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Civil societies conserving Mai Valley and Kanchenjunga Conservation Area: Key Biodiversity Areas in the eastern Nepal

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Mai Valley KBA

The Mai Valley forests lie in the northeastern part of the country south of the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area. Most of the Mai watershed falls entirely within Ilam district in Mechi Zone, extending from the confluence with the Kankai River at 70 m in the tropical zone to the Darjeeling border at 3050 m in the subalpine zone. Ilam (population 13,200), the main town in the district lies in the valley at 1210 m; the local economy focuses on tea and cardamom plantations. Delineating the area of remaining forests is difficult because of widespread forest losses, and forest degradation and fragmentation. Forests in the upper Mai valley lie mainly in the lower and upper temperate zones. Lower Mai valley forests comprise tropical and subtropical forests. They include a small but important remnant of tropical evergreen forest; a forest type that is currently not represented in the existing network of Nepal's protected area. Subtropical semi-evergreen forests also occur. The most important forests for birds are the moist broadleaved oak *Quercus* and mixed broadleaved forests comprising *Lithocarpus* spp., *Castanopsis* spp. and *Rhododendron* spp.

with a bamboo understorey and the tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen forests.

The high total of around 300 species has been recorded for the whole of the Mai watershed, including over 200 species in the upper valley (Inskipp 1989a, Halliday and McKnight 1990, 1993, Choudhary 1998). A recent bird survey carried by BCN as part of CEPF project has recorded 252 species. Recently, a CEPF funded project has recorded 14 new plant species to Nepal from the Mai Valley (CEPF 2008). According to them the area still needs further explorations. The forests are regarded to be important for populations of the following restricted-range species: Rufous-throated Wren Babbler *Spelaeornis caudatus*, Spiny Babbler *Turdoides nipalensis* and Hoary-throated Barwing *Actinodura nipalensis* (Baral and Inskipp 2005). Several species recorded in the small remnant of tropical evergreen forest are either very rare in Nepal e.g. Asian Fairy Bluebird *Irena puella* or have only been found in this locality e.g. Pale-headed Woodpecker *Gecinulus grantia* (Baral and Inskipp 2004). Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus* and White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* are reported

to breed at the edge of the forests. Other important bird species include Satyr Tragopan and Lesser Kestrel. The forests also hold important nationally threatened species like Blue-eared Barbet *Megalaima australis*, Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*, Great Thick-knee *Burhinus recurvirostris*, Yellow-vented Warbler *Phylloscopus cantator*, White-throated Bulbul *Alophoixus flaveolus*, Ruby-cheeked Sunbird *Anthreptes singalensis*. Up to at least the mid 1990s the area had large areas of temperate forest and a considerable area of tropical and subtropical moist forest that were known to support significant populations of characteristic species of the Sino-Himalayan Temperate Forest biome



Kanchenjunga Conservation Area

Photo: Jyotendra Thakuri



and the Sino-Himalayan Subtropical Forest and Indo-Chinese Tropical Moist Forest biomes respectively (Baral and Inskipp 2005).

A small number of mammal species have been recorded. These includes globally threatened Assam Macaque *Macaca assamensis* and Red Panda *Ailurus fulgens*, Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus*, Common Leopard *Panthera pardus*, Golden Jackal *Canis aureus*, Leopard Cat *Prionailurus bengalensis*, Hanuman Langur *Semnopithecus entellus*, Black Giant Squirrel *Ratufa bicolor*, Indian Muntjac *Muntiacus muntjak*, Yellow-throated Marten *Martes flavigula*, and Crab-eating Mongoose *Herpestes urva*.

Kanchenjunga Conservation Area KBA

Kanchenjunga Conservation Area lies at the extreme northeastern corner of Nepal. It was designated in 1997 and is the newest of Nepal's protected areas. The Conservation Area supports many species of flora and fauna that are characteristic of the eastern Himalaya. The Qomolangma National Nature Reserve of China lies to the north and the Kanchenjunga National Park in Sikkim in India to the east.

