

**THE WHITE-BELLIED HERON (*Ardea insignis*)**

**“SAVE**

**THE**

**CRITICALLY**

**ENDANGERED**

**WHITE-BELLIED**

**HERON”**



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*The Critically Endangered  
White-bellied Heron  
(Ardea insignis)*

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# The *Critically Endangered* White-bellied Heron (*Ardea insignis*)

**Common name:** White-bellied Heron (WBH)

**Scientific name:** *Ardea insignis*

## **Distribution:**

WBH exist only in two major river basins in Bhutan. Punatsangchu basin (Punakha, Wangdue and Tsirang) and Mangdechu basin (Berti, Tingtibi), Dagachu and Phibsoo are only places in Bhutan where WBH are currently found.

Globally WBH is found in eastern Himalaya foothills in Bhutan, North-east India and north Myanmar.

## **Population:**

Global population is estimated to 50-250 individuals. In Bhutan 28 individuals were recorded in 2015.

## **Habitat Ecology:**

WBH is primarily found feeding in small to large rivers, usually with sand or gravel bars often within or adjacent to dominant Chirpine forest between the elevation of 400 to 1500 meters. WBH is a solitary but may aggregate into small flocks and family groups. WBH nest, breeds and roost in Chirpine forest on step slopes with sparse or no understory.

## **Conservation Status:**

Listed as *Critically Endangered* by IUCN and top 100 EDGE species globally. In Bhutan, WBH is listed in Schedule I of Forest and Nature Conservation Act 1995 of Bhutan (2012).

## **Conservation management:**

Habitat protection works are being carried out in Bhutan. Phuchu (Punatsangchu basin) in Punakha has been declared as WBH habitat. Extensive population monitoring and awareness campaign are being conducted by RSPN WBH recovery project team. Independent researchers are also working for conservation of WBH and WBH habitat in Bhutan.

## **Acknowledgement:**

This brochure is produce with financial support from **Rufford Small Grant** and technical assistance from **RSPN** and **DoFPS**, Bhutan.