

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Nature and People: A Partnership for Progress



*Inspiring personal responsibility in conservation
of the Kingdom's environment since 1987*

STATEMENT FROM OUR PATRON



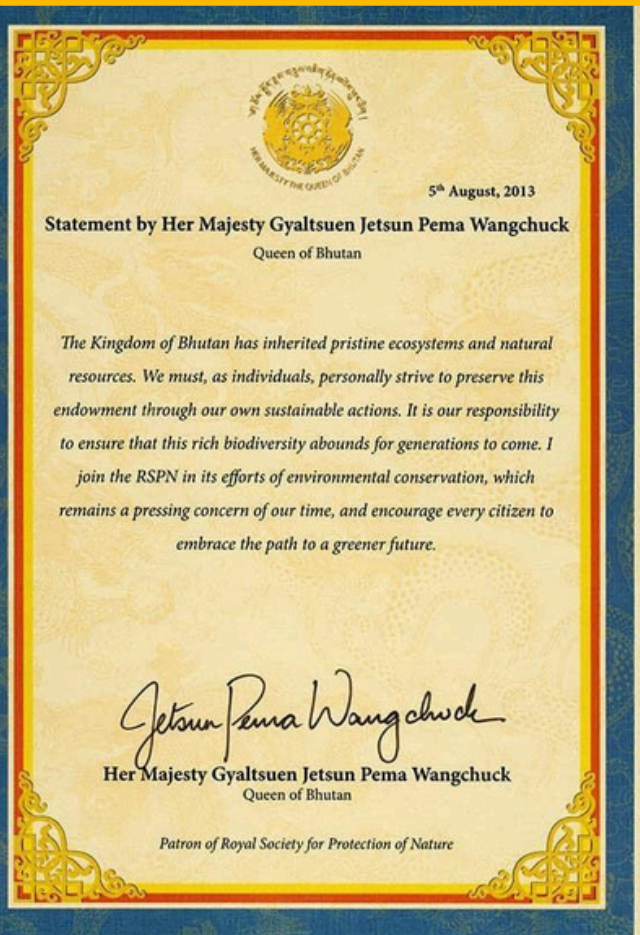
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Under the Royal Patronage of HRH the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Bhutan

19/04/99

“The kingdom of Bhutan is blessed with an exceptional and largely intact natural environment. I have joined RSPN in its mission to raise awareness of the challenge that faces us now. We must all accept our individual responsibility to conserve the rich diversity of Bhutan’s plant and animal species, for the benefit of both the natural world and our children’s future.”

Jigme Khesar Wangchuck.

**His Royal Highness DASHO JIGME KHE SAR NAMGYAL WANGCHUCK
the Crown Prince of Bhutan, Royal Patron of RSPN**



A breeding pair of White-bellied Herons (WBH) is guarding the nest.



A happy farmer reaps a bountiful harvest, made possible through integrated Livelihood interventions in WBH landscape.

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Campsites development supported in the White-bellied Heron Landscape, balancing conservation and sustainable tourism.

MESSAGE FROM CHAIRPERSON

Dear Friends of Nature,

As we reflect on another year of progress, growth, and dedication, it is my privilege to present the annual report of the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN). This year's theme, ***"Nature and People: A Partnership for Progress,"*** emphasizes the vital connection between environmental conservation and the well-being of our local communities. Through our collective efforts, we have continued to bridge the gap between conservation and sustainable development, fostering a collaboration that ensures a brighter future for both nature and people.

Through our diverse programs and partnerships, we have reached significant milestones in advancing sustainable livelihoods, enhancing community development, promoting social inclusion, and preserving our pristine environment. RSPN has successfully secured a One Million USD Readiness Grant from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) as a Delivery Partner, contributing to capacity development in accessing climate financing. A key focus has been the active involvement of local communities in conservation efforts, reinforcing our commitment to a future where nature and people coexist harmoniously.

This report highlights our achievements and also acknowledges the challenges we have faced, such as the ongoing threats to biodiversity, the impacts of climate change, and the need for greater funding and resources to enhance our impact. These challenges, however, have provided valuable lessons, enabling us to refine our strategies and strengthen our initiatives moving forward. Through continued collaboration with local governments, NGOs, stakeholders, and both national and international partners, we strive to build resilient communities that understand the deep connection between their well-being and the protection of the environment.

Together, we are creating a sustainable future where nature and people truly become partners in progress.

Tashi Delek!