The Conservation Area comprises rocks and ice (64 per cent), forests (16.1 per cent), shrubland (10.1 per cent), grassland (9.2 per cent), agricultural land (0.5 per cent) and lake and landslide (0.1 per cent) (KCAP 2003 based on topo map 1978). Mount Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world (8586m), lies within the Area. There are four main river valleys: the Simbua Khola and the Ghunsa, Kabeli and Tamur. The vegetation ranges from subtropical to alpine. Subtropical vegetation comprises moist broadleaved forests of mixed *Schima wallichii*, *Engelhardtia spicata* etc, *Schima wallichii/Castanopsis tribuloides* and *C. tribuloides/C. hystrix*. In the temperate zone there are moist broadleaved forests of oak/laurel dominated by *Quercus glauca*, *Q. lamellosa* and *C. tribuloides* etc, *Q. lamellosa* forests, *Q. semecarpifolia* forests and mixed broadleaved/coniferous forests of *Q. semecarpifolia/Tsuga dumosa/Abies spectabilis/Betula utilis/Rhododendron arboreum* etc. The subalpine zone has a wide range of forest types: *Tsuga dumosa/Abies spectabilis* forest, *Abies spectabilis* forest, *Larix griffithiana* forest, *Juniperus indica* forest, *Rhododendron* forests and *Betula* forest. Vegetation in the alpine zone consists of scrub and meadows (Rastogi et al. 1997).

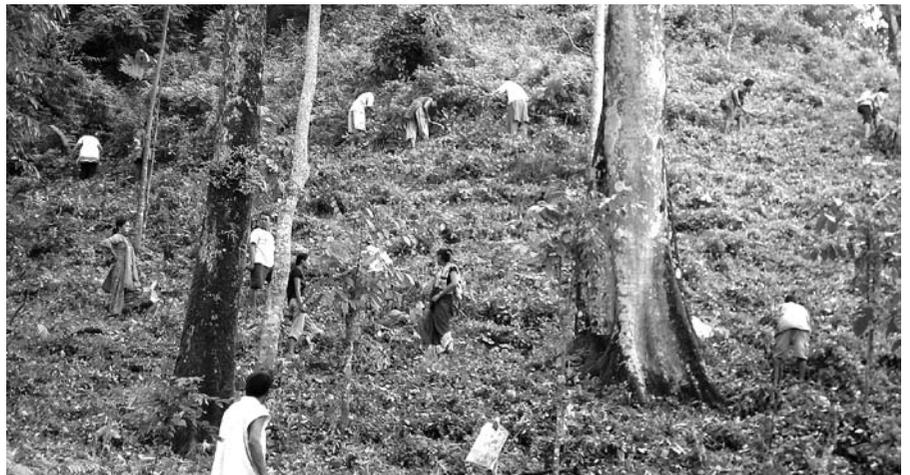
As many as 279 bird species have been recorded in the Conservation Area (Thapa and Karki 2004). CEPF funded BCN project has now revised the list and the bird total for Kanchenjunga now stands to 330 species (Inskipp et al.

2008). The recent survey by BCN alone has reliably added 17 bird species new to the area. In spite of these surveys, the status of many bird species in the Area is still largely unknown. Considering the Area's location and the high quality of extensive remaining forests it is likely to be important for many east Himalayan species, including several species from the East Himalayan Endemic Bird Area. There are large temperate forest and alpine zone areas that are likely to support significant populations of characteristic species of the Sino-Himalayan Temperate Forest and Eurasian High Montane biomes. A recent study has pointed out that a total of 844 species of flora has been found in the area (KCAMC 2003).

Other wildlife include the globally threatened mammals Assam Macaque *Macaca assamensis*, Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus*, Snow Leopard *Uncia uncia*, and Red Panda *Ailurus fulgens*. Himalayan Musk Deer *Moschus chrysogaster* and Serow *Capricornis sumatraensis* have been also recorded here.

Conservation issues in Mai Valley and KCA

Mai valley forests are unprotected. They suffer from severe



Plantation program by SSG at lower Mai valley supported by BCN

fragmentation and degradation through over-exploitation for fuelwood, fodder and bamboo and overgrazing by livestock (Inskipp 1989a, Halliday and McKnight 1990, 1993). Illegal logging is also taking place. Settlements of refugees from Bhutan have added to the already high pressure on forests. The forest areas are not being effectively managed although some forests are handed back to local people as community forests. It is likely that all forests will disappear from here within a decade if the forest destruction continues at the same rate. Alternative energy and poverty alleviation programmes together with conservation awareness are urgently needed in the area.

Local people are dependent upon forests to meet fuel wood, fodder, construction and heating needs throughout the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area. The expanding human population may result in degradation of forest resources,



Snow Partridge *Lerwa lerwa*

Photo: Jyotendra Thakuri

especially in high altitude areas that are particularly vulnerable. Slash-and-burn agriculture is common, the time span between cropping has declined significantly, resulting in decreased agricultural productivity, and incursion into forests and other wildlife habitats has increased. These shifting cultivation practices have been found to be the main factor in the depletion of biodiversity. Human encroachment is particularly high in the middle hills where the prime forest area is being converted into cultivable land. Overgrazing and associated soil erosion are additional threats. Hunting pressure by local people and government employees was reported to be high, however this seems to have reduced significantly after the declaration of the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area in 1997.

