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# RANGZHIN



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## Five new juveniles added to the existing population of the White-bellied Herons in 2018



Three juveniles in Goling, Zhemgang

RSPN research team was in the field looking for WBH nests from June 12 to 27, 2018.

The team located two active nests in 2018. One nest with two juveniles was found in Goling, Zhemgang, Mangdechu basin and another with three juveniles in Wagletar, Tsirang, Punatsangchu basin.

The other nest was located at Burichu on April 23, 2018, but it was abandoned half-built. Probably the same pair nested few hundred meters downstream and was found incubating on June 19, 2018.

However, the nest was found predated on June 30, 2018. Such findings of unsuccessful nests clearly portrays the survival issues faced by the critically endangered White-bellied Heron. During the trip the team sighted total of seven birds in Tingtibi and Goling area in



Three juveniles and one adult in Wagletar, Tsirang

WBH nest in Wagletar, 2018

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## Project introductory meeting



RSPN project team with Dzongkhag and Gewog Administration

An introductory meeting for organic agriculture project 'Empower Small Scale Bhutanese Farmers to Increase Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods through Agro-Ecological Farming and Food Systems Development' at Bayulkuenza under Bongo Gewog in Chhukha was successfully conducted at the Chhukha Dzongkhag Conference Hall on April 13, 2018. The meeting was chaired by Dasho Dzongrab in the presence of all sector heads, Gewog officials, RSPN

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## Project introductory meeting

project team and Organic Denmark. The meeting was organized as part of the project activity to solicit technical support and collaboration from the District and Gewog authorities for the successful implementation of the project.

The Chair expressed gratitude for selecting Chhukha as one of the project sites and committed full support during the course of implementation. The project team from RSPN and Organic Denmark presented the project profile and promised to work very closely with the Dzongkhag and Gewog Administrations to avoid any duplication in planning.

Prior to the meeting, the RSPN project team and Mr. Jesper Saxgren, Vice Chairman of Organic Denmark had one and half day meeting at the RSPN headquarters from

April 11 - 12, 2018. The team discussed at length on project budget and activities, and implementation approaches such as planning, reporting and transfer of project fund. The one and a half year project, funded by Civil Society in Development (CISU) based in Denmark, is implemented by RSPN with technical support from Organic Denmark in close collaboration with various stakeholders like National Organic Program based in ARDC-Yusipang of the Department of Agriculture, Dzongkhag and Gewog Administrations.



Discussion with the stakeholders



Mr. Jesper presenting the project profile

## Monitoring visit for REDD+ Capacity Building Project

Mrs. Helen (Project Team Leader) from Tabettba Foundation visited REDD+ Capacity Building Project area under Nangkhor Gewog in Zhemgang Dzongkhag. The objective of the visit was to gauge the implementation status of the project.

During the visit, monitoring team interacted with Dasho Dzongda, Local Government officials and project beneficiaries. Under this project, RSPN conducted series of training and workshops to different villages and stakeholders under Nangkhor Gewog.