Phub Dorji



“

On behalf of the RSPN, I express my heartfelt gratitude to our friends, partners, supporters, and the communities we serve. It is through your unwavering commitment, collaboration and support that RSPN continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who need it most.

”

WHO WE ARE?

ABOUT US

Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) was established in 1987 under the Royal Command of His Majesty The Fourth King of Bhutan as a citizen-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) devoted to the conservation of the Kingdom's environment. His Majesty The King was the Royal Patron of RSPN from 1999 to 2012. Her Majesty The Queen of Bhutan is the Royal Patron. RSPN is managed by a seven-Board Directors, the Executive Director is the head of the organization.

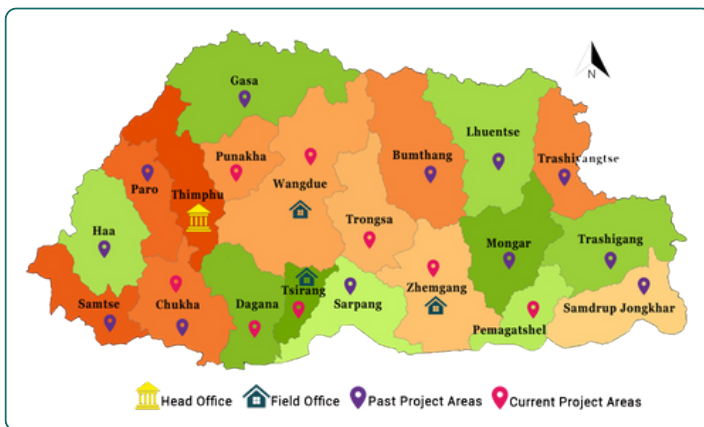
VISION

To be the Leader in Conservation ensuring future generations of Bhutan live in an Environmentally Sustainable Society.

MISSION

To inspire personal responsibility and active involvement of people of Bhutan in the conservation of the Kingdom's environment through, Education, Community Engagemet and Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities

WHERE WE ARE



CORE VALUES

- » Promote innovative technologies and methods.
- » Be proactive towards environmental issues.
- » Be accountable and transparent.
- » Be efficient and effective in delivering programs and services.

WHAT WE DO?

The mandala represents our systemic approach and efforts, geared to implement sustainable solutions to emerging environmental challenges through, innovation, citizen engagement, education, and empowerment. The six thematic areas are initiated based on national and international priorities that are aligned to address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Using this approach, it affirms our belief and commitment to addressing the global issues which are interdependent and connected in nature.



RSPN's Conservation Mandala

THEMATIC AREAS- KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



SPECIES AND HABITAT

1. BLACK-NECKED CRANE (BNC)



Conducted BNC Annual Population Survey and recorded **676 individuals** including **101 Juveniles**.



Maintained roosting for the Black-necked Crane (BNC) in WangduePhodrang District.



Initiated joint conservation project across the range countries of Black-necked Cranes '**Sacred Flyways: Securing Site Networks for the Black-necked Crane as a Flagship Species for High Altitude Wetland Biodiversity Conservation in the central Asian Flyway**'.

2. WHITE-BELLIED HERON (WBH)



Conducted WBH Annual Population Survey and recorded **25 individuals**. There is a decrease of 11% compared to the 2023 count (27 individuals).



Explored two new potential WBH nesting sites along the Lower Punatsangchhu basin and Zhemgang District.



Raised two new individuals of WBH at White-bellied Heron Conservation Center (WBHCC).



Restored 12.5 Hectares of degraded WBH habitats along Punatsangchhu and Mangdechhu basins through forest plantation with a survival rate of over 95 percentage.



The annual roost maintenance ensures the majestic Black-necked Cranes continue to thrive in their winter habitat, Gangtey-Phobjikha valley.



The 10-day-old female WBH chick, nurtured and raised at the WBHCC in Tsirang District, a hopeful step towards preserving this endangered species.

Bhutan, a home to over

700

species of birds, however more than

50

species are considered at risk and White-bellied Heron stands out with a rapidly decreasing population

with only

25

individuals remaining in Bhutan, the highest habitat in the region and urgently require conservation efforts to prevent further decline.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



Engaged 728 participants (435 Female and 293 Male including students) for WBH awareness and advocacy program.



Supported eight Nature Club across six Districts along the Punatsangchhu and Mangdechhu basins.



Disseminated Environmental Education to visitors at our centers and recorded 22,600 visitors (BNCEC-22,000 visitors and WBHCC- 600 visitors).