Conservation awareness amongst local people was low but after the implementation of the project this has been raised significantly (KCAP 2003). Relatively few trekking tourists have visited the Area to date and only agency-organised trekking groups are allowed. However the major form of pollution in the Area is the rubbish produced by trekking and expedition groups. In 1998, 3000 kg of rubbish was collected from the base camps of Kanchenjunga and Kumbakarna and camping sites at Rhonak and Khambachen, and properly disposed of as part of the WWF Nepal Program in the Area. Village residents are also actively involved in periodic village clean-up campaigns (WWF Nepal Program undated b).

The WWF Nepal Program recently started an Integrated Conservation and Development Program in the Conservation Area from 1997. The aims include increasing community awareness in natural resource conservation and management, promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, empowering local women for participation in conservation and development, improving tourism infrastructure, raising the socio-economic status of local communities and promoting a regional approach (Nepal, China and India) for the conservation of the Kanchenjunga Mountain System. Work is underway and projects include reforestation, agroforestry, exploring

and promoting additional income generation, conducting non-formal education and extension programmes, supporting infrastructure development and completing the construction of the Conservation Area headquarters (WWF Nepal 2000a,b).

BCN's involvement in the area

BCN has a long history of involvement in the conservation of especially the Mai Valley and Tamur Valley KBAs. In recent times, first few surveys by the BirdLife International (former International Council for Bird Preservation—ICBP) in the 80s and early 1990s were accompanied by the members of Bird Conservation Nepal. As a result of the surveys and expedition two important documents were produced; *Nepal's Forest Birds: their status and conservation* (Inskipp 1989) and *An investigation of the status and conservation of forest birds in the Mai and Tamur valleys in eastern Nepal* (Halliday and McKnight 1990). Follow up survey in the area continued till the late 1990s in some forms especially to promote nature-based tourism but was abandoned when insurgency grew and situation became unfavourable for work and visits. A bird survey was carried in lower Mai valley in 2006 with a total record of 152 bird species (Basnet 2006). Initially proposed as two IBAs, now both the Mai Valley IBAs are lumped into one to make it practical for management purpose. The Mai Valley IBA is spread into Jhapa, Ilam and southeastern part of Panchthar districts (Baral and Inskipp 2005, this project).

Compared to Mai Valley, BCN's involvement in the KCA is a recent one. However with WWF, BCN has already produced a bird identification guide especially targeted to KCA in 2004 (Thapa and Karki 2004). The book has been quite popular and has been able to give some positive impact for the conservation of the bird species in the area.

Because both are identified as IBAs by BirdLife International, BCN has a long term interest to continue working with local conservation groups to safeguard birds and biodiversity in the area (Baral and Inskipp 2005).

CEPF project concept and objectives

Strategic Direction 3 in the Ecosystem Profile for the Eastern Himalayas identifies a need to "build capacity within local, grassroots-level communities to manage natural resources at levels that can sustain biodiversity and enable conservation, while also providing livelihoods" (CEPF 2005). In Nepal, this need is particularly acute, given the rapid population growth and high levels of dependence on forest products are driving unsustainable exploitation of natural resources in many rural areas, with resultant impacts on biodiversity and local livelihoods, and that the country has few examples of successful community-based conservation initiatives relative to other parts of the Eastern Himalayas Region (CEPF 2006).

More than half of Nepal's Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) - called Site Outcomes in the Ecosystem Profile - lie outside of formally protected areas, while several KBAs that are designated as protected areas are not under effective





conservation management (Baral and Inskipp 2005). These 'under-protected' KBAs are in particular need of conservation action. However, as the Ecosystem Profile recognises, "many civil society organisations and government agencies lack financial, technical and institutional capacity to co-manage high biodiversity areas outside formally protected areas" (CEPF 2005). There is, therefore, a need for mechanisms that enable grassroots civil society to engage in the conservation of these sites. Even at formally protected KBAs, there is often a need for greater collaboration between civil society and management authorities. In particular, many of Nepal's globally threatened bird species, especially those dependent on grassland habitats, are threatened by incompatible management regimes, geared towards the conservation of large mammal species (Baral 2001). The Ecosystem Profile recognises the need to develop partnerships among civil society organisations working at different levels, to share lessons learned, replicate good practice, and channel data collected by grassroots groups into advocacy by national-level NGOs (CEPF 2005).

