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Distribution and breeding ecology of Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus* in Nepal

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Introduction

Vultures are medium to large sized scavenging birds, feeding mostly on the carcasses of dead animals and are found on every continent except Antarctica and Oceania (Del Hoyo *et al.*, 1994). Vultures play important role in maintain clean environment through rapid consumption of animal carcasses and human dead bodies in the form of sky burials within Nepal and Tibet, China.

Four species of vultures in Asia are in grave danger of extinction across the Indian subcontinent. Research and monitoring of

vulture species undertaken in lowland areas of Nepal revealed declines of 91% for White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* and 96% for Slender-billed Vulture *G. tenuirostris* between 1995 and 2011 (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2012). Due to similar trends of decline elsewhere in South Asia in 1990s four vulture species of South Asia namely White-rumped Vulture, Indian Vulture *Gyps indicus*, Slender-billed Vulture and Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus* have been listed by IUCN as "Critically Endangered" (IUCN, 2014).

Vultures are highly susceptible to Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug (NSAID), diclofenac, they are exposed to the drug through



Photo: Adult Red-headed Vulture on its nest in Palpa district by Ishwari Chaudhary



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the carcasses of treated livestock. Diclofenac kills gyps vultures (Oaks *et al.*, 2004; Swan *et al.*, 2006) including Himalayan Griffon (Das *et al.*, 2010) and possibly other species as they too have declined (Cuthbert *et al.*, 2006; Acharya *et al.*, 2009).

It was estimated that Red-headed Vulture populations in India declined by 91% during the period 1999 to 2003 and rates of decline per year was 41% during this time period (Cuthbert *et al.*, 2006). If these rates of decline have continued then this previously scarce population has now declined by >99% (Cuthbert *et al.*, 2006). Whilst there is already strong suggestive evidence that nimesulide is toxic to vultures, aceclofenac (Sharma, P., 2010) and ketoprofen (Naidoo *et al.* 2009) are already known to be toxic to vultures through previous safety-testing experiments.

Diclofenac might be toxic to Red-headed Vulture, but we do not have firm evidence and due to inter-specific differences in diclofenac toxicity this assumption may not be true for this species which belongs to a different genus: *Sarcogyps*.

Red-headed Vulture is a resident, still widespread in the west central to far west Nepal but virtually absent in eastern part of Nepal (Inskipp *et al.* 2016). Population of Red-headed Vulture has been estimated to be less than 500 in Nepal (BCN and DNPWC, 2011). There is only little information available about this species. Nest of Red-headed Vulture have been recorded on recent year after a gap of more than ten years in Nepal. First nest of Red-headed Vulture was found at Tansen-12, Palpa district in 2012 (Dhakal *et al.*, 2014).

Study Area

The study on distribution of Red-headed Vulture was carried out in western mid hill of Nepal. Exploration of active nests of Red-headed Vulture and ecological monitoring was done in Jajarkot and Palpa districts. Jajarkot district is one of the districts of Bheri Zone in mid-western region of Nepal. It is located between N28°37'22" to 29°07'32" and E81°49'22" and 82°34'46". The

climatic zone of the district ranges from subtropical to alpine. One nest of Red-headed Vulture was found at Lanha VDC ward no. 6 of Jajarkot district (Bhusal 2014). The nest was built at the main trunk of Pine tree (*Pinus roxburghii*).

Palpa district is one of the district of Lumbini Zone in western region of Nepal. It is located between N 27°34' to 27°57' and E 83°15' to 84°22'. Two active nests of Red-headed Vulture are being monitored in this district. One active nest of Red-headed Vulture on *Adina cordifolia* tree has been located at Tansen Municipality 12, Dharampani and another has been located on *Pinus* tree at Baugha Pokharathok 6, Luhung.

Methods

The exploratory and preliminary field visit was conducted in Jajarkot district from 8 April to 18 April 2014. On an average 10 hours a day was spent in the field to keep the record of vulture sightings along with exploring nests of vultures. One Red-headed Vulture nest was found at Lanha-6, Mahadevpuri, Jajarkot on 16 April 2014. After its first record, regular nest monitoring was done by trained local assistant. Similarly, another active nest of Red-headed Vulture was found in Baughapokharathok-6, Luhung, Palpa on 15 May 2014; the nest has been regularly monitored