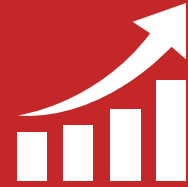


Imparted Environmental Education to 980 youth through internship opportunities, membership programs and environment-related events.



Conducted two-day National Coordination Meeting on White-bellied Heron Conservation project and **engaged** 40 relevant stakeholders..

The **Education Advocacy Program** saw significant boost in female participation, with women making up



60% of total participants compared to 2023 Advocacy program.



Women participation brings unique perspectives on how environmental issues impact communities, particularly marginalized groups such as women and children. It underscores their crucial role in shaping conservation efforts.



Visitors at the White-bellied Heron Conservation Center, Tsirang, learn about the urgent conservation efforts to protect the Critically Endangered White-bellied Herons in their race against extinction.



WASTE AND POLLUTION



Participated in the Chubachu stream cleaning campaign on International Zero Waste Day and collected 2,667 Kilograms of solid waste.



Riverside waste dumping: A growing environmental threat to water quality and wildlife.

Bhutan committed to its **'ZERO WASTE BHUTAN'**

initiative, which aims to minimize waste still faces significant challenges.

Bhutan generates approximately

172.16 METRIC TONNES

of solid waste daily



47.34% of the total waste generated from households level



39.09 % of the total waste generated from Commercial Units

as per the National Waste Inventory Survey 2019.

Collected **2667 kgs of solid waste** from the cleaning campaigns and engaged **368 individuals**.



Participants cleaned Chubachhu stream contributing to a cleaner and healthier environment in Thimphu District.



SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS



Trained 53 Homestay owners (39 female and 14 male) on Homestay Management from the Punatsangchhu and Mangdechhu basins and 10 homestays were certified by the Department of Tourism.



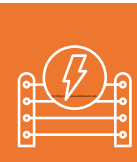
Conducted Souvenir Development training for 6 individuals (6 Male) in Berti, Zhemgang District.



Trained 12 individuals (5 female and 7 male) from the Sunkosh Ecotourism Group on Campsite Management and the Promotion of Local Products.



Supported 11 Climate Smart Agriculture sites with a total of 1,740 Agar saplings, 14,740 Teak saplings, 160 Areca nut saplings, 22 Rhododendron saplings, and 900 kgs of Mustard seed, with various high-value timber species to the Local Communities along the Punatsangchhu and Mangdechhu basins.



Supported 100 Kilometers of Electric fencing to three villages (Bara-Gumti, Zawa and Rangaytar) along Punatsangchhu and Mangdechhu basins.



136 households from four villages (Lauri, Momring, Relnang, and Phajogonpa) **initiated** Sustainable Land Management activities, including stone terracing and hedgerow planting, to enhance climate resilience.



A participant skillfully crafts a woodwork product during the souvenir development training.



A bountiful chili harvest after the distribution of improved seeds to local communities, Dagana District.

Around **70%**

of Bhutan's population is engaged in sustainable livelihood activities.

**35 COMMUNITIES
ACROSS 11 SITES**

have adopted



a Climate-smart Agriculture approach to enhance their livelihoods in the WBH landscape, benefitting **over 600 households**.



Installation of Oil Expeller at Goenshari, Punakha District.



Supported Local Communities along the Punatsangchhu and Mangdechhu basins with three Oil Expellers, one flour machine, and one power tiller machine to enhance their livelihood options.



Capacity building programs with Youth and Women groups from CSA sites.



48 farmers (20 Female and 28 Male) from 11 Climate-Smart Agriculture sites **received** training on Post-harvest and packaging techniques.



Conducted ToT on Human-wildlife conflict management and guideline development for electric/ solar fencing management and engaged 25 Local Community members and Local Government officials (5 Female and 20 Male) along the Punatsangchhu and Mangdechhu basins.



Installation of solar fencing at Athang Gewog, WangduePhodrang District.



Visitors enjoy the homestay, experiencing local culture.

Bountiful harvest of vegetables grown from saplings nurtured inside a greenhouse.



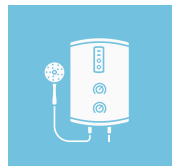
WETLAND AND FRESHWATER



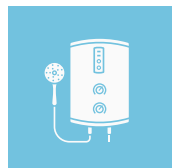
Supported 14 Rural Water Supply Schemes (RWSS) covering five Districts (Punakha, Trongsa, Tsirang, WangduePhodrang and Zhemgang).



