



5th August, 2013

Statement by Her Majesty Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck

Queen of Bhutan

The Kingdom of Bhutan has inherited pristine ecosystems and natural resources. We must, as individuals, personally strive to preserve this endowment through our own sustainable actions. It is our responsibility to ensure that this rich biodiversity abounds for generations to come. I join the RSPN in its efforts of environmental conservation, which remains a pressing concern of our time, and encourage every citizen to embrace the path to a greener future.

Her Majesty Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck

Queen of Bhutan

Patron of Royal Society for Protection of Nature



Photo credits: RSPN Archives

Cover Photo: Tshewang Lhendup, RSPN

Editing: Tashi Phuntsho, RSPN

Design: Damcho Yonten & Sonam Rinzin, RSPN

Table of Contents

Message from the Chairperson	5
Message from the Executive Director	6
Our Board Directors	7
Human caused disturbances, a major threat driving the White-bellied Heron to Extinction	9
Widening knowledge on wintering Black-necked Cranes of Bhutan: Movement ecology and Dietary Composition	19
Global Water Partnership Bhutan	27
Mapping Perceptions: Conservation Social Sciences, Community Engagement, and Participatory Methods for Conservation	31
Environmental Education, Advocacy and Awareness	33
Sustainable Land Management project in Degela, Zhemgang.....	41
Working towards a Cleaner Chubachu Stream	45
REDD+ Capacity Building Project	49
Going Organic in Zhemgang and Chhukha	51
RSPN Membership	53



Message from the Chairperson

Cleaning the 'Chubachu stream' in Thimphu is symbolic of the various challenges and opportunities that define our work and generally the work of many other conservation organizations across the planet. For such initiatives to succeed, no matter how small or big, we must stay focused and committed to the cause and must appreciate and learn to partner with other organizations.

It is also Urgent! We are at a unique moment in human history, and the prevailing times call for greater collaboration and partnership amongst govts, CSOs, private sectors, international organizations, to collectively address the devastating impacts of climate change that are both local and transboundary in nature. Over the last year, RSPN made concerted efforts to expand its membership, diversify its partner organizations both in and outside the country and reached out to many, to capitalize on the prospects and potentials of partnership. We are happy to report that this effort yielded great results and on behalf of the board, I commend the RSPN leadership and team for all the achievements so far.

Continuing from the great work over the last few years, our fund-raising initiatives are also progressing immensely well. We have put in place, processes and procedures for higher fiduciary standards, transparency and accountability to manage the generosity of our donors for greater conservation impact. On behalf of the board and management, I would like to firstly offer our respects and gratitude to our patron, Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen for the continued inspiration and blessings. We would also like to thank all our Donors, members, partner organizations and well-wishers for their goodwill and support towards our conservation initiatives across the country. With Best Wishes to all, and Tashi Delek.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dechen Dorji'.

(Dechen Dorji)



Message from the Executive Director



As we bring out this annual report for the fiscal year 2018-2019, we are glad to present to you yet another productive and progressive great year. RSPN would like to present some of the major achievement and recognition as we complete 32 years of our service to environmental conservation.

We made major strides in our core focus areas, mainly in the field of community-based sustainable livelihood initiatives, Black-necked Crane (BNC) and White-bellied Heron (WBH) conservation, and environmental education program. Some of the major highlights are the institution of a Visitor Information Centre in Haa, tagging of WBH and BNC, construction of a better rehabilitation Centre for Karma, an injured BNC, and engagement of more than 1400 volunteers and members through our environmental education programs spread across the country.

As we draw close to the end of a fruitful financial year, I would like to thank our donors, stakeholders, members and RSPN board for their continued support and inspiration. We pledge to move forward towards achieving our mission of inspiring personal responsibility and active involvement in the protection of our environment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kinley Tenzin'.

(Kinley Tenzin, PhD)



OUR BOARD DIRECTORS



Dechen Dorji, Chairperson

Dechen Dorji is WWF's Country Representative for Bhutan. Prior to joining the WWF, he served as a Public Policy Researcher in the areas of social and welfare assistance for disadvantaged communities and students under His Majesty's Secretariat office. He has a Bachelors (hons) degree in Forestry from University of Wales, UK and a Master of Environmental Management degree from Yale University, USA. He started his career in the Forestry departments as a forestry and environment management planner. At the end of 1996, he moved to Khangma, Trashigang for seven years to work on the World Bank, SDC and IFAD funded regional forestry and agriculture development project covering the six eastern Dzongkhags. Mr. Dorji is also the Founding Director of Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environmental Research (UWICER) based in Bumthang, a project initiated as a tribute of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests during the Centenary Celebrations of the monarchy in 2008.



Dr. Pema Choephyel, Board Director

Dr. Pema Choephyel is the Director for Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation having joined the Fund in July 2010. He began his career with the Royal Civil Service Commission; as a civil servant he held various positions as the Principal at Royal Veterinary Institute, Department of Animal Husbandry, Pedagogic Head (VP) at the Natural Resources Training Institute, Chief Research Officer, Chief Extension Officer, Director at the Council of RNR Research of Bhutan and recently as an Advisor to the Bhutan Development Finance Corporation Limited. He has held various professional membership such as the Permanent Representative of World Meteorology Organization (2004-2007), member of the Project Steering Committee of various area Development Projects in Bhutan. (1997-2007), Board Director for Bhutan Development Finance Corporation Limited (2002-2007), Druk Seed Corporation, (2001-2007), Bhutan Agro Industry Limited (2001-2003), and Food Corporation of Bhutan. A graduate of Bombay Veterinary College, Bombay, India Dr. Pema Choephyel received his master's degree in Rural Development and Communication from Lincoln University, New Zealand in 1991.



Karma Tshering, Board Director

Karma Tshering is the Director General for Department of School Education, Ministry of Education. He started his career as the Assistant Planning Officer, Royal Institute of Management in 1987 and has been with the Royal civil service for over 25 years having served as the Lecturer and later as the Senior Lecturer at Royal Institute of Management, Deputy Director at National Employment Board, Director at Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, and most recently as the Director General at Royal Institute of Management. He is the Executive Board Member, AMDISA, and a Governing Board Member, SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC). He graduated with a Bachelor's degree in commerce from Sherubtse College in 1986 and received a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration from Cardiff Business School, UK in 1989 and a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) from Cardiff Business School, UK in 1990.



Lobzang Dorji, Board Director

Lobzang Dorji is the Director, Department of Forests and Park Services. He started his career as a Militia Officer with Royal Bhutan Army from January 1, 1991 till February 1995. For his services, he received the Druk Yugel Medal. On March 1, 1995, he joined Forest Resources Development Division, Department of Forest as a Forest Officer. He also served as Divisional Forest Officer at Thimphu and Samtse Division. From August 1, 2009 till July 31, 2014 he was sent on deputation to the Punatsangchu-1 Hydro-power Project as the Chief Environment Officer, after which he served as the Chief Forestry Officer with the Forest Resources Management Division, Department of Forests and Park Services till March 15, 2019. For his distinguished and meritorious services to the state, he was conferred the National Order of Merit Gold on December 17, 2017, by His Majesty the King of Bhutan.



Tashi, Board Director

Tashi joined His Majesty's Secretariat as Zimpon Wom in July 2009. He is on deputation from the Royal Audit Authority where he holds the post as Deputy Auditor General. Currently he looks after the Queens Project Office under His Majesty's Secretariat. Zimpon Wom Tashi obtained a Bachelor of Commerce from Sherubtse College in 1993 and is a finalist in Chartered Management Accountancy from the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, U.K.



Phub Dorji, Board Director

Phub Dorji is the Chief Executive Officer of Bhutan Development Bank Limited. He started his career at the Ministry of Economic Affairs as Coordinator for the Cottage, Small and Medium Industry (CSMI) development project. He was the Head of the Entrepreneurship Promotion Centre (EPC) under the Ministry of Economic Affairs when he was summoned to start a Research Centre as an extension to His Majesty The King's Secretariat in 2006. He later served as a Professional Changkarp to His Majesty the King.



Dr. Kinley Tenzin, Member Secretary

Dr. Kinley Tenzin served as the Program Director at Renewable Natural Resource Research and Development Center, Yusipang under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests before taking up the new responsibility as the Executive Director of the Royal Society for Protection of Nature. He went to University of the Philippine at Los Banos for B.Sc. in General Forestry and got M.Sc. in Resource Management from the University of Edinburgh in UK. He obtained his PhD in Forest Ecosystem Dynamics from University of Boku, Vienna, Austria in 2008. He started his career as Forestry Research Program Officer in RNR-RC, Jakar in March 1997. In 2005, he was transferred to RNR-RC, Yusipang as Deputy Chief Research Officer and back to RNR-RC, Jakar in the same capacity in 2009. Considering his capacity and vast experience in research, he was appointed as the Program Director at RNR-RC, Yusipang in 2010. Besides attending numerous national and international conferences, seminars and trainings, he has made several important publications.