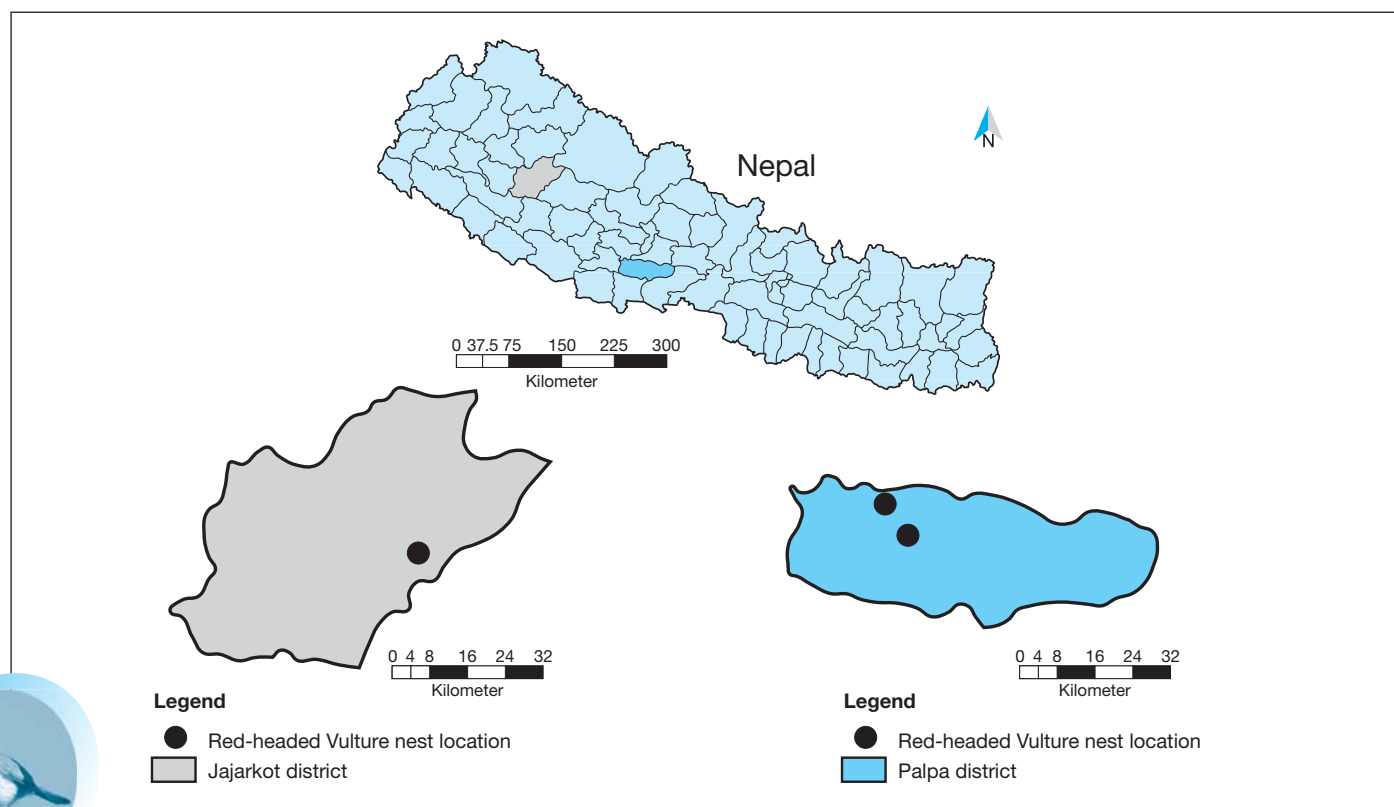


Fig 1. Map showing the nest location of Red-headed Vulture in Nepal.

since then. Likewise, another nest of Red-headed Vulture which lies in Tansen-12, Dharampani of Palpa district was monitored during the breeding season 2013-2014.

Absolute Count

Absolute count and monitoring of Red-headed Vulture was conducted in western Nepal from March 2012 to May 2015. During the field visits the details on sighting of Red-headed Vulture i.e. number, age class and location were recorded between 8 am to 5 pm.

Nest Monitoring

In order to study the breeding ecology, the nest occupancy, breeding status and general behavior were recorded for all three known nest for Red-headed Vulture in Palpa and Jajarkot districts of Nepal. Observation of nests in tree were made from the ground without disturbing the vulture. Monitoring of each nest was done to access the nest status and breeding success for the breeding season 2013-14. Following Postupalsky (1974), an active nest was defined as a nest in which eggs had been laid, whereas an occupied nest is one in which an egg need not have been laid, but a minimum of nest building must have taken place. A nest from which a chick fledged is termed as productive or successful. Breeding success of Red-headed Vulture was calculated using following formula:

$$\text{Breeding Success} = \frac{\text{Number of productive nest}}{\text{Number of active nest}} \times 100$$

Results

During the three years study period from 2012 to 2015, there were recorded the 102 sightings of Red-headed Vulture in different places with respective time (Fig. 2). The average flock size of Red-headed Vulture from these sighting records was found to be 1.78. Mostly single individual or pairs were recorded during their monitoring. Remarkably the maximum number of Red-headed Vulture was 20 in a single sighting, recorded at Vulture Safe Feeding Site, Ghachok, Kaski on 24 June 2013.

Monitoring of three active nests in Palpa and Jajarkot district during the breeding season 2013-2014 results the 100% breeding success based on the active nest as primary unit. One old previously used nest also recorded nearer to active nest in Jajarkot but not occupied for this breeding season. It was found that Red-headed Vulture built nest at the top of a large tree. The large, flat nest was constructed from sticks and lined towards the centre with leaves and dry grass. The average nest height was 27 m from the ground level. Mainly breeding activities of Red-headed Vulture were observed from November to June. Red-headed Vulture laid only one egg during one breeding season and both male and female took part in incubation and provide parental care. The incubation period took about two months and hatches egg in March. Nestlings were fledged after four months in late June.

Discussion/Conclusion

Since 2005 sightings have been recorded at a number of localities by several birders and researcher in the central and western part