With the project beneficiaries



With Local Government officials



Mrs. Helen giving the talks



Aum Mindu sharing her project experiences



## Nursery Management Training

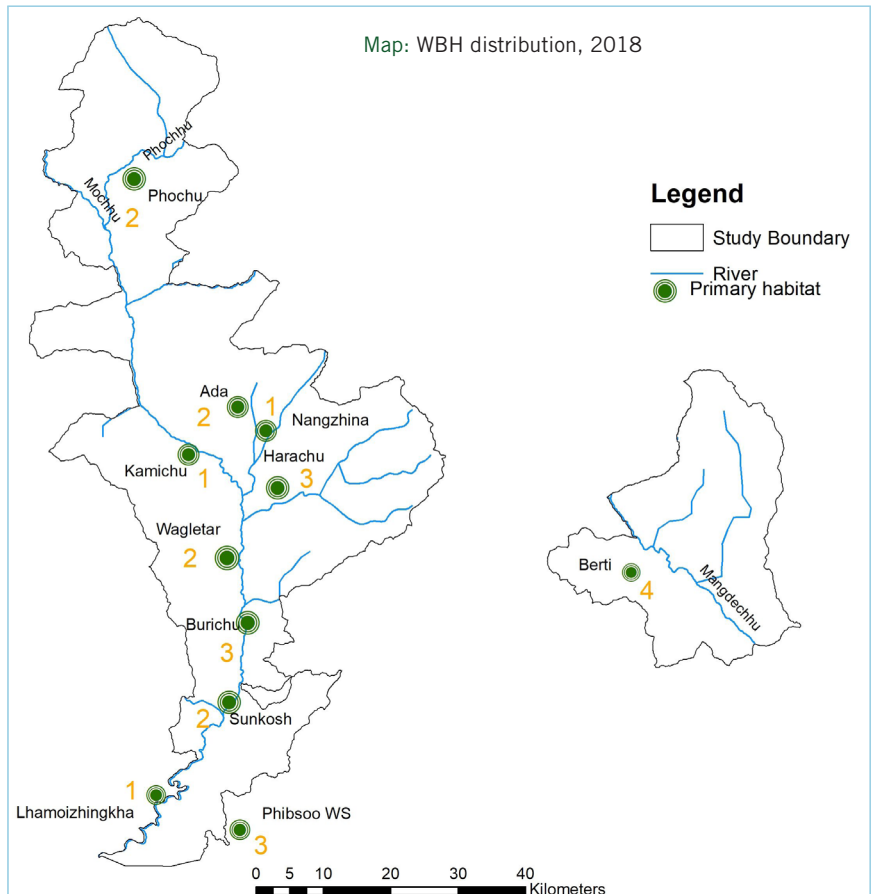
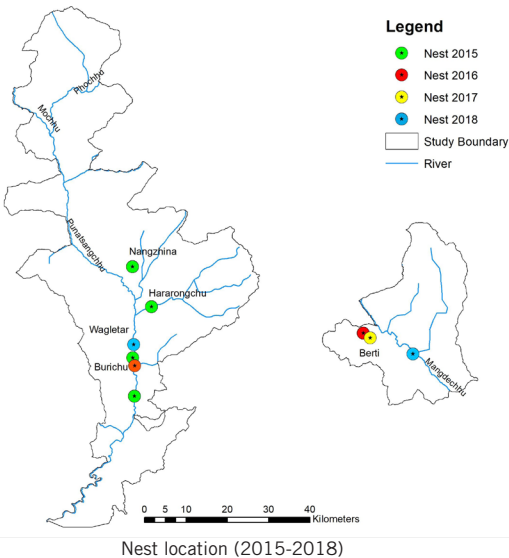
RSPN Field Office in Zhemgang with technical support from Zhemgang Forest Division Office successfully conducted the two-day Nursery Management Training for 75 individuals from the two Community Forestry Management Groups (CFMGs) of Buli village under Nangkhor gewog.

The training program was supported by REDD+ Capacity Building Project to CFMGs with an objective to provide hands-on experience on establishment and management of forest nursery and plantation creation. Such trainings are expected to help achieve of the objectives of REDD+ readiness program in the areas of sustainable forest management and address forest degradation and deforestation issues. The project will support similar training programs to rest of the CFMGs under Nangkhor Gewog.



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Mangdechhu basin and five birds in Burichu and Wagletar area in Punatsangchu basin. Of the 12 birds sighted, five were juveniles. With the additional five juveniles recruited to the existing population this year, 29 individuals of WBH are expected to live in wilds of Bhutan today. 24 WBH individuals were counted during annual population survey conducted toward the end of February 2018. There were 28 birds in 2017.





## REDD+ readiness training

RSPN in collaboration with Zhemgang Forest Division successfully conducted the REDD+ readiness training program from June 15-20, 2018 at the Rural Development Training Center, Zhemgang. Thirty community forest executive members representing 19 Community Forests (CF) in Zhemgang district attended the 6-day training program.

The training program was supported by the REDD+ capacity building project implemented by RSPN in Zhemgang district. During the 6-day training program, participants were sensitized on Bhutan REDD+ readiness program, drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, new Forest and Nature Conservation Rules & Regulations (FNCRR, 2017), sustainable forest management, silviculture, Non-Wood Forest Product (NWFP) management, NWFP post-harvest techniques, and waste management in rural communities.

The trained executive members representing the individual C.F will further sensitize people in their own community.



The participants



Forestry officials presenting FNCRR-2017

## Mass awareness program on Bhutan REDD+ readiness program

RSPN Field Office in Zhemgang in collaboration with Zhemgang Forest Division successfully conducted a day-long mass awareness program on Bhutan REDD+ readiness program to the students of Buli central School, monastic institutions and seven villages under Nangkhori Gewog. The awareness program objective was to impart REDD+ information.