**HUMAN-CAUSED DISTURBANCES,
A MAJOR THREAT DRIVING**

THE WHITE-BELLIED HERON TO

EXTINCTION





Rebecca
Pradhan



Indra Prasad
Acharja



Tshewang
Lhendup



Sonam
Tshering

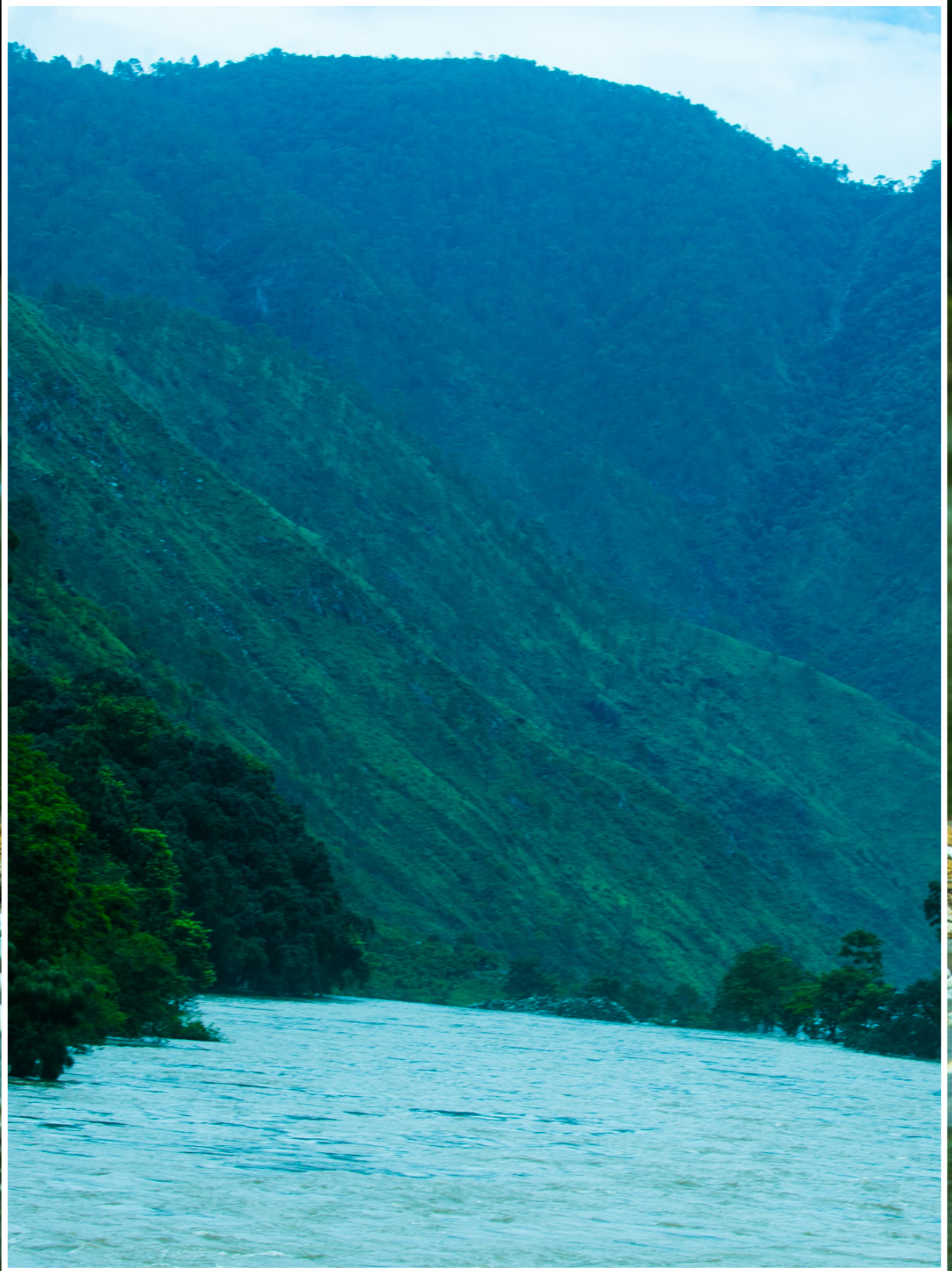
Before 2012, the distribution of the White-bellied Heron in Bhutan was assumed to be restricted to the freshwater river systems of temperate forest at an altitude range of 600–1200m, predominantly the Chirpine forest. Today, it is found both in temperate and mixed-broadleaved forests of two major river basins; Punatsangchhu and Mangdechhu, at an altitudinal range of 100–1500 m.

The distribution range of the bird has almost doubled in Bhutan with the recent sighting in Kurichhu and Drangmechhu basins. The nesting habitat has also expanded with the latest finding of successful breeding in broadleaved trees since 2018. In the last two years, 10 juveniles have successfully fledged from four nests on broadleaved species in both Punatsangchhu and Mangdechhu basins. Despite the expanding distribution range and discovery of new nesting habitats, the White-bellied Heron population is not increasing.

RSPN conducted the first comprehensive WBH population census in 2003. During the census, 14 birds were counted from five locations along the Punatsangchhu. For the next six consecutive years, the population and the number of new sites increased to an all-time high in 2009 with 30 birds counted from 11 locations. However, the apparent increase in population size was directly influenced by the discovery of additional birds in new habitats, while the total number of birds in each habitat remained same or had decreased.

Despite the revelation of birds from several new habitats in recent years and an additional 2–6 juveniles fledging annually, the population in Bhutan has remained at 22–30 individuals. RSPN's data indicate that the WBHs have reproduced 42 times from 24 nests producing at least 86 juveniles in the past seventeen years. But it is still a mystery as to why there is no overall increase in the wild population.







Although the occurrence records from lower regions of both the basins are increasing, the population in upper areas has declined gradually — notably in the habitats along Punatsangchhu basin, which were abundantly used before 2009 (Fig.1). Looking at the data, it is evident that the visible decline in population began in 2009, which coincides with the inception of two major hydro-power projects in Punatsangchhu basin. Breeding birds had abandoned almost all of the older nesting habitats, and also nests reuse has significantly decreased in recent years. No successful nests have been discovered in Phochhu, Zawa, Adha, Nangzhina, and Harachhu since 2015. These were once the most abundantly used nesting sites.

Looking at the population sizes in each locale over the past seventeen years, it is evident that human-caused disturbances are one of the major threats, driving the WBH to extinction. Research findings suggest that the WBHs are intolerant of disturbances brought about by activities such as rafting, picnicking, and other disturbances along the foraging sites. The local communities at Phochhu and Mochhu associate the decline in population to the increase in anthropogenic activities in the area in recent years. Although up to five WBHs were regularly sighted in Phochhu before 2012, only one is infrequently sighted today. Similarly, the Local Conservation Support Group (LCSG) member at Zawa attributes the drastic decrease in the number of WBH sightings to the road and bridge construction at Digchhu and surrounding areas.

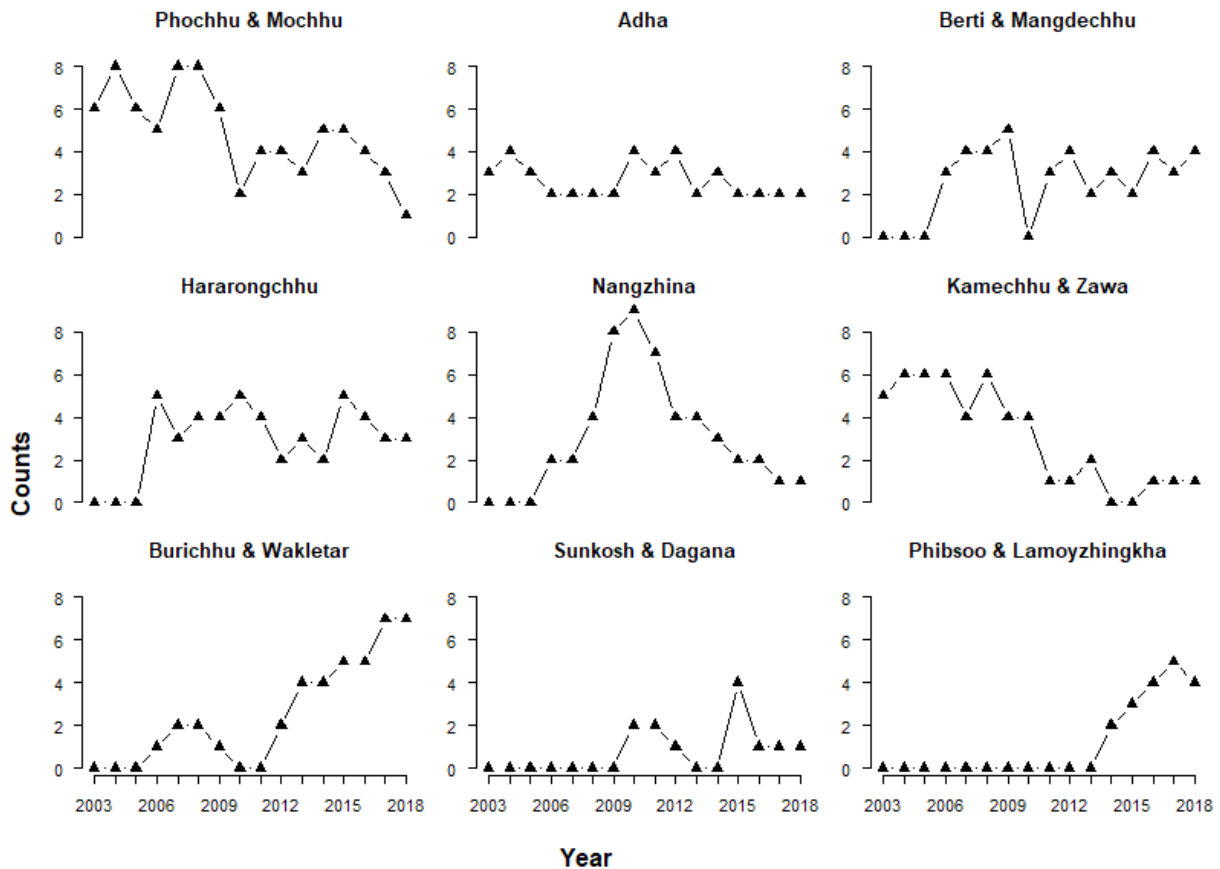



Figure 1: The White-bellied Heron population count and the trend in key foraging habitats in Bhutan for the past 16 years.