The need for this project was the outcome of on-going dialogues between Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) and its conservation partners in government and civil society, informed by the results of BCN's conservation research and lessons learned from its site conservation actions. The project design stems from a programme development workshop held at Kaziranga National Park, Assam, in June 2004. This workshop was attended by senior staff from BCN and Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS-the BirdLife in India), and facilitated by BirdLife International and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the BirdLife in the UK. The workshop resulted in a joint five-year programme of work on site-based bird conservation in the Eastern Himalayas. The project is a key component of this programme in Nepal, and addresses four of the six results from the programme log frame designed during the workshop.

The main objectives of the project are:

- To develop civil society networks to conserve Key Biodiversity Areas in Nepal, focusing on the Kanchenjunga-Singalila Complex
- To build local capacity (financial, technical and institutional)
- To build a national network of organizations
- To strengthen of grassroots conservation groups
- To develop Important Bird Areas monitoring approach for Nepal

Project achievements –Focus on civil societies

Recognising the need to engage grassroots civil society (i.e. local communities and local conservation groups, LCGs) in KBA conservation, the project has catalysed the development of civil society networks to manage, monitor and mitigate threats at globally important sites for biodiversity conservation in Nepal. For the first time in Nepal, this concept was initiated through piloting innovative, local and sustainable approaches

to site conservation at selected KBAs. These approaches include strengthening of LCGs comprising community members with a shared commitment to understanding, managing, monitoring and mitigating threats to biodiversity at local KBAs. These groups - termed 'Site Support Groups' or SSGs - have been assisted to identify and promote conservation solutions that sustain biodiversity while meeting the livelihood needs of rural communities. For example, all the SSGs have been provided with 'micro-grants' for grassroots conservation actions, such as awareness-raising campaigns or demonstration models of natural-resource-use practices compatible with conservation objectives. In addition, the project has helped build grassroots capacity to monitor, identify and address threats to biodiversity arising from unsustainable land-use and resource-use practices. This has been achieved through developing training programmes for low-cost, sustainable site-level monitoring, and piloting them with selected SSGs and forest user groups (FUGs).



Biodiversity Conservation Education Training, Phidim

The project has also helped leverage partnerships between civil society and the management authorities of selected KBAs, in order to promote improvements to management regimes to make them more consistent with the conservation of globally threatened bird species and overall habitats. These partnerships have been vital to ensure that the technical expertise and experience of civil society groups is brought to bear in managing a KBA, and contribute to the maturation of conservation policy in the country at a time when the range and intensity of threats are increasing.

In order to maximise the impact and sustainability of these various site-level conservation actions, the project has been working to strengthen civil society networks at three levels. At the national level, the project has established the 'Nepalese Bird Conservation Network (NBCN)', a network of SSGs, local NGOs and committed individuals, brought together around a shared agenda of KBA conservation throughout the country. At the regional and international levels, the project has been working to strengthen mutually supportive partnerships between BCN and other NGOs in the BirdLife Partnership. These links once fully functional will assist BCN to sustain and replicate the innovative approaches to site conservation learnt from this project.



BCN's future strategy for conservation of these KBAs

While important achievements have been made to conserve the KBAs within Kanchenjunga-Singalila Biological Complex, there is more to do. Delineating KBA boundary with differentiation of old growth mature forests, plantation forests, private forests (with or without agroforestry practiced) and settlement area is urgently needed. Although designated as corridor, study into connectivity of remaining habitats for movement of wildlife especially the north-south movement have to be conducted. While many birds may be able to cope with fragmented patches of forests, there are several others that may be seriously affected because of patchiness of habitat. Other vertebrates and invertebrates and flora may also demand some form of connectivity to the habitat. Present study has revealed an alarming situation on forest fragmentation, degradation and loss of original forest cover, and this issue needs to be understood and addressed.

Besides, as most KBAs have settlement within it, there is a need of suitable approach of conservation on human dominated landscapes. Livelihoods, education and awareness are some of the aspects that BCN needs to tackle through future projects. Expansion of NBCN, more strengthening of SSGs, regular monitoring of IBAs and climate change studies are the key areas where BCN will put immediate focus.

