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CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM
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Eastern Himalayas Bulletin

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Supporting rural livelihoods

A fair, held in Panbari (Western Range of Manas National Park) on 6 January 2009, promoted sustainable alternative livelihoods in the fringe areas of Manas Tiger Reserve in northeast India. Over forty members from nearby communities set up stalls to display and sell products such as woven textiles, basketry, honey, traditional medicinal plants and food items. The one-day event attracted more than a thousand people.

The fair was organized by the Dolphin Foundation as part of the project funded by CEPF to support livelihoods that alleviate the stress on natural resources. Habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation from over-harvesting of natural resources are considerable threats to the park.

For more information

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▲ Woven textiles from around Manas Biosphere Reserve

Snares seized

Several snares were seized in Timbung Pokhari and Topekegola in the foothills of the Kangchenjunga mountains in eastern Nepal by the civil society organization Kangchenjunga Landscape Concern Group (KCG).

The patrolling team comprising two members from the organization and two community members seized ten nylon snares in Timbung Pokhari, that had been set by poachers to capture Himalayan Monal, crimson pheasant and musk deer in the trans-boundary area between India and Nepal. The team also found and destroyed a kilometre long barricade used to drive wildlife towards a snare.

In addition, twelve snares were seized by a community-based anti-poaching unit, supported by the KCG, in the Topkegola area recently.

KCG is the recipient of a CEPF grant to establish community-based anti-poaching networks.

For more information

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Small grants in the region

Sixteen small grants have been awarded in the Eastern Himalayas in the last quarter—7 in Bhutan, 6 in India and 3 in Nepal.

Projects to assess the status of agarwood (*Aquilaria malaccensis*), survey rhododendrons in the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary, study the

Rufous-necked hornbill, survey the habitat of the woolly-necked flying squirrel, a survey of the white-rumped vulture, the compilation of a red data list of flowering plants, and a study of the *Bazzania bhutanica*, a rare species of liverwort, were awarded grants in Bhutan.

In northeast India, grants were given to study the influence of legal and communal protection regimes on primate conservation, to document the diversity and status of genus *Dioscorea*, a type of tuber, survey Himalayan Yew and Indian madder trees, to investigate amphibian distribution, research high altitude vegetation and its response to climate change, and to help reduce fishing pressure in Gangetic dolphin habitats.

A survey of fish diversity in the Tamur river, research for providing recommendations to update the protected animal list, and an amphibian conservation project received grants in Nepal.

More details on all projects are available on the small grants page at www.panda.org/easternhimalayas/cepf.

For more information

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Radio tagging to save gharials

Fourteen gharials fitted with radio tags were released into the Rapti river in southern Nepal, in February, to track the movement of this critically endangered crocodile. The tracking is expected to help assess the reptile's survival rate and the status of its preferred habitat in Nepal.

Part of the funding for this release programme was provided through the CEPF-Eastern Himalayas small grants programme.

More information is available on the news and features page of www.panda.org/easternhimalayas/cepf.

For more information

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USD 308,000 awarded to three core grants in Bhutan

In the second round of CEPF core grants for Bhutan, three organizations received grants.

The Nature Conservation Committee of Trashiyangtse received USD 105,000 for the restoration of the wintering habitat of the endangered black necked crane in Bomdeling Wildlife Sanctuary. This will be done by engaging local community around the sanctuary through the development of a community based habitat restoration plan.

The second grant was awarded to the World Wildlife Fund Inc. This USD 113,000 project will result in the development and endorsement of a Corridor Management Framework that will serve as a guide for the effective management of biological corridors in Bhutan.

The Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment received USD 90,000 for an eighteen month project to develop a national ecotourism framework for protected areas in Bhutan. The framework will guide the development of sustainable and conservation friendly tourism practices in Bhutan.

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▲ Gharial

Exchange visit between CEPF Nepal and India grantees

A cross-border exchange visit was organized between CEPF grantees in Ilam, Nepal and Sikkim and Darjeeling, India, in December to improve coordination, sharing of experiences and monitoring of projects that lie in the border areas between eastern Nepal and northeast India. Grantees from relevant projects visited similar projects in the other country as part of the visit.

CEPF grantees from Nepal who participated in the programme include the Namsaling Community Development Centre, Ilam Cooperation Council, Environmental Camps and Conservation Awareness (ECCA), Bird Conservation Nepal and Red Panda

Network. Members of the Voluntary Health Association of Sikkim (VHAS), a CEPF grantee from Sikkim, India, participated in the programme too.

During the visit, participants interacted with stakeholders, community forest users groups, nature clubs, and with community members. Grantees observed similarities in challenges faced by conservation and development organizations on either side of the border. The need for transboundary coordination and cooperation with policy makers was articulated, and the possibility of a common strategy for conservation discussed during the visit.

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 and 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.

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

For more information

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