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## NEWSLETTER OF IUCN WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS: SOUTH ASIA

The Newsletter of IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, South Asia is a compilation of information on the Protected Areas of South Asian countries. These information are obtained from free and publicly available sources such as the internet, newspapers and other publications. The publisher of this newsletter does not make any claim on the authenticity of the contents of the secondary sources of information. The information does not necessarily represent any official views of the publisher.



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THE IUCN WORLD  
COMMISSION ON  
PROTECTED  
AREAS

# MOUNTAINS OF SOUTH ASIA

NEWSLETTER NO. WCPA/SOUTH ASIA/2017/1

## MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL VICE-CHAIR

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Writing anything about South Asia reminds me of the global importance of this distinct geographical region that is home to unique biodiversity and to one fourth of the world human population. Apart from being the cradle of ancient culture and civilization, the South Asian subcontinent encompasses a massive mosaic of snow-capped mountains, arid deserts, vast plateaus, fertile plains, dense forests, coral islands, seas and oceans. The entire region is home to diverse flora and fauna and many of which are extremely rare, and their survival prospects are extensively threatened. Hence, the role of Protected Areas (PA) to hold and protect the enormous diversity of the region is undoubtedly crucial. The PA Managers have a significant role to play in not only managing their PA's but also learn from other managers within and outside their respective countries.

As much of the conservation and management issues are similar in South Asian nations, there is a need for PA managers in the region to share their experiences and update themselves on the recent developments. Keeping this in view, this step of publishing the bi-annual newsletter for the WCPA South Asia Region has been taken up and the theme for this first issue is the 'Mountains of South Asia'. This issue highlights some of the important ecological issues related to the PA Network in different mountain ranges of the seven South Asian countries. Our constant aspiration is to assist IUCN / WCPA members and governments so that PAs of this region truly become "hope spots" for sustainability besides being "hot spots" for biodiversity. We want to ensure that in South Asia, PAs become the most cost effective, efficient and reliable tool for biodiversity conservation, providers of ecosystem services and as a significant component and contributor to other societal values.

I take this opportunity to request all those WCPA members in South Asia who have not renewed their membership to do so at the earliest. Please fill in the online application form and submit it at <https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/wcpa/membership/become-wcpa-member>.

The WCPA membership Guide 2017 and Code of Conduct are also provided on this web page. For those who are interested in becoming new members of WCPA, they may also submit their applications via the web link provided above.

The theme of the next issue (January 2018) of WCPA South Asia Newsletter will be "Coastal and Marine Conservation in South Asia". Contributions may please be submitted to Dr. S. Sathyakumar, Scientist at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun ([ssk@wii.gov.in](mailto:ssk@wii.gov.in)) by 1 December 2017. I hope with the launch of this newsletter and our renewed efforts for enhancing WCPA membership from South Asian nations, we will be able to work towards strengthening our PA management efforts in South Asia. Happy Reading, and I look forward to receiving your valuable feedback.

**Dr. V. B. Mathur,**  
Regional Vice-Chair, IUCN-WCPA South Asia  
&

Director, Wildlife Institute of India  
[vbm@wii.gov.in](mailto:vbm@wii.gov.in)

4th April, 2017



## PROTECTED AREAS IN THE MOUNTAINS OF SOUTH ASIA



*Khangchendzonga National Park, a newly inscribed World Heritage Site, India*

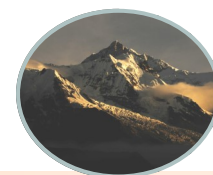
South Asia is the land of mountains featuring the highest mountain range the Himalaya and the other associated ranges such as the Karakoram, the Hindukush and the Kirthar. These mountains hold a considerable geographical area of India and Pakistan and almost the entire country of Nepal and Bhutan. Apart from the high Himalayan ranges, along the west coast of India, the Western Ghat Mountain range represents a very unique geophysical and biological entity. The island nation of Sri Lanka also has