Conclusion

The corridor's importance for the conservation of globally threatened species and the maintenance of ecological processes, plus the opportunities it provides for site conservation action outside of formally protected areas has been a great experience for BCN. The experience learned from here will be utilised by BCN in managing and working with other KBAs elsewhere in the country and shared with other BirdLife partners to manage thousands of KBAs identified by BirdLife



Field practice for SSGs on Participatory biodiversity monitoring, Phidim

International all over the world. In Asia alone over 2300 IBAs/KBAs have been recognised which represents nearly 8% of Asia's land (BirdLife International 2004). We will continue

Tune in to

Panchhi Sansar

on **IMAGE FM 97.9**
at **7.45 am**

**Second and Fourth Saturday
of Nepali Month**



to acknowledge the role that CEPF has played in promoting IBAs as KBAs, and look forward to receive similar support and advice for other KBAs of Nepal.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost we would like to thank Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) for giving us the opportunity to work for conservation of the KBAs within Kanchenjunga-Singalila Biological Complex. We would in particular like to thank Mr Anghuri Sherpa, CEPF National Coordinator for Nepal, Dr Sarala Khaling, CEPF Regional Coordinator for Eastern Himalayas, Ms Nina Marshal, CEPF Grant Director, and Dr Jorgen Thomsen, CEPF Executive Director for their advice and support. Dr Khaling and Mr Sherpa based at WWF Nepal office have provided us with their valuable guidance to execute the project.

We would like to thank Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), BirdLife in the UK and BirdLife International in Indochina office for their support and help before the project began and their continued support, especially of Steve Parr during the conceptual phase, Jack Tordoff and Ian Barber from the very beginning of the project.

We owe much gratitude to Carol Inskipp for her tireless efforts and interest for conservation of Nepal's birds and her help to BCN in many ways. We would like to thank Dev Ghimire, Yadav Ghimirey and Chandra Prasad Pokharel BCN's former staff for their help and input in this project. BCN also likes to thank Hathan Chaudhary and the team members of the recent Mai Valley and KCA Bird Surveys for making an important contribution to the ornithology of the area.

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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.



Unconfirmed record of Russet Bush Warbler *Bradypterus mandelli* in Nepal

Tim and Carol Inskipp

In April 2008 we took part in a BCN-organised bird survey of the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) as a contribution to the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund initiative in Nepal (Inskipp *et al.*, 2008). During the bird survey we trekked up the Ghunsa Khola valley and, on 15 April, we walked across a steep slope through dense bamboo with scattered *Rhododendron*, between Amjilessa and Gyabla. At 2470 m we heard an insistent, repetitive, nasal, high-pitched song: *zee-it...zee-it...zee-it*, coming from dense bamboo, first on one side of the path and a few minutes later from the other. The phrases were repeated about 25 times in 10 seconds. We identified the song as that of the Russet Bush Warbler *Bradypterus mandelli*, based on previous experience of the song from Bhutan. The KCA bird team which also included, Paul Collin, Mitra Pandey, Angus Robin, Jyotendra Thakuri and Richard Winspear listened to the bird singing for a few minutes but, unfortunately, we were not successful in making a sound recording. On returning home we listened to a recording of the species (Scharringa, 2005), and are convinced that the initial identification was correct.

The occurrence of the Russet Bush Warbler in the Indian subcontinent has been confounded by misidentifications and muddled taxonomic decisions. Its history was thoroughly explored by Dickinson *et al.* (2000), who clarified its taxonomy, occurrence and identification. Briefly, it was first described by Brooks (1875), based on various morphological differences from Brown Bush Warbler *B. luteoventris*. Hume (1878) suggested that it was synonymous with *luteoventris* and this was followed by Seebohm (1880, 1881). Despite protestations by Brooks (1881) and its treatment as a separate species by Oates (1889), Baker (1921) agreed with the synonymy, and his later (1924) adoption of this in the *Fauna of British India* volume, obviously influenced later authors, e.g. Ali and Ripley (1987), who made no mention of *mandelli*, even as a synonym. Dickinson *et al.* (2000) contended that it 'may be expected in easternmost Nepal.'

The range of Russet Bush Warbler in the Indian subcontinent extends from West Bengal through Sikkim and Bhutan to Arunachal Pradesh and to south Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland. The breeding altitudinal range is not well documented, but is considered to be 1000-2200 m in the subcontinent (Rasmussen and Anderton, 2005) and concentrated between 2100-2200 m in Bhutan (Spierenburg, 2005). The species was first recorded in Bhutan in 1994 and it has since been found in more than ten sites, where it is now considered an uncommon summer visitor to the country (Spierenburg, 2005). In West Bengal, India it is fairly common from 2050-2200 m in April (Grimmett *et al.*, 1998). Like other bush warblers it is very skulking and inconspicuous, and is most easily located by its frequent song (Grimmett *et al.*, 1998). Peak vocal activity in Bhutan appears to be in April (Spierenburg, 2005).

