	4520	2	Marshy lake with gravel substratum
Phedi	N28°04.019' E85°26.527'	4330	1	marshy ground

Most of the species (100%) were recorded from the Marshy areas with rhododendron scrub. The rhododendron scrub was found to be the major vegetation type in Gosainkunda with marshy ground which is considered as a prime breeding site for the Wood Snipe (Priemé and Øksnebjerg 1994 cited in BirdLife International 2001, and Inskipp and Inskipp 1991). Around Gosainkunda (Ghopte), Buckton and Morris (1993) previously documented the vocalization and display of a pair of Wood Snipe. However the Gosainkunda area was found to be heavily affected by livestock grazing during the months of July to September. Similarly, the Kyanjing area was also found to be heavily disturbed by grazing and deforestation. Wood Snipes were found to be sparsely distributed in the survey valleys. The maximum concentration observed (five birds) was found around the high altitude lake system above 4200m. The species is known to breed from April to June in alpine meadows and marshes with scattered low bushes, or in dwarf scrub in barren, boulder strewn areas, generally between 3,000 and 5,000 m (Inskipp 1996).

Conservation Issues

Animal husbandry is the main source of economy for local people in the Langtang valley (Khatiwada 2004). According to them, seasonal grazing can enhance the quality of pastureland. Therefore, locals maintain seasonal grazing in different pastures. Livestock movement in the area is between 3000-5000 m during the months of May-September (Yonzon and Hunter 1991). The breeding grounds of snipes are therefore the major grazing places for livestock. Overstocking of livestock, habitat destruction and disturbance are likely to be major threats to the species in the area. Because of the nature of pasture management, animals are passing through the valley from April to June as they move up to alpine pastures. The number of days spent in each pasture varies as this depends on availability of grass, weather and religious festivals.

Similarly, tourism is considered another likely threat to the species. Panoramic natural scenery combined with an exotic cultural heritage has become Nepal's biggest assets in this era of widespread international tourism. Trekking in Langtang National Park is popular with tourists. The park receives about 8,000 visitors per year. With the advent of the motorable road to Dhunche and Syabrubensi, Langtang National Park has become the most accessible trek in the Himalayas (Gurung 1998). More than 59 hotels and tea houses are present along the trail from



Syabrubensi to the Kyanjing Gumba. In the entire Langtang valley, local people run 44 lodges, 13 tea houses, camping sites and restaurants. This indicates that tourism has a positive impact on local business in the area by the creation of various employment opportunities for the local people and providing substantial contributions in improving the local economy. It has been reported that more than 100 children from the Langtang NP have been studying in Kathmandu resulting from tourist donations.

Apart from the socio-economic changes, increased tourism also modifies the natural and manmade physical environment of the valley. The resulting habitat degradation and disturbance are likely to threaten the Wood Snipe, and as such, the long-term viability of the species in Langtang seems uncertain. Uncontrolled grazing is the main reason of the loss of breeding grounds of the species thus affecting its breeding success. Education and awareness programme in parallel with alternative income generating activities is urgently needed to engage the local community in safe guarding this globally threatened species. Alternative income generating activities would help to decrease the livestock rearing system thus reducing the livestock pressure in the breeding grounds of the Wood Snipe.

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News

Membership

Prakash Gurung has joined BCN as a Life Member. He has been the headmaster of Himalaya Milan High School in Kaski district since last 15 years. Under his leadership, the school has been ranked as one of the best government-run schools and has won several awards.

Ram Kumar Aryal has joined BCN as a Life Member. He is the Administrative Officer of National Trust for Nature Conservation/Biodiversity Conservation Centre at Sauraha, Chitwan. He is also associated with the management of Rhino Lodge and Hotel and promotes birdwatching tourism in Chitwan.

Dr. Ghana Shyam Gurung has joined BCN as a Life Member. He is the Conservation Programme Director of WWF Nepal. He is actively involved in conservation policy and programmes in Nepal. Dr. Gurung has also designed and implemented the Ghalekharka-Sikles ecotourism programme in the Annapurna Conservation Area.

