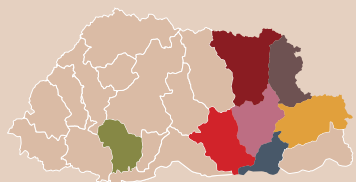


FIRST EDITION
2022



UNCHARTED BHUTAN TOURISM ATTRACTIONS



UNCHARTED BHUTAN

TOURISM ATTRACTIONS

- Crops & Livelihood
- History, Culture & Craft
- Nature & Wildlife
- Traditional Sports
- Rituals & Festivals

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SHINE (Sustainable Hospitality Industries Inclusive
of Native Entrepreneurs)

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Foreword

Tourism benefits have been rather concentrated in western Bhutan. Most of eastern and central areas are barely visited by international tourists, despite the vast potential of the attractions - pristine landscapes, rich cultural heritage, historical narratives and diverse ethnic minorities. The project “Sustainable Hospitality Industry Inclusive of Native Entrepreneur (SHINE)” funded by the EU SWITCH-Asia Programme aims at more inclusive tourism development in Bhutan, by promoting the indigenous and authentic tourism resources of the eastern and central Bhutan. At large, SHINE adopts the two-way strategy: to vitalize tourism in eastern and central Bhutan, where the handicraft and agro- products are made; and conversely, to bring these products into the supply chain of the mainstream tourism.

The project was initiated by the Centre for Appropriate Technology (GrAT, Austria) and kicked off in May 2020 in partnership with the Handicrafts Association of Bhutan (HAB), Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs (BAOWE), and STENUM Asia in India.

The project engages native producers - individuals and groups in the tourism value chain, links their products and services to the tourism hubs, and uses Appropriate Technology (AT) to increase production quality and quantity. SHINE’s various interventions include product diversification, quality and quantity improvement of handicrafts and agri-products, integrating indigenous attractions in tour products, and propagating and replicating the results. The beneficiary groups of the project are rural producers, craftsmen, hoteliers, village homestays, agro-producers, craft and agro-enterprises, women entrepreneurs, informal self-help groups, disadvantaged youth and the local communities. Through the multi-dimensional interventions, producers not only acquire better skills, but are also able to market their products more successfully. HAB and BAOWE also receive assistance in terms of skills development and capacity building. These agencies are active in helping the vulnerable and neglected players in the value chain. This volume of tourism attraction books is one vital step towards promoting the eastern and southern districts in Bhutan as attractive tourism destinations.

On behalf of the entire SHINE team, I would like to invite you to discover the exciting and diverse attractions presented in this first edition of our books, and wish you use this resource collection together with the local stakeholders for a joint and inclusive development.

Dr. Robert Wimmer
Lead Project Manager of the SHINE project
Managing Director, Center for Appropriate Technology (GrAT) Austria



Sustainable Hospitality Industry
Inclusive of Native Entrepreneurs

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Kengkhar Nagtshang in Mongar



Photo Courtesy: Fb, Heavenly Bhutan Travels

Introduction


The uneven distribution of tourism benefits in Bhutan is one of the pressing concerns that the EU-funded SWITCH-Asia project SHINE (Sustainable Hospitality Industry Inclusive of Native Entrepreneurs) is addressing. The project's seven target districts - Zhemgang, Dagana, Lhuentse, Mongar, Trashigang, Trashigang and Pemagatshel - are far-flung districts with challenging accessibility by both road and air. An overwhelming majority of tourists visit only the western region, which resulted in heavy dependence on imported products such as handicrafts and agri-food to serve them while leaving behind the valuable and diverse traditional foods and rural crafts from the eastern districts. If more tourists travel to the rural areas to experience another aspect of Bhutan, or if the resources in the East are effectively mobilized to cover the high demand of tourists in the current tourism hotspots, local producers can improve their community livelihood and enhance the distribution of tourism values across the country. These seven districts have an enormous potential to attract tourists. Each is unique in itself. Every valley resounds with myths and tales from the past, and every village has its own folk traditions and customs. Their rituals, festivals, and social mores still retain that native originality and splendor. The way they work on their ancient farmlands, the food they consume, the community in which they thrive, and almost all other aspects of their lives are largely unsullied by modernization and external influences. To top it all, surrounding their homes and villages are pristine forests inhabited by a plethora of wildlife.

This volume of tourism attraction books is therefore an attempt to build an inventory of tourism resources in these seven districts by delving into every aspect of rural life including crops and forest products, history, culture, craft, monasteries and religious sites, folk life, etc. Various products deemed interesting enough for tourists to see, taste and listen to, are introduced. The volume consists of eight books: one presenting the agri-products and non-timber forest products, as well as traditional sports and cultural activities, which are commonly encountered and practiced in the region; each of the other seven books is dedicated to each target district with specific monasteries and stupas, distinguishable festivals and myths, and available accommodation options. Two sample itineraries per district are proposed to explore the uncharted Bhutan.

As a whole, this inventory will help policymakers and respective districts to develop sustainable and inclusive tourism models with the rich resources, tour operators and guides pick up the momentum of thriving rural eco-tourism trends of the world, and many producers along the tourism value chain to find the new opportunities for income generation by supplying cash crops, authentic handicraft, and village homestays with standard quality.

This is the first edition, and the SHINE project team hopes to receive feedback from readers, including potential stakeholders of the new sustainable tourism models, to verify and enhance the inventory, and tourists who are interested in discovering real Bhutan.



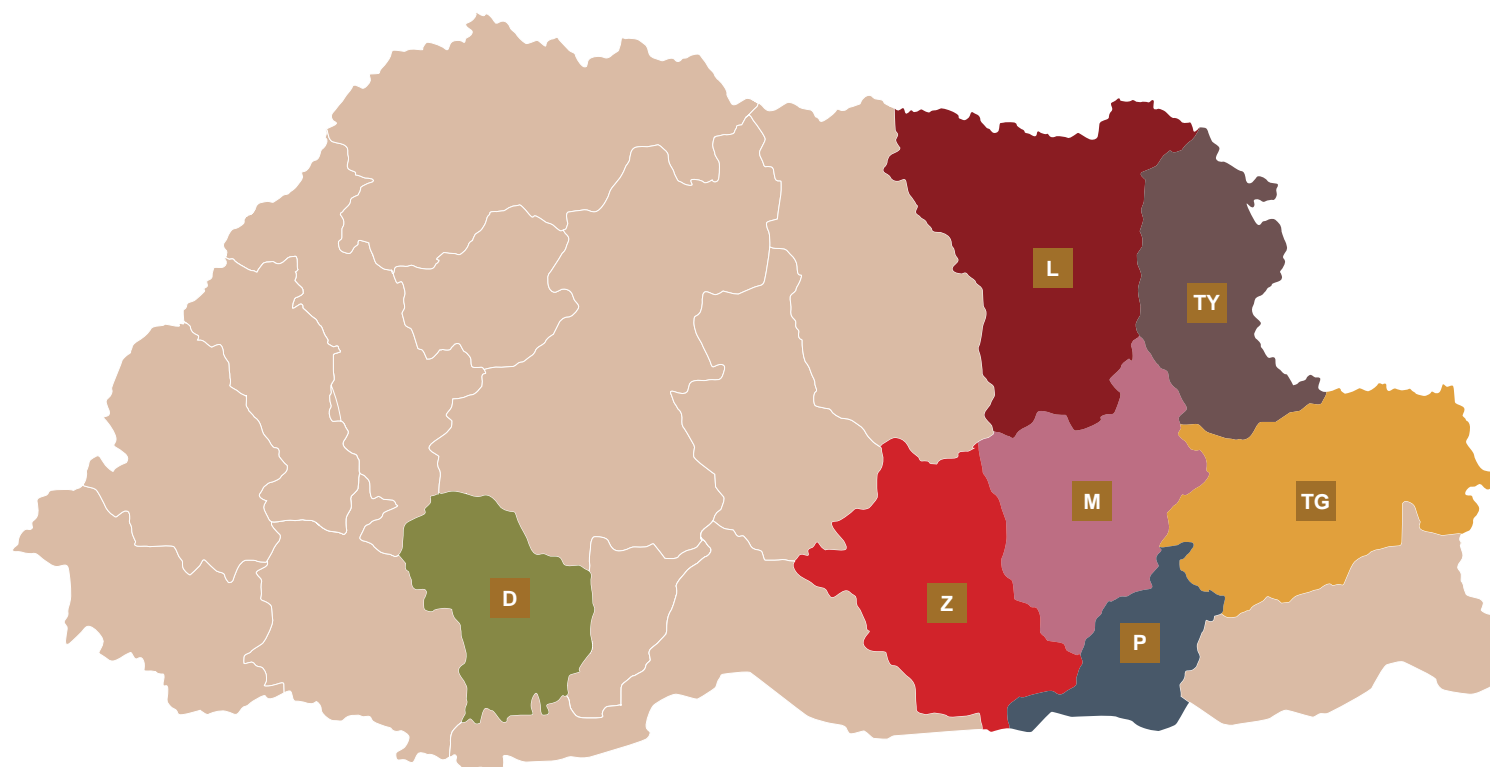


Kanglung paddy field view

INDIGENOUS CROPS, FOOD, BEVERAGES AND OTHER SOURCES OF RURAL LIVELIHOOD

Photo Courtesy: bhutantimes.bt

TRADITIONAL CROPS, FOOD, BEVERAGES AND OTHER SOURCES OF RURAL LIVELIHOOD



Legend

Dagana	D
Lhuentse	L
Mongar	M
Pemagatshel	P
Trashigang	TG
Trashi Yangtse	TY
Zhemgang	Z

D L

The food/crop that is endemic to, or grown in a particular district is highlighted in dark brown.