With community



With monastic institution



At Buli Central School



## FFLG facilitators trained on organic agriculture

The Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) with technical support from the Organic Denmark is currently implementing the project, “Empower small scale Bhutanese farmers to increased food security and sustainability livelihood through agro-ecological farming and food system development” in Chhukha and Zhemgang Dzongkhag. The project is support by CISU based in Denmark and shall be executed from January 2018 till June 2019.

As part of the project activity, RSPN in collaboration with the Organic Denmark trained farmers from Bayel-Kunzang under Chhukha Dzongkhag and farmers from Buli, Tali, Kikhar, Dakpay and Berti

under Zhemgang Dongkhag for five days at the Rural Development Training Centre (RDTTC) from May 28 – June 1, 2018. The training was attended by 13 Farmers Family Learning Group Facilitators (FFLG).

The main objective of the training was to impart the FFLG facilitators with the knowledge of organic agriculture which is one of the sustainable agricultural practices as it takes care of bio-diversity, avoids environmental contamination, a holistic farming approach, stress on on-farm production of farm inputs thereby, has a good scope to reduce the cost of

production, higher profit margins due to premium prices and is a climate smart agriculture.

The participants were also taught about Participatory mapping. Participatory mapping is defined by the content of the maps which depicts local knowledge and information and provide a valuable visual representation of what a community perceives as its place and the significant features within it.

On the final day, the farmers learnt about the importance of networking among the FFLGs and a group on social app called WECHAT was created.



Group work session



Group work presentation



Mr. Jesper, Organic Denmark with FFLG

## Monitoring visit for new Captive Breeding Centre

The RSPN team and a donor representative from BTFEC visited Changchey at Tsirang to monitor the construction of the White-bellied Heron Captive Breeding Centre. The Centre aims to increase the population of the critically endangered White-bellied Heron through captive rearing and research. The construction is expected to be completed in the next two years.



Captive breeding construction site



RSPN team with BTFEC (donor representative)



## Inauguration of Rural Water Supply Scheme

The Water Supply Infrastructures built through the ‘Strengthening of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)’ Project was handed over to the beneficiary communities of Yoeseltse and Phuntshopelri Gewogs, Samtse on June 8, 2018.

Dasho Dzongrab of Samtse Dzongkhag, the Chief Guest of the handing over ceremony, thanked RSPN, SAARC Development Fund (SDF), Department of Public Health (DoPH, Ministry of Health) and the stakeholders on behalf of the beneficiaries from Yoeseltse and Phuntshopelri Gewogs. “This is a day of great significance. The water infrastructures built and handed over today through the WASH project shall greatly benefit about 1100 households. Now the communities should understand the importance of sustainably using and managing the water supply infrastructures that have been gifted to us,” Dasho said. Dasho assured that the Water Infrastructures will be utilized sustainably, and stated that besides ensuring water sufficiency for the two gewogs for the next 20 years, WASH project through its various activities has helped improve sanitation and health in the two communities and

the local schools. The Gup of Yoeseltse Gewog talked about the challenges faced by the people due to acute water shortages in the past. He mentioned that the new water infrastructures, one of the biggest in Bhutan, will immensely benefit the communities in his areas and thanked RSPN, SDF, DoPH and Samtse Dzongkhag for the support.

About 95 participants, including the Executive Director, Program Manager, Division Chiefs and WASH Project Officer of RSPN, Gewog officials and other officials of Phuntshopelri and Yoeseltse Gewog, District Engineer, Project Engineer and Sector Heads of Samtse Dzongkhag, Principal and

teachers of Yoeseltse Middle Secondary School, Gewog Tshogdu Members and Water Committee Members of Yoeseltse Gewog attended the ceremony.

The three-year project was funded by SDF Secretariat Office based in Thimphu, Bhutan and implemented by RSPN with technical support from Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health and Samtse Dzongkhag in two Gewogs of Phuntshopelri and Yoeseltse under Samtse District. The project consisted of three main components of water, sanitation and hygiene with the goal to improve the quality of life of rural population (covering about 1095 rural households) by providing safe, convenient and sustainable water, sanitation services and better hygiene.



Dasho Dzongrab gracing the inauguration

## Dr. Kinley Tenzin honored with the “PRIDE OF ASIA AWARD – 2018”



Global Leaders Foundation conferred the “PRIDE OF ASIA AWARD – 2018” to Dr. Kinley Tenzin, Executive Director of the Royal Society for Protection of Nature on June 20, 2018 during the 2nd Indo-Bhutan Friendship Summit held in Thimphu, Bhutan. The award was in recognition for Excellence in Environmental Conservation on the basis of his excellent performance, splendid achievement and outstanding contribution towards the improvement and development of forest research & nature protection activities in Bhutan.