several mountains at the central part of the country. The riverine flat and lowlands of Bangladesh do not have any true mountain; however, hills are present in the South eastern part of the country. All of these mountains in South Asian countries are enormously rich in biodiversity and are home of several rare and endangered species. However, habitat loss due to rapid increase in several kinds of developmental activities, extraction of resources including illegal hunting and threats of habitat alteration due to climate change pose a real challenge for the long term survival of the mountain flora and fauna in South Asian countries. To protect this array of biodiversity, several Protected Areas in the forms of National Park, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Hunting Reserves are present in all the South Asian countries. The focus of this newsletter is to bring forward the significant updates from these Protected Areas or the landscapes. A brief description and details of the Protected Area Network in mountains of South Asian countries are given here:

### Protected Area Network in the mountains of South Asian countries

Country	India	Pakistan	Nepal	Bhutan	Sri Lanka
Number of PA	127	14	18	10	1
Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	43551.11	23753.7	27892	16396	32
National Park	22	10	11	5	1
Wildlife Sanctuary	67	3		4	
Hunting Reserve		1	1		
Conservation Area	38		6		
Nature Reserve				1	





## INDIA

### NATIONAL MISSION FOR SUSTAINING THE HIMALAYAN ECOSYSTEM: INITIATION OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY ON IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON WILDLIFE OF BHAGIRATHI BASIN

The National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE) is one of the eight National missions which form the core of India's first National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) launched in 2008 and is headed by the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change. The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has recently initiated field studies in Bhagirathi Basin in Uttarakhand. The expected outputs/outcomes of this five years project will be cohesive spatial database on fauna and their habitats, and ecosystems in the IHR; vulnerability indices for species (fauna), establishment of monitoring protocols for long-term climate change monitoring, development of predictive modelling and visualization scenarios in context of climate change and anthropogenic drivers, enhancement in research capacities of WII and collaborating partners; and formulation of policy briefs and development of 'Wildlife Watch' for indicator/endangered species for regular monitoring by stakeholders. To know more, visit



*Gangotri National Park, Bhagirathi basin, Uttarakhand, India*

📷 Manish Bhardwaj

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/global-warming/WII-initiates-study-on-Climate-Change-in-Bhagirathi-region/articleshow/49949858.cms>

### WILDLIFE OF THE HIMALAYA: TREAD CAREFULLY, ACT RESPONSIBLY



*Apart from farming, livestock rearing is an important source of livelihood in the Himalaya* 📷 S.Sathyakumar

The Himalaya is endowed with rich biodiversity, which includes close to 10,000 plants, 300 mammals, 980 birds, 176 reptiles, 105 amphibians and 270 fresh-water fishes and innumerable invertebrates, many of which are yet to be documented. The region is still unexplored. This is evident from approximately 353 new species discovered from the Eastern Himalaya alone during the last two decades. In the last six decades, human population in the region have increased three-fold with a current average density of about 125 people per square km. Apart from farming, livestock rearing is an important livelihood which contributes 15-20 per cent of the annual income of a family. The rapid pace of development

and over-exploitation of natural resources have led to habitat degradation and loss. These long-standing as well as emerging threats have led to the decline of many endangered wildlife species in the Himalaya. Visit <http://www.wionews.com/south-asia/wildlife-of-the-himalaya-tread-carefully-act-responsibly-12996>



## INDIA

### TWO PLANT SPECIES DISCOVERED NEAR ERAVIKULAM NATIONAL PARK IN MUNNAR

Two new plant species, *Impatiens mankulamensis* and *Impatiens panduramgani*, were discovered from Mankulam forest and near Eravikulam National Park in Munnar. It was first spotted by Mankulam forest range officer in July 2015 at Edathatt of Mankulam forest range. The same plant was also spotted in September 2016 at Kannadipara of Mankulam range. The new plant was included in *Impatiens* genus and as it was spotted for the first time in the region, it will be known as *Impatiens mankulanensis*. The research paper in this regard has already been published in Fito-taxa International Journal. The plant, which normally flowers in the rainy season of July to October, has flowers that are white in colour with a pink border.