Strengthened 14 existing Water Users Associations (WUAs) and **conducted** a ToT on Community-based Water Resource Management, and benefited 68 Local Government officials (*18 Female and 50 Male*) in five Districts.



Installed hot water bathing facilities for students at Lingzhi Lower Secondary School, Thimphu District.



Conducted a pilot training and ToT on spring shed management for 9 RWSS in Chhukha, Dagana, Trashigang, and Zhemgang, Districts and developed a Spring shed Management guideline.

Bhutan has approximately

3,000

wetlands covering about 4.6% of the country's land area.

Still **most of the rural villages** do not have adequate clean and safe drinking water in WBH Landscape.



14 RWSS

covering six districts benefitting



OVER 400 HOUSEHOLDS

from 30 villages reaching out to mostly women and children.



Construction of water reservoir tank as part of RWSS at Tsholingkhar Gewog, Tsirang.



CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION



Accessed One Million USD Readiness Grant from Green Climate Fund (GCF) as Delivery Partner and supported capacity development in accessing Climate financing.



Signed grant Agreement between RSPN and Bhutan Trust Fund For Environmental Conservation (BTFFEC) to support RSPN's accreditation as Country's second National Implementing Entity to Adaptation Fund.



Participated in the UN Biodiversity Conference 2024 (COP16) in Cali, Colombia, and presented RSPN's conservation initiatives.

Bhutan is a



CARBON-NEGATIVE COUNTRY



Over **69.71%** of Bhutan's forests act as significant carbon sinks, absorbing an estimated

6 MILLION TONS OF CO₂

annually, which is far greater than the country's emissions of around

1.5 MILLION TONS OF CO₂ PER YEAR.



RSPN Team with the Executive Director of Green Climate Fund and Officials.