A farmhouse in Ngangla Trong





Vegetables

Chilli



Bhutanese are known as chili-lovers, and chilli is considered a vegetable rather than a spice. Chilli is a primary ingredient that is either eaten raw, cooked, dried or in powdered form, and it is an indispensable fare in almost all Bhutanese cuisines. Notably, if there is a dish that merits the title of “national dish of Bhutan” it will undisputedly be Emadatsi – a fiery dish prepared from chili and fresh or fermented cheese. A majority of Bhutanese gardens are dominated by chilli as well. The surplus yield is sun-dried on rooftops and made into “Emakam (dried chilli)” or is steamed in hot water and then dried, resulting in a cream-colored dried chili locally known

as “Shukam”. Powdered dry chillies, locally known as “Eb-chii”, are also a vital ingredient in most local dishes and is also used to prepare a chilipaste known as “Ezay”. Chilli grows in all parts of the country, from the sub-tropical southern foothills to the warm temperate north-central districts, except for the cold and arid sub-alpines in the north.



Urka Bangala



Among the chilli varieties grown in Bhutan, Urka Bangala (Yangtsepa chili) is considered one of the best. This traditional variety is only grown in the villages of Bumdeling and Womanang in upper Yangtse, in Trashi Yangtse. Its shape is similar to capsicum but it is larger in size and pungent in taste. This variety of chilli is now being grown on a commercial scale because of a growing market demand. It grows between pre-monsoon and the end of autumn. The Urka Bangala Production Group was formed by the cultivators of Trashi Yangtse in 2018.



Dalle Khursani



Scientific name *Capsicum annuum*

Dalle Khursani, as it is known among the Nepali-speaking Lhotshampas, literally translates to 'round chillies' owing to its physical shape. It is a special variety of chilli grown in the south and south-central districts of Samtse, Chhukha, Sarpang, Tsirang and Dagana. Scarlet-red in color, it is famed as one of the hottest chillies in the world. It is used as a vegetable or spice, and canned and pickled. Travelling across the highway from Wangdue towards Dagana, Tsirang and Sarpang, one will be greeted with makeshift road-side shops or kiosks at regular intervals

selling a range of farm-fresh products, including "Dalle Khursani" (red-hot chilli peppers). A kilogram of Dalle will cost almost five times more than other locally grown chilli species. Farmers have also formed co-operatives and set-up pickling and packaging units to ensure constant supply of these products.



Pumpkin



Scientific name *Cucurbita moschata*

Local name Kakur
(Dzongkha)
Broomsha (Tshangla)
Aanjang (Khengkha)

There are numerous varieties of pumpkin in Bhutan. Traditionally, pumpkin was one of the main sources of food, particularly in eastern Bhutan. One dish in particular, locally known as pumpkin Khuri, was commonly eaten in the olden days. To prepare it, pumpkin was first chopped and then boiled until it turned squashy and dough-like. Chili powder, salt, vegetable oil and other ingredients would then be added before it was ready to be served. Today, pumpkin is used mostly to make curry. Other popular dishes are Kakur Datsi (pumpkin with cheese curry), pump-



kin with cheese curry), pumpkin stew, Kakur Norsha Tsho-em (pumpkin with beef curry) and Kakur Jaju (pumpkin soup) which is seasoned with Bhutanese pepper.



Turnip



Scientific name *Brassica rapa*

Local name Endo
(Dzongkha)
Bouru (Khengkha)
Doney (Tshangla)

Turnip is a root crop, and its leaves are dried to prepare different kinds of curries. Bhutanese collect home-grown turnip leaves, dry them in the autumn sun and store for winter. To prepare the curry, dried leaves are first soaked in warm water and washed. Then, onion, tomato, salt and oil are added. The mixture is boiled and when the leaves turn tender, chili, garlic and ginger are added. It is mostly consumed with pork and beef seasoned with Bhutanese pepper. Turnip leaf soup ("Jaju") is another delicious side dish.



Gundruk Ko Achar



Gundruk Ko is a fermented leafy green vegetable prepared from the leaves of mustard, radish, cauliflower or turnip. Gundruk is widely consumed in southern Bhutan, often as Achar or Jhol (soup).

To prepare Achar, a mix of coriander seed, cumin seed, timur (Sichuan pepper), turmeric powder, dry red chillies, salt, garlic, ginger tomato, coriander is ground into paste with mortar and pestle. This paste is mixed with the gundruk. Fenugreek seeds are fried in mustard oil and added to the mixture. After garnishing with chopped coriander leaves and green chillies the dish is ready to be served.



Asparagus



Scientific name *Asparagus officinalis*
Local name Nyakhagchu (Dzongkha)
Nyalakhagchung (Tshangla)

Asparagus, especially gathered from the wild, is considered a delicacy in Bhutanese cuisine. It is simmered in water with onion, chili and butter, and topped with crumbled cheese. In medicine, the dried roots are used to treat reproductive and hormonal problems of women. Asparagus is also used to treat gastric ulcers and indigestion.



Perilla



Scientific name *Perilla frutescens*
Local name Zhimtse
(Dzongkha)
Nam (Tshangla and
Khengkha)

Two kinds of perilla, a red and a white variety are found in Eastern and Southern Bhutan. What is special about perilla is its distinctive flavor in salad, curry and butter tea. In olden days, people in eastern and central Bhutan used perilla as a substitute for cheese and butter in curry.



Cassava



Local name Shing Joktang
(Tshangla)

Cassava has traditionally been used by Bhutanese as food and as an ingredient to prepare alcohol. Today, it is used in dessert, pie filling, dumplings and noodles, basically as an alternative flour for baking and cooking. The harvested tubers are usually steamed and eaten with salad, or peeled and cut into small pieces, after which it is sundried. The dried nuggets are ground into flour. Cassava is coveted for its natural sweetness. A farmers group called Green Hills Group in Chhoekhorling Gewog in Nganglam (Pemagatshel) has ventured into commercial cassava farming to produce cassava flour on a larger scale.





Fruits

Banana



Scientific name *Musa acuminata*

Local name: Ngala (Dzongkha)
Mochali (Tsangla.)

Apart from its fruits which are consumed raw, sun-dried or cooked, the reddish-purple, banana flower also called a banana heart is used as a vegetable in most rural households. They are steamed and consumed with dips or cooked in soups and curries. The flavor resembles that of artichoke. Both the fleshy part of the bracts and the heart are edible. Likewise, the tender core of the banana trunk is consumed as a vegetable. Being large, flexible, and waterproof, banana leaves are often used as ecologically friendly packaging. Occasion-



ally, the leaves are also used for steaming or grilling.



Wild Avacado



Scientific name *Persea americana*

Local name Gulee
(Khengkha and Tshangla)

Wild Avocado fruits have a greenish or yellowish flesh with a buttery consistency and a rich nutty flavour. Considered a rare dietary supplement in the past, the avocado fruit has been a highly valued source of nourishment, especially to the people of Zhemgang. A Warm sub-tropical climate and moderate topography is best suited for the growth of avocados. Today farmers in Zhemgang, Dagana and Tsirang have taken up avocado farming at a commercial scale.