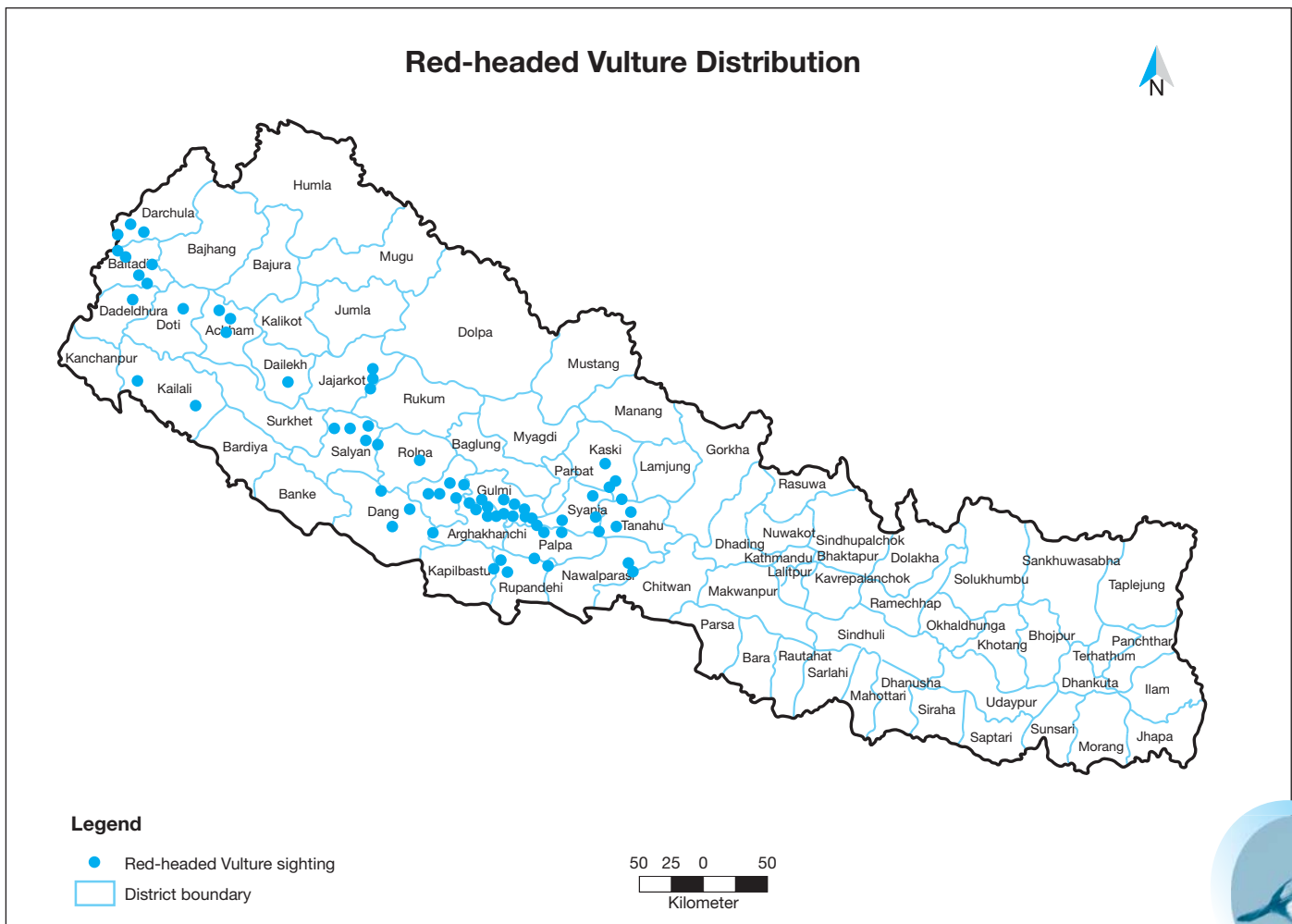


Fig 2. Distribution and sightings record of Red-headed Vulture in Nepal



of country. During a raptor survey near Khande, Kaski District, 75 Red-headed Vultures were seen migrating west between 30 October and 2 December 2005 (Gurung 2005). A population survey of Red-headed Vulture was carried out in the western Middle Mountain region in 2012. A total of 24 birds were estimated: nine in Kaski District, six in both Palpa and Arghakhanchi Districts, three in Pyuthan and none in Salyan Districts. No nests were located during the study, although fresh juvenile birds were repeatedly recorded in the autumn (Subedi 2013). Unlike most of the larger species of vulture, Red-headed Vulture does not live in large groups and is most often found solitary or in a breeding pair. The average flock size for Red-headed Vulture as 1.78, explains that they are mostly seen in pairs. During the breeding season 2013-14, breeding success of Red-headed Vulture in the studied area was 100%.

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An ornithological survey of Panchase Protected Forest

Jyotendra Jyu Thakuri



Photo: Black-chinned Yuhina by Jyotendra Thakuri

Panchase Protected Forest

Panchase Protected Forest is located at the junction of three districts, Kaski, Parbat and Syangja of western development region and spreads in nine Village Development Committees (VDCs); Chitre, Bhadaure Tamgi, Chapakot, Arukharka, Bagefatake, Wangsing Deurali, Arthar Dadakgarka, Ramja Deurali and Phumdibhumdi covering 57.76 km². The Government of Nepal has declared the area as a "Panchase Protected Forest" in 2012 under the article 23 of the Forest Act 2002. It represents a middle mountain ecosystem, and lies in the Chitwan-Annapurna landscape, linking the lowland and high Himalaya of the Annapurna-Himalaya range. Altitudinally, it ranges from 1450m to 2517m above sea level.

This area is known for its dense forests with 50.5% covered with sub-tropical and temperate mixed evergreen forest (IUCN undated and BCN 2015). Major forest types are Katus-Chilaune *Schima-Castanopsis* Forest, Hill Sal *Shorea Robusta* Forest, Gurans – Rakchan *Rhododendron-Daphniphyllum* Forest, Pine Forest and Upper Mixed Hardwood Forest. According to Shah *et al.* (2012), more than 589 flowering plant species have been recorded in the area including 113 species of orchids. Among the orchids, *Panisea Panchasenensis* and *Eria Pokharensia* are endemic and 35 species have high commercial value.

Panchase Forest area is the important watershed area, source of several important rivers such as the Harpankhola, Phedikhola, Ratikhola, Jaharekhola, Andhikhola and several springs and brooks. Harpankhola is the main feeder stream of Phewa Lake and all the rivers originating from Panchase are the source of irrigation and drinking water for communities living downstream.

Method

Survey was carried out on 19-27 November 2014 and 15-22 June 2015 using the Mackinnon's species richness counting method (Mackinnon and Phillips 1993) as described by Bibby *et al.* (2000). Separate lists of 20 bird species were prepared to know the bird diversity and abundance. By plotting the cumulative total of species detected against the number of lists, a species richness curve, a measure of species diversity was produced. The number of time a species reappears in subsequent lists was converted into a frequency of occurrence, which gives idea about relative abundance of that species when compared with other species.

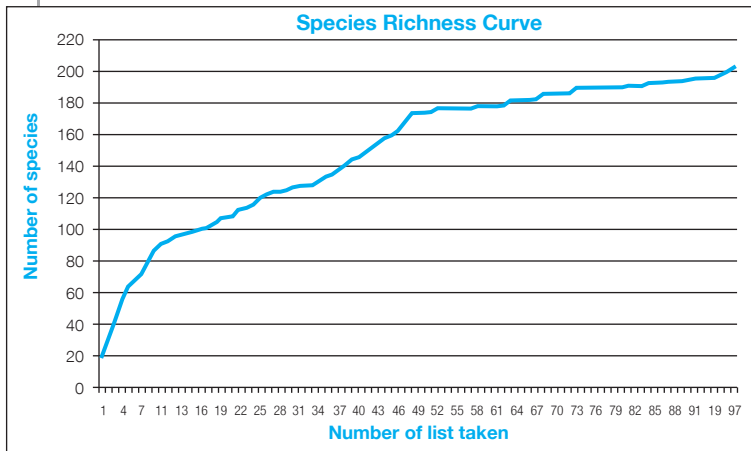
Grimmett *et al.* (2000 and 2011) and Rasmussen and Anderton (2012) were used as field guides, and Viking 10x42 binoculars were used to identify birds in the field.

The final bird checklist follows the official checklist of birds of Nepal (BCN and DNPWC 2016).