Likewise, the population in Adha and Harachhu has declined after the beginning of new road construction and mega construction work at the Harachhu-Punatsangchhu areas. Our records also show that at least three herons have died of electrocution from transmission lines since 2003. Forest fires are another direct threat to both breeding parents and juveniles. In 2016, an incubating pair abandoned the nest after a major forest fire outbreak in the area, and no active nest has been located there since.

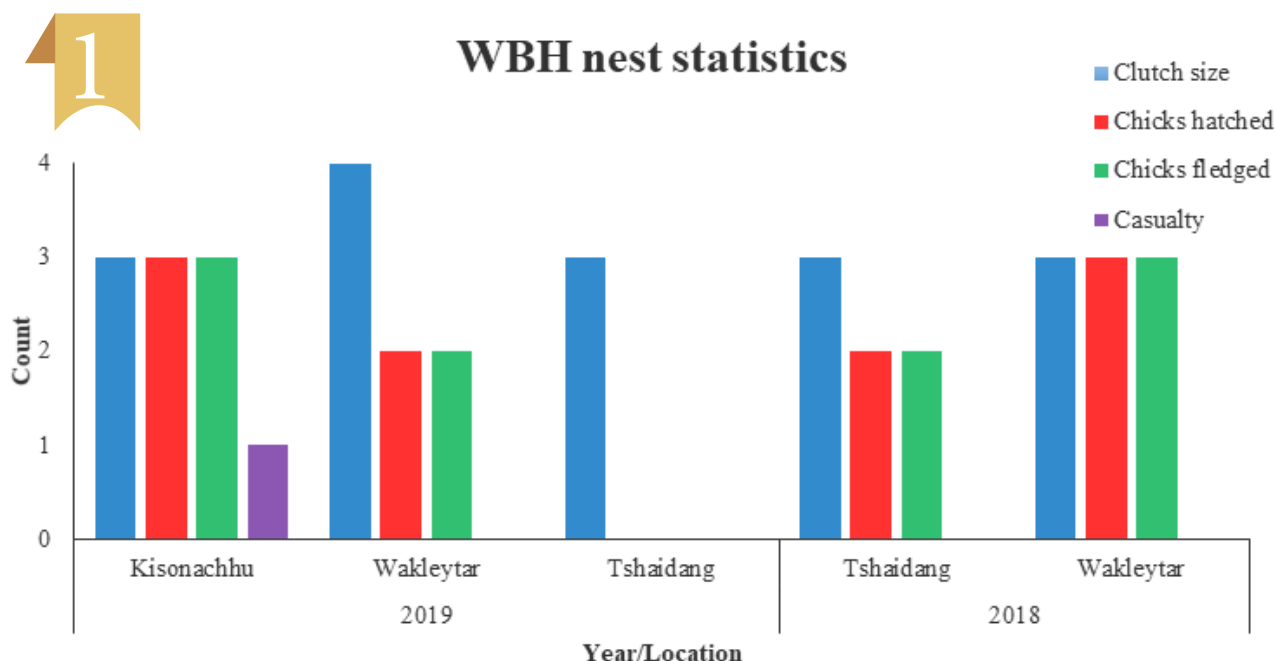


The background image is a composite. The left side shows a forest fire with bright orange and yellow flames rising from the ground. The right side shows a large, dark bird, possibly a pelican, in flight against a blue sky with some clouds. A semi-transparent white text box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing two paragraphs of text.

Overall, the WBH habitats are shrinking at an exponential rate and riverine habitats are transforming at an alarming pace due to developmental works. The fish population, on which the WBH depends are also under threat due to unsustainable and illegal harvesting. These are expected to impact resource availability and isolate one micro-population from another, which would affect breeding and genetic viability for the extremely low surviving population.

The future of this bird will be defined by what we do now. The time is running out, and if our priority is to save it, we should act now, collectively and aggressively. Although the committed conservation efforts have been able to maintain the population, the numbers have not increased. And, going through the data, it is evident that our priorities and actions are driving the decline in population. It is mainly because we have customized our river systems and wild habitats to best suit our needs, at the cost of verging threatened species to extinction. The only way forward is to rethink our priorities, educate and empower the people and share conservation ownership with a single shared vision.

Activity highlights: White-bellied Heron (*Ardea insignis*) Conservation program supported by Mava Foundation, NatGeo, Synchronicity Earth and BirdLife



Nest statistics

Three to five line nests have been recorded from 2003 to 2019 with three-five chicks fledging from it annually. With this trend, the in-situ WBH population is expected to increase annually. However, the population remained inconsistent (24-30 individuals) despite our continued efforts. In most cases, the nest building is challenged by the natural calamities like forest fires, strong wind/storm and sometimes predation by the natural predators. The WBHs are usually solitary birds and build nests on tall chir pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) trees (Pradhan, 2011), overseeing the river. However, since 2018, few of the nests were built on broad leaved trees. Initially, three nests were discovered;

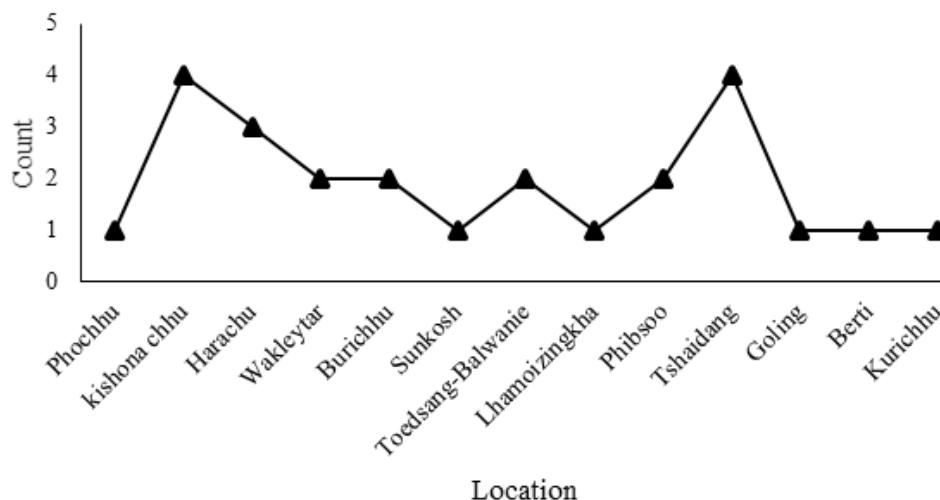
two nests were located along Punatsangchhu and one at Tshaidang, Mangdechhu river basin.

However, the nest at Tshaidang could not succeed due to natural factors. Two additional nests were located in 2019, one at Kisonachhu and another at Wakleytar. Both the nests were located during the annual population survey 2019. Out of four eggs laid at Wakleytar, only two hatched, while all the three eggs successfully hatched from the Kisonachhu nest. Both the juveniles at Wakleytar fledged successfully on June 8, and the three juveniles at Kisonachhu fledged on June 29, 2019. In 2018, two nests were also sighted along the same river basin and five juveniles fledged from the nests.



2

WBH distribution 2019



**Assessment
of population
size and
distribution
for 2019**

The annual White-bellied heron population survey for 2019 was conducted for five days from March 2 to March 6. The survey was conducted with support from local conservation support groups, forestry officials and many other enthusiast birders across the country. Among many Probable habitats, two major river basins; Punatsangchu and Mangdechu and their tributaries below 1500m were intensively surveyed. A total of 25 White-bellied Heron individuals were recorded from 13 locations during the survey.

More than 40% of the current global population of WBH exist in Bhutan. The total population is estimated to be between 14 and 30 individuals based on the annual population count maintained by the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) from 2003-2019. The total population count for 2018 was 24.

3



Awareness programs

Awareness program to the community people in the key WBH areas is one of the major activities implemented to address and bring people in the conservation on board. Through awareness, people are well informed about conserving the species, its ecology, habitats and foraging behaviors. Five community awareness programs were conducted in the last one year. A total of 193 participants took part in the program conducted at different WBH sites. The majority (61%, 112 participants) of the participants were male, while 39% (73 participants) constituted of female representatives.

Tagging of the juveniles

RSPN in collaboration with the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environmental Research (UWICER) tagged three WBH juveniles at Kisonachhu, Tsirang on May 14, 2019. The joint program was led by Dr. Sherub, an ornithologist from UWICER. The three juveniles tagged (Fig: 5) on May 14 were named as Sangay (Buddha, Tag ID: 5274) chhoe (Dharma, Tag ID: 5275) and Gaedhen (Sangha, Tag ID: 5284), referring to the Triple Gem in the religious context of Bhutan. The three juveniles were approximately 40-45 days old when tagged on May 14. The rationale for tagging was to understand the post fledging



activity of WBH. The tagging materials were supported by Maxplanck Institute for ornithology (MPIO), a conservation organization based in Germany.



Habitat inventory and finding nesting sites is a major component of this project and is integral to the success of ex-situ programs. The habitat inventory helps to assess the potential areas where the captive bred herons can be released in the future. Within the project term, two potential habitats were assessed along the Kuri-Gongri Basin

Habitat inventory

in the east and Khar stream in the southern part of the country. The two areas along with other existing habitats were rigorously surveyed.

A single WBH was also sighted at Kurichhu in October 9, 2018 by Pema Tobgay, Park Ranger, Phrumsengla National Park, Lingmithang. Consequent to the sighting, the RSPN WBH team visited the site on October 23 to verify its presence and assess the surrounding environment.