Mandarin



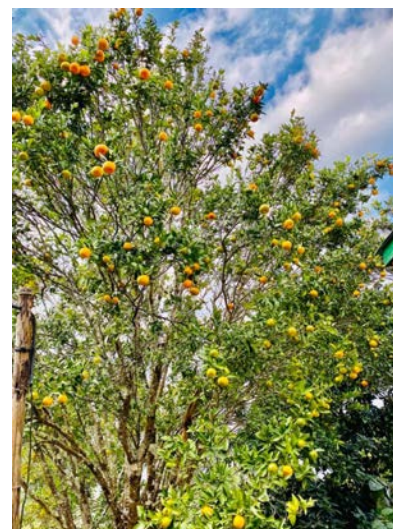
Scientific name *Citrus reticulata*

Local name Tshelu
(Dzongkha)
Tshalu (Tshangla)

The warm sub-tropical foothills of Dagana with altitudes ranging from 300 – 2,000 meters, have favorable climatic conditions and are therefore best suited for the growth of mandarin, which flourish in most of the rural landscapes in the district. While the fruit also thrives in other low-lying regions of the country, the mandarines grown here are considered some of the most delectable. It is a major horticultural crop, and is extensively cultivated in the five Gewogs of Drugyegang, Trashiding, Tsendagang, Goshi and Kana.

The mandarin species, *Citrus reticulata* Blanco, is the main type of citrus cultivated in the districts and constitutes more than 95% of the total citrus production.

The trees start flowering in March and the fruits are ready to be harvested by November/ December. A sizeable proportion of the harvests is exported to India and Bangladesh. There are two varieties grown in Bhutan: Sikkim mandarin and Khasi mandarin. The former variety is concentrated in the south west districts, while the latter dominates the south-central and south-east districts.



Mango



Scientific name *Mangifera Indica*
Local name Amchukuli (Dzongkha)
 Aamsey (Tshangla)

Mango is a sub-tropical fruit which usually thrives in the warmer river valleys of eastern Bhutan and in parts of the southern foothills of Dagana, Pemagatshel and Zhemgang. Mango varieties which are commonly cultivated in Bhutan include the Bajo Aumchkulis (Dashehari, Langra and Amrapali) and Chaunsa. The Chaunsa variety is well-adapted to the sub-tropical lowlands within an altitude range of 150 –1200 meters. While most districts of eastern Bhutan comprise of

temperate dry lands, some regions like Lingmethang in Mongar, Nganglam in Pemagatshel, Panbang in Zhemgang and Lhamoidzingkha in Dagana, which experience hot and humid weather conditions, are well-suited for the cultivation of this exotic fruit. Mangoes produced in these rural areas are mostly sold in the local markets or taken to the agro-pickling and bottling plant located at Lingmethang, where it is manufactured into a variety of squashes, pickles, jams and marmalades. Apart from being consumed as food, mangoes are also essential items used in Tshogs (ceremonial offerings) during important religious occasions.



Pear



Scientific name *Pyrus communis* L
Local names Lii (Dzongkha)
 Litong (Tshangla)

Pear is a popular fruit in Bhutan and many rural households have a tree or two in their backyards. Apart from naturally-occurring native pear species, the government recently introduced hybrid Asian and Nashi types which are gradually replacing the indigenous varieties. Traditionally, pear is also one of the main components that adorn a Thokey (a vase filled with exotic fruits) which is laid on a table and used as ceremonial offerings to high Lamas and high-ranking officials. The fruit is also sliced into



small circular chunks which are sun-dried and preserved for the lean winter seasons when there is a scarcity of fruits. A special type of pear juice, dried-pear soaked in water, is also a customary treat among village communities.



Pineapple



Scientific name *Ananas comosus*

Local name Kongtsey
(Dzongkha)
Jana Kongtsey (Tshangla)

This fruit has been cultivated traditionally in the subtropical regions of Bhutan. Apart from being consumed as a fruit its traditional use also includes the offering as Thokey (a vase filled with fruits) for special occasions. Due to its high demand and commercial success, farmers across eastern Bhutan have started cultivating pineapples in a commercial scale. Especially the farmers of Yurung and Khangma in Pemagatshel cultivate pineapples, which has helped supplement their incomes. The harvests are



partly processed by Bhutan Agro Industries, Ltd. into juices, squashes and jams which are sold domestically and exported to India.



Peach

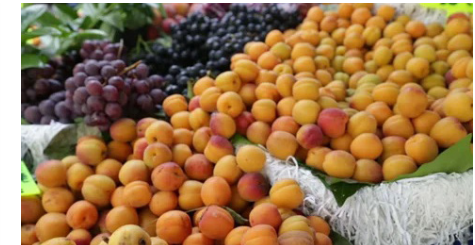


Scientific name *Prunus persica*
Local name Kham
 (Dzongkha)
 Lengsey (Tshangla)

One striking feature of Bhutan's landscape and scenery, especially during the spring season, is the magnificent peach blossoms that adorn highways, streets and village settlements. Apart from native species, the four main varieties cultivated nowadays in Bhutan are Flordasum (locally known as Bajokham), July Elberta, Nonomiwase and Bathpala Super which are grown on the altitude ranging from 1000 to 2600 meters. Apart from consuming or selling it fresh in the local market, farmers dry and



preserve peaches. It is also used for manufacturing wine and alcoholic spirits. In addition, peach jams and pickles are also produced.





Wild Plants & Flowers

Wild Yam



Scientific name *Dioscorea villosa*

Local name Jukepang
(Khengkha)
Borang Joktang (Tshangla)

In the past, wild yams and tubers contributed significantly to food security. Yam is also coveted for its use during annual religious ceremonies and community celebrations. Five species of yams are common:

1. *D. alata* L. is a bushy vine with dense foliage and watery tuber. The skin is purple and the shape generally cylindrical.

2. *D. esculenta* has oval shaped leaves and a whitish inner flesh.

3. *D. rotundata* is a bushy vine, ovate in shape, with cylindrical tuber and smooth brownish or whitish flesh.

4. *D. bulbifera* is a large



perennial vine with broad leaves. The bulbils are round or oval with brown skin and white flesh.

5. *D. cayenensis* is a bushy vine, oval in shape, with oval/cylindrical tubers containing yellow flesh.

(*D. alata* L)



(*D. esculenta*)



(*D. rotundata*)



(*D. bulbifera*)



(*D. cayenensis*)



Leafless Mistletoe



Scientific name *Viscum articulatum*

Local name Nyashing Jurmo

Nyashing Jurmo is a parasitic plant from which Bhutanese, mainly the people in Pemagatshel, prepare butter tea.

The plant is chopped into small pieces and boiled with ash water. The mixture is further boiled till it gives a dark-red colour and the water fully evaporates. The residual stems are then sun-dried. To prepare butter tea, the dried leaves are boiled in water till it gives a dark-red color and then transferred into the churner where a slice of butter and a little amount of salt is added. Churning results in a light brown texture. Leafless mistletoe is also used in traditional medicine.



Fish Mint



Scientific name *Houttuynia cordata* Thunb.

Local name Mombaring
(Tshangla)
Gechey (Dzongkha)

It is a commonly found leaf and root vegetable which is used as a fresh herbal garnish. It has an unusual taste that is often described as 'fishy', thus the name fish mint. In Bhutan it is cooked with other vegetables or used as garnish with dry meat or fish, and chilies. It is also taken raw as salad. Its dried leaves may be used to make herbal tea. Young shoots



and leaves are eaten raw or cooked as a pot-herb. Externally, it is used for the treatment of snake bites and skin disorders.



Dhamroo



Scientific name *Elatostema
linoleum*
Local name Damroo

Bhutan's forests have a rich variety of wild plants that are used as food. "Drimom" in Tshangla, and "Dhamroo" in Dzongkha and Khengkha, is one of them, and it is consumed as main dish or soup. Dhamroo as a main dish is prepared by chopping it into small pieces and then cooking it together with rice, millet or ground maize. It was often consumed during the times of food shortages. To prepare soup from this plant, the soft young fronds are cut from the stem and washed. The vegetable is then boiled in

water along with chopped onions, garlic, chili and salt. Once the water starts to boil, butter and cheese are added one after the other.



Fern



Fiddlehead fern is one of the traditional vegetables used all over Bhutan due to its taste, availability, texture and health benefits. The fresh green fiddleheads begin to grow from spring and can be harvested until monsoon time. It is cooked, fried, or steamed with cheese stew. It is also used for non-veg dishes.