Eravikulam National Park, Munnar, Kerala, Western Ghat

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kochi/2-plant-species-discovered-near-eravikulam-national-park-in-munnar/articleshow/57350169.cms>

### WESTERN GHATS: 57,000 km<sup>2</sup> NOTIFIED AS ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE



A view of Western Ghat which holds many eco-sensitive areas

The Government has notified 57,000 km<sup>2</sup> of the Western Ghats as an ecologically sensitive area (ESA) where all kinds of mining activities, large constructions, thermal power plants and highly polluting industries will no longer be allowed. The land is spread over six states – of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. “There shall be a complete ban on mining, quarrying and sand mining in ecologically sensitive area and all existing mines shall be phased out within five years from the date of issue of final notification or on the expiry of the existing mining lease, whichever is earlier,” the Environment Ministry notification said. For more information, visit:

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/esa-isro-western-ghats-57000-sq-km-notified-as-ecologically-sensitive-4551900/>





## PAKISTAN

### UNESCO ADDS EIGHT PAKISTANI HISTORICAL SITES TO HERITAGE LIST



Central Karakoram National Park and Deosai National Park in Gilgit Baltistan were amongst eight historical sites in Pakistan that were named in a list of potential sites by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, and accepted by UNESCO as properties of universal value. According to the deputy director of the DOAM, they are developing dossiers on all these sites, which will document plans on how to best conserve and manage the heritage sites.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/182809-UNESCO-adds-eight-Pakistani-historical-sites-to-heritage-list>

### MARKHOR SLIPS OUT OF CHITRAL NATIONAL PARK



A Kashmir Markhor made its way into the centre of Chitral city, attracting crowds of people. It seemed to have lost its way and entered the city from the Chitral Gol National Park. The Markhor was eventually tranquilized and captured by forest officials, who then released the animal into the core zone of the Park in Roghzhall. As of January 2017, the number of Markhor in the National Park has crossed 2000 heads in the core area along. While normally high altitude ungulates, Markhor descend to lower-altitude areas in search of food in winter, when the higher altitudes are snow-bound. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1096270>

### MNC TO REPLENISH ALL THE WATER IT USES: AN EXAMPLE FROM AYUBIA



The Coca-Cola Company and its global bottling partners announced in August 2016 that they met their goal to replenish, or “balance” the equivalent amount of water to their global sales volume – the water used in manufacturing as well as in finished beverages – back to nature and communities. Coca Cola Pakistan has made similar efforts in Ayubia National Park, Pakistan, making a significant contribution to achievement of global water replenishment targets through the Ayubia National Park Sub-watershed Management Project. The project has been implemented in phases since 2008 in partnership with WWF-Pakistan. The company has so far invested

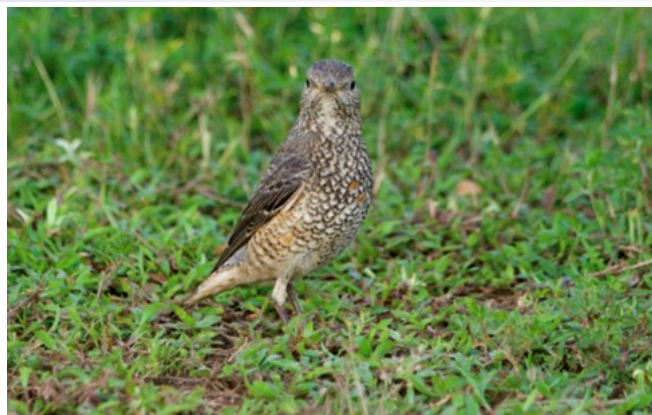
over Rs. 85 million in this project, which has positively impacted 135,000 local people. <http://dailytimes.com.pk/business/02-Sep-16/coca-cola-is-the-first-fortune-500-company-to-replenish-all-the-water-it-uses-globally>