Addition of this species to the list of Nepal's birds needs further confirmation, preferably a sound recording. It is possible that this species occurs widely in the east and has been overlooked previously. We hope that other observers will listen for this species and can secure confirmation of its occurrence in Nepal.

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News

Membership

Mr Shyam Krishna Prasai joined BCN as a Patron. He has completed his Diploma in Hotel and Tourism Management from SSHT CHVR (Switzerland). He is involved in tourism industry since last 10 years and currently involved with Daman Mountain Resort.

Mr. Aadhip Dev Ghimire is one of the youngest life members of BCN. He is only one year and 10 months old.

Mr. Pushpa Raj Sedhai, businessman by profession joined BCN as a life member. He is doing business of export and production of Nepali Handicrafts. He has deep interest on birds and would like to work on conservation of birds.

Mr Sharad Singh joined BCN as a life member. He has been involved in tourism trade since last 17 years. He is currently operating a resort "Lumbini Buddha Garden" at Lumbini. He has been the director of Himalayan Nature since last 2 years and also involved in nature conservation.

Mr Rabindra Shrestha, General Manager of Til Ganga Eye Hospital joined BCN as a life member. He is an Engineer and also holds Masters in business administration. He is nature lover and shows keen interest in birds.

Mr Surendra Kumar Paudel joined BCN as a life member. He is a Charter Accountant and working as Finance Manager in Til Ganga Eye Hospital. He has a great interest in conservation of birds.

Publication

A Birdwatcher's Guide to the Kathmandu Valley



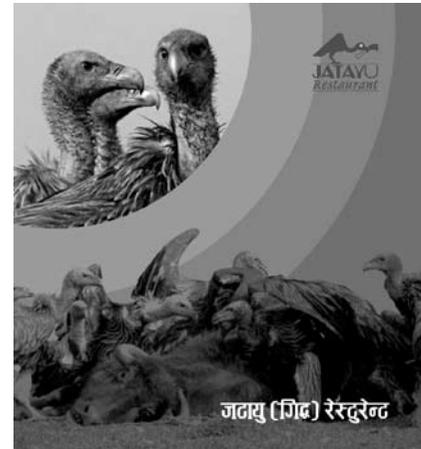
BCN has published 1000 copies of "A Birdwatcher's Guide to the Kathmandu Valley". The book consists of information on 14 important birding sites in Kathmandu Valley with detail maps. It also consists of 463 systematic bird list of the Valley. The major objective of this guide is to promote birdwatching in Kathmandu Valley. It

is believed that this guide serves the purpose of effective mode of generating awareness on birds and its habitat conservation amongst the birdwatchers.

Dr Stephen Biggs, UK, Impuls Project Fonds of Kirchzarten, Germany, Mrs Gabriele Dyckhoff of Rheine, Germany and Social Welfare Association of Nepal, Kathmandu have kindly provided financial support for this publication.

Jatayu (Vulture) Restaurant Nepali Brochure

BCN has published 3000 copies of Jatayu restaurant brochure in Nepali. This brochure gives good information on decline of vulture, cause of the decline and scope of vulture restaurant in conserving these birds. This will be very valuable in generating awareness among the local people. The brochure is published with financial support from UNDP/SGP.



Events

World Environment Day 2008

BCN organized a one-day Street Exhibition and Public Awareness Campaign to celebrate World Environment Day, 5 June 2008 at Shanti Vatika, Ratna Park. The programme started at 7:00 am and run till 5:30 pm. Informative leaflets,



posters, brochures and newsletters were distributed to the visitors to share information on birds and environment. Various publications, BCN activity photos, bird photos, habitat photos and bird paintings were on display. A quiz contest was held to evaluate the knowledge of birds among the general people.



Around 15000 people from various backgrounds visited the exhibition stall.

BCN also participated in a five-day exhibition on World Environment Day 2008 organized by Ministry for Population and Environment (MOPE) at Bhrikutimandap Mr. Formulah Mansur, Minister for Environment, Science and Technology inaugurated the programme. During his visit to BCN stall he was briefed about BCN's activities on birds and biodiversity conservation. Informative leaflets, posters, brochures and newsletters were distributed to share information on birds and environment. Various publications, BCN activity photos, bird photos, habitats and painting were also on display. Around 8000 people from various backgrounds visited the exhibition stall. Public participation and feedback was very encouraging for BCN to do conservation activities together with the people in order to benefit the people themselves.