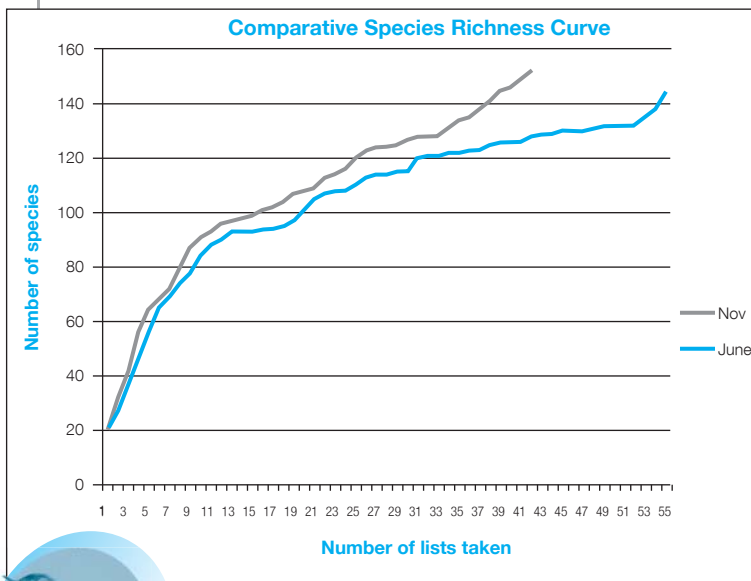
Results

A total of 203 bird species representing 10 orders and 33 families were recorded from 97 lists during 17 days of survey (detail in Annex I).



White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*, Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus*, Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*, Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus*, Himalayan Vulture *Gyps himalayensis*, Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* and Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* were some notable threatened species listed in IUCN red list under Critically Endangered to Near Threatened category. Red-headed Trogon *Harpactes erythrocephalus*, Indian Eagle Owl *Bubo bengalensis*, Brown Wood Owl *Strix leptogrammica*, Barred Cuckoo Dove *Macro pygiaunchall*, Black-headed Shrike Babbler *Pteruthius rufiventer*, Black-chinned Yuhina *Yuhina nigrimenta* and Sapphire Flycatcher *Ficedula sapphire* were nationally threatened species. Spiny Babbler *Turdoides nipalensis*, the only one endemic bird to Nepal, was also recorded.

A comparative species richness curve shows that more bird species were recorded during the November and less during the June. During the November and June surveys 152 and 144 bird species were recorded respectively. However, only 42 lists were prepared during November in comparison to 55 during June. Likewise, 56 species were recorded only from November and 52 only from June survey.



During November, Slaty-headed Parakeet *Psittacula himalayana*, Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*, Speckled Wood Pigeon *Columba hodgsonii*, White-

throated Laughingthrush *Garrulax albogularis*, Rufous Sibia *Heterophasia capistrata*, were the five birds with high number. Similarly, Grey-hooded Warbler *Seicercus xanthoschistos*, Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*, Green-tailed Sunbird, Rufous Sibia, Black Bulbul, were most common birds with high frequency of occurrence. As many as 26 species were recorded only once with single individual such as Spotted Laughingthrush *Garrulax ocellatus*, Striated Bulbul *Pycnonotus striatus*, Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*, Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus*, Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides*, etc.

On June survey, Rufous Sibia, Himalayan Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucogenys*, Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*, Whiskered Yuhina *Yuhina flavicollis*, and White-throated Laughingthrush were counted in highest numbers. Similarly, Rufous Sibia, Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina*, Large Hawk Cuckoo *Hierococcyx parveroides*, Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus*, Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush *Garrulax erythrocephalus* were five most common birds with high frequency of occurrence. Total 25 species were considered rare, seen once with single individual such as Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus*, Red-headed Trogon *Harpactes erythrocephalus*, Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*, Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* etc.

Discussion

Panchase Protected Forest, important section of Chitwan-Annapurna Landscape is renowned as a pilgrimage site and as an important watershed of the Gandaki River basin with forest in good condition in the vicinity.

The documentation of 203 bird species from only two months, November and June, survey shows the area has high bird diversity. Baral (2014) recorded 152 bird species covering four seasons, hence the total number of bird species found is 240. This species diversity of Panchase Forest compares favorably with other highly explored and renowned areas representing the same mid-hill ecosystems of Nepal, for example in Phulchowki Mountain Forest with at least 300 species, 318 species in Shivapuri National Park and 201 species in Resunga Forest (Baral 2007, SNP and BCN 2007 and Thakuri 2011).

Of the 40 globally threatened and 167 nationally threatened bird species in Nepal (BCN and DNPWC 2011, BCN and DNPWC 2016 and Inskipp *et al.* 2016) only seven species of birds of prey identified as globally threatened and 13 species of nationally threatened were recorded. The altitudinal distribution of globally threatened birds in Nepal and availability of habitat shows very few globally threatened bird species can be expected at the Panchase Forest.

November was richer in number of bird species in comparison to June. Probably, this is because Nepal supports higher number of winter visitor birds in comparison to summer visitor. Further, 36% of Nepal's breeding birds are altitudinal migrants, with their southward movements controlled by seasonal weather conditions (Grimmett *et al.* 2009 and Inskipp 1989). However, the frequency of occurrence of bird species was higher during the breeding season, resulting in more MacKinnon's lists than in November because birds become more obvious and vocal during the breeding season. Bird Communities of the area was dominated by the resident and flocking birds such as White-throated Laughingthrush, Striated Laughingthrush, Rufous Sibia, Himalayan, Bulbul, Black Bulbul, Large-billed Crow etc. While comparing the population of individual species recorded in both surveys, more birds were recorded in November than in June; probably in June many species dispersed for breeding, did not feed in open areas or formed only small flocks.



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Annex I: Checklist of Birds

ORDER/Family/Common name/ Scientific name	November		June	
	A	N	A	N
GALLIFORMES				
Phasianidae				
Black Francolin <i>Francolinus francolinus</i>			1	1
Hill Partridge <i>Arborophila torqueola</i>	12	25	30	24
Kalij Pheasant <i>Lophura leucomelanos</i>	6	17	7	7
PICIFORMES				
Picidae				
Speckled Piculet <i>Picumnus innominatus</i>			1	2
Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos macei</i>	1	1		
Crimson-breasted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos cathpharius</i>	4	9		
Darjeeling Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos darjellensis</i>			2	2
Himalayan Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos himalayensis</i>			1	1
Lesser Yellownape <i>Picus chlorolophus</i>	2	2		
Greater Yellownape <i>Picus flavinucha</i>	2	2	5	5
Scaly-bellied Woodpecker <i>Picus squamatus</i>			1	1
Grey-headed Woodpecker <i>Picus canus</i>	1	2	8	8
Bay Woodpecker <i>Blythipicus pyrrhotis</i>			3	3
Megalaimidae				
Great Barbet <i>Megalaima virens</i>	16	39	24	47



