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RSPN Members marked International Biodiversity Day



RSPN members visited White-bellied Heron nesting site in Burichi, Tsirang.

RSPN organized a membership program from 22 – 23 May 2013 to mark International Biodiversity Day. A total of 29 RSPN adult members from diverse backgrounds and professions joined the trip to Burichu in Tsirang and Samtengang in Wangduephodrang.

Participating members included individuals from government and non-government organizations, private and corporate sectors and youth. On the first day, members travelled to Burichu in Tsirang, in see White-bellied Heron (*Ardea insignis*) and its habitat. The

>> *Contd. on page 3*

Phobjikha Local Guides Trained



Participants study quality of water

A total of 9 local guides were trained in Phobjikha from 4 to 9 and 21 to 24 May 2013 under the community-based sustainable tourism project. The training was conducted by Mr. Masanori Shintani, a well-known international ecotourism interpretive trainer from Japan.

During the training the local guides were taught about the simple understanding of what ecotourism or community-based sustainable tourism is, and how being a good interpretive guide can add value to the tourist experience of a particular area.

During the training period the participants were given class room training comprising lectures, presentations on case studies

>> *Contd. on page 2*

Capacity Building for Homestay Home Owners



Homestay home owner being trained



A series of training for Homestay Home Owners were conducted from 12 to 19 May 2013 and the 2 phase focusing on the refresher training was con-

ducted from 7 to 11 June 2013 in Phobjikha by RSPN and JEEF along with technical support of two trainers from the Royal Institute for Tourism and Hospitality (RITH)

and with help and participation of the Service Division team from the Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB).

Although there were 19 households selected within the project as new upcoming homestays, the training opportunity was also given to additional 5 households who were already operating as homestay and farmhouses for few years.

The participants were again made aware about the homestay guideline booklet which would be published in both Dzongkha and English and based on which the training curriculum has been developed. The training mainly stressed on hospitality, cleanliness and sanitation, first aid, organic kitchen gardening and cooking variety of dishes from popular crop of the locality and other food materials available like (potato, buckwheat flour, wild strawberries, cheese, butter, eggs and different herbs).



Participants of the training

>> *Contd. from page 1*

Phobjikha Local Guides Trained



The resource person trains local guides



from elsewhere, having participatory activities like resource finding and developing tour package and then they were given field based training of being a guide.

The training was based on the training manual book "Interpretive Methods for Community-Based Ecotourism-A Training Manual for Guides and Community Members" co-

authored by Mr. Masanori Shintani, Ms. Lisa Brochu and Dr. Tim Merriman.

>> Contd. from page 1

RSPN Members marked International Biodiversity Day



The members visited Samtengang Lake

White-bellied Heron (WBH), also known as the Imperial Heron, Great White-bellied Heron or Gentle Giant is a species of large heron found in the foothills of the eastern Himalaya (India, northeastern Bangladesh, Burma and Bhutan). It is dark grey with a white throat and under parts. This heron is mostly solitary and is found on undisturbed riversides in Bhutan especially along the Punatsangchu River. Because of its rareness, the Guinness Book of World Records rated the WBH as the rarest heron in the world in 2012.

In Bhutan, the WBH is protected by the law and is listed as Critically Endangered by the 2012 IUCN Red List. The global popula-

tion of the WBH is said to have declined and the species is threatened by disturbance and habitat degradation. The Punatsangchu basin in Bhutan is considered as its primary habitat with 20 plus individuals. RSPN has been involved in its habitat and behavioral study for over 10 years.

The WBH in Bhutan faces threats from developmental activities especially the hydropower construction. Currently, there are no plans for habitat rehabilitation and very few conservation initiatives. If the economic development activities in the river basin continue in the same pace, the WBH will be threatened with extinction.

The RSPN members saw an adult her-

on on its nest, assumed to be incubating. RSPN's WBH research official Rebecca Pradhan, explained about the particular nest and the WBH's behavior at the site. Members enjoyed watching WBH through a spotting scope.

By evening, RSPN members reached Samtengang and halted at Samtengang Middle Secondary School. On the second day, RSPN members were treated to a lecture and demonstration on the preparation of a herbarium with the support of the staff of NRED, who are also RSPN members. Members were shown how to collect plant parts from the wild and prepare herbariums with the help of newspapers and frames. The importance of herbariums in terms of biodiversity conservation and preservation was discussed.

