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# Eastern Himalayas Bulletin

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## First photo-record of golden cat in Nepal

An Asian golden cat (*Pardofelis temmincki*) was camera-trapped for the first time in Nepal on 9 May 2009, during the first phase of a study by CEPF small grant recipient Yadav Ghimirey.

Ghimirey was awarded a CEPF small grant to assess the conservation status of small carnivores in the Makalu Barun National Park, to evaluate the status of prey in the area, document the threats to the survival of small carnivores, and to help increase local interest in species' conservation.

The Asiatic golden cat is one of the least studied wild cat species in Nepal, believed to be the western-most range of the animal.

For more information

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## Decline in crane numbers linked to loss of farmland

The Bumdeling Valley in Trashiyangste in eastern Bhutan resonates with the trumpeting of about a hundred Black-necked Cranes (*Grus nigricollis*) each winter. The birds flock here attracted by the valley's paddy fields and farmlands, where the cranes forage for food.



▲ Black-necked Crane

Although the number of cranes in the valley has never been over 200, there has been a decline in crane numbers recently with only 105 cranes recorded in the winter of 2009-2010, the lowest number counted since 1992. This decline has been attributed to the loss of paddy fields to floods. CEPF grantee Sherub predicts a loss of one crane for every acre of paddy land lost.

Sherub's study aimed to understand changes in the birds' wintering grounds in Bumdeling, and to determine the valley's carrying capacity.

The Black-necked Crane is an endangered bird with an estimated population of 8000 in the wild. This is the only crane species that winters in Bhutan.

For more information

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## Fish diversity of the Tamor river surveyed

A CEPF-funded survey has recorded 30 fish species in the Tamur river of Nepal. CEPF grantee Jiwan Shrestha's study, which also aims to identify fish diversity hotspots in the area, was carried out in the Taplejung, Panchthar and Terhathum districts.

Fish diversity in Nepal has been poorly studied until about 10 years ago. In the last decade, seven new fish species have been reported from the country. According to a 2008 study, there are 217 fish species in Nepal.

The 190 km long Tamor river originates in the Kangchenjunga range and ends at Tribeni in central Nepal.

[For more information](#)

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## Seven small grants awarded in India

Seven grants were recently awarded bringing the total to 29 grants in northeast India, and 62 in the Eastern Himalayan region.

Grants were given for community-based conservation in the Talley Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh; to study the distribution of the critically endangered white-bellied heron in Assam; to develop a community-based monitoring and control system for conservation in the transboundary area of the Kangchenjunga-Singalila complex; and for a survey of mammalian diversity of the Mouling National Park in Arunachal Pradesh. Grants were also awarded to study the red-breasted hill partridge in the Singalila National Park

and Buxa Tiger Reserve in West Bengal; pollinators in Sikkim's Kangchenjunga Biosphere Reserve; and high-altitude amphibians in the Kangchenjunga and Singalila National Parks.

[For more information](#)

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## Water management system for Sarbang, Bhutan

Protecting water sources, especially those of potable water, is high on the agenda in Bhutan. Although the country has abundant water resources, water management is a challenge.

In response to the challenge, community members in Dargaythang village in the Sarbang district of southern Bhutan have come together to manage water resources in the area. The community has formed a water source protection committee that receives 100 Ngultrum (about 2.2 USD) annually from each household in the area for maintenance. The district's Local Community Support Group (LCSG), established by the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN), with CEPF funding, is now planning to construct a water tank for storage. The community also plans to plant local species to conserve the watershed.

RSPN was awarded a 3-year grant to establish a network of local support groups in six pilot districts in key biodiversity areas of the Bhutan Biological Conservation Complex. The local groups identify and undertake conservation actions relevant to their areas.

[For more information](#)

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📌 Pollinator

## Towards a vulture-friendly environment

Following the successful setting up of community-run vulture restaurants in Rupandehi and Dang districts of Nepal, CEPF has now funded an 18-month project to secure a safe environment for critically endangered vulture species by declaring diclofenac-free zones in the central and western lowlands of Nepal. The grant has been awarded to NGO Bird Conservation Nepal to work in 10 districts in Nepal's Terai region.

Vulture populations have declined dramatically since the mid-90's. Numbers of some species have decreased by over 90 per cent primarily due to the veterinary drug diclofenac which is fatal to the birds. Although the production of the drug is banned in India, Pakistan and Nepal, surveys show that diclofenac manufactured



▲ At a vulture restaurant

for human use is now being used for veterinary purposes in Nepal. There is a clear need to promote the alternative drug, Meloxicam, which is safe for vultures.

There are three vulture restaurants in Nepal today, close to vulture colonies, all of which provide diclofenac-free carcasses for the birds.

### For more information

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The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a global programme that provides grants to nongovernmental organizations and other private sector partners to protect critical ecosystems. It is a joint programme of Conservation International, l'Agence Française de Développement, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank.

To apply for a CEPF grant, all applicants must submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI), when calls for LOIs are advertised on the websites [www.panda.org/easternhimalayas/cepf](http://www.panda.org/easternhimalayas/cepf) and [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net). The call for proposals will also be advertised in major national newspapers. Guidelines and format for developing LOIs are available on [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net).

In the Eastern Himalayas region, WWF leads the regional team responsible for facilitating, coordinating and monitoring grants for CEPF-supported conservation projects.

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