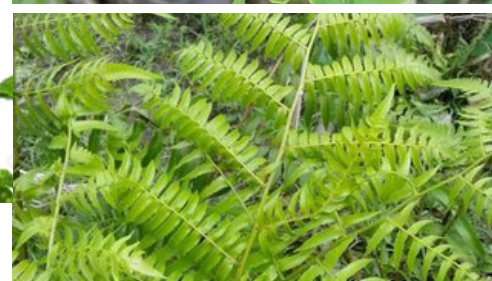
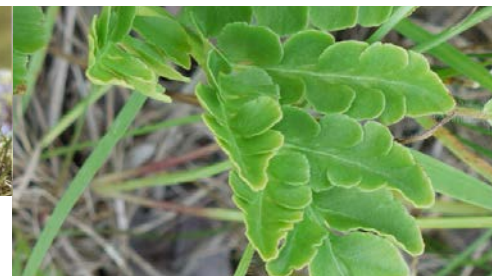
1. Scientific name *Athyrium sp.*
Common name Fiddlehead Fern
Local name Gasha Daway (Tshangla)

2. Scientific name *Botrychium multifidum* (S.G. Gmel). Rupr.
Common name Leathery Grapefern
Uses Food and medicine
Parts used Fronds

3. Scientific name *Diplazium esculentu* (Retz.) Sw.
Local name Nakey (Dzongkha)
Uses Food
Parts used Young fronds

4. Scientific name *Diplazium sp.*
Local name Tonkey Dawey (Tshangla)
Uses Food and medicine
Parts used Young fronds

5. Scientific name *Dryopteris sp.*
Uses Food
Parts used Young fronds



Smilacina purpurea



Local name Deyma

This beautiful alpine flowering plant is a popular dish in Trash Yangtse and Lhuentse. The bitter tasting plant is cooked with meat, potato or radish, and served as a side dish when other greens are scarce during winter. The plant is shred into thin strips and dried in the sun. It is then soaked and rinsed in hot water before being cooked to reduce its bitter taste.

Smilacina is perennial and grows in the rocky outcrops of alpine areas together with shrubs and grasses within altitudes of 3,200-4,000 meters. It flowers in May-June and the seeds ripen in August-September.



Malabar Nut



Scientific name *Justicia*
adhatoda L.

Local name Khadkalay
(Khengkha)
Khatsirma (Tshangla)

Commonly known as Malabar nut, it is a native medicinal plant. It is used extensively for cough and other respiratory ailments. Malabar nut is found widely in the subtropical regions of southern Bhutan, such as the Lhamoizhingkha highway in Dagana, Tsirang, Wangduephodrang, Mongar, Lhuentse and Tashigang. The tiny flowers are consumed as bitter vegetable.



Wax Tree



Scientific name *Toxicodendron succedaneum*
Local name Kinema Shing (Khengkha)

The wax tree is a flowering plant with beautiful autumn foliage. In places like Trashi Yangtse, it is used to produce lacquer, while in Zhemgang, for example, its seed is used to extract oil and prepare local butter tea or Suja. In the olden days, the wax was also used as vegetable oil. In some countries, it is used as a medicinal plant. The oil is black when extracted fresh. However, it turns creamy white when the seed is dried and the oil is extracted after about a year.



Cotton Tree



Scientific name *Bombax
ceiba*

Local name Pemageyser
Seng (Khengkha)
Pemagey sershing (Tshangla)

Cotton tree is a tall Asian tropical tree, on which red flowers with five petals bloom in spring before the new leaves unfold. The tree produces a capsule which, when ripe, contains white fibers like cotton. In Bhutan, the flower buds and the calyx of not fully opened flowers are eaten as vegetable in curry and soup (Jaju), while the fibers are used in pillows. In countries like Nepal and India, the white fluffy fibers are carded into thread and woven into textiles. The leaves can also be



cooked and eaten. Moreover, ripe seeds and young roots are roasted and eaten. The fibers of these trees can be seen floating in the wind around early May.



Urn-shaped Gentian



Scientific name *Gentian urnula*
Harry Sm.

Local name Pangi meto
(Dzongkha)
(Brokpakha)

This is a ground-hugging perennial plant rare and endemic to the eastern Himalayas and grows at altitudes between 3,900 and 5,700 meters. Bhutanese covet the flower as a local delicacy which, when used as a vegetable in curry mixed with fermented cheese, makes for a lip-smacking treat. The roots are also used to produce gentian, a distilled beverage. The plant has been used for medicinal purposes for over 2,000 years, to treat hypotension, rheumatic pains, fevers and allergic inflammations.



Orchid



Local name Olatshé
(Dzongkha)

Many orchid varieties are used as vegetables, including flowering shoots of *Cymbidium erythraeum*, *C. hookerianum*, *C. iridioides* and *C. elegans* var. *elegans*. They are added to pork stew and provide a slightly bitter flavor, or are cooked with chilies and cheese. The young stems and flowers of *Calanthe plantaginea* and *C. triplata* are collected to be used as vegetable. Various orchid species, such as *Gymnadenia crassinervis* roots, *Coelogyne oculata* pseudobulbs and other *Dendrobium* species are also used in traditional medicine.



Patsha



Scientific name *Plectocomia himalayana* Griff.

Local name Patsha
(General)
Pacha (Khengkha)

“Patsha” grows in warm, moist sub-tropical conditions. The curry prepared from the pith of the stem - locally known as Patsha Tshoem - is considered a delicacy in Bhutanese cuisine. It is also used to prepare Patsha Jaju, a thin soup. It tastes bitter but is highly appreciated in Bhutan. It is also believed to have health benefits. The canes can be woven into ropes, or split into strips for tying fences and making baskets



and household furniture. Cane shoots are available only in its seasons from spring to monsoon.



Bamboo Shoot



Local name Bungba Raksha
(Khengkha)
Shee (Tshangla)

Pickled bamboo shoots and dried bamboo shoot curry are part of the people's daily food because bamboo is widely available. To prepare pickled bamboo shoots, the outer skin of the shoot is peeled off to expose the tender yellowish core. After that the shoot is boiled to make it soft and tender. Next the shoots are sliced and dried under the sun for a day or two, and then mixed with oil, salt, chili, and other spices. After a week or two, it is ready to be consumed. Bamboo shoot is a highly valued vegetable in Asian cuisine.





Spices, Herbs & Medicinal Plants

Mustard



Scientific name *Brassica campestris*

Local name Peka (Dzongkha)
Memba (Tshangla)
Yungka (Khengkha)

For generations, Mustard has been the most important oil seed in Bhutan. The oil was not only used for cooking, but also for butter lamps in offerings. Furthermore, mustard is used for animal feed and to produce incense. It is also stored in a vase as sacred seeds in homes. Two varieties of mustard are grown: yellow mustard and red mustard.



Siltimur



Scientific name *Lindera neesiana*
Local name Nengshing (Tshangla)

Siltimur flowers from March to April, while its aromatic and spicy fruits appear from May to August. The plant grows within the altitude range of 1,500 and 2,700 meters. The essential oil derived from this plant is commonly used in cooking. As a traditional herbal medicine, it is widely used to treat diarrhea, tooth pain, headache and gastric disorders. For oil extraction the fruits are sun-dried, roasted and crushed using a grindstone. The crushed fruits are put in a bamboo filter basket which is then sealed



and inserted between two wooden planks. Heavy stones are placed over the top of the upper plank to squeeze out the oil.



Winged Prickly Ash



Scientific name *Zanthoxylum armatum* D.C.

Local name Thingay
(Dzongkha)
Ghee (Tshangla)
Chawa (Khengkha)

The winged prickly ash is an aromatic spiny shrub. The fruits of the plant, dried and crushed, are used as a spice. The seeds and bark of the plant are also used for indigenous medicines. The plant is a source of an essential oil. People normally grow it as an ornamental garden plant.



Himalayan Paris



Scientific name *Paris polyphylla*
Local name Dochu kewa
(Dzongkha)
Thoksampa (Tshangla)

Himalayan Paris has fascinated the botanical world with its high medicinal value. It grows at an altitude of up to 3,300 meters and is found in the eastern, central and western parts of Bhutan. It has been widely used in traditional medicine. Collectors in Bhutan are paid about Nu 1,250 per kilogram for the roots of the plant, and even up to Nu 5,100 if dried. It is exported mostly to China.

The species is threatened due to its peculiar life cycle, i.e. slow to reach maturity and seed dormancy, predation, and climate change. In Bhutan, the collection of the plant was legalized in 2014. However, it can be collected only during the harvesting seasons between October and November, when the roots of the plant have matured. People also need a permit for collection.



Lemongrass



Scientific name *Cymbopogon Bhutanicus*

Lemon grass is one of the most important essential oil plants which provides livelihood to farmers in eastern Bhutan, mainly growing wild in Trashigang, Mongar and Lhuentse districts. Lemon grass oil has a distinctly relaxing scent, and it is one of the most popular ingredients in traditional medicine. It is known to have cleansing and detoxifying properties. It is also used as an insect repellent, and as an antiseptic. It is used to prepare lemon grass herbal tea.

Bhutan's lemon grass oil production was initiated by Tashi



Commercial Corporation in 1983. Currently, the oil is distilled at the central unit of the company in Kurizampa, Mongar.