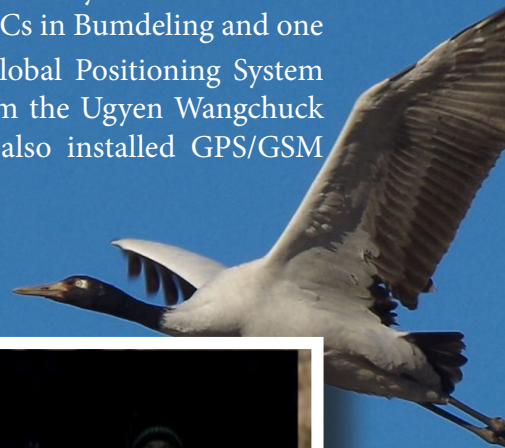
The team monitored the WBH feeding in that area for three days along with the park ranger and confirmed the area as a new habitat for WBH in Bhutan. Currently there are 13 confirmed habitats with one to four WBH individuals residing in each habitat.

Widening knowledge on wintering Black-necked Cranes of Bhutan: *Movement ecology and dietary composition*



Jigme Tshering

Background: Understanding the Black-necked Crane (BNC) movement ecology, habitat preferences, and diet composition enables actors to make informed planning and conservation efforts. Movement ecologies are studied using satellite transmitters attached to the Black-necked Cranes. The first movement study of wintering Black-necked Cranes in Bhutan was conducted in the late 1990s. Researchers from the International Crane Foundation (ICF) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN) affixed leg Push to Talk (PTT) transmitters on two BNCs in Bumdeling and one in Phobjikha. In 2005, RSPN along with Japanese experts attached Global Positioning System (GPS) tags in Phobjikha on five BNCs. Following that, researchers from the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environmental Research (UWICER) also installed GPS/GSM transmitters on 20 BNCs in Bhutan.





While substantial data were generated from this research, however, there still existed data gaps in the movements of BNCs, owing to technology limitations.

Significant advancements have been achieved in the movement studies of biodiversity on earth- especially for avian movement research. Using the latest technologies, became a necessity to carry out in depth study of the cranes in Bhutan.

RSPN in partnership with the UWICER, Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary, ICF, Crane Conservation Germany and NABU embarked on studying the migratory patterns, behavior and dietary composition of the Black-necked Cranes in Bhutan.



Legend

Phobjikha

- Anneguntera(6602)
- Chimi(6604)
- Wangchen(6603)

Bumdeling

- Dorji 6608
- Karma 6606
- Samten 6607

GPS Tagging

Six BNCs were tagged with GPS-GSM-GPRS-multi sensor solar powered tags in Bumdeling and Phobjikha. The BNCs were caught using loop snares adapted from local capture methods using locally available materials. In Phobjikha, three cranes, including a juvenile, were tagged with the GPS tags and color banded with individual identification color combinations. Preliminary analysis shows the wintering cranes of Phobjikha used the age old migratory route along the Wangdue, Punakha and Gasa valleys to get to their summer and breeding grounds in the Tibetan Autonomous Region in China.

CHINA

NEPAL



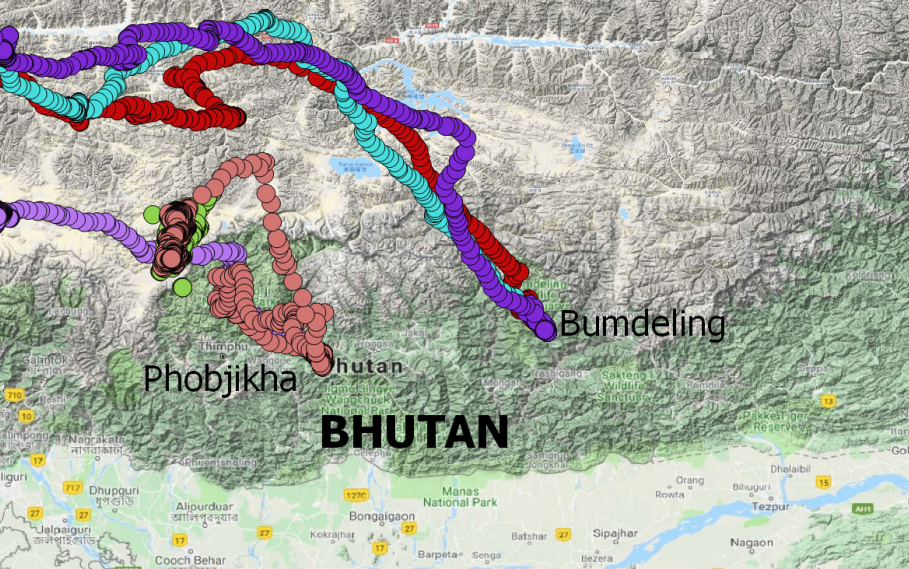


Tag No.	Name	Age	Weight netto (kg)	Tarsus (cm)	Wing (cm)	Beak (cm)	Ring detail
6602	Annea guentera	Adult	6,3	24,0	62,0	12,2	YR-RBu
6603	WangC	Immature	6,08	26,1	61.5	x	RY-GW
6604	Sonamw	Adult	5,97	24,1	61,0	x	RY-BuW

Tag No.	Lat	Long	Habitat	Date	Time	Ringer
6602	27.45666	90.18539	Roost	09.02.2019	1800	S. Sherub
6603	27.48858	90.15259	Roost	25.01.2019	18:10	G. Nowald
6604	27.48858	90.15259	Roost	25.01.2019	18:00	G. Nowald

There are two main sites the cranes used, namely, Duoqing lake and Chamling lake with approximately 110 Kms and 219 Kms respectively, north-west of Phobjikha.

The tagged cranes of Bumdeling flew further north and west, as compared to the cranes of Phobjikha, covering more than 800 Kms. Comprehensive analysis will be carried out upon the completion of the Autumn migration of these birds to Bhutan.



Dietary Study

At present, knowledge of the dietary habits of BNCs and winter dietary composition is very limited in Bhutan. By understanding dietary composition of the cranes, conservation and management of foraging habitats can be enhanced. In the beginning of 2019, field staffs were deployed to record feeding habits and sites of wintering cranes in Bumdeling. Two methods, videography and fecal sample collection, were used. Five minute duration videos were documented of BNC individual feeding and foraging in various foraging sites, and about five kilogram fecal samples were collected from foraging and roosting grounds in the Bumdeling valley. Data collection will be carried out for the second year (beginning of 2020) to gather more information.



Visitors at the BNCVC, Gangtey-Phobjikha



Santa Lal Gajmer

	Month	Number of Visitors
1	July 2018	538
2	August 2018	562
3	September 2018	1150
4	October 2018	2678
5	November 2018	2772
6	December 2018	1572
7	January 2019	478
8	February 2019	847
9	March 2019	1658
10	April 2019	2237
11	May 2019	1696
12	June 2019	931
Total		17119





Karma, the injured Black-necked Crane will be moved into his new home this September. The new aviary was built with the support from various donors.

GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP BHUTAN



Deki Choden

GWP Bhutan is a consortium of water professionals and concerned individuals from various sections of the society working towards achieving the goals of IWRM. It is a non-profit entity affiliated to Global Water Partnership (GWP). The Global Water Partnership (GWP) is an international network created to foster an integrated approach to water resources management (IWRM). The vision of Global Water Partnership (GWP) is a water secure world. Its mission is to support the sustainable development and management of water resources at all levels.

Bhutan Water Partnership brings about ensuring the application of IWRM principles for the holistic and sustainable management of water resources across Bhutan in pursuit of Gross National Happiness. BhWP affirms to create awareness and advocacy on IWRM, support communities in securing water for livelihood and promote research and development on water.

Bhutan Water Partnership brought about accomplishing the main activities at regional levels through various outreach programs implemented on diverse themes, climate resilience, sensitization and advocacy on Integrated Water Resources Management.

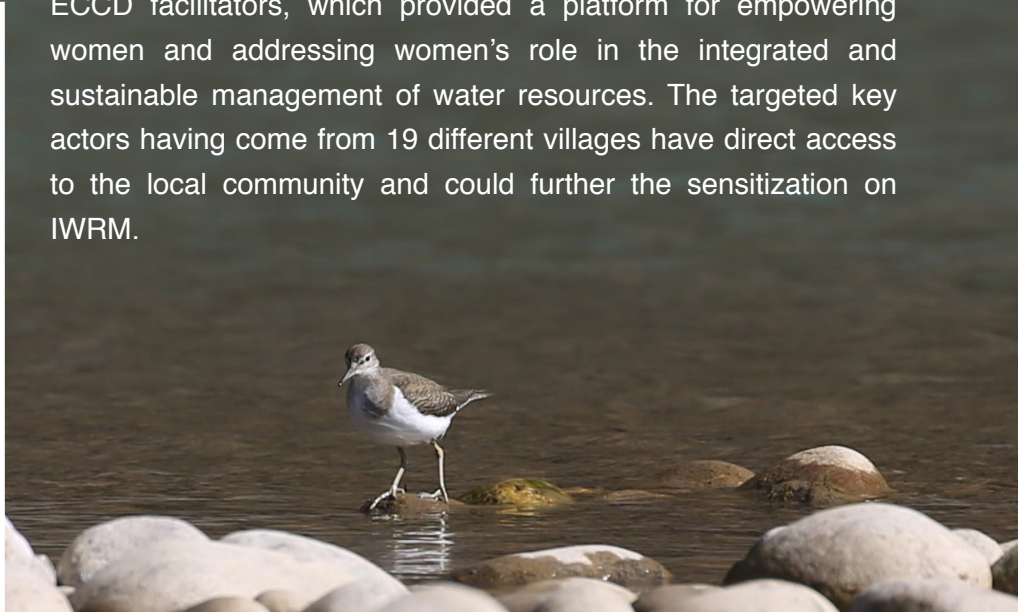


THE GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP (GWP) IS AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK CREATED TO FOSTER AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (IWRM).