## NEPAL

### NEW IMMIGRANTS IN SHEY PHOKSUNDO NATIONAL PARK

A Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush was photographed in Nepal's Shey Phoksundo National Park, near the Shey Monastery, in September 2016. This is the first time an individual of this species has been seen in Nepal, bringing the total number of birds in the mountainous country to 866. The Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*), is seen as an autumn channel migrant bird species in Pakistan and India. The Branch of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and Bird Conservation Nepal sanctioned the presence of a new bird species in the nation. <http://www.newdelhitimes.com/new-immigrants-in-nepal123/>



### LIVESTOCK MAKE UP A QUARTER OF SNOW LEOPARDS' MEALS

A study published in February 2017 found that one-fourth of the diet of Snow Leopards in the Central Himalayas in Nepal is made up of livestock. The survey area covered nearly 5,000 km<sup>2</sup>, mostly in the Annapurna and Manaslu Conservation Areas. The researchers conducting the study were able to identify prey DNA from 182 of the leopard scats they collected. While snow leopards mostly preferred to hunt cliff-dwelling wild animals — primarily Blue Sheep and Himalayan Tahr — 27% of their diet was domestic livestock such as goat, horse and yak. The research highlights the concern regarding the conflict between snow leopards and poor herders in the area, who view the snow leopards as a threat to their livelihood, and may turn to killing the animals in retribution, which is a huge blow to an already endangered species. <http://www.livescience.com/57821-snow-leopard-diet-livestock.html>

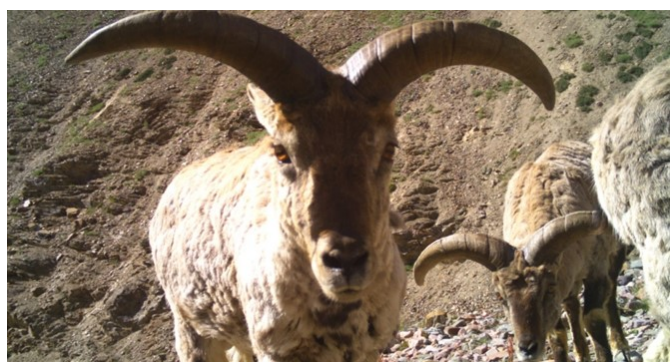


*In the central Himalayas of Nepal, snow leopards depend on livestock for about 25 percent of their diet.*

📷 Madhu Chetri

### NUMBER OF HIMALAYAN BLUE SHEEP ON RISE AT DHORPATAN HUNTING RESERVE

A census of Blue Sheep, or Bharal (*Pseudois nayaur*) in the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve has found that the number of blue sheep in the reserve has increased to 2202, with 83 groups. Ten years ago, there were 755 blue sheep in the Reserve. The reserve carries out the census every five years by making three groups with the support of locals. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation determines the quota for hunting on the basis of their number. Permission is given for hunting 12 mountain goats and Himalayan blue sheep in both seasons — six each per season. <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2017-01-06/number-of-himalayan-blue-sheep-on-rise-at-dhorpatan-hunting-reserve.html>







## BHUTAN

### BHUTAN'S STUMBLING BLOCK TO BECOMING THE GREENEST NATION ON THE PLANET

Bhutan is well on its way to becoming the greenest nation on the planet. The Himalayan Kingdom claims to have just over 50 percent of its land area designated as protected area, in the form of National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. Furthermore, these are all connected by biological corridors. Bhutan keeps adding protected areas, with several new wetland reserves declared recently at Phobjikha and Khotokha. This vast green coverage is possible due to a combination of factors: minimal exploitation of natural resources, Royal Family patronage of parks, and a very small population in Bhutan-officially totalling 768,577 people in 2016. Maintaining natural heritage does not come easily. Bhutan has banned climbing of all of its peaks above 6,000 metres, a number of which are regarded as sacred. Having observed the garbage that accompanies mountaineers at the summit of Everest in nearby Nepal, Bhutan decided that its sacred peaks are better off pristine and undisturbed. There are some major obstacles in the path of Bhutan's vision for keeping its ecosystems intact - mainly, megadam building on Bhutan's pristine rivers. Bhutan is also one of the highest per-capita consumers of fuel wood in the world. Bhutan has made admirable strides in becoming the greenest country in the world. If the nation can address these issues in time, it will be a shining example of sustainability and conservation of our natural heritage.

