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# Eastern Himalayas Bulletin

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## Small grant to establish a vulture restaurant

The Narti Community Forest Coordination Committee, based in Lamahi of Dang district in Western Nepal, has been awarded a small grant for a vulture conservation project.

Populations of three species of vultures that occur across the Indian subcontinent – White-rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*), Long-billed vulture (*Gyps indicus*) and Slender-billed vulture (*Gyps tenuirostris*) – have been listed as Critically Endangered by IUCN. These species have suffered from loss of breeding colonies and local extinction in several areas in Nepal.

A cause for the decline in numbers has been shown to be residues of diclofenac, a veterinary drug which is widely used to treat livestock in Asia, in carcasses which vultures feed on. Safe feeding is therefore one of the preconditions for vulture conservation. In this regard, vulture restaurants are viable schemes for providing safe food for the birds.

In Nepal, the community-based *Jatayu* (meaning vulture in Sanskrit) restaurant is already being run at the edge of the Chitwan National Park's buffer zone in Nawalparasi district. Successful replication of the restaurant in Lamahi will be instrumental in encouraging the communities living near important vulture habitats to conserve them.

The Lamahi area is one of the bottlenecks in the Terai Arc Landscape. Conservation in bottleneck areas is important to maintain contiguity of forests and thus the ecological integrity of the landscape. Thirty community forest user groups are involved in the management of 9,888 hectares of forest here.

The main goal of the Narti Community Forest Coordination Committee's project is to conserve the

critically endangered population of vultures in the Lamahi bottleneck, Deukhuri Valley, by providing safe food and nesting habitat, while involving local communities in conservation.

For more information

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## USD 219,000 awarded to five NGOs in Nepal

USD 219,000 has been awarded to five NGOs working on conservation issues in eastern Nepal, for projects ranging from 3 months to 2 years' duration.

This is the second round of large grants that have been awarded in Nepal by CEPF. Five NGOs were awarded USD 315,000 in 2006.

In this round of core grants, Shree Deep Jyoti Youth Club, an Ilam-based NGO, received USD 40,800 for the conservation of key plant species in the Kangchenjunga-Singalila area, a project that runs for two years.

The NGO Kangchenjunga Landscape Concern Group received USD 43,300 for their two-year project to establish community-based anti-poaching networks, while USD 60,900 was awarded to the Red Panda Network for the promotion of local stewardship by community forest users for red panda conservation.

The other two NGOs who received grants were The East Foundation for a period of three months to help identify major issues in red panda conservation, and The Mountain Institute, who received USD 70,000 for a 1.5 year project to promote coordinated community-based conservation in the

transboundary region of the Kangchenjunga-Singalila complex.

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## Flight of the Great Hornbill

Rohit Naniwadekar received a CEPF small grant in August this year to study the ecology of the endangered Rufous-necked hornbill and the conservation status of hornbills in the forests of Arunachal Pradesh, northeast India.

Naniwadekar's study aims to understand the distribution patterns of the five species of hornbills in the area, and the relative impacts of hunting and habitat degradation on the birds. The study also looks at temporal and spatial associations between food availability and hornbill presence, and explores resource partitioning mechanisms between four species in the region.

Hunting, Naniwadekar says, has proved to be a far greater threat to hornbills than habitat loss from logging and shifting cultivation. Hunting is deeply ingrained in the local culture across the state making its curbing an exceptionally challenging task, he adds.

Read Rohit Naniwadekar's account of his findings on hornbill hunting in the News and Features page of [www.panda.org/easternhimalayas/cepf](http://www.panda.org/easternhimalayas/cepf).

#### For more information on the project

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#### For more information on CEPF small grants in India

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▲ A hunter of the Wancho tribe of Arunachal Pradesh with a Great Hornbill tail feather in his cap

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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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