

## Project Update: November 2016

### 1. Mass public awareness on White Bellied Heron Conservation

32 nature club students with two coordinators and 36 scout members with their scout master were involved in mass public awareness on biodiversity conservation particularly white bellied heron (WBH). Students who were the scout members have marched towards Dawakha-upstream of Phochu and valley and 32 nature club members have walk downstream of Phochu valley. Students have worn the T Shirt with the phrase “Living in harmony with Heron” and walk from village to village. The students have educated local people on status of white bellied heron and pleaded them to minimise the activities which threaten survival of WBH. Local people were reminded and subsequently requested to stop/control the following activities in and adjacent to WBH habitat.

1. Feeling of trees.
2. Intention disturbance.
3. Forest fires.
4. Fishing.
5. Free grazing.
6. Mining.

\*\*\* The poster is attached in annexure I

Students have walked from village to village and farm to farm in order to enhance the reach of the information and not to interrupt their farm works. More than 500 local people from 16 villages (see figure 1) were made aware about conservation of WBH and students have requested local people to control/stop above six major activities. The local people promised the students that they would immediately stop collection of firewood and sand/stone from core feeding areas.

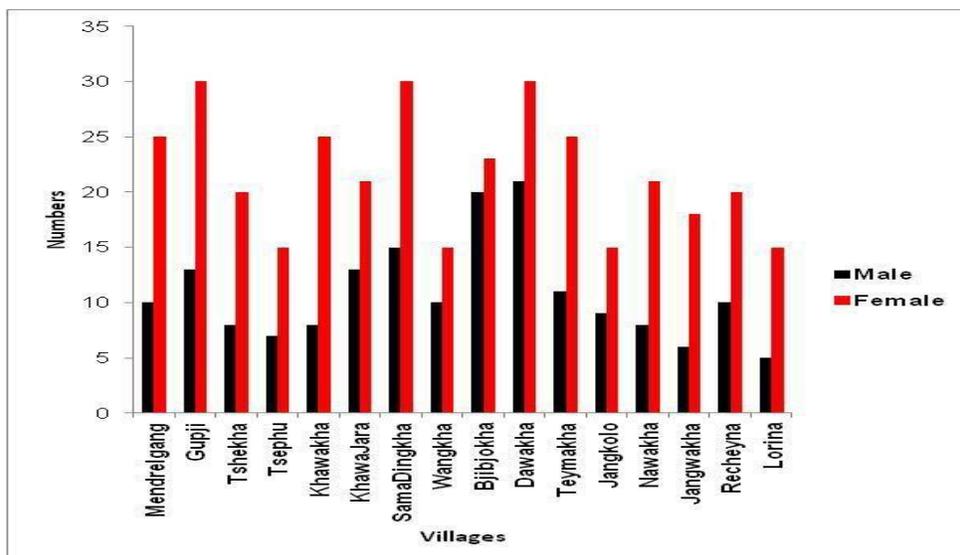


Figure 1. The number of males and females who participated in awareness program



Figure 2. Nature club students pleading local people to stop/ control activities that threaten WBH

## 2. Capacity Development of Nature Club members

### • Basic plant identification

Trees, shrubs and herbs make the habitat for WBH. Chirpine forest is the main tree species which provide roosting and nesting place. Students were taught on how to identify the plants by leaves and flowers. Types of leaves (simple, composite) and arrangement of leaves (alternative, spiral, opposite and whorled) were taught to students to make a professional guess on family, then genus and species. They were also introduced on how to use the guide book and other keys. Students could identify around 20 species of the plants along the valley. List of plants identified by the students were illustrated in the annexure II.



Figure 3. Student with the flowering plants of *Eupatorium species*

- **Bird watching**

Students were shown how to use binoculars, use guide books, record in datasheet. At the time of bird watching exercise, student were instructed to identify the birds based on size and shape, features, colours and markings, anything unusual such as a crest or wattles on the side of the face and beak. The list of birds identified by the students is attached in annexure III.



Figure 4. The nature student (girls) watching birds and identifying using guide books

- **Wildlife surveys**

The nature club members were taught on basic ecology of WBH like where they nest, feed and roosts. Besides it, students were taught on how to observe and look for wildlife signs, survey protocols and latest techniques (camera trapping and GPS tagging). During the time of survey, dropping of barking deer, wallowing by wild pigs, leopard scats and scrape were encountered.

### **3. Social survey to assess local people perception on WBH**

People living in and around Phochu valley were interviewed to assess their knowledge on importance of WBH conservation, population trends, identify new conservation threats, causes of population decline and what needs to be done to maintain viable population of WBH. So far 50 households were interviewed and more than half of participants reported a concern on decline of population over the years. The respondents expressed their views that rafting and boating facility permitted in the river is main factor which disturbs birds and avoid visiting the place again.