IWRM sensitization and education program for schools, local government leaders and other relevant institutions (June 8, 2019 - Punakha)

GWP fosters the implementation of the “IWRM” prioritizing in securing water through the governance and management of water resources for sustainable and equitable development. Accordingly, BhWP’s sensitization program aimed at sensitizing the community in Punakha Dzongkhag on water management and simultaneously introducing the climate resilient convention to address water scarcity in the communities through water resource management. The targeted

key actors were the Non-Formal Education Instructors and the ECCD facilitators, which provided a platform for empowering women and addressing women’s role in the integrated and sustainable management of water resources. The targeted key actors having come from 19 different villages have direct access to the local community and could further the sensitization on IWRM.



Initiating community based climate resilience water project

The survey, conducted by Jigme Khesar Strict Nature Reserve, Haa evinced that Potoloe and Tshome Pang water sources, on which the communities depend on for their sustainable livelihood, were on a decline.

Potoloe water source declination is caused by the increase in the population and the effect of climate change. During the interview, the construction of the High Way to Paro from Haa via Chelela and the felling of trees at the upper recharge further deteriorated the water source.

**652.11
Acres**

water catchment area





The area of 263.9 hac in Potoloe Water Source was identified as a water catchment area; the water flow is guided to the trenches and traps the surface water flow along the roadside. The intervention, thinning of the pine stands was appropriate forest management practice to enhance the growth and development of a forest stand.

The Tshome pang spring water is discharged from the rock and had been the primeval source. Since 2017, there has been no discharge of water from that source due to a disruption caused by the constructions and the felling of the trees on the actual charge zone. Such circumstance of the Tshome pang spring water entailed the appropriate landscape level assessment.

Mapping Perceptions: Conservation Social Science, Community Engagement, and Participatory Methods for Conservation



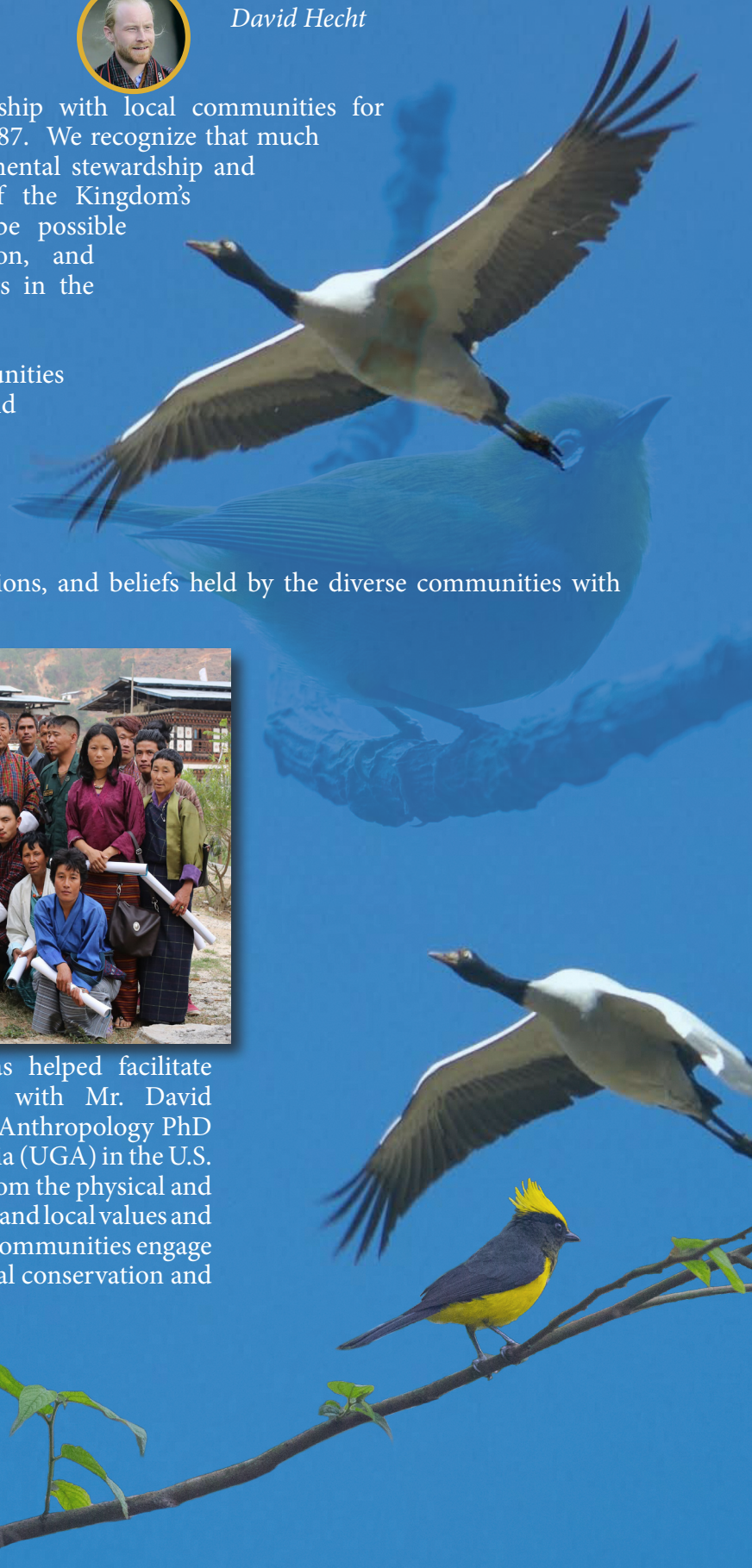
David Hecht

RSPN has been working in partnership with local communities for conservation since our founding in 1987. We recognize that much of the work we do to foster environmental stewardship and participation in the management of the Kingdom's environmental heritage would not be possible without the involvement, integration, and insight from our community partners in the places we work.

In order to better understand the communities we work with in addition to living and working in close proximity with our project officers, our program and research division aims to employ methods and tools from the conservation social sciences to document community values, perceptions, and beliefs held by the diverse communities with which we partner.



Over the past four years, RSPN has helped facilitate collaborative ethnographic research with Mr. David Hecht, an Integrative Conservation & Anthropology PhD candidate from the University of Georgia (UGA) in the U.S. In his work, Mr. Hecht uses methods from the physical and socio-cultural sciences to better understand local values and religious beliefs that influence the way communities engage with ideas and politics of environmental conservation and protected area management.





Sketch mapping with community partners to talk about White-bellied Heron sightings, changing perceptions of value and stewardship, and emerging threats to WBHs. 12 sketch maps in Balwani, Berti, Toed Sang, and Gholing were created.

Created five participatory maps aimed at highlighting the relationships between BNC habitats, sites of ecological/social change, and socio-cultural protected areas. In this context, the participatory maps help facilitate group discussion about landscape-scale values and beliefs in sacred natural sites.



Mapping the territories of local deities (neydah zhida, yulha zhida, tsen) means mapping areas in the landscape that are traditionally governed by strict social guidelines of entry and resource use. Many of these forests, lakes, boulders, and trees that are associated with revered teachers of Buddhism or protective guardian deities influence the effectiveness and by-in of a conservation ethic and protected area management, for species of conservation concern like BNCs & WBHs, and the people that make these regions their homes.



Environmental Education, Advocacy and Awareness



Khachi Wangmo

The Environmental Education, Advocacy and Awareness program has always been the flagship program at RSPN. The Environmental Education program through establishment of Nature Club in the schools was first initiated by RSPN and now institutionalized as one of the mandatory co-curricular program in all the schools. Environmental Education program in schools was further strengthened in the schools by introducing the Environmental Science as a curriculum in the formal education sector in Bhutan.

RSPN has completed the project 'Environment Education through Haa Visitor Center' in Haa supported by KNCF and currently implementing the project in Gangtey-Phobjikha valley "Environmental Education and Public Awareness Project on Biodiversity conservation in Asia Pacific Region – "SATO YAMA UNMI" Project" funded by Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund, and with Japan Environmental Education Forum (JEEF) and BirdLife International Tokyo as international partners.

Environmental Education through Haa Visitor Information Center

The model of imparting knowledge and awareness education from a visitor center is a replication of the Black-necked Crane Visitor Center adopted in Gangtey-Phobjikha. The Black-necked Crane Visitor Center in Gangtey-Phobjikha receives about 7,000 visitors annually. Inspired by the success of Black-necked Crane Visitor Center, RSPN in 2017 started replicating the same model in Haa which was welcomed by the District Administration.

The center built in partnership with the District Administration and relevant stakeholders, and with the technical support of the JICA, will cater to all visitors (Local, Regional and International).



Project Achievements

Development of Nublang and Yak models

Life-size *Nublang* and *Yak* models were developed and are displayed inside the information center.

Nublang:

Nublang is the native cattle breed of Bhutan, with its original home tract in Haa Sangbeykha of Western Bhutan. The word *Nub* literally means west and *Lang* is a general term used to describe male cattle. The terminology, therefore, links its origin to the western part of the kingdom. Locally, the breeding bull is called as *Pha-lang*, *pha* indicating paternal lineage. The female counterpart of the breed is called as Thrabum.

Yak:

Yak is a large domesticated wild ox with shaggy hair, humped shoulders, and large horns, used in Haa as a pack animal and for its milk, meat, etc. People in Haa handles yak as an essential source of livelihood for nomadic communities in the high mountains.

Today, the population is decreasing because of developmental activities, insufficient labor, less support for herding communities, the younger generation opting out, with more children attending schools.