Golden-throated Barbet <i>Megalaima franklinii</i>	11	14	12	22
Blue-throated Barbet <i>Megalaima asiatica</i>	5	10	2	2
TROGONIFORMES				
Trogonidae				
Red-headed Trogon <i>Harpactes erythrocephalus</i> **			1	1
Alcedinidae				
Common Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>			1	1
Dacelonidae				
White-throated Kingfisher <i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>			1	3
Cerylidae				
Crested Kingfisher <i>Megaceryle lugubris</i>			1	1
CUCULIFORMES				
Cuculidae				
Large Hawk Cuckoo <i>Hierococcyx sparveroides</i>			36	28
Indian Cuckoo <i>Cuculus micropterus</i>			9	7
Eurasian Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>			14	10
Oriental Cuckoo <i>Cuculus saturatus</i>			15	11
Lesser Cuckoo <i>Cuculus poliocephalus</i>			3	5
Asian Koel <i>Eudynamys scolopacea</i>			1	2
PSITTACIFORMES				
Psittacidae				
Slaty-headed Parakeet <i>Psittacula himalayana</i>	6	268		
APODIFORMES				
Apodidae				
White-rumped Spinetail <i>Zoonavena sylvatica</i>			2	4
Alpine Swift <i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	1	12		
STRIGIFORMES				
Strigidae				
Mountain Scops Owl <i>Otus spilocephalus</i>	1	1		
Indian Eagle Owl <i>Bubo bengalensis</i> **	1	1		
Brown Wood Owl <i>Strix leptogrammica</i> **			2	1
Collared Owlet <i>Glaucidium brodiei</i>			1	1
Asian Barred Owlet <i>Glaucidium cuculoides</i>	1	1	1	1
COLUMBIFORMES				
Columbidae				
Speckled Wood Pigeon <i>Columba hodgsonii</i>	1	255	1	12
Oriental Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	5	10	2	8
Spotted Dove <i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	2	3	4	14
Barred Cuckoo Dove <i>Macropygia unchall</i> **			5	12
Emerald Dove <i>Chalcophaps indica</i>			1	1
Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon <i>Treron sphenura</i>	7	16	17	36
CICONIIFORMES				
Scolopacidae				
Solitary Snipe <i>Gallinago solitaria</i>	1	1		
Accipitridae				
Oriental Honey-buzzard <i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	2	4	3	2
Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>	2	2	1	2



Bearded Vulture <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> *	11	16		
Egyptian Vulture <i>Neophron percnopterus</i> *	1	1	3	5
White-rumped Vulture <i>Gyps bengalensis</i> *	1	3	1	7
Himalayan Vulture <i>Gyps himalayensis</i> *	13	35	1	1
Cinereous Vulture <i>Aegypius monachus</i> *	2	2		
Red-headed Vulture <i>Sarcogyps calvus</i> *	2	2	2	4
Crested Serpent Eagle <i>Spilornis cheela</i>	1	1	7	6
Shikra <i>Accipiter badius</i>	1	1	3	3
Eurasian Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	1	1		
Northern Goshawk <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	1	1		
Common Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>	3	3	1	1
Upland Buzzard <i>Buteo hemilasius</i>	1	1		
Black Eagle <i>Ictinaetus malayensis</i>	3	5	6	6
Steppe Eagle <i>Aquila nipalensis</i> *	4	4		
Golden Eagle <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	2	2		
Bonelli's Eagle <i>Hieraaetus fasciatus</i>	1	1		
Mountain Hawk Eagle <i>Spizaetus nipalensis</i>	1	1		
Falconidae				
Lesser Kestrel <i>Falco naumanni</i>	1	1		
Common Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	3	4	1	1
Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1	1		
PASSERIFORMES				
Irenidae				
Orange-bellied Leafbird <i>Chloropsis hardwickii</i>	8	14	8	12
Laniidae				
Long-tailed Shrike <i>Lanius schach</i>	2	3	7	12
Grey-backed Shrike <i>Lanius tephronotus</i>	1	2		
Corvidae				
Eurasian Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>			1	1
Yellow-billed Blue Magpie <i>Urocissa flavirostris</i>	10	24	14	17
Red-billed Blue Magpie <i>Urocissa erythrorhyncha</i>	14	47	10	23
Common Green Magpie <i>Cissa chinensis</i>			1	2
Grey Treepie <i>Dendrocitta formosae</i>	15	77	11	42
Large-billed Crow <i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	29	228	28	87
Eurasian Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>			1	2
Maroon Oriole <i>Oriolus traillii</i>	2	2	1	2
Large Cuckooshrike <i>Coracina macei</i>	3	6		
Long-tailed Minivet <i>Pericrocotus ethologus</i>	5	13	4	15
Scarlet Minivet <i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	3	11	10	13
Yellow-bellied Fantail <i>Rhipidura hypoxantha</i>	1	2		
White-throated Fantail <i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>	1	2	2	9
Black Drongo <i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	1	1	6	17
Ashy Drongo <i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>	9	23	28	58
Bronzed Drongo <i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>	2	3	1	2
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo <i>Dicrurus remifer</i>			1	1
Spangled Drongo <i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i>	1	1	6	14
Cinclidae				
Brown Dipper <i>Cinclus pallasii</i>			1	1