RSPN members were then escorted to see the Samtengang Lake, which has now shrunk in volume and is covered with an invasive species (possibly water lilies). Members were briefed about eutrophication and how a decrease in water levels and the natural addition of nutrients can lead to eutrophication in water bodies. The Samtengang Lake's case was discussed among the members and also with the school teachers who told the history of the lake. Members explored the lake environment and observed the various species that have invaded the lake ecology.

In the afternoon, on the way back to Thimphu, members also had the chance to visit the Royal Botanical Park at Lamperi. At the park center, members were briefed on the Park and shown a documentary on the White-bellied Heron. Following the presentations, the RSPN members enjoyed the Park campus; visiting the lake, the rhododendron garden and the children's park.



The members who participated for the trip

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RSPN members planted 2500 saplings



The members worked during leisure hours and weekends



Carrying saplings to the plantation site

In a drive to plant trees for more carbon sequestration, RSPN members planted more than 2500 saplings composed of mostly *Quercus griffithii* {Si Si Shing (Dz); Beynang Shing (Sh); Khasru (Lh) } and *Quercus semicarlifolia* {Bjisjing (Dz); Beyt-senang Shing (Sh); Khasru (Lh)} on the way to Kuenselphodrang.

The plantation area measured 5.263 acres. The plantation program is expected to be an

annual activity for the RSPN members and volunteers.

RSPN has also plan to plant additional saplings of Dogwood or *Benthamidia capitata* tree {Poitse (Dz); Naminpa Shing (Sh); Ram Katar (Lh)} that will add beauty to the place.

The plantation was organized by RSPN in close collaboration with Nature Recreation and Eco-tourism Division (NRED) under Department of Forests and Park Services,

Ministry of Agriculture and Forests.

The activity was spanned over a period of around one month which was participated by RSPN members and volunteers during their leisure time.

RSPN would like to thank all stakeholders and members involved in this event and hope for their continued support and cooperation in similar activity in the future.



The saplings



A part of the plantation site

Global natural World Heritage coverage – the gaps identified

A new IUCN report identifies ‘gaps’ in the World Heritage List. The study also represents the first global effort to identify the most irreplaceable sites of outstanding biodiversity values for species conservation that may merit inscription on the prestigious list.

The World Heritage List includes 156 sites that are explicitly recognized for their outstanding biodiversity values. They span 72 countries across all continents except Ant-

arctica and represent all of the world’s major ecosystems.

‘ Biodiversity World Heritage sites’ are generally very large protected areas such as Australia’s Great Barrier Reef, the Cape Floral Region of South Africa or India’s Western Ghats. They cover a land area of 1.1 million km² - nearly 0.8% of the global land surface. But there are still areas with outstanding biodiversity values that are not yet part of this network and these are outlined in the report

Terrestrial Biodiversity and the World Heritage List: Identifying broad gaps and potential candidate sites for inclusion in the natural World Heritage network. The study is released during the annual UNESCO World Heritage meeting taking place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia this week.

It updates the previous study on the biogeographic coverage, and the representation

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Global natural World Heritage coverage – the gaps identified



IUCN launched a terrestrial biodiversity World Heritage gaps study

Photo: Juriah Mosin/Shutterstock.com

of biodiversity World Heritage sites on the global conservation priorities such as Biodiversity Hotspots, high-biodiversity wilderness areas, the Global 200 terrestrial priority ecoregions, Centres of Plant Diversity and Endemic Bird Areas to assess the 156 sites and identify broad gaps. It also identifies the most irreplaceable protected areas that may merit World Heritage listing and evaluates how these can help to fill the broad gaps.

Gaps in the coverage of global biodiversity conservation priorities include areas in the mountains of Central Asia, southwest

Arabian Peninsula, and mountain, forest and desert areas in the southwest of North and South America. Broad 'biogeographic' gaps include Oceania, temperate grasslands and cold deserts and semi-deserts.