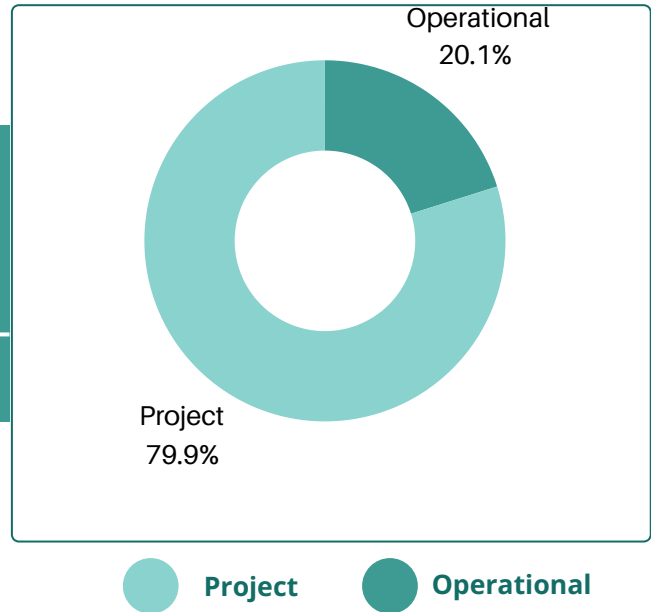
PROJECT PROFILE FOR THE YEAR 2024

SL. No	Project Profile	Donor	Total Approved Grant (USD)	Approved budget for 2024 (USD)
1	Assess and Map New Potential Habitat of White-bellied Heron in Eastern Bhutan, Jomori river basin	ASAP and Great Wildlife Fund, Australia	20,000.00	0
2	BNC Conservation Project-Year 4, Gr. VI- ICF	International Crane Foundation, USA	34,815.56	32,249.21
3	Capacity Building and Implementation of Strategic Plans	Foundation Hans Wilsdorf, Switzerland	450,000.00	150,000.00
4	Capacity Building of Veterinary Officers	Suntory Fund	7,500.00	7,500.00
5	Conservation Allies Fund	Conservation Allies, USA	1,982.00	0
6	Developing Ecosystem-based Solution for Managing Biodiversity Landscape in Bhutan	BMUV/IKI, Germany	4,357,262.10	922,471.64
7	Enhancing Biodiversity Protection and Building Capacity for Cooperative Research in Bhutan to Address Sustainable Development Goal 15	Cooperation Development Research (KoEF), Austria	50,000.00	306.59
8	Enhancing Climate Resilience of the Marginalized Communities of Lauri Gewog, Bhutan to the Impact of Climate Change	Canadian Foundation - Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI),Canada	38,970.48	38,970.48
9	Eco Tourism at Jigmechhu	Bhutan Foundation	14,987.50	14,987.50
10	Eco tourism Homestay Subsidy	Department of Tourism	30,120.48	30,120.48
11	Exchange Program to India	Bhutan India Foundation	6,250.00	6,250.00
12	Grant Fund BNCEC Revamping Project	Philanthropic	10,834.29	10,834.29
13	Hongkong Bird Watching Society	Hongkong Bird Watch Fund, Singapore	1,361.00	1,361.00
14	Hot Water bathing Facility to student of Lingzhi Lower Secondary School,Thimphu District	Christopher Hunt(Druk Dada Jebba), USA	30,000.00	21,000.00
15	Partnership with RSPN- Towards Climate Resilient inclusive WASH services in rural Bhutan	SNV Bhutan	33,016.64	4,781.77
16	Safe Drinking Water for the vulnerable communities of Jigmechhu,Chhukha	Christopher Hunt(Druk Dada Jebba), USA	10,000.00	10,000.00
17	Securing White-bellied Heron Population in Bhutan	Synchronicity Earth, United Kingdom	43,474.00	38,262.86
18	Securing Site Networks for BNC as a Flagship Species for the High-Altitude Wetlands. Biodiversity Conservation in the Central Asian Flyway	Foundation Hans Willsdorf through ICF	288,376.00	
19	Strengthening Capacities and Enhancing Climate Data and Services in Bhutan to Scale-up Climate Financing from Multiple Sources	Green Climate Fund, South Korea	991,452.00	193,153.52
20	T4Tree Fund Raising	Philanthropic	1,463.25	1,463.25
21	WBH - Aviary construction	Tokyo Zoological Park Society,Japan	6,725.18	6,725.18
22	WBH - Aviary construction	Suntory fund for bird conservation, Japan	14,865.11	14,865.11
23	WBH- Conservation	International conservation fund of Canada (ICFC),Canada	13,984.00	13,984.00
24	WBH Conservation Center Operational Fund	MAVA Foundation, Switzerland	272,589.00	225,035.05
25	WBH Research Fund	Zoological Association of America,USA	4,982.00	494.52
26	WBH Ex-situ conservation (Donation)	Christopher Hunt(Druk Dada Jebba), USA	10,000.00	10,000
Total approved grant in (USD)			6,745,010.59	
Total budget implemented in 2024 (USD)				1,794,816.45