Cardamom



Scientific name *Elettaria cardamomum*
Local name Alanchi
(Commonly used)

Cardamom, grown in the sub-tropical regions of Bhutan, is one of the key sources of livelihood for farmers. Most of the harvest is exported. Both black and green cardamom grow in Bhutan. It is used as a spice to flavor food, tea and other beverages. Individual seeds are sometimes chewed and used in much the same way as a chewing gum.



Turmeric



Scientific name *Curcuma
longa* L
Local name Yung wa
(Dzongkha)
Yongka (Tshangla)
Yongkead (Khengkha)

Turmeric is an important spice for curries and gives its distinct yellow colour. It is used either fresh or in powdered form. Turmeric powder is produced by drying the roots. A blender or a food processor is used to powderize the dried turmeric roots. Turmeric powder is also sought after for its health benefits, and promoted as a dietary supplement.



Cordyceps



Scientific name *Cordyceps sinensis*

Local name Yartsa Guenbub

The local names literally mean “summer grass and winter worm”. This illustrates the life-cycle of parasitic fungus, which grows at an altitude between 4,400 to 5,400 meters, just below the snow line. Spores of this fungus settle on the heads of caterpillars that live underground. The fungus gets into the body of the caterpillar. The caterpillar dies and serves as a substrate for the sac fungus which grows its mycelium throughout the entire body of the “worm” and eventually develops a fruiting body out of the insect’s head which looks like “grass”. *Cordyceps sinensis*



sinensis has been used for centuries to address and treat various health conditions. It is considered to be one of the most expensive ingredients for traditional medicine. It is also consumed raw or dipped in alcohol or soup as an aphrodisiac and energizer. In recent years, the fungus has become a lucrative income for the highlanders of Laya, Lunana, Saephu, Bumthang and Merak-Sakteng.



Sugarcane & Jaggery



Local name Tshatsi Buram
(Tshangla)

Tshatshi Buram is prepared by boiling raw sugarcane juice till it solidifies. Not so long ago, jaggery or Tshatshi Buram was widely consumed as candy or even as food. Its popularity has declined today, but for people in the villages of Pangthang and Tshatshi in Nanong Gewog, in Pemagatshel it still is one of their main sources of income. These sweet lumps are believed to have the ability to cleanse the body and help in digestion. About a hundred households from Pangthang and Tshatshi villages cultivate sugarcane to produce jaggery.



Areca Nut



Scientific name *Areca catechu*
Local name Doma

The tradition of chewing “doma” is so steeped in Bhutanese traditions that it was considered a prized commodity, usually reserved for the nobilities or offered as gifts for social bonding, dating way back to Bhutan’s medieval past. Doma is offered as tshogs (ceremonial offerings) during most rituals until today. However, over the years, the natives of the warmer valleys in the south started to cultivate the plant in a much larger scale. Especially in the subtropical regions of Bhutan’s southern foothills - including Lhamoidzingkha in Dagana, it

is one of the main cash crops. It is widely traded across the country. Doma is wrapped in betel leaves (piper betel) or Paan, and smeared with a dash of lime, which is then called Domapani. Domapani has some hallucinogenic effects, and is considered harmful to health (carcinogenic). Nevertheless, it is widely consumed and many people are addicted, despite its rancid flavor and unpleasant smell.



P. confertiflora



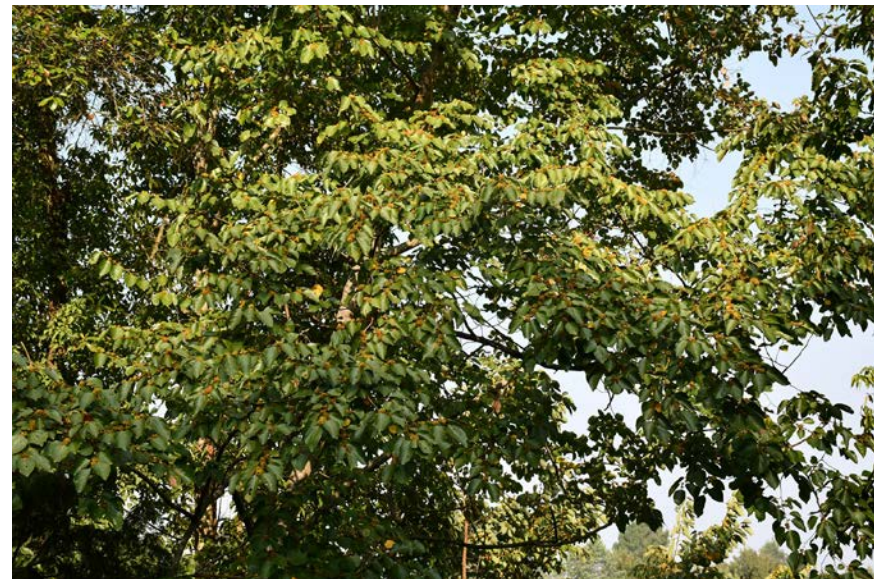
Scientific name *Parasassafras confertiflora*

Local name Shingmar
(Khengkha)
Singsi Shing (Tshangla)

The oil extracted from this wild plant, found in the sub-tropical regions of Bhutan, is used for manifold purposes. The fruits are harvested in early autumn, sun-dried and stored in a ventilated place. To extract the oil, the fruits are roasted and crushed using a grindstone. Manual pressing is still practiced using a bamboo filter basket between two wooden planks pressed by heavy stones. Apart from its use as cooking oil, *P. confertiflora* oil is used to treat injuries, cracked skin and blisters of both humans and animals. It



is also used for tanning leather and as a fuel for traditional lamps in rural households. The residual press cake after oil extraction is fed to cattles.



Indian Butter Tree



Scientific name *Diploknema butyracea*
Local name Khairnang
 Khengkha)
 Yeeka (Dzongkha)
 Peen Shing (Tshangla)

Indian butter trees grow between 300 - 1,500 meters above sea level. The fruits are used for cooking, lighting and as medicine. The fruit is also eaten fresh but is mainly used to extract oil or fat from the seeds. The oil can be applied externally in the treatment of headaches, rheumatism, boils, pimples and burns. The fat is also used for making soap and candles. The ripe fruits are collected from the tree in June and July, de-pulped. And the



seeds are washed and dried. The shells of the seeds are removed to extract kernel and the oil is extracted by simple mechanical pressing.





Grains & Staple Food

Maize



Scientific name Zea mays

Local name Gayza

(Dzongkha)

Domba (Khengkha)

Ashom (Tshangla)

Maize has been a staple food for hundreds of years, especially for the people in eastern Bhutan where rice farming is limited due to the slopes. Upon harvesting, the kernels are dried and stored for later consumption, while the stalk is used as cattle fodder. Moderate consumption of maize is believed to lower blood sugar and cholesterol level and reduce the risk of anemia. Traditionally, a stone handmill is used to make coarse particles called Kharang from maize. Kharang is mixed with rice to be cooked together.



Maize is also ground into flour and consumed as Phee (steamed dough) which is, a staple diet in eastern Bhutan until not so long ago. Dombachan is made by pounding fried maize. Alcoholic drinks like Ara, Bangchang, and Singchang are also brewed from maize.



Upland Rice



Scientific name *Oryza sativa*
Local name Rey / Bja
 (Dzongkha)
 Epa/Kambra (Khengkha)

Rice is the most common staple food for Bhutanese but its cultivation, both upland and wetland, have declined because of the cheaper rice imports. Traditionally, slash-and-burn farming was used to grow upland rice, a method which is no longer permitted. Various kinds of food and dishes are prepared from rice such as steamed/fried rice, Zaow (popped rice), Thukpa (porridge), Desi (traditional fried rice), Mekhu (pappad), Khu-Tengma (rice flakes) as well as alcoholic beverages



especially Changkey/Tittpa and Ara. For spiritual purposes rice is used to make ritual cakes (Torma). Hay and husk are stored as cattle fodder for the lean season.



Handa Tengma



HandaTengma is exclusively made in Radhi village which is considered the rice bowl of eastern Bhutan. HandaTengma is hardened sticky rice and considered a local delicacy. To prepare this, rice is soaked in warm water overnight. The water is then drained and the rice is mixed with oil and fried in a pan, before being pounded in Lhue (a traditional wooden or stone mortar). Then, it is served as a snack with tea.



Sel Roti



Sel roti is a traditional home-made ring-shaped sweet rice bread which is popular in the Lhotsampa community in southern Bhutan. It is mostly prepared during the Hindu festivals of Dashain and Tihar. A semi-liquid rice flour dough is usually prepared by adding milk, water, sugar, cardamom, cloves, etc. The semi-liquid dough is then deep fried in oil or butter. The dough is poured by hand into ring shapes and fried on high heat until it turns light brown on both sides. Sel



rotis are often sent as special gifts to family members living away from home or used as Prasad, a religious offering during--- Puja and worship.