Muscicapidae				
Blue-capped Rock Thrush <i>Monticola cinclorhynchus</i>			1	2
Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush <i>Monticola rufiventris</i>	1	2		
Blue Whistling Thrush <i>Myophonus caeruleus</i>	22	32	8	14
Scaly Thrush <i>Zoothera dauma</i>			1	1
Tickell's Thrush <i>Turdus unicolor</i>			3	8
Grey-winged Blackbird <i>Turdus boulboul</i>	2	8	9	27
Eurasian Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>			4	4
Dark-throated Thrush <i>Turdus ruficollis</i>	2	2		
Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher <i>Ficedula strophliata</i>	5	7	11	18
Ultramarine Flycatcher <i>Ficedula supercilialis</i>			6	6
Slaty-blue Flycatcher <i>Ficedula tricolor</i>			2	2
Sapphire Flycatcher <i>Ficedula sapphira</i>			1	1
Verditer Flycatcher <i>Eumyias thalassina</i>			36	55
Small Niltava <i>Niltava macgrigoriae</i>	4	6	20	35
Rufous-bellied Niltava <i>Niltava sundara</i>	1	2	10	18
Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher <i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>	4	6	9	28
Orange-flanked Bush Robin <i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>	8	14		
Golden Bush Robin <i>Tarsiger chrysaeus</i>	9	14	1	1
Oriental Magpie Robin <i>Copsychus saularis</i>	1	2		
Blue-capped Redstart <i>Phoenicurus coeruleocephalus</i>	3	4		
Blue-fronted Redstart <i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i>	20	38		
White-capped Water Redstart <i>Chaimarrornis leucocephalus</i>	2	2		
Plumbeous Water Redstart <i>Rhyacornis fuliginosus</i>	2	3		
White-tailed Robin <i>Myiomela leucura</i>	1	2	4	4
Little Forktail <i>Enicurus scouleri</i>	1	1		
Slaty-backed Forktail <i>Enicurus schistaceus</i>			1	1
Spotted Forktail <i>Enicurus maculatus</i>	1	1		
Common Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquata</i>	3	5		
Pied Bushchat <i>Saxicola caprata</i>	1	2	3	5
Grey Bushchat <i>Saxicola ferrea</i>	5	8	7	25
Sturnidae				
Chestnut-tailed Starling <i>Sturnus malabaricus</i>			1	17
Common Myna <i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	3	9	5	11
Sittidae				
White-tailed Nuthatch <i>Sitta himalayensis</i>	15	67	24	74
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch <i>Sitta frontalis</i>	2	3	1	1
Wallcreeper <i>Tichodroma muraria</i>	1	1		
Certhiidae				
Brown-throated Tree-creeper <i>Certhia discolor</i>	1	1		
Paridae				
Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>			2	4
Green-backed Tit <i>Parus monticolus</i>	23	90	34	116
Black-lored Tit <i>Parus xanthogenys</i>	5	10	8	34
Yellow-browed Tit <i>Sylviparus modestus</i>	3	7	13	28
Aegithalidae				
Black-throated Tit <i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>	3	20	7	42



Hirundinidae				
Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	1	5	3	11
Red-rumped Swallow <i>Hirundo daurica</i>	1	1	1	4
Nepal House Martin <i>Delichon nipalensis</i>	1	55		
Pycnonotidae				
Striated Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus striatus</i>	1	1	2	6
Himalayan Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus leucogenys</i>	22	123	14	67
Red-vented Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	3	13	6	25
Ashy Bulbul <i>Hemixos flava</i>			2	2
Mountain Bulbul <i>Hypsipetes maclellandii</i>	4	14	4	12
Black Bulbul <i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>	23	202	11	175
Cisticolidae				
Striated Prinia <i>Prinia criniger</i>	2	2	5	9
Zosteropidae				
Oriental White-eye <i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	3	14	7	36
Sylviidae				
Chestnut-headed Tesia <i>Tesia castaneocoronata</i>	2	2		
Grey-bellied Tesia <i>Tesia cyaniventer</i>			8	19
Aberrant Bush Warbler <i>Cettia flavolivacea</i>	2	2		
Grey-sided Bush Warbler <i>Cettia brunnifrons</i>	6	7		
Common Tailorbird <i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	5	10	2	5
Buff-barred Warbler <i>Phylloscopus pulcher</i>	5	6	1	1
Ashy-throated Warbler <i>Phylloscopus maculipennis</i>	7	10	10	15
Lemon-rumped Warbler <i>Phylloscopus chloronotus</i>	6	8	1	1
Yellow-browed Warbler <i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	3	4		
Hume's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus humei</i>	7	10		
Greenish Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	13	16		
Blyth's Leaf Warbler <i>Phylloscopus reguloides</i>	3	3		
Golden-spectacled Warbler <i>Seicercus burkii</i>	3	3		
Grey-hooded Warbler <i>Seicercus xanthoschistos</i>	30	105	31	89
Chestnut-crowned Warbler <i>Seicercus castaniceps</i>	1	2	2	2
White-throated Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax albogularis</i>	19	323	31	188
White-crested Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax leucolophus</i>	17	72	17	42
Striated Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax striatus</i>	20	119	33	75
Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax rufogularis</i>	1	2	2	2
Spotted Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax ocellatus</i>	1	1		
Streaked Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax lineatus</i>	10	19	27	32
Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax erythrocephalus</i>	16	70	34	48
Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler <i>Pomatorhinus erythrogenys</i>	15	55	8	32
Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler <i>Pomatorhinus ruficollis</i>	12	41	11	35
Scaly-breasted Wren Babbler <i>Pnoepyga albiventer</i>	4	4		
Nepal Wren Babbler <i>Pnoepyga maculata</i>	5	7	1	1
Black-chinned Babbler <i>Stachyris pyrrhops</i>	5	11	4	4
Grey-throated Babbler <i>Stachyris nigriceps</i>			1	1
Striped Tit Babbler <i>Macronous gularis</i>			1	1
Spiny Babbler <i>Turdoides nipalensis</i>			4	4
Red-billed Leiothrix <i>Leiothrix lutea</i>	6	68	9	34
Black-headed Shrike Babbler <i>Pteruthius rufiventer</i> **	2	3		



White-browed Shrike Babbler <i>Pteruthius flaviscapis</i>	2	3		
Green Shrike Babbler <i>Pteruthius xanthochlorus</i>			5	14
Black-eared Shrike Babbler <i>Pteruthius melanotis</i>			4	7
Hoary-throated Barwing <i>Actinodura nipalensis</i>	4	11		
Blue-winged Minla <i>Minla cyanouroptera</i>			11	34
Chestnut-tailed Minla <i>Minla strigula</i>	8	62	13	46
Red-tailed Minla <i>Minla ignotincta</i>	1	12	1	2
Rufous-winged Fulvetta <i>Alcippe castaneiceps</i>			12	23
White-browed Fulvetta <i>Alcippe vinipectus</i>			4	6
Nepal Fulvetta <i>Alcippe nipalensis</i>	2	29	10	42
RufousSibia <i>Heterophasia capistrata</i>	23	331	39	225
Whiskered Yuhina <i>Yuhina flavicollis</i>	16	181	28	137
Stripe-throated Yuhina <i>Yuhina gularis</i>			7	9
Black-chinned Yuhina <i>Yuhina nigrimenta</i> **			1	7
White-bellied Yuhina <i>Yuhina zantholeuca</i>			1	4
Nectariniidae				
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker <i>Dicaeum ignipectus</i>	20	50	10	38
Green-tailed Sunbird <i>Aethopyga nipalensis</i>	24	146	21	98
Black-throated Sunbird <i>Aethopyga saturata</i>	3	6	8	12
Crimson Sunbird <i>Aethopyga siparaja</i>	1	2	4	9
Fire-tailed Sunbird <i>Aethopyga ignicauda</i>	1	2		
Passeridae				
Russet Sparrow <i>Passer rutilans</i>	7	32	12	26
Eurasian Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	1	2	1	12
White Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	2	2		
Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	3	4		
Olive-backed Pipit <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	4	14		
Rosy Pipit <i>Anthus roseatus</i>	2	2		
Upland Pipit <i>Anthus sylvanus</i>	1	2	1	1
White-rumped Munia <i>Lonchura striata</i>	3	13	3	18
Fringillidae				
Yellow-breasted Greenfinch <i>Carduelis spinoides</i>	3	20		
Plain Mountain Finch <i>Leucosticte nemoricola</i>	1	9		
Dark-breasted Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus nipalensis</i>	2	4		
Common Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	6	14		
Pink-browed Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus rodochrous</i>	3	6		
Crested Bunting <i>Melophus lathamii</i>			1	2