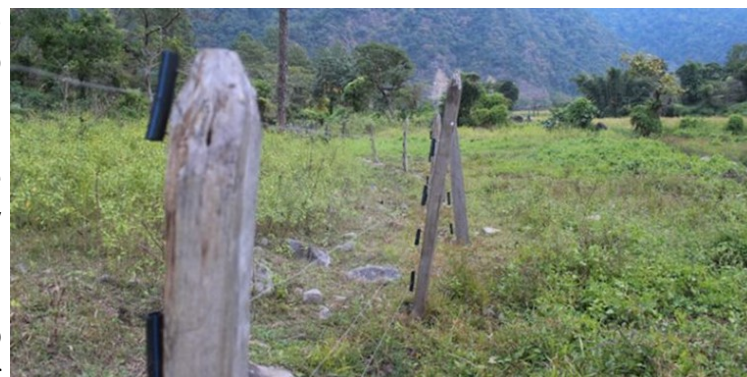


*Organic farming in Bhutan*

[http://www.theecologist.org/News/news\\_analysis/2988705/ecologist\\_special\\_report\\_bhutans\\_stumbling\\_block\\_to\\_becoming\\_the\\_greenest\\_nation\\_on\\_the\\_planet.html](http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_analysis/2988705/ecologist_special_report_bhutans_stumbling_block_to_becoming_the_greenest_nation_on_the_planet.html)

### ELECTRIC FENCING CONTRIBUTED TO IMPROVE CROP YIELD

The installation of electric fencing in Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park in 2014 has contributed to improved crop yield in the village of Berti in 2016. Unlike past years, wild animals, like wild pig and barking deer, which usually destroy the crops, were not able to access the paddy fields. Local farmers say they no longer have to guard their fields overnight, and over 90% of the crop is now being harvested, with some percentage of the crops being lost to birds. The village received the electric fences under the Rural Livelihood Project. The fencing stretches three kilometres. While it should be considered how fencing and other linear infrastructure may act as a barrier to the movement of wild animal species, a reduction in human-wildlife negative interaction is beneficial to all involved.



*Electric fencing in Berti village, Bhutan*

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/electric-fencing-to-the-rescue/>



## SRI LANKA

## DEVELOPMENT AT A COST TO THE ENVIRONMENT



Environmentalists have opposed moves by the Sri Lanka Government to encroach 99 acres of land from the Sripada (Adam's peak) Wildlife Sanctuary to build cable wire cars and luxury hotels under an Urban Development Authority (UDA) project. Out of 12, 329 acres, the project proposes to construct cable wire cars and hotels in 99 acres in the holy grounds of Sripada but environmentalists and the environmental protection organisations raised concerns ever since the plan was proposed in 2013 by the previous government. The surrounding areas and the road leading from Sripada to Nallathanni were declared as a world heritage site of UNESCO – of ecological

and biological importance – in 2010, and hence no construction or renovation can take place here without a valid reason and appropriate approvals from the authorities concerned, especially from the UNESCO committee.

<http://www.thesundayleader.lk/2016/11/06/development-at-a-cost-to-the-environment/>

## ANNOUNCEMENT

- ♦ To **renew the WCPA membership**, please fill in the online application form and submit it at <https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/wcpa/membership/become-wcpa-member>. The WCPA membership Guide 2017 and Code of Conduct are also provided on this web page. For those who are interested in becoming new members of WCPA, they may also submit their applications via the web link provided above.
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