Figure 5. A senior local resident expressing his concern over WBH population decline

Annexure I: 6 Appeals to local residents

བྱ་ཕོམ་དཀར་པོ་མ་ཉམས་སྲུང་སྐྱོབ་དོན་ལུ།  
TO HELP WHITE BELLIED HERON SURVIVE

དོན་མེད་བྱ་སྐྱོག་གནང།  
Do not disturb  
birds

མིང་དང་མེ་རྟོག་ཚུ་བརྟོག་མ་གནང།  
Stop felling trees



ལྗགས་ཚལ་མེ་རླུན་ལས་བཀག་གནང།  
Prevent forest fire



ཉ་བཟུང་ལས་བཟོད་མ་གནང།  
Stop fishing



སྐོ་རོར་སེམས་ཅན་བདག་མེད་མ་བཞག།  
Control free grazing



བྱེམ་དང་རྫོ་ཕ་བསྐྱོམ་ནི་མཚའ་ལས་གནང།  
Minimize sand and boulder collection



**Annexure II: The list of the plants identified by the students**

Sl.#	Scientific Name	Local Name	Notes
1	<i>Adhatoda vasica</i>	Bashekha	
2	<i>Aesandra butyracea</i>	Yika Shing	
3	<i>Artemisia nilagirica</i>	Khempa	
4	<i>Berberis asiatica</i>	Kay-pai tshang	
5	<i>Bidens pilosa</i>	Chim ja nachum	
6	<i>Bridella</i> spp.	-	
7	<i>Buddleia asiatica</i>	Kan shing chuwa	
8	<i>Campylotris speciosa</i>	-	
9	<i>Cymbopogon flexuosus</i>	Chin trum	
10	<i>Elaeagnus parvifolia</i>	Bji	
11	<i>Eupatorium</i>	-	
12	<i>Euphorbia</i> spp	-	
13	<i>Jatropha curcas</i>	Dhu shing	
14	<i>Loranthus</i> spp.	-	
15	<i>Misa chisa</i>		
16	<i>Napeta</i> spp.	-	
17	<i>Oroxylon indicum</i>	Tsampa-ka-yee meto	
18	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>	Omla	
19	<i>Pilea symmeria</i>	-	
20	<i>Pinus roxburghii</i>	Tongphu	
21	<i>Plectranthus barbatus</i>	-	
22	<i>Rhus simialata</i>	Choka shing	
23	<i>Rubia manjith</i>	Tsoy	
25	<i>Rubus ellipticus</i>	Tshema tsheloo	
26	<i>Sapium insigne</i>	Sho shee	
27	<i>Syzygium cumini</i>	Nyasee Shing	
28	<i>Toricellia tilliifolia</i>	-	
29	Unknown spp 1		
30	Unknown spp 2		
31	<i>Zanthoxylum bungeanum</i>	Thing-ngay	

**Annexure III: List of the birds identified by the nature club students.**

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific name</b>
White Bellied Heron	<i>Ardea Insignis</i>
Red Vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
White capped Water Redstart	<i>Chaimarrornis leucocephalus</i>
Hodgson Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus hodgsoni</i>
Green Backed Tit	<i>Parus monticolus</i>
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Crested King fisher	<i>Megaceryle lugubris</i>
River lapwing	<i>Vanellus duvaucelii</i>
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>
Rusty-checked Scimitar Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus erythrogeus</i>
Speckled Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba hodgsonii</i>
Grandala	<i>Grandala coelicolor</i>
Grey-Backed Shrike	<i>Lanius tephronotus</i>
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Blue Whistling Thrush	<i>Myophonus caeruleus</i>
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
Mountain bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus mclellandii</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
Russet Sparrow	<i>Passer rutilans</i>
Brown Dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasii</i>
Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocerus</i>
Chestnut-Bellied Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>
Common hoopoe	<i>Upapa epops</i>
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Anser indicus</i>
Yellow-billed Magpie	<i>Urocissa flavirostris</i>



Figure 6. School children with T shirt worn during awareness



Figure 7. One of nature club group near feeding site of WBH



བྱ་ཕོ་མ་དཀར་ཕོ་འདི་འཛམ་གླིང་ནང་རབ་  
ཆད་ནིའི་ཉེན་ཁ་ཅན་གྱི་བྱ་འི་རིག་གཞི་གཅིག་  
ཡིན། མ་ཉམས་སྤྱད་སྐྱོབ་མཛད་གནང་།

The White-bellied Heron is one of the critically endangered bird species. Help to protect and conserve them.