Development of business plan for the visitor center

Haa Visitor Information Center was developed with the expectation to self-sustain through various programs conducted through the center. Therefore, a business plan was developed through the support of JICA supported project and in consultation with the communities and all other stakeholders.

Development of the bylaw

Considering the importance of having a legal document to keep the visitor center functioning as an entity, a bylaw was developed in close consultation with the management team of the center and other relevant stakeholders.



Refreshers training program for the communities

Refresher courses were provided to the local guides, Homestay owners, souvenir development group and the community based sustainable tourism management team.

1. Local guides: local guides play important role in sustaining the community based tourism program in the community; therefore, we have conducted a refresher course for the guides in the valley; however, and the participation from the communities was not as expected due to low level of tourism activities in the valley.
2. Two rounds of refresher course were convened for the souvenir group members focusing mainly on the production of souvenirs, labeling, packaging and pricing of the finished products.



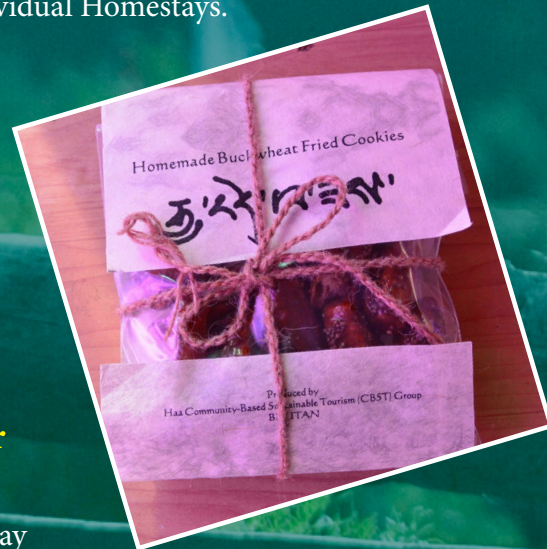
3. Through the community based sustainable tourism program of RSPN about 20 Homestays have started operating their business. Homestays are one of the major accommodation for the tourist as district administration has already imposed moratorium for construction of hotels and resorts in the valley. To ensure quality and effective service delivery, the Homestay owners were re-briefed and trained on the standards and cleanliness, safety and waste management .





Skills Development for community based sustainable tourism group and Center Management Group

The Community-based Sustainable Tourism management team was trained on the importance of basic record and book keeping. The members were trained in aspects such as membership registration, membership fee collection, issues of money receipt, updating Cash Books, attendance of members during meetings and other group activities, writing minutes of the meetings, maintaining stock register, timely documentation and filing of documents, maintenance of Guest Register and Guest Feedback Forms both at the Visitor Information Center and individual Homestays.

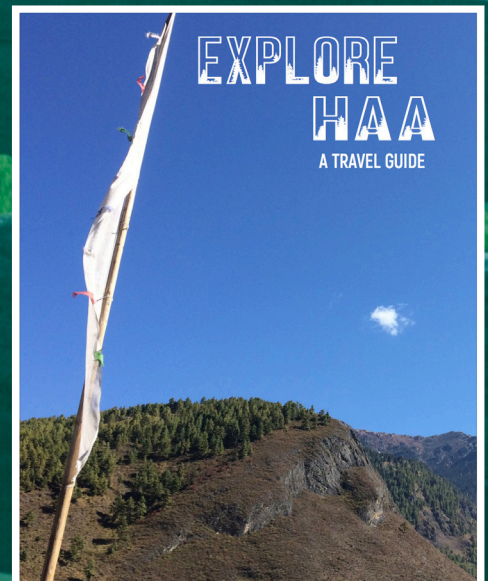


Outreach Program through Visitor center

More than 25 participants, including Homestay owners, local guides and other stakeholders involved in the community-based sustainable tourism program in Haa participated in the Education and awareness program. The program focused on community based environmental issues such as Waste, Climate Change, Water management, health and sanitation and forest management.

Development of the visitor guidebook

A visitor guidebook titled "Explore Haa - A Travel Guide Book" consisting of comprehensive documentation of the culture & historical sites, information on flora and fauna and other tourism products was developed. The book will be sold at the center to raise the fund for enhancing other eco-tourism activities.



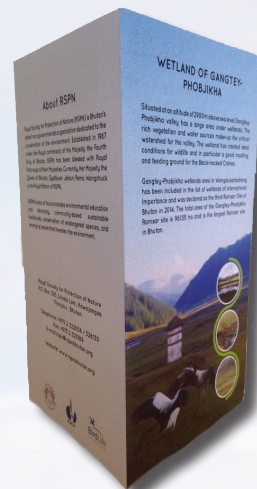
Activiyy highlights from the EEA Project in Gangtey-Phobjikha



Tsheten Dorji



Tashi Phuntsho



EEA materials about wetlands and its importance were developed



Consultation workshop for the development of environmental education reference materials in Punakha, (January14-18,2019)

Local leaders takes action towards waste management for the Black-necked Cranes

Gangtey-Phobjikha valley, the largest high altitude wetland in Bhutan is the largest habitat for the Black-necked Cranes, and is one of the important ecosystem areas in the country. The vast wetland in the middle of the valley is highly sensitive to any human induced changes that may come with the socio-economic development activities and population growth.



While waste programs were started as early as 2003, littering and waste management have become a serious issue in the valley. Therefore on June 30, Heads (Gups) from Local Government Offices, Schools, Monastic Institutions, Business Community and Staffs from RSPN initiated a daylong cleaning campaign at the landfill. The campaign aimed to educate the local leaders about waste management and was a testament to their commitment to tackle waste issues.

The waste, mostly consisted of pet bottles, plastics, rubber boots, tins, diapers, old clothes, etc. Recyclable waste were segregated at the landfill and a truck load of it was handed over to scrap dealer based in Bajo town at Wangdue.

A seven-minute video documentary titled “Echoes of the Wetlands” was produced





Quiz competition at Bayta Primary School in
Observation of World Environment Day

Observing World Environment Day with Ramachen Primary School, Bayta Primary School and Phobjikha Central School



Sustainable land management project in Degela, Zhemgang



Narayan Ghalley



Tsheten Dorji

RSPN with fund support from GEF/Small Grants Program(SGP), UNDP is currently implementing climate resilient sustainable land management to enhance food security.

The two year project is expected to be completed by the end of 2019. The project has benefited 55 households of Degela Chiwog under Bardo Gewog.



Achievements under the project

Land management program

Land degradation is one of the pressing issues of the farmers of Degela chiwog. Land degradation in the chiwog is aggravated by the landscape and topography of the place. As land management programs were supported through similar projects in the past, the SGP

project aims to upscale the initiative by building capacity of farmers. At present, stone bunding and hedges plantation are two preferred land management techniques carried out in Degela.

Under this project, two major land

management programs were organized during which a total of 40 households was benefited through the stone banding program. 40 acres of land were managed through stone terracing and 13 acres of land through hedgerow plantation.

Material and cash incentives were also provided to farmers as per the Agricultural Land Development Guidelines, 2017 which has significantly helped in the achievement of the project target.



Solar electric fencing

With the objective to reduce human-wildlife conflict and improve food security, a total of 67 acres of land was fenced with solar electric fences with the support from District and Gewog administration. The beneficiaries were trained in the operation and maintenance of the fence.



Horticulture program

Under the program 800 Japanese varieties of avocado seedling were distributed to the community with each household receiving around 15 seedlings.

Green house program

Five farmers' group mostly comprising of women members was supported with the installation of greenhouse and were provided with a green house, watering can, drip irrigation equipment and vegetable seeds. The beneficiaries were also trained on the operation and maintenance of the Greenhouse with the technical support from Rural Development Training Center (RDTC).

The farmers have already started to grow and sell tomatoes, chillies, spinach raised from the nursery in the greenhouse.





Working towards a cleaner Chubachu stream



Deki Dema

A rapid increase in the socioeconomic activities in Bhutan has resulted in massive pollution of streams, rivers and other water bodies. Like many other streams and rivers in the country, Chubachu stream in the capital city, Thimphu is also one of the grossly contaminated streams.

Concerned and with an objective to improve the health of the stream, the National Environment Commission Secretariat in partnership with Bhutan Red Cross Society, Thimphu Thromde, RSPN and Clean Bhutan adopted the stream (with different stretches allocated to the organizations living along it) on March 22, 2017.

Following the adoption of the half kilometer stretch of the stream, RSPN and the partners have carried out 20 cleaning campaigns.





A waste exhibition was also held in partnership with Jigme Losel Primary School.

Water tests conducted in collaboration with Royal Centre for Disease Control (RCDC) in Serbithang reveal gross pollution with high content of E. coli (*Escherichia coli*).



There are over **30** temporary toilets, built along the stream.



2,269.6

kilograms of waste collected from the eight cleanings held from July 2018 to June 2019.

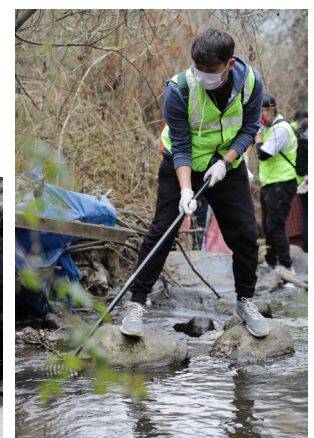
More than **30** households, including construction workers residing near the buffer of the stream were educated on the consequences of improper waste management on human health and the environment.



We acknowledge the following partners for supporting us in improving the health of Chubachhu Stream.