Khu Keptang



Made from rice flour, Khukeptang (called Chung keptang in Khengkha) is round and flat in shape, resembling a very thin pan-cake. It is served mainly during the ritual of the 21st day after a death in eastern and central Bhutan. To make Khukeptang, rice is first pounded finely, mixed with water and kneaded to dough. It is then made into thin round shapes and left to dry in the sun. Once dried, it is fried in oil. Khu Keptang is also offered to deities during religious ceremonies.



Wheat



Scientific name *Triticum aestivum*

Local name Kaar (Dzongkha)
Tsher Kar (Khengkha) Bong
(Tshangla)

Wheat cultivation, which was once popular, has greatly decreased because of more popular food crops like maize and rice. It is usually grown in spring and winter on dry land. Roasted and blended wheat flour is consumed as Kapchi (in Dzongkha), which is a staple diet for highlanders. It is considered a sacred grain and therefore used in rituals. Wheat is also used to brew alcoholic drinks and to feed cattles.



Barley



Scientific name *Hordeum vulgare* L

Local name Naa (Dzongkha)
Femong (Tshangla)
Thungkar (Khengkha)

There are two types of barley grown in eastern and central Bhutan locally known as 'femong' and 'shophu'. Shophu is a bit furry compared to femong. The crop was once widely cultivated but now it has been replaced by more popular crops, such as maize and rice. Like buckwheat, barley is ground into flour and consumed as dough. The grains are also used to brew alcoholic drinks.



Buckwheat



Scientific name *Fagopyrum esculentum*

Common name Sweet buckwheat

Local name Jarea (Dzongkha)
Charai (Khengkha)

Scientific name *Fagopyrum esculentum*

Common name Bitter buckwheat

Local name Bjo (Dzongkha)
Brathma (Khengkha)

Both sweet and bitter buckwheat varieties were once important cereals in the traditional Bhutanese cuisine. They were cultivated extensively in eastern and central Bhutan. Today however, due to labor shortage, low production, human-wildlife conflict and a lack of market, the importance of buckwheat has diminished. Sweet buck-



wheat flour is consumed as steamed dough (Bokpi) or processed into noodles (Putang) while bitter buckwheat flour is usually consumed as pancake (Khuli). The tender shoots and leaves of both varieties are also eaten as vegetables. By products such as hulls from the grounded flour and dried stalks are used as cattle feed.



Putang & Kontong



'Putang' is a thick buckwheat noodle, and 'Kontong' is a pyramid-shaped dumpling which is prepared only on rare festive occasions. Both dishes are made from sweet buckwheat flour and are a typical and popular delicacy in eastern Bhutan. To prepare Putang, sweet buckwheat flour is kneaded into dough and then made into noodles using a traditional wooden noodle press. After steaming or cooking, the noodle is stir-fried in butter with other ingredients like chili powder, finely-chopped garlic, ginger, onions and tomatoes. Finally, the dish is garnished with grated cottage cheese or scrambled eggs, and finely chopped

coriander or spring onions. Kontong is prepared by molding the buckwheat dough into dumplings shaped like a pyramid and steamed or boiled in water. The steamed dumplings are then stir fried in oil or butter to be eaten with salads or vegetable curries.



Sorghum



Scientific name *Sorghum
bicolor*

Local name Phenang
(Tshangla)
Kretae (Khengkha)

Sorghum is a staple diet commonly popped, similar to popcorns and eaten as a snack. It is also used for brewing alcohol and to feed animals.



Millet



1. Little Millet

Scientific Name *Panicum miliaceum*

Local name Chera (Tshangla)

This specific millet, Chhang, is softer than foxtail millet and consumed like rice and maize groats as staple diet either mixed with other grains or by itself.

2. Finger Millet

Scientific Name *Eleusine coracana*

Local name Memja (Dzongkha) Kongpo (Tshangla)

This millet variety is key ingredient to brew local wine and beer. Steamed dough from this millets mixed with rice makes good-changkey and Ara (home-brewed alcohol). Fresh straws of millets make an excellent fodder for cattle in winters.

3. Foxtail Millet

Scientific Name *Setaria italica*

Local name Yangra (Tshangla)

Foxtail millet is harvested during the off-season before paddy and maize, and thus provides food security during the lean season. It is a dry land crop, grown mainly through shifting cultivation, and can be preserved for years without fungal infection. Foxtail millet is soft in texture and is mainly consumed as porridge. Traditional drinks like Ara (home-brewed alcohol) and Sinchang (homebrewed beer) are also made from this millet. There are several kinds of foxtail millet grown in Eastern Bhutan and they are called KhuchangluYangra, DanishampiYangra, and RongshongYangra.

4. Pearl Millet

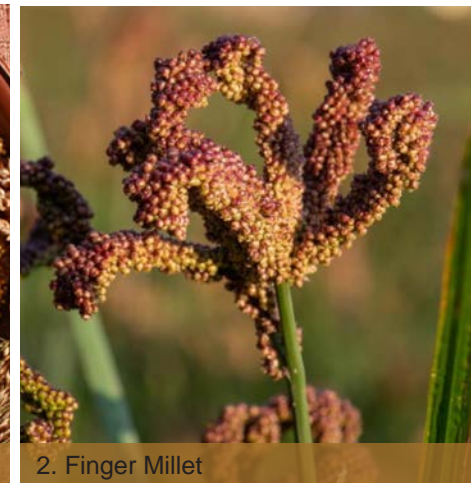
Scientific name *Pennisetum typhoides*

Local name Ngera Yangra (Tshangla)

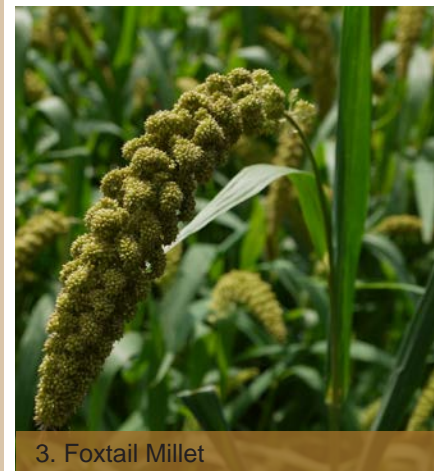
Pearl Millet was brought to Bhutan from India, hence it was named as "NgeraYangra" in Tshangla meaning the Indian millet. It is mostly used for brewing local alcohol.



1. Little Millet



2. Finger Millet



3. Foxtail Millet



4. Pearl Millet

Run Toh



Run toh, a dish made from foxtail millet in Zhemgang is served with vegetables or ema datsi (chili cheese). De-husking and pounding of the millet is traditionally done in a Lheu (traditional wooden mortar and pestle) and the husk is removed by winnowing. Today, Runtoh is served only during special occasions like annual rituals and festivals or served to special guests. Before the availability of cheaper alternatives like rice, millet used to be popular in the Kheng region due to its sturdy nature and its ability to grow in poor weather conditions.



Khrezan



The Khrezan - “Khre” refers to millet and “Zan” to dough in the Yangtsep dialect. It is a staple diet of the people of Yangtse and Bumdeling in Trashi Yangtse. It is made from the flour of finger millet.

The process of preparing the ‘Zan’ is simple: Butter is added to water and boiled, and then the finger millet flour is cooked for five to ten minutes to be stirred thoroughly with a hardwood ladle. Khrezan is usually eaten with a special curry made from dried cheese (known as Phromkempa) and dried chili, flavored with fermented beans.





Alcoholic Beverages

Traditional Yeast



Local name Phab
(Khengkha and Dzongkha)
Pham (Tshangla)

Traditional yeast is the key ingredient in preparing Bhutanese alcoholic drinks such as Bangchang, Singchang and Ara. To make the yeast, either millet, maize or buckwheat are sun-dried or roasted and processed into a flat, round dough which is rolled in a starter culture and left for fermentation in a warm place for at least 24 hours. The availability of cheap commercial yeast has reduced



the traditional practice which can however still be found in Eastern Bhutan.



Ara



Ara - home-brewed liquor - is a traditional alcoholic beverage made from barley, rice, maize, millet or wheat, through fermentation and/or distillation. It is consumed hot or cold, and sometimes with butter and eggs.

In Eastern Bhutan, Ara is served during important occasions. It is common to receive guests by serving Ara in Bhutanese household. Ara mixed with TsendenMarmo, – a red paste extracted from Cypress tree – is considered to be a specialty.