There is potential for new biodiversity World Heritage sites in the four biodiversity hotspots, where currently have no representation on the List: Chilean Winter Rainfall and Valdivian Forests (Argentina and Chile); Irano-Anatolian (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Turkmenistan), the Göreme National Park World Heritage site

in Turkey falls into this hotspot but is not listed under biodiversity criteria; Madrean Pine-Oak Woodlands (Mexico and United States), the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve World Heritage site in Mexico falls into this hotspot but is not listed under biodiversity criteria; Mountains of Central Asia (Afghanistan, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

“Together with other regional gap studies, this work should go a long way in providing continued guidance for the development of the World Heritage List in coming years, further strengthening its contribution to protecting the world’s most important ecosystems and better safeguarding our planet’s natural heritage for future generations,” says Tim Badman, Director of IUCN’s World Heritage Programme.

Two sites from this hotspot (Xinjiang Tianshan, China and Tajik National Park, Tajikistan) have just been declared World Heritage sites.

Another 19 hotspots and one ‘high-biodiversity wilderness area’ have less than 1% of their area in biodiversity World Heritage sites. Hotspots with less than 0.1% coverage are New Caledonia, Succulent Karoo, Philippines and Mediterranean Basin. A further 46 Global 200 terrestrial priority ecoregions, 159 Centres of Plant Diversity, and 136 Endemic Bird Areas do not have a biodiversity World Heritage site.

The study was supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) with funds from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). Additional support was provided by the MAVA Foundation.

Source: www.iucn.org

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WORD SAFARI

In this edition, we have compiled a list of some threatened small birds and the parks they are found. (Source: page 87-89 of *Bhutan's Natural Heritage - A Legacy of the Monarchs*, published by RSPN, Thimphu).

Find and encircle the words which are **bold** and underlined. We have encircled one to help you get start with.

IUCN Status	Other small birds		Protected Areas**									
	Common name	Latin name	J D N P	J S W N P	B W S	R M N P	T N P	S W S	P W S	W C P	T S N R	K W S
Endangered	Rusty-bellied Shortwing	<i>Brachypteryx hyperythra</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Endangered	Dark-rumped Swift	<i>Apus acuticauda</i>			X						X	X
Endangered	Wood Snipe	<i>Gallinago nemoricola</i>	X	X			X					
Endangered	Kashmir Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula subrubra</i>					X					
Endangered	Beautiful Nuthatch	<i>Sitta formosa</i>		X			X					
Near Threatened	Ward's Trogon	<i>Harpactes wardi</i>	X	X			X					X
Near Threatened	Grey-crowned Prinia	<i>Prinia cinereocapilla</i>		X			X					
Near Threatened	Yellow-rumped Honeyguide	<i>Inticator xanthonotus</i>	X	X	X		X					
Near Threatened	Rufous-throated Wren Babbler	<i>Spelaeornis caudatus</i>	X	X								
Near Threatened	Wedge-billed Wren Babbler	<i>Sphenocichla humei</i>		X			X					

M	E	S	N	I	P	E	T	P	E
H	S	P	H	S	N	A	L	R	A
O	H	W	Y	S	A	D	I	I	G
N	O	R	I	G	O	T	I	N	L
E	R	T	I	F	R	E	Y	I	E
Y	T	R	R	R	T	E	O	A	S
G	W	I	K	W	R	E	N	O	S
U	I	D	A	E	G	E	U	U	E
I	N	G	S	N	M	O	L	N	R
D	G	E	H	U	U	I	P	T	G
E	H	E	M	T	R	O	G	O	N
I	N	S	I	H	K	H	R	I	N
S	A	R	R	A	N	G	E	N	N
R	D	U	C	T	B	L	A	E	G
D	T	S	P	C	T	T	T	D	P
U	V	U	E	H	A	I	R	O	O
S	N	O	D	S	H	N	U	X	S
P	O	R	C	U	P	I	E	E	V
B	A	B	B	L	E	R	L	R	N

** **JDNP**: Jigme Dorji National Park; **JSWNP**: Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park; **BWS**: Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary; **RMNP**: Royal Manas National Park; **TNP**: Thrumshingla National Park; **SWS**: Sakten Wildlife Sanctuary; **PWS**: Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary; **WCP**: Wangchuck Centennial Park; **TSNR**: Toorsa Strict Nature Reserve; **KWS**: Khaling Wildlife Sanctuary

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