1. Ministry of Health
2. Anti-Corruption Commission
3. National Land Commission Secretariat
4. Faculty of Traditional Medicine
5. Bhutan Toilet Organization
6. Royal Monetary Authority
7. WWF Bhutan Program
8. Royal Audit Authority
9. Royal University of Bhutan
10. JICA Volunteers
11. Six Senses, Thimphu
12. UNDP Bhutan
13. RSPN Members
14. iBEST Institute
15. Athang Training Academy
16. Royal Centre for Disease Control
17. REWA-Care Bhutan
18. Y-VIA, Royal Thimphu College

20
cleaning campaigns



REDD+ CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

Narayan Ghalley



The Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) with fund support from Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), World Bank and project managed by Tebtebba Foundation, an NGO based in Phillippines, implemented phase II REDD+ capacity building project in Zhemgang. The current project is in continuation of the past REDD+ capacity building project for forest dependent communities in Buli.

The project began in January 2019 and will be completed by August 2019. 13 Community Forests (CF) under Zhemgang Dzongkhag was benefited through training and awareness programs.

OBJECTIVES



To prepare the indigenous people of Buli to engage in REDD+ benefits sharing and carbon accounting program through capacity building programs.



Build a local knowledge-base to inform REDD+ benefit sharing and carbon accounting programs in the future.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

BASLINE STUDY REPORT ON THE STATUS OF AGRICULTURE YIELD, FOREST, SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION AND BIODIVERSITY IN THE CONTEXT OF REDD+



ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PROTECTION OF NATURE
JUNE 2019

Baseline study report on the status of agriculture yield, forest, socioeconomic situation and biodiversity in the context of REDD+ for the project in Buli, Zhemgang developed.



FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR ECO-TOURISM OPPORTUNITY IN BULI UNDER NANGKHOR GEWOG IN ZHEMGANG DZONGKHAG
STAKEHOLDER VALIDATION ON ECO-TOURISM PRODUCTS

Feasibility of eco-tourism in Buli assessed and validated.



Awareness of REDD+ carbon benefit conducted in 13 Community Forests under five gewogs of Zhemgang.



Carbon Stock Assessment in two Community Forests of Buli under Zhemgang Dzongkhag carried out to calculate carbon stock and carbon emission from the CF.



Forest resource assessment for 2 community forest in Buli completed, which complemented in the revision of management plans of CF.



Carbon accounting training conducted in 13 Community Forests under five gewogs of Zhemgang.



Three days Knowledge sharing workshop on REDD+ organized with an objective to bring together all the relevant project stakeholders (government representative, community representative, local government, CSOs and organization involved in REDD+) to share experiences, good practices and lesson learned, and enhance REDD+ knowledge among stakeholders.



540 members (224 Males, 316 Females) from 13 CF participated during the awareness and training program.

GOING ORGANIC IN ZHEMGANG AND CHHUKHA

Dhendup Wangchuk



Tsheten Dorji



The Royal Society for Protection of Nature with technical support from Organic Denmark is implementing the project, “Empower small scale Bhutanese farmers to increase food security and sustainable livelihood through agro-ecological farming and food system development” in Chhukha and Zhemgang Dzongkhags. The project is supported by the Civil Society in Development (CISU), Denmark.

The main objective of the project is to contribute towards Bhutan’s vision of going 100% organic by fostering efficient and sustainable livelihood strategies by integrating the principles of agro-ecological farming and ecosystem management among small scale Bhutanese farmers. The project began in January 2018 and will end in December 2019.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS



Since its inception in January 2018, the project formed 14 farmers family learning group in 2 Dzongkhags. In Chukha, Bayul Kunza and Gedaphu under Bongo gewog were selected as the pilot villages.

While in Zhemgang, Berti under Trong gewog and Dakpay, Tali and Kikhar under Nangkhon gewog were selected as pilot villages. One youth cooperatives called Khengrig Namsum is also included in the project.



The primary activity of the project is to build the capacity of farmers and develop a participatory extension module. Accordingly, 14 farmer facilitators were trained twice (in June 2018 and October 2018) at the Rural Development Training Centre (RDTC) in Zhemgang.

The facilitators were trained on the concept of organic agriculture and its benefits. They were also trained in various organic techniques such as swale, preparation of organic pesticides, manure, compost, companion cropping and many more.



After the training from RDTC, facilitators along with the project officers further trained the respective groups in Zhemgang and Chukha. A total of 117 households was trained in basic organic agriculture technologies.

Among the techniques learned from the training, companion cropping, mulching and composting were most commonly adopted by the farmers of both the project areas. Farmers of both the project areas have established 100 percent vegetable gardens.



Farmers of Zhemgang have already started to sell the vegetables earning approximately around Nu. 10,000 in the season. Farmers of Tali also recognizes the importance of agro-forestry and horticulture through the training and have started the plantation of Kiwi and Avacado at large.

Farmers of Bayul Kunza and Gedaphu under Chukha have registered as cooperatives under Department of Marketing Cooperatives under MoAF.

RSPN

MEMBERSHIP



148

INDIVIDUAL
MEMBERS

59

JUNIOR
MEMBERS

22

FOREIGN
MEMBERS

19

INSTITUTIONAL
MEMBERS

248

TOTAL MEMBERS



September 11, 2018
Wild Wisdom Quiz
Competition



November 11, 2018
Hike in Gangtey
Nature Trail



March 22, 2019
Waste exhibition in Thimphu
(World Water Day)



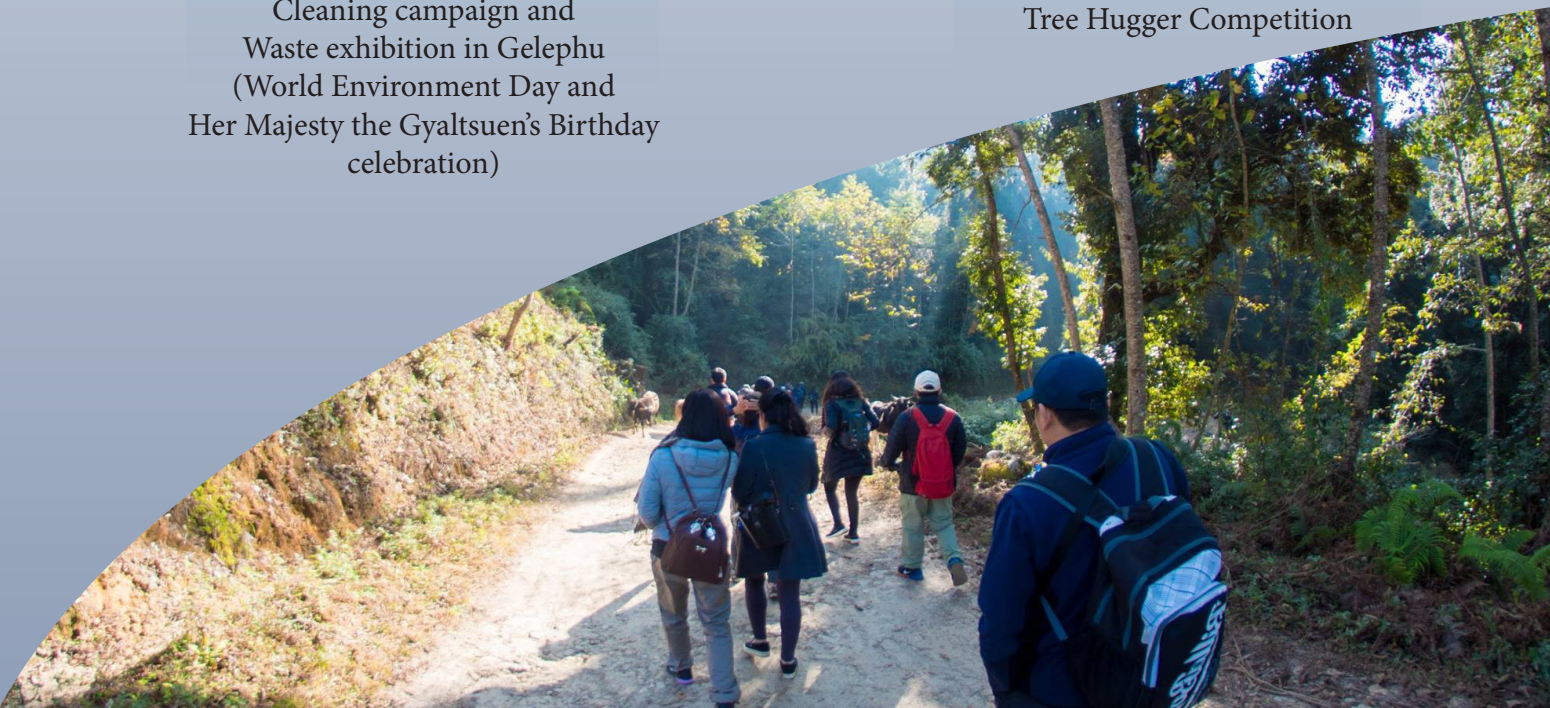
June 5, 2019
Art Competition in Gelephu
(World Environment Day)



June 4 - 5, 2019
Cleaning campaign and
Waste exhibition in Gelephu
(World Environment Day and
Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen's Birthday
celebration)



August 21, 2018
Tree Hugger Competition



OUR TEAM



Dr. Kinley Tenzin
Executive Director



Rinchen Wangmo
Program Director



Rebecca Pradhan
Sr. Ecologist



Dr. Lungten Norbu
Specialist



Sonam Jamtsho
Chief, FID



Tshering Dorji
Chief, ADM/HRD



Tashi Phuntsho
Chief, CMD



Tsheten Dorji
Chief, CSLD



Jigme Tshering
Dy. Chief Project Officer



Indra Prasad Acharja
Research Officer



Deki Dema
Sr. Communications Officer



Namita Kafley
Sr. Finance Officer



Narayan Ghalley
Project Officer



Dhendup Wangchuk
Project Officer



Khachi Wangmo
Project Officer



Damcho Yonten
ICT Officer



Sonam Rinzin
Sr. Communications Officer



Tshewang Lhendup
Research Officer



Dechen Tshomo
Asst. Finance Officer



Sonam Tshering
Sr. Research Asst.