Key to notes

A: abundance, N: number of birds recorded,

*: globally threatened, **: nationally threatened

Donation

BCN welcomes all kinds of support from individuals and institutions. 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. All support will be duly acknowledged.



News

Membership

Bhasker Nath Bhattarai joined BCN as a Life Member. He is an engineer by profession and a bird lover.

Sunil Shrestha joined BCN as a Life Member. He loves to watch birds in his free times.

Devendra Chapagain joined BCN as a Life Member. He works as a Field Biologist in BCN.

Dr. Rajendra KC joined BCN as a Life Member. He is dedicated in the field of conservation.

Muna Munikar joined BCN as a Life Member. She works as an Accountant in BCN.

Dr Bikash Dhaubanjari joined BCN as a Life Member. He works as a Veterinary Officer in BCN.

Him Lal Shrestha joined BCN as a Life Member. He is working as a consultant for Ministry of Population and Environment.

Govinda Bahadur Singh joined BCN as a Life Member. He is currently a Vet Technician at District Livestock Services Office, Jajarkot.

Paban Shakya joined BCN as a Life Member. He is very keen to be involved in bird conservation.

Nima Wangchu Sherpa joined BCN as a Life Member. He worked for Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation in the past and now resides in United States of America. He is very much interested in supporting BCN's conservation programme.

33rd Annual General Meeting

BCN's 33rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) was organised on 30 January 2016, at Indreni Complex, Kathmandu, Nepal. President Mr. Yub Raj Basnet chaired the meeting. The founder president Mr. Hari Saran Nepali "Kazi" was the chief guest of the program. Patrons, Advisors, Members, supporters and representatives of various organizations attended the program.

General Secretary Mr. Rajendra Gurung presented on the program status. Similarly, Treasurer Mr. Ashok Bahadur Malla highlighted the financial report of the year 2014/15.

Mr. Ram Bahadur Shahi and Mr. Benjamin Smelt, were honored for recording Mottled Wood Owl, new bird species for Nepal. Likewise Naresh Khushi and Geraldine Werhahn were also honored for recording Tibetan Lark *Melanocorypha maxima*, a new species for Nepal. During the meeting Ms Ishana Thapa and Mr Khadananda Paudel presented the findings of Ecosystem Services Assessment on Rauta VDC, Udaypur and Satellite telemetry study on Red-headed Vulture respectively.

Programme/Project updates

Exposure visit to learn about IBA conservation from BirdLife Asia partners

To enhance the knowledge and understanding of IBA conservation work carried by other BirdLife partners in Asia, BCN organised a visit to Bombay Natural History and BirdLife Vietnam to

government officials, Local conservation group representatives and project staff from 11 – 17 January 2016.



Project Management Committee Meeting of Danida/CISU funded People Partner with Nature Programme hosted by BCN

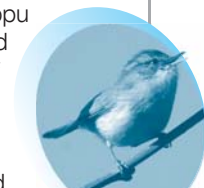
The second PMC meeting of Danida/CISU funded programme took place in Pokhara, Nepal from 22-26 February 2016 with the participation of all eight PMC members from the four partner organisations BirdLife Denmark, Nature Kenya, Nature Uganda and BCN. The main objective of the meeting was to review, plan and discuss the People Partner with Nature Programme. In addition BCN had arranged an afternoon of training on community forestry and a field visit to a vulture feeding site in Ghachowk, Kaski.



National Workshop on Bengal Florican Conservation

BCN supported DNPWC to organize a National Workshop on developing Bengal Florican Conservation Action Plan on 29 February 2016 at Malla Hotel, Lainchaur, Kathmandu. Altogether 28 people participated in the program representing DNPWC, BCN, MoFSC, DoF, Chitwan National Park, Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, District Forest Offices Sunsari and Chitwan, WCT, NEFEJ, Royal Society for Protection of Birds, BirdLife Asia, and ZSL Nepal. The program was chaired by Director General Mr. Fanindra Raj Kharel.

The finding on recent researches on Bengal Florican and



the draft action plan were shared and feedbacks were gathered during the workshop.

Expert Consultation Workshop on Darwin Initiative Project “Mainstreaming Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services into Community Forestry”

A national level expert consultation workshop on developing biodiversity supplement to national community forest management guidelines under the project, “mainstreaming Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services into Community Forestry in Nepal” was held in Kathmandu on 3 and 4 March 2016. The workshop mainly focused on developing the outline of the official biodiversity supplement to national community forestry management guidelines. Case studies, desk review and policies on biodiversity and ecosystem services related to community forestry management in Nepal were presented in the workshop. Discussion was also made to design the content of training materials, tools and guidelines.

Bird Conservation Nepal Strategic Planning Workshop

With an aim to come up with ambitious yet achievable strategic action plan for next 5 years "2017-2021", BCN organized strategic planning workshop on 16 November 2016 at Hotel Malla, Kathmandu.

CEO, Narendra Man Babu Pradhan reflected his view on the objectives of the workshop. Ishana Thapa, Director of BCN summarized the review of Strategic Plan 2012-2016 in her presentation. After presentation of Ian Barber, Senior Partnership Development Officer-Asia on BirdLife Quality Assurance System, participants were involved in group to do the SWOT analysis of the Organization. The workshop took more participatory approach and reviewed the institution's goal, objectives to set targets and prepare plan of action for the new strategy. The day long workshop concluded with closing remarks of Yubraj Basnet, President of BCN.

Harish Chandra Rai, Advisor of BCN and Dipak Biswokarma were the facilitators of the workshop that was attended by BCN's Advisers, Executive Council members and staff.