Dr. Kinley began his career as a Researcher at Research and Development Center, Ministry of Agriculture and

Forests in 1998. He also served as the National Counterpart to an International Project funded by Boku University, Austria, the same university from where he obtained his PHD degree in 2008, and international project on Dendro science with Columbia University, USA. In 2010, he was appointed as the Program Director of Renewable Natural Resource Research and Development Center, Yusipang, Thimphu, Bhutan and spearheaded several Research and Extension projects in Bhutan. In 2015, Dr. Kinley assumed the post of Executive Director of RSPN, the oldest environmental Non-profit organization in the country established under the Royal command of His Majesty the Fourth King of Bhutan in 1987.



## RSPN celebrates Her Majesty The Gyalsuen's birth anniversary

On the auspicious occasion of Her Majesty the Gyalsuen's birthday, the Royal Society for Protection of Nature with our members and volunteers from Athang Training Academy successfully carried out the cleaning campaign in our half kilometre stretch of the Chubachu stream on June 4, 2018. The cleaning program was also to celebrate the World Environment Day.

The waste weighing more than three hundred kilograms was collected and handed over to City Corporation. A total of seventy volunteers and members from Athang Training Academy and RSPN took part in the campaign.

In commemoration of the day, two other environment conservation programs were funded by RSPN in Phuntsholing and Gelephu.

Similarly, RSPN carried out the 12th monthly cleaning of Chubachu stream on June 28, 2018 collecting a total of 73 kilograms of waste.

Also, two thermotolerant coliform (TtC) tests of Chubachu Stream were conducted with the help from Royal Centre for Disease Control, Dept. of Public Health, MoH. Despite the regular cleanings, it was

found that the Chubachu stream is grossly contaminated. The second TtC test results measured a total of 158,316 coliform bacteria in 100 mL of water, an increase of 41,456 mL from the first test conducted in August last year (refer table). Thermotolerant coliform is a WHO recommended test for the drinking water quality test.



participants preparing for the move



Sampling point	Interpreted results (CFU/100 mL)		Accepted values
	1st test (Aug 22, 2017)	2nd test (Jun 4, 2018)	
Above Kuengachholing Palace	0	16	0
Below Takin Zoo	160	300	0
Below Dept. of National Property	50,000	53,000	0
Below FoTM bridge	12,300	56,000	0
Below Telecom bridge	26,400	43,000	0
Below Tarayana bridge	28,000	6,000	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>116,860</b>	<b>158,316</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Royal Centre for Disease Control, Dept. of Public Health, MoH

## Office cleaning

As we were occupied working on environmental programs spread across the country, little did we realize that huge amount of junk and dirt had accumulated inside and around our office.

George Bernard Shaw's quote, "Better keep yourself clean and bright; you are the window through which you must see the world." was a good reminder that it was time to act.

Therefore, a mass cleaning and repainting of office was initiated from May 30 – June 2, 2018.



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**The Vulnerable**

# Black-necked Crane

*Grus nigricollis*

**HEIGHT**  
115 cm, 4 ft

**GLOBAL POPULATION**  
10,070 - 10,970 (2014)

**Total count in Bhutan**  
555 (2016 - 2017)

**WINGSPAN**  
235 cm (7.8 ft)

## Distribution

Bhutan  
India  
China

## Key Threats

Loss and degradation of habitat

## DIET

Plant roots & tubers, insects, snails, shrimps, fish, frogs, lizards and waste grains



## Conservation of vulnerable Black-necked Cranes in Bhutan

Bhutan is the largest wintering habitat of the migratory Black-necked Cranes (BNC) outside China. The bird is legally protected in Bhutan with its habitat mostly under conservation area. It is listed under Schedule I as protected bird species in the Forest and Nature Conservation Act of Bhutan (FNCA) 1995. The Cranes are an integral part of the Bhutanese culture and revered as the “heavenly bird” which often appears in folk songs, stories, wall paintings

and embroideries. It represents and symbolizes longevity and elegance. Bhutan receives over 500 Black-necked Cranes each year. A total of 555 Black-necked Cranes visited Bhutan, of which 78 per cent wintered in Phobjikha Valley. Since 1987, the number of cranes visiting Bhutan has doubled due to the healthy habitats in Bhutan and long-term conservation efforts of The Royal Government, communities and RSPN.

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