Angphuri Sherpa has joined BCN as a Life Member. He is the National Coordinator of Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund / WWF Nepal. Trained in New Zealand in parks, recreation and tourism, he brings extensive practical conservation experience from the Annapurna Conservation Area.

Dr. Hum Gurung, Chief Executive Officer of BCN, has joined BCN as a Life Member. He has been championing the cause of bird tourism in Nepal. As the CEO, he is advancing the idea of developing birdwatching as a strong entity of BCN.

Deependra Joshi, former Executive Officer of BCN has become Life Member of BCN. In recent years, he has developed a strong niche on bird conservation and has been advocating and networking on building strong partnership for IBA conservation.

Sushma Shrestha, Administrative Officer of BCN has joined as a Life Member. She has been serving the organisation since last two years. Ms. Shrestha has previously worked in Plan International Nepal at Biratnagar and is interested in birdwatching.

Ishana Thapa, Conservation Officer of BCN has joined as a Life Member. She has been working on bird conservation field for nearly a decade. She brings with her immense knowledge on conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

Dr. Hira Pradhan has joined BCN as a Life Member. He is a leprosy specialist working in the leprosy hospital in Kathmandu. In recent years, he has developed an interest on bird conservation.

Gyan Chandra Dugar, Managing Director of Hulas Metal Craft

Ltd. has joined BCN as a Life Member. He is one of the famous industrialists of Nepal and has keen interest in birds.

Keshab Paudyal has joined BCN as a Life Member. He is the Director of Peak Promotion Pvt. Ltd.

Nature-treks.com has joined BCN as the Corporate Member. The company is supporting bird conservation by promoting bird ecotourism in Nepal.

Caharalai Char

Charalai char is a BCN initiative to save Nepal's endangered birds. Even a small contribution can make a big difference and will enable us to continue working to save birds. We have been collecting NRs 4 from various events and school programs. BCN has so far collected NRs 28,097 from this initiative.

New Pin Badges

Pin badges of three different birds Spiny Babbler, Danphe and Vulture have been produced. These are available at BCN for purchase. Each pin badges cost NRs 100.

27th Annual General Meeting

BCN organised its 27th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Kathmandu on 19 December, 2009. The AGM was attended by government officials, patrons, advisors, members, supporters of BCN and representatives from various conservation organisations. President of BCN, Mr. Shree Ram Subedi chaired the meeting.



On the occasion, Chief Guest Mr. Gopal Prasad Upadhyay, Director General of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, handed over the Jatayu scholarship certificates to three M.Sc. students from the Tribhuvan University. The scholarship carries a purse of 25,000 rupees. The scholarship winners were Dikpal Krishna Karmacharya, Hemanta Dhakal and Krishna Bhusal for undertaking research on the behavioural patterns of vultures, its habitats and the management and



conservation initiatives of the Jayatu Restaurants of Nepal.

On the occasion, Dr. Hum B. Gurung, Chief Executive Officer of BCN, presented the annual progress and future plans of BCN and Mr. Yubraj Basnet, Treasurer of BCN Executive Council, presented the financial report of FY 2008/2009.

Altogether, over 90 BCN members and representatives of various organizations attended the AGM.

World Wetlands Day Celebration

BCN participated in the World Wetlands Day Celebration with other conservation partners on 2 February 2010. A large hoarding board has been placed at Babar Mahal with the World Wetlands Day 2010 message and slogan. A national workshop was organised at the Nepal Tourism Board hall. Vulture Conservation Action Plan and Information board on "Birds of Jagdishpur" were released on the same occasion by Honourable Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation, Mr. Deepak Bohara and Director General of Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Mr Gopal Prasad Upadhyay.



Vulture Conservation Action Plan Launched

The Vulture Conservation Action Plan for Nepal 2009-2013 was approved by the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation and launched officially by the Hon. Minister Deepak Bohara on the occasion of World Wetland Day 2 February, 2010. Bird Conservation Nepal along with National Trust for Nature Conservation played key roles to support the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation in preparing this action plan with support from RSPB and ZSL.