To make Ara, the cereal is cooked in a large cauldron. The cooked cereal is then laid out on a large bamboo mat to be cooled, and traditional yeast is mixed with the cereal. The mixture is transferred



into a large container, made of bamboo or wood, and left to ferment. After the fermentation, the ferment is placed in a distillation container. A simple distillation unit consists of three vessels: 1) a large copper vessel which is heated over firewood, which holds the diluted ferment, 2) a small earthen pot



for collecting the ara (distillate), which is placed inside a larger pot filled with water, and 3) a bowl shaped vessel on the top, which is used as a condensation unit.



Bang Chang



Wheat, maize, buckwheat and millet are the main ingredients of Bang chang. The fermentation process is same for Ara but Bang chang is not distilled. Just before it is consumed, the fermented grain is mixed with water in a big pot, and a bamboo strainer is placed inside. A long ladle is used to push the strainer and crush the fermented grain underneath. The crushing and steeping are then repeated until the brew reaches the right flavor and consistency.



Changkoe



Known as “tiitpa” in Khengkha, “nagpa” in central Bhutan, and “phaben” in eastern Bhutan, Changkoe is an alcoholic beverage made from cereals like wheat, barley, millet, and rice. To prepare this, the grains are roasted and ground into flour. The flour is then cooked, mashed and spread out on a mat before the yeast is added. It is then filled in a container and left for fermentation at room temperature. Changkoe is served as a delicacy during Bhutanese festivals, family rituals and parties, especially during baby showers. Eastern



Bhutanese households usually fry the solid part of Changkoe in butter with or without eggs and then add water. The consistency resembles that of a thin porridge.



Sing Chang



Sing Chang is an alcoholic brew with mild acidic and sweet taste. It is usually served in Bhutanese homes in rural areas. The preparation starts with cooking raw cereal over an open fire. When the cereal becomes soft, it is removed from the metal cauldron and spread onto a flat surface. Powdered yeast is then sprinkled over the cooked cereal and mixed by hand thoroughly. The product is then stored in a large vertical wooden container and sealed with a lid. Fermentation takes place over days or months or sometimes years. The liquid part generated from the fermentation is consumed as Sing Chang.



Tongpa



Tongpa, a traditional fermented drink made from millet, is usually served during rituals, festivals, celebrations, and as a refreshing drink after a day of hard work. To prepare Tongpa, millet is washed and boiled. The cooked millet is then spread on a mat and mixed with yeast thoroughly. After that, it is stored in a warm, air-tight container for fermentation. After one or two days of fermentation the millet is transferred to buckets or jars and fermented further for up to two weeks until it develops a distinct taste and flavor. Longer fermentation leads to higher alcohol concentration and stron-



ger taste. Tongpa is served in a small cylindrical bamboo container called “Kegtong”, mixed with hot water. People normally use a fine bamboo straw, called “Pibshing” to suck the liquid.





Legumes

Soybean



Scientific name *Glycine max*
Local name Senm
(Dzongkha)
Libi (Tshangla)
Shaywalay (Khengkha)

Soybean is an essential part of Bhutanese diet, especially in the eastern and southern regions. The most popular product is fermented soybean which is used as a substitute for cheese in curry. However, soybeans are also consumed in different forms, for instance while they are green and in the pod they are steamed and eaten as a starter. Furthermore, Soybeans are dried and used in dal (soup) or roasted. Sometimes it is taken along with pop-



corn as a snack while working in the field.



Fermented Soybean



Locally known as Shewaley Thued or Kinema, fermented soybean is traditionally used as an ingredient in curry in eastern and southern Bhutan. It is a sticky, slightly alkaline food that is produced by natural fermentation with *Bacillus subtilis* as the dominant bacterium. To prepare fermented soybean, dry seeds are soaked overnight in water and then boiled until they become soft. The cooked soybean seeds are put into a wooden mortar and are pounded lightly using a wooden pestle. Some wood ash is added directly to the cooked soybeans and mixed thoroughly to create an alkaline condition. The soybean grits are then left to ferment naturally for a few days in a warm place, typical-



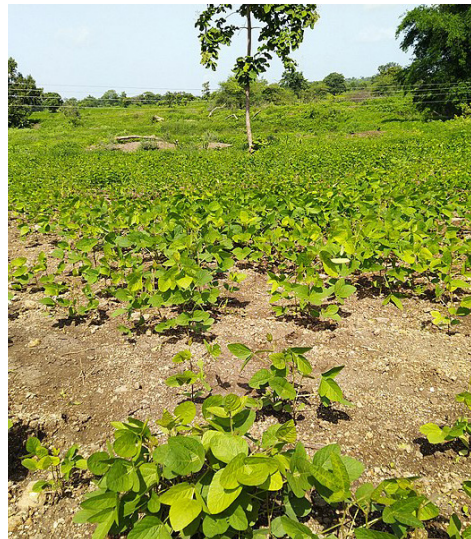
ly above an earthen kitchen oven. Fermented soybean with its distinct flavor and sticky texture is consumed as curry with steamed rice. Fermented Soybean is considered to have a variety of health benefits. It is a valuable source of plant protein, minerals and vitamins.



Fermented Soybean Cheese



The farmers of Decheling Gewog in Pemagatshel traditionally produce fermented soybean cheese to supplement their income. The soybeans grown in their farms are processed in small scale units in the village, then they are marketed in urban areas like Thimphu, Paro and Punakha. The production process is similar to making Tofu. Soybeans are washed and soaked overnight in water. Then they are ground into a slurry paste which is diluted and pressed to obtain soy milk. Coagulation of the soy milk is done by adding acid or salt, such as calcium sulphate and magnesium sulphate. The coagulated protein is pressed through a cloth to remove excess water. Finally, the remaining soft cake is cut into cubes



of desired sizes before they are fermented. In the past, fungal fermentation was used while today it is mostly done through bacterial fermentation. Fermented soya cheese has a highly appreciated taste as well as nutritional values.



Bean



DWARF BEAN

Scientific name *Phaseolus vulgaris*
Common name Dwarf Bean
Local name Shaypen (Khengkha)
 Langma Oray (Tshangla)

CLIMBER BEAN

Scientific name *Phaseolus coccineus*
Common name Climber Bean
Local Name Shaypen (Khengkha)
 Jog Oray (Tshangla)

MUNG BEAN

Scientific Name *Vigna radiate*
Local name Senm (Dzongkha)
 Shagpu/Gagpu (Tshangla)
 Krie (Khengkha)
 Moong Daal (Lhotshamkha)

ADZUKI BEAN

Scientific name *Vigna angularis*
Local name Darun (Khengkha)

Dwarf beans are widely grown because of its market value and demand. These beans are commonly eaten as vegetable. They are also dried and made into soup.

Mung beans, alternatively known as green grams, mash, moong, monggo or munggo, are another common species in the legume family. The mung bean is consumed in special social events as soup, seasoned with ginger and garlic.

Adzuki bean is also a popular legume used in Bhutanese dishes. The cultivars most familiar in Bhutan have a uniform red color, however there are also white, black, gray,



DWARF BEAN



and differently mottled variants. In eastern Bhutan it is consumed as porridge seasoned with garlic and ginger besides being consumed with rice or maize groat.

CLIMBER BEAN



MUNG BEAN



ADZUKI BEAN



Daal Bhat



Daal Bhat is a traditional meal, popular in southern Bhutan. In India, “Bhat” means “cooked rice”, and “Daal” cooked lentil. Daal is generally cooked with onion, garlic, ginger, chili and tomatoes. Herbs and spices such as coriander, garam masala, cumin, and turmeric are added but recipes vary by season and locality. Daal bhat is considered a wholesome food, combining carbohydrates and protein.



Groundnut



Scientific name *Arachis hypogaea* Linn
Local name Badam

Based on location, colour, shape and size, five local varieties of groundnut can be found in eastern Bhutan, namely Chalipa badam, Bartshampa white badam, Yangbrangpa red badam, Yangbrangpa white and purple badam, and Nanongpa badam. Amongst the eastern districts, this legume is particularly popular in Trashigang. The harvested nut is roasted in hot sand until it turns light-brown and the kernels become crispy. Groundnuts are consumed as



snack with tea and alcoholic beverages. They are also used for chili salads (peanut masala, peanut chaat).





