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CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM
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Bird surveys in eastern Nepal

Bird Conservation International (BCI), a CEPF grantee, conducted two separate bird surveys in eastern Nepal in March and April this year. The 18-day survey in the Upper and Lower Mai Valley in early March recorded a total of 252 species. Some noteworthy sightings were those of a Satyr Tragopan, a Lesser Kestrel and two Lesser Adjutant Storks, all of which are globally threatened.

In April, another survey in the Kangchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) recorded a total of 244 bird species, of which 184 were spotted within the Conservation Area. The survey entailed a 20-day trek over altitudes ranging from 1,240 to 4,710 metres. About twenty bird species new to KCA were recorded. The most significant finds were the globally near-threatened Satyr Tragopan, nationally threatened Pygmy Blue Flycatcher, Blue-winged Laughingthrush and Great Parrotbill and Asian Emerald Cuckoo, a rare summer visitor to Nepal.

Both surveys will help provide an estimate of species richness and can also indicate relative abundance.

[For more information](#)

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Small grants for bat and snow-leopard conservation in Nepal

The first two CEPF small grants in Nepal have been awarded to a project that identifies bat diversity hotspots and for one that estimates snow leopard abundance.

Puspa Raj Acharya, who received the grant to study bats in the Kangchenjunga-Singalila Complex and in the Makalu Barun area, will assess the presence, diversity, threats and conservation requirements of bats. The project will focus on the Mandelli's Mouse-eared Bat and the Kashmir Cave Bat, both threatened species. A practical monitoring protocol for the long-term study of bats will also be developed.

Mahesh Khadga's 18-month project will look into snow leopard monitoring. The grantee aims to compare two of the most popular methods – the Snow Leopard Information Management System (SLIMS) where counts are based on signs such as footprints, scrapes, faeces, scent-sprays and claw-rakes, and camera trapping – in estimating snow leopard abundance and population trends in the Kangchenjunga Conservation Area.

[For more information](#)

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Fourteen plant species new to Nepal recorded

The Ethnobotanical Society of Nepal (ESON) held a workshop in Kathmandu in March to discuss results of last September's plant survey expedition in the Ilam and Panchthar districts of eastern Nepal.

One result of the expedition was that fourteen new plant species to Nepal were recorded.

ESON's plant collection expedition studied the floral diversity in nine Village Development Committees (VDCs) along the Lower Kangchenjunga-Singalila Ridge in eastern Nepal. During the three weeks of the expedition, the team recorded the status, richness, and diversity of plants of forest and agricultural land in the project sites. This information was then disseminated to the local community, who gained knowledge about the management and significance of such ecological research.



▲ *Castanopsis longispina*, one of the 14 species new to Nepal

Read the full story in the News & Features page at www.panda.org/easternhimalayas/cepf and at www.ceph.net

For more information

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Local conservation support groups set up in Bhutan

One of the challenges for conservation in Bhutan is finding the means of engaging citizens in conservation action. With this in view, the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN), a CEPF grantee in Bhutan, is setting up local conservation support groups in six districts. These local action groups comprise individuals who can be conservation ambassadors to their community and who can act as watchdogs of policy for decision-makers. The groups will work on locally relevant issues on which the community can take action.

Three of these action groups have recently been set up in Trashigang, Bumthang and Wangdue districts, and priority actions are being discussed.

For more information

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Two large grants awarded in India

Two CEPF core grants have been awarded in India since February this year.

USD 80,776 was awarded to WWF-India for a 2-year project to maintain linkages across two corridors in the North Bank Landscape. These linkages will help restore habitat connectivity and to reduce human-animal conflict in the two corridors that are critical passages for elephants.

The local NGO Darjeeling Ladenla Road Prerna has been awarded USD 60,000 for a 3-year project to organize and support communities in the fringe areas of the Singalila National park, to conserve local biodiversity by promoting sustainable resource use.

For more information

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Caught on film: carnivores in India

Kashmira Kakati, a CEPF small-grant recipient in India, carried out a camera-trapping survey to assess the richness of the carnivore species in the sub-tropical evergreen Hollong-Nahor forests in eastern Assam. These forests are among the last remaining lowland rain forests in northeast India.

The project, supported by CEPF, WCS-India, and the Rufford Foundation, has yielded the first ever camera-trap photographs of the clouded leopard, golden cat, marbled cat and the Malayan sun bear from Assam. This is also the first time that tiger and wild dog have been confirmed in these forests from photographs.

Read the full story in the News & Features page at www.panda.org/easternhimalayas/cepf and at www.cepf.net



▲ Camera trap photo of clouded leopard

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For more information on CEPF small grants in India

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The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a global program that provides grants to nongovernmental organizations and other private sector partners to protect critical ecosystems. It is a joint program 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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