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2024

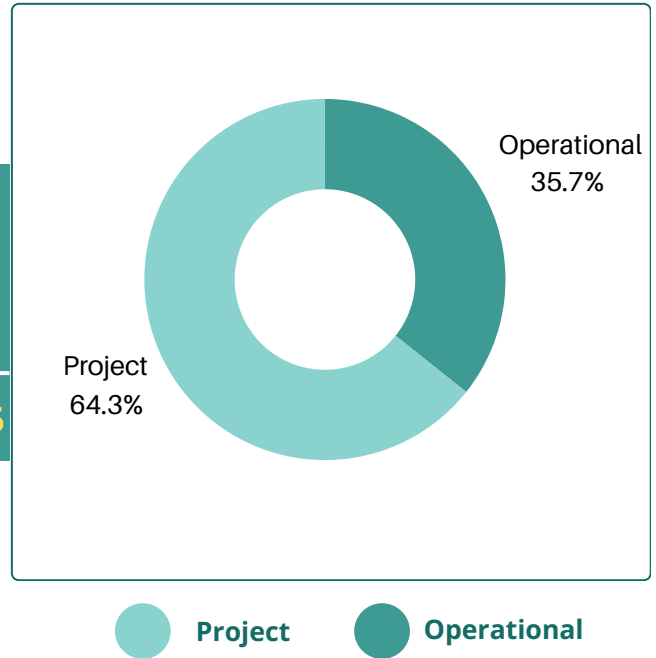
BUDGET PROPOSED

Operational	Nu 37,556,058.64
Project	Nu 114,807,505.26
TOTAL	Nu 152,363,563.90



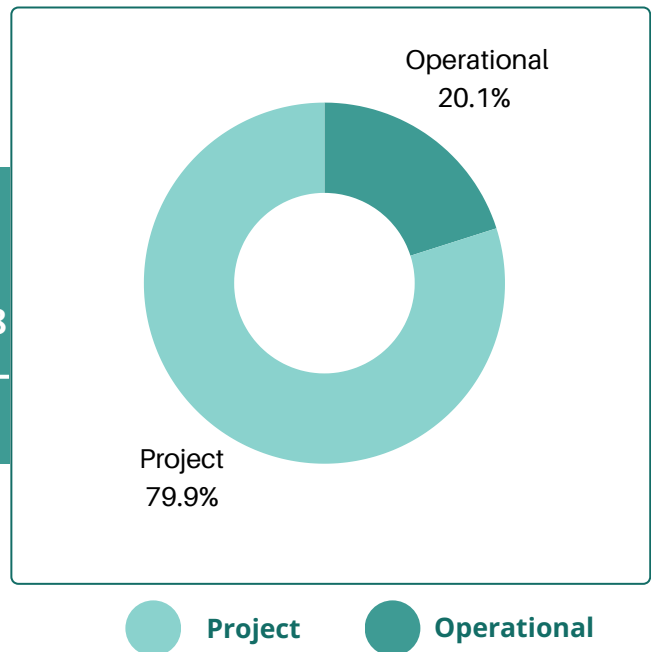
BUDGET RECEIPT

Operational	Nu 89,082,244.08
Project	Nu 160,444,258.97
TOTAL	Nu 249,526,503.05



EXPENSES

Operational	Nu 36,621,280.30
Project	Nu 145,684,707.58
TOTAL	Nu 182,305,987.88



NOTE: The above financial summary is unaudited and subject to revision. The remaining balance of funds, representing the difference between the budget received and expenditure incurred, will be carried forward as spillover funds to the next fiscal year.

OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS

DONORS



PARTNERS



OUR PHILANTHROPISTS



Dr. George Archibald
Co-Founder, ICF, USA



Dinh Thi Hoa
Vietnam



Jonathan Charles
Eames, OBE, UK



Anis Abadi
Germany



Christopher Hunt,
USA



Dominic & Han Scriven,
Vietnam



Professor Satoshi Shimano
Japan



Hishey Tshering & Sons
Bhutan Birding and Heritage Travels,
Bhutan

David Moll

We also acknowledge our **Institutional Members, international and national members**, for graciously supporting our shared mission:

1. All Bhutan Connect Pvt. Ltd.
2. Amen Bhutan Tours & Treks
3. Athang Private Limited.
4. Bank of Bhutan
5. Bhutan Agro Industries Ltd.
6. Bhutan Development Bank Ltd.
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15. My Bhutan
16. Natural Resources Development Corporation Ltd.
17. Norbu Bhutan Travel Pvt. Ltd.
18. Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan Ltd.
19. Royal Thimphu College

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As 2024 ends, let me take a moment to express our gratitude for the unwavering support, partnership and commitment that we received from all our donors, partners and collaborators across the globe. The support has been invaluable, making a lasting impact on the natural ecosystem and rural communities in Bhutan.

Looking ahead, 2025 will be a year of action and momentum. We will continue to reflect on the commitment, stewardship and trust from all our donors and look forward to the continuation of the support with bigger scope, output and impact.

With this, It is my pleasure to present this annual report to all our supporters and partners, locally and globally.

Wishing everyone a joyful reading and a successful start to the new year!

HOW CAN YOU HELP US?

Together, with your support, the Royal Society for Protection of Nature can create an even greater impact!

International Donation



SCAN ME

National Donation



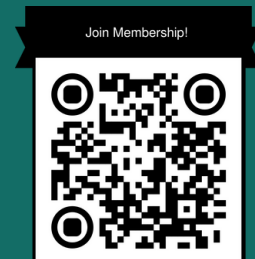
SCAN ME

Donate Online

<https://rspnbhutan.org/#donate>



Join Membership and be a champion for the environmental conservation!



OUR TEAM

Royal Patron

Her Majesty Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck

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Zimpon Wom Karma Tenzin, Board Director
Dr Pema Wangda, Board Director
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Mrs Kinley Gyem
Mr Tshering Dhendup
Mr Yeshi Wangdi
Mrs Dechen Wangmo

Field Offices:

Black-necked Crane Education Center, Gangtey - Phobjikha WangduePhodrang

Mr Santala Gajmer
Ms Karma Lodhen Wangmo
Ms Tshering Zangmo
Ms Karma Dema

White-bellied Heron Conservation Center, Chachey Dovan Tsirang

Ms Samten Leki
Mr Sonam Tshering
Mr Thinley Phuntsho
Mrs Wangdi Zam
Mr Chatur Man Rai





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Layout and Design:

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