Animal Products

Phrom Kempa



Trashigang is not just about crafts and artisans. People there also eat some delectable dishes that one cannot find anywhere in Bhutan. One of such, in Yangtsep dialect, is Phrom Kempa – literally meaning “dried cheese”. As the name suggests, the raw cheese obtained after churning milk is molded into coin-like circular shapes and dried over fire or in the sun. Once the required hardness is obtained, it is stored and used in the preparation of curries. The recipe involves putting the hardened cheese in the curry pot where it is boiled or stir-fried along with other ingredients like vegetables or meat. After it has turned soft, the dish is ready. Phrom Kempa is served during festive occasions and during the cultivating seasons.



Dahi Chiura



Dahi Chiura is a dish made of curd and beaten rice and commonly eaten in the southern part of Bhutan by the *Lhotshamps*. It is often served along with bananas and sugar on a specific festival called “Asar panra”, which marks the onset of the moon and paddy plantation. The farmers serve Dahi Chiura to the workers, which is often followed by jovial splashing of muds accompanied by songs and dances. The dish is also prepared during Dassain festival and to welcome a newborn in the family.

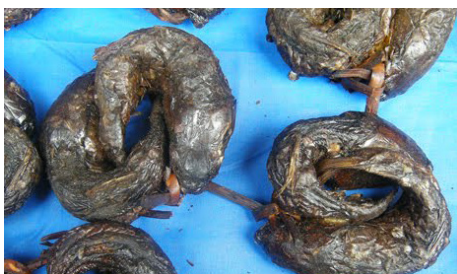


Smoked Fish



Local name Nya Kam
(Dzongkha)
Nga Sangma (Tshangla)

Fresh fish - mainly carp and trout - is caught from the village ponds, and carefully placed over fire in different layers. Bhutanese people consider smoked fishes a delicacy. Thus, smoked fishes serve as an important source of livelihood for local villagers.



Fermented Cheese



Local name Zoethe
(Dzongkha)
Yitpa (Tshangla)

“Zoedoe” in Dzongkha, or “Yithpa” in Tshangla, is a product in great demand. It is made by the Brokpa, highlanders of Trashigang. The cheese is fermented and packed in yak or cow hide pouches. The yak or cow hide is first soaked in water. Once the leather is soft, it is stitched at the corners leaving one end open. After the milk is churned and the butter extracted, the fresh cheese is stuffed into the pouches and left to ferment naturally for months and even years. The longer it is fermented the better the flavor and the texture. The



price also goes up accordingly. Fermented cheese lovers say it enhances the taste of Bhutanese dishes.



Shakam & Sikam Paa



Local names: Sikam Paa
(Dzongkha)

Dried or smoked pork and beef or yak-meat are used in signature dishes in traditional Bhutanese cuisines. The meat is sliced into thin strips and sun-dried for a couple of days, or dried over open wood fire. It is also common to rub salt, especially on the sliced pork-strips, to expedite the dehydration process and also to prevent it from getting rancid. In the past, the shakam and sikam paa were coveted dishes, prepared only on festive occasions and losar celebrations. However, today it is widely consumed by Bhutanese as a sumptuous dish which is usually taken with rice. To prepare Shakam

and Sikam paa, the dried meat is cut into chunks and cooked thoroughly. Apart from adding spices like onion, ginger and garlic the two key ingredients of the paa dishes are radish and whole dried chilies, which are added when the meat is partially cooked. Finally, it is served garnished with finely-chopped fresh coriander leaves or spring onions.



Honey



Local name Mizuma
Zhing (Tshangla)
Jaang (Dzongkha)

Bee keeping has become a major income generator for people in several districts of Bhutan, including Dagana. Traditionally, farmers used to keep few colonies of honeybees in hive and harvested honey by squeezing the combs with their hands. Nowadays the bee keeping and honey production has been modernized. From the different types of bees found in Bhutan, the most common ones include *Apis cerana*, *Apis dorsata*, *Apis laboriosa*, *Apis florea* and *Meliponine* and *Apis mellifera*. Honey is highly valued for its antibiotics properties and wide-



ly used as an ingredient in traditional medicine. At home, people drink warm water mixed with honey to cure sore throats and strengthen their immunity. The medicinal value of honey is also derived from the fact that bees gather pollen from a wide range of medicinal herbs and plants.

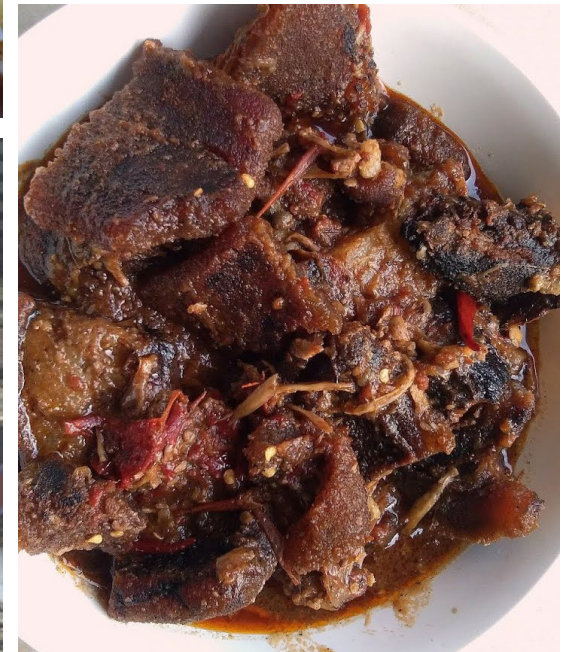
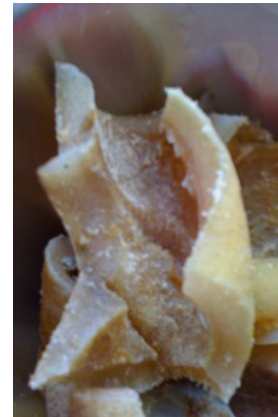


Cattle Hide



Local name Kow
(Dzongkha)
Mongnang (Tshangla)
Pakpa (Khengkha)

It is customary in the villages to serve cooked cow or yak hide dish along with rice and vegetable curry, especially during large gatherings such as community ceremonies and death rituals. The raw hide is roasted over fire to remove hair and then soaked in water. After it becomes soft, the hide is sliced into palm-size pieces and boiled in a large cauldron on an open fire until it turns soft and sticky. After this, chili, salt, pepper, garlic, vegetable oil or butter are added and fried.





Non-food Products

Dye



For centuries, Bhutanese have been dyeing textiles with indigenous materials found abundantly throughout the country. It is an art that has traditionally been a secret, passed down through generations. Bhutan's dyes can be grouped in five categories:

- I. Leaf dyes (*Symplocos* sp., *Strobilanthes flaccidifolius*, *Holcia nilagirica* and *Indigofera*)
- II. Bark dyes (*Terminalia tomentosa*, *Berberis nepalensis*, *Acacia* spp. and *Alnus* sp.);
- III. Flower and fruit dyes (*Choenomeles lagenaria*, *Rhus similata*, *Phyllanthus emblica*, *Cedra toona*, *Michelia champaka* and *Mallo-tus phillipensis*);
- IV. Stem and root dyes, (*Curcuma longa* and *Acacia catechu*);

- V. Mineral dyes (natural mineral salts and oxidized iron).

Typically, textile dyeing involves the following processes (example of dying in red):

- Rinsing the yarn and leaving it to dry.
- Boiling Zim tree leaves until the light-yellow color emerges.
- Placing the dried yarn in the Zim tree water until the yarn turns light yellow.
- Boiling madder up to 45 minutes until a red color emerges, and then sieving it into another dye bath.
- Squeezing the yarn and steeping it into boiled madder water. Stirring to ensure that the yarn is dyed properly.
- Hanging the dyed yarn to dry in a windy and location in the shade.



Agarwood



Scientific name *Aquilaria malaccensis*

Local name Agar
(Dzongkha)
Akuru seng
(Khengkha)

Considered one of the most valuable aromatic trees, agar, produced from agarwood is used for aromatics and medicines. Oil distilled from Agarwood can cost as much as USD 30,000 per kilogram for the best qualities. In Bhutan, the tree is found in parts of Panbang and other warm sub-tropical forests. A cooperative was formed in Zhemgang to ensure sustainable production of Agarwood which could help earn more income for rural subsistence farmers. Agar from Bhutan is ranking among the best qualities worldwide.



Resin



Local name Roju (Tshangla)
Thangchu (Dzongkha)

Resin tapping is still an important economic activity in eastern Bhutan and makes a significant contribution to rural economy. Resin is obtained from tapping chirpine trees (*Pinus roxburghii*). Turpentine and rosin are two important bi-products obtained by resin distillation and are exported mainly to India. Resin is usually collected by making a hole deep enough to puncture vacuoles, to let sap flow out from the tree. The tree then repairs its damage by filling the wound with resin. Resins are widely used in variety of products such as adhesives, coatings and paints.