Training on Integrating Rights and Social Issues in Conservation



BCN with support of BirdLife International, BirdLife Denmark and BirdLife Norway organized a four days long training on "Integrating Rights & Social Issues in Conservation" to BCN staffs, EC members and conservation professionals from 8 to 11 November 2016 in Lumbini Nepal.

The training was designed to increase awareness and capacity of Conservation professionals to address the social and rights based approach of conservation and Natural resource management. With "active learning" approach based on practical exercises and interactive talks participants shared their experiences from their own projects.

The team also visited Jatayu Restaurant at Gaida Taal Lumbini as a part of field assignment. The learning and experience sharing course was led by the trainers Billy Fairburn from Bird Life International and Charlotte Mathiassen from BirdLife Denmark.

National Sharing Meeting on 'Ecosystem Services Assessment and Action Research on Ecosystem Management'

National Sharing Meeting on 'Ecosystem Services Assessment and Action Research on Ecosystem Management' for Himalica Program was held on 26 December 2016 at Hotel Malla, Thamel. The three year long program from 2014 to 2016 is funded by ICIMOD/EU and implemented by BCN in partnership with Navaprabhat Nepal at Rauta VDC, Udaypur.



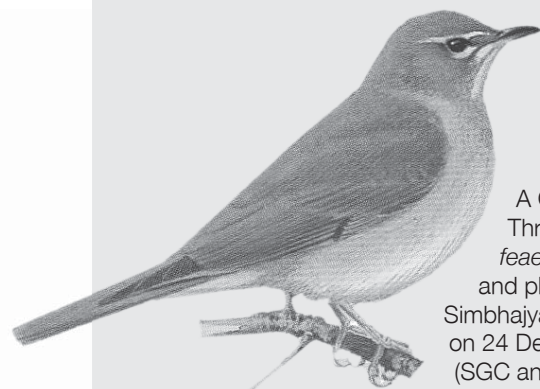
The meeting began with opening remarks from Dr. Narendra Man Babu Pradhan, CEO, BCN on assessment of the program and applauded the effective works carried out by ICIMOD, BCN and Navaprabhat Nepal with continued engagement and support from local government line agencies. Nakul Chettri, Senior Biodiversity Analyst, ICIMOD in his short presentation gave an overview on working strategy of ICIMOD and significance of ecosystem services and how the project demonstrate proven solutions for improved ecosystem management through collaborative research on ecosystem based alternative livelihood options

Dr. Pem Narayan Kandel, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) and chief guest of the meeting said the ministry is amending existing Forest Act and the suggestions of ecosystem assessment could provide technical concerns that have been untouched. Akhileshwar Lal Karna, Joint Secretary of MoFSC congratulated the team involved in the project for carrying out visible result in short period of three years. "The model implemented in Rauta should be the way we choose for future," he added.

Later Ishana Thapa, Director (BCN) gave a short presentation sharing the progress the project has made in three years. She explained how the program has directly benefitted people and made them realize the importance of ecosystem services at Rauta Village. The forum discussion involved active participation from senior government officials from MoFSC and DoF, ICIMOD, conservation partners, media as well as Executive Members and staffs from BCN. The event came to a conclusion with closing remarks from Dr Anuja Sharma, Community Forestry Chief at DoF and Yub Raj Basnet, President of BCN.



Additional Sightings!



Grey-sided Thrush
by Alan Harris

A Grey-sided Thrush *Turdus feae* was sighted and photographed at Simbhajyang, Makawanpur on 24 December 2015, (SGC and MC). A new species for Nepal.

A pair of Red-faced Liocichla *Liocichla phoenicea* was sighted in the forest of Darhakhani Chisapanitar in Upardang Gadi, Chitwan district on 21 May 2016, (HSB, TRG, BB, BC, BM, RT, SBT, RC, PC and RK). The second sighting of the species in Nepal.

A Rufous-tailed Rock-thrush *Monticola saxatilis*, was recorded near Shey Gumpa, Upper Dolpa on 27 May 2016, (NK, TLL, PRL and GW). A new species for Nepal.



Rufous-tailed Rock-thrush
by Alan Harris

Seven West Himalayan Bush Warbler *Bradypterus kashmirensis* were heard singing, including one photographed between Machhapuchhre Base Camp and Annapurna Base Camp, 3950-4100 m on 7 August 2016, (HC, CI and MC). A new species for Nepal.

Contributors

BB: Basu Bidari, BC: Badri Chaudhary, BM: Bishnu Mahato, CI: Carol Inskipp, GW: Geraldine Werhahn HC: Hathan Chaudhary; HSB: Hem Sagar Baral MC: Mary Crosby; MC: Mich Coker; NK: Naresh Kusi; PC: Phuleswar Chaudhary; PRL: Pema Rikzin Lama; RC: Ramgir Chaudhary; RK: Rupendra Karmacharya; RT: Raju Tamang, SBT: Som Bahadur Tamang, SGC: Som G.C., TLL: Tshiring Lhamu Lama; TRG: Tika Ram Giri

Compiled by Tika Giri and Hathan Chaudhary



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.

Editorial Board

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

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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. 400 for any SAARC nationals and equivalent Nepali rupees of US\$ 15.00 for others to join as Friends of BCN.

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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Prof. David Simmons, New Zealand
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नेपाल पंखी संरक्षण संघ

**Bird
Conservation
Nepal**

Established in 1982, Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) is the leading organisation in Nepal, focussing on conservation of birds, their habitats and sites. It seeks to promote interest in birds among the general public, encourage research on birds, identify major threats to birds' continued survival. As a result, BCN is the foremost scientific authority providing accurate information on birds and their habitats throughout Nepal. We provide scientific data and expertise on birds for the Government of Nepal (GoN) through the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and work closely in birds and biodiversity conservation throughout the country.

BCN is a membership-based organisation with a founding President, patrons, life members, ordinary members, friends of BCN and active supporters. Our membership provides strength to the society and is drawn from people of all walks of life from students, professionals and conservationists. Our members act collectively to set the organisation's strategic agenda.

We are committed to showing the value of birds and their special relationship with people. As such, we strongly advocate the need for peoples' participation as future stewards to attain long-term conservation goal.

As the Nepalese partner of BirdLife International, a network of more than 120 organisations around the world, BCN also works on a worldwide agenda to conserve the world's birds and their habitats.

For further information please contact:

Bird Conservation Nepal

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