Sonam Wangmo
Sr. ADM/HR Asst.



Santalal Gajmer
BNCVC Manager



Tshering Zangmo
Center Assistant



Kinley Gyem
Receptionist



Tenzin Nima
Driver



Tshering Dhendup
Sr. Driver



Kelzang Tobgay
Caretaker



Dechen Wangmo
Cleaner



Tenzin Wangmo
Cleaner

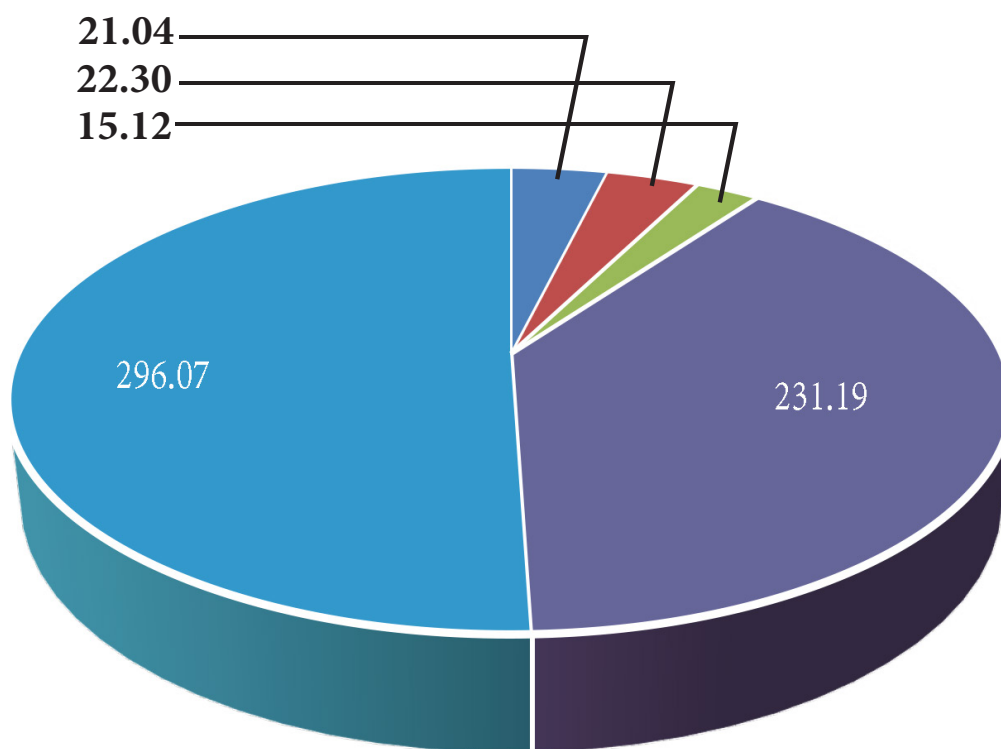
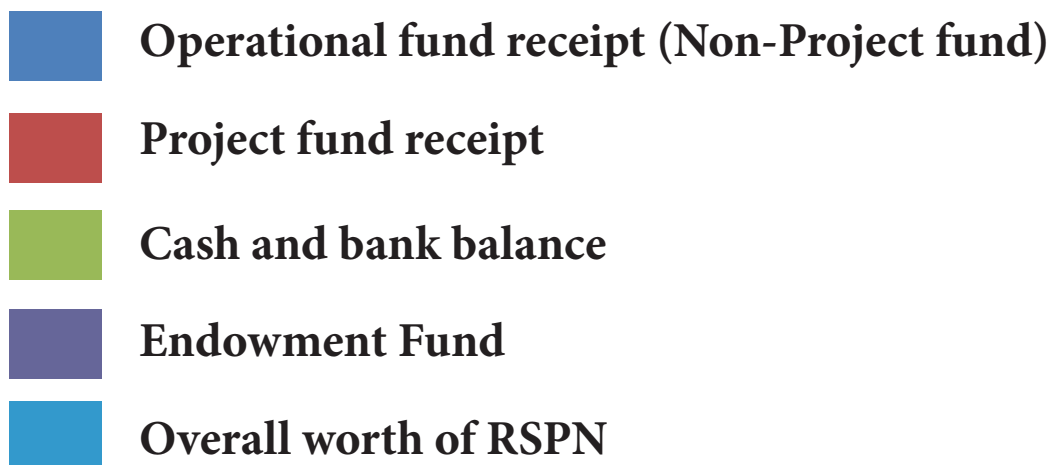


Dawa Mith Lepcha
Caretaker



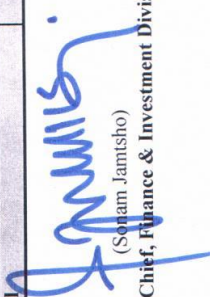
Norbu Wangdi
Caretaker

Overview of RSPN's financial performance in the FY 2018-2019 (Nu. in Million)

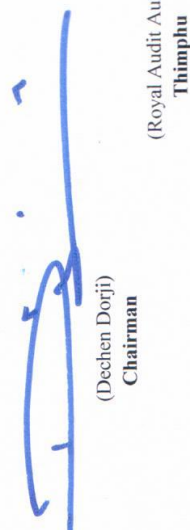


ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PROTECTION OF NATURE
Un-audited Receipt and Payment Statement
Period: 01.07.2018 to 30.06.2019

Receipt	Schedule	Amount (Nu.)	Amount (USD)	Payment	Schedule	Amount (Nu.)	Amount (USD)
I. Opening Balances:				I. Expenditure:			
Cash-in-Hand		(6,269.06)	59.50	1. Non- Project Expenses	3	21,449,152.22	
Cash at Bank - RSPN		6,281,750.73	57,075.22	2. Project Expenses	4	13,784,153.97	
Cash at Bank - BNCVC		2,115,753.00	-				
Cash at Bank - WASH Project		41,693.46					
Cash at Bank - REDD+ Project		64,584.20					
Cash at Bank - Organic Denmark		1,236,610.36					
II. Advance				II. Advance			
a. Advance to employees		861,608.26		a. Advance to employees		1,235,813.06	
b. Advance to party		192,692.00		b. Advance to party		2,384,322.63	
c. Fuel Deposit advance		39,946.55		c. Fuel deposit advance		157,977.01	
III. Receipt				III. Recoveries & Remittances			
1. Non-Project Fund	1	22,300,830.49	60,984.00	Recoveries & Remittances	7	27,682.80	
2. Project Fund	2	21,048,015.71					
Closing Balances:				Closing Balances:			
Cash-in-Hand				Cash-in-Hand		4,077.94	59.50
Cash at Bank - RSPN				Cash at Bank - RSPN		6,916,548.56	118,059.22
Cash at Bank - BNCVC				Cash at Bank - BNCVC		3,969,473.00	
Cash at Bank - WASH Project				Cash at Bank - WASH Project		41,693.46	
Cash at Bank - REDD+ Project				Cash at Bank - REDD+ Project		2,741,877.32	
Cash at Bank - Organic Denmark				Cash at Bank - Organic Denmark		1,464,443.73	
Total		54,177,215.70	118,118.72	Total		54,177,215.70	118,118.72


 (Sodam Jamtsho)
Chief, Finance & Investment Division

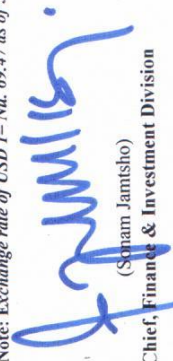

 (Kinley Tenzin, PhD)
Executive Director


 (Dechen Dorji)
Chairman
 (Royal Audit Authority)
Thimphu

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PROTECTION OF NATURE
UN-AUDITED STATEMENT OF AFFAIRS (BALANCE SHEET)
for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019

	Schedule	For the year ended June 30, 2019				For the year ended June 30, 2018			
		(A)		(B)	(A+B)	(A)		(B)	(A+B)
		NU.	US\$	Equivalent NU.	TOTAL (NU.)	NU.	US\$	Equivalent NU.	TOTAL (NU.)
Assets	6	Fixed Assets (Net Block)							
		Furniture & Fixture	1,510,044.30	-	-	1,510,044.30	-	-	1,677,827.00
		Office Equipment	6,034,716.74	-	-	6,034,716.74	-	-	4,644,179.82
		Trekking Equipment	463,586.42	-	-	463,586.42	-	-	150,995.79
		Vehicles	1,998,267.00	-	-	1,998,267.00	-	-	2,350,902.36
		Communication/Electronic Equipment	82,512.12	-	-	82,512.12	-	-	97,073.08
		Building (Observation Center)	1,131,902.55	-	-	1,131,902.55	-	-	1,166,909.84
		Building (Head Office & JKERC)	34,778,208.74	-	-	34,778,208.74	-	-	35,853,823.44
		Investment with BTTEC	-	1,733,448.68	120,422,680.06	120,422,680.06	1,596,618.48	107,133,100.01	107,133,100.01
		Investment with BDBL	110,005,500.00	-	-	110,005,500.00	-	-	113,509,841.94
10									
					</				

Note: Exchange rate of USD 1= Nu. 69.47 as of June 30, 2019 (Bhuan National Bank Ltd.)


 (Sonam Jamtsho)
 Chief, Finance & Investment Division


 (Kinley Tenzin, PhD)
 Executive Director

(Dechen Dorji)
 Chairman

(Royal Audit Authority)
 Thimphu

OUR PARTNERS