Exhibition at KIST College

BCN exhibited on KIST-KEC Expo-2008 (Science/Engineering) exhibition organised by KIST College from 27 to 28 June 2008 at Kamalpokhari. The exhibition was inaugurated by Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Minister for Information and Communication. Mostly the participants were the students of Science and



Engineering. Informative leaflets, posters, brochure and newsletters of BCN were distributed to the visitors for raising awareness on birds and environment. Various publications, BCN activity photos, bird photos, habitat photos and bird paintings were on display. Moreover, the vulture documentary show was the main attraction in the exhibition through which most of the students and other people came to know about the importance on conservation of Vulture and its habitat.

Plantation at Bagmati Nature Park

On 17 July 2008, BCN organized a plantation programme at Bagmati Nature Park, Jwagal, Lalitpur. Altogether 1100 saplings of different native plant species were planted. The programme was inaugurated by Krishna K.C, President of BASP. He forwarded a speech where he highlighted the importance of the role of individuals for greener and cleaner Bagmati by a holistic approach. Further, Dr Siddhartha Bajracharya from



NTNC and Krishna Dev Yadav from UNPDC also forwarded a short speech about keeping Bagmati Nature Park clean and safe and give consistency to our commitment of greener world.

The saplings were provided by the nursery, Chalnakhel of Forest Department and Godawari Nursery, ICIMOD. More than 200 people participated in the Plantation Program along with few people living near the Bagmati River.

Exhibition at French Culture Centre

BCN took part in book launch programme of "Garden Birds of Nepal" held on 8 August 2008 on the premises of French Culture Centre. It was organized by Friends of Birds. Dr. Hem Sagar Baral was invited as Chief Guest. All the merchandise of BCN as well as various posters were displayed and sold on that programme. BCN brochure and newsletters were distributed to more than 100 participants. Lots of people showed keen interest in birds and BCN.

BCN Support for Koshi Flood Victim

The recent Koshi flood has been devastating and has displaced more than 50,000 people. In spite of intensive rescue and relief provided for all affected still many more victims are still in need of basic things. Government employees and national and international organizations have started collecting money for relief work among victims of the Saptakoshi flood in western Sunsari. Since Koshi is one of our potential IBAs it is our duty to support the local community without whose support conservation of this IBA is impossible so BCN contributed NRs 71,646 in total which also includes two days' staff salary to the flood victims. In addition to the cash support, BCN staff, EC and well wishers have contributed some old clothings and wares. All this was handed over to the Director General of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Dr Annapurna Nanda Das. Dr Das



appreciated BCN's contribution and thanked for the support. BCN has also set up a Koshi Relief Fund. Mrs Carol Inskipp has kindly deposited Nepali Rupees equivalent of UK pound 100 the fund.

Appointment

Mrs Sushma Shrestha has been appointed as an Administrative Officer. She has an academic background of MSc and worked for more than 10 years in Plan International.

Grants

National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) has kindly supported BCN for conducting an Assessment of bird's status, diversity and abundance along the Bagmati River System.

BCN has received CEPF small grant for setting up a vulture restaurant at Gaidahawa Lake area.

Donations

During the farewell party for Mr Dev Ghimire our Administrative Officer, arranged on 18 July 2008, we were able to collect NRs 4920 from the invited guest as a donation. We are very thankful to all those who have contributed and will wisely use this amount in our conservation awareness programme.

Project Update

CEPF Project

Micro grants for SSGs

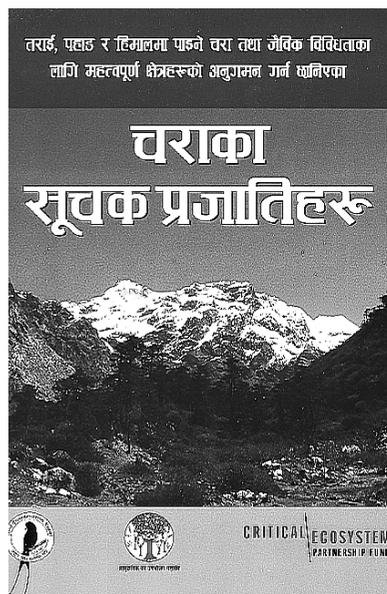
BCN has provided micro grants for 7 SSGs in upper and lower Mai valley. The micro grant will support in capacity enhancement of the SSGs as well as some of their biodiversity conservation work.

Bird Identification Leaflets

BCN has published 2000 copies of Bird Identification Leaflets for Mai Valley and Kanchenjunga IBAs. This identification leaflet and the simplified form will be used by the SSGs and the CFUGs in monitoring the indicator bird species.

CFUG Operational Plan Review

The operational plan of the key CFUGs in terms of potential bird habitat has been reviewed as well as developed in partnership with the



DFO and fellow CEPF grantees. Conservation of threatened bird species (with list provided) and actions for minimizing the threats to these birds has been strongly reflected in the OPs.

Koshi Wetland Project

Pig distribution and pig rearing training

With aim to promote income of the wetland dependent communities through pig rearing and management, a total of 10 pigs were distributed to the 10 women of the Jhagad community of Kusaha VDC. Since the pigs feed on invasive species (water hyacinth), it is expected that pig rearing program can help in invasive species management. At the same time, 2 days advance pig rearing training was also conducted from 31st July - 1 August, 2008 for the better management of the pigs.

Fish ponds group strengthening training

Local fishermen have been managing 5 fish ponds in support of the project since April 2008. In order to strengthening group management capacity, 2 days training on fish ponds group strengthening and record keeping of input and output training was conducted at Laukahi of the Sunsari. A total of 20 fish farmers from Kusaha and Mudhuban VDCs participated in the training programme.

Fisheries management surveys

Darwin Fellow through Stirling University has been researching the group management practices at demonstration fish ponds. Dr. Anton Immink visited Koshi for five days in August 2008 to observe and discuss group fish farming management with local communities, and to discuss nursery/hatchery issues with project team. These activities are feeding in to the development of the fisheries management plan.

Vulture Conservation Programme

Nawalparasi Vulture Restaurant

Training on bee keeping completed for 13 individuals. Electrification of meeting hall complete with fans. Vermicomposting shed completed. A tourism promotion sub-committee formed and coordination underway with Bird Education Society, Sauraha for promotion of the restaurant among tourism entrepreneurs and guides.

Gaidahawa Lake Vulture Restaurant, Lumbini

Inception workshop completed with formation of management committee. The committee has received approval from the



District Forest Office for the construction of vulture restaurant inside the community forest. The construction of cowshed is complete.

Vulture Restaurant at Dhangadhi, Kailali

A cow shed, small office room and a sign board has been set up by EARTH our local partner NGO. 12 cows and a rickshaw also purchased. A cow farm caretaker has also been appointed. Awareness raising activities are on going.

Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre

Construction of staff quarter is complete and construction of big aviary has been initiated.

Jagdishpur Wetland Conservation Programme

A field staff has been appointed. Skill enhancement training programme is underway. Discussion ongoing with the local communities in setting up cooperative.

BCN Pokhara Branch activities

Quiz Contest

BCN Pokhara branch organized a quiz contest on 19 July 2008 with the objective to create awareness among the students of IoF. Program was chaired by Ashok Ram, Coordinator BCN, Pokhara Branch, hosted by Keshab Baral, Secretary, BCN, Pokhara Branch and coordinated by Rijan Tamrakar, (Head, Publication), BCN, Pokhara Branch. Altogether 6 teams from Technical Certificate Level and BSc Forestry took part in the program. Chief Guest for the program was Dr. Keshab D. Awasthi (Dean, IoF). Participants from BSc second year Shradha Sigdel, Arun Parajuli and Dipak Sharma were the winner in the contest.



We would like to thank Mr. Marcus Cotton, Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge and ComForM, IoF for supporting us financially. We are also very thankful to MemCo, IoF, Pokhara for providing dictionary for the participants.

Bird Education Training Programme at Institute of Forestry, Pokhara

BCN Pokhara branch organized Bird Education Training Programme for the members from 31 August to 1 September 2008 at Institute of Forestry (IOF), Pokhara. The main objective of the programme was to raise awareness and enhance the knowledge on bird identification technique. The program was coordinated by Mr. Keshab Baral, Secretary, and BCN Pokhara branch. Altogether 25 BCN members from Technical Certificate Level, B.Sc Forestry and M. Sc. level took part in the programme. The programme was sponsored by Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, ComForM, BCN head office, IOF Pokhara Campus, IOF office of the Dean.

BCN Pokhara branch would like to thank all the sponsors and resource persons for their contribution.

Editorial Board

Dr Hem Sagar Baral (Chief Editor),
Ishana Thapa (Sub Editor),
Suchit Basnet, Yub Raj Basnet, Dev Ghimire

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Donation

BCN welcomes all kinds of support from the interested ones. You can even help us by providing us your camera, binocular, telescope, scientific equipment etc. Further more, we will also be grateful if any one provides educational materials for our library. We will always acknowledge your contribution towards our organisation



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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**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, 18 Patrons, 130 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:

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