Vulture Safe Zone in Pokhara and Kailali

After more than a year of effort, Ghachowk, just a few kilometers north of Pokhara was selected as the location for establishment of safe feeding site for vultures. A management committee has been formed and they are already working to set up the infrastructure. The project will be funded jointly by the RSPB/ Darwin Initiative, Annapurna Conservation Area Project/ NTNC, International Trust for Nature Conservation (ITNC) and Himalayan Raptor Rescue. Similarly, Samajji Community Forest, Khutiya has been selected as site for vulture safe zone in Kailali. It is ideally located close to existing vulture colonies, both being monitored by BCN through local partners for the last two years.

This project is funded by RSPB and Darwin Initiative and will be implemented in collaboration with a local NGO named EARTH. This brings the total number of vulture safe zones in Nepal to six.

Vulture Conservation and Management Training

This training was provided to develop local resource persons at district and community level. Representatives from district forest office, district livestock service office, Nepal para veterinary and livestock association, department of national parks and wildlife conservation, conservation organizations from ten districts of Nepal along with Jatayu Scholarship winners and new project staff were trained in two trainings held at Butwal and Thakurdwara/Bardiya. The training was supported by CEPF, RSPB, Darwin Initiative, ZSL and NBPT.

Climate Change Workshop

BCN organised a national level workshop on 'climate change impacts on the conservation of birds' at Hotel Ambassador, Lazimpat on 25 January 2010. A total of 15 participants representing WWF-Nepal, The Mountain Institute, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Himalayan Nature and Global Primate Network-Nepal (GPN-Nepal) attended the workshop. The main objective of the workshop was to introduce about the BirdLife-McArthur climate change project, share its progress and seek suggestions on the technical aspects of the project.

On the occasion, Chief Executive Officer of BCN, Dr. Hum Gurung welcomed all the participants. Senior Technical Advisor of Himalayan Nature Dr. Hem Sagar Baral shared views about the relevance of the project. Dr. Bishnu Bhandari of ICIMOD delivered the presentation on the impact of climate change on the high altitude wetlands in Nepal.

Mitra Pandey, Climate Change Project Officer of BCN introduced the Important Bird Areas (IBAs) of eastern Nepal and project bird species. He also provided introduction to the Birdlife/RSPB worldbirds website. The workshop also discussed about the bird data sources for the project along with mapping the location of birds in different localities by the ornithologists.



Environmental Education at Bagmati Nature Park

Two informative flex boards have been placed at strategic location of the Park. The information board includes pictures of 36 different bird species that are found at BNP at different seasons. Conservation message for bird conservation has also been placed. The information board has been a great attraction of the park. Most of the visitors are found to be viewing the board and increasing their knowledge on birds of BNP. Around 500 visitors have already inquired about detail information of the bird species pictured in the board and also shown great interest in bird watching. They also showed keen interest on supporting our activities and conserving the beauty of the park.

Managing wetlands for sustainable livelihood at Koshi

A three-year Darwin Initiative project has been successfully completed. A new MoU has also been signed with WWT to sustain the project activities at a small scale and look for new funding opportunities.

Jagdishpur Wetland Conservation

A district level workshop on preparation of Jagdishpur Reservoir management plan was organized at DDC hall, Taulihawa on 9 January 2010. The main objective of the workshop was to take the inputs and suggestions of local communities, local government officials, politicians, media persons, CBO representatives and other relevant stakeholders for drafting management plan. The workshop was also attended by senior government officials from DNPWC and Dol as being the government line agencies.



Organic farming and compost making training was organised for the local farmers of Jagdishpur areas from 18-22 January 2010 at Village Development Committee hall of Niglihawa. Altogether 26 locals participated in the training. The training has been beneficial in developing knowledge and skills of local farmers in best utilization of the compost fertilizer in their farming practice thus supporting biodiversity conservation.



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.

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नेपाल पंखी संरक्षण संघ

**Bird
Conservation
Nepal**

Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) is the largest and oldest civil society organisation 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, 20 Patrons, 162 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.

BCN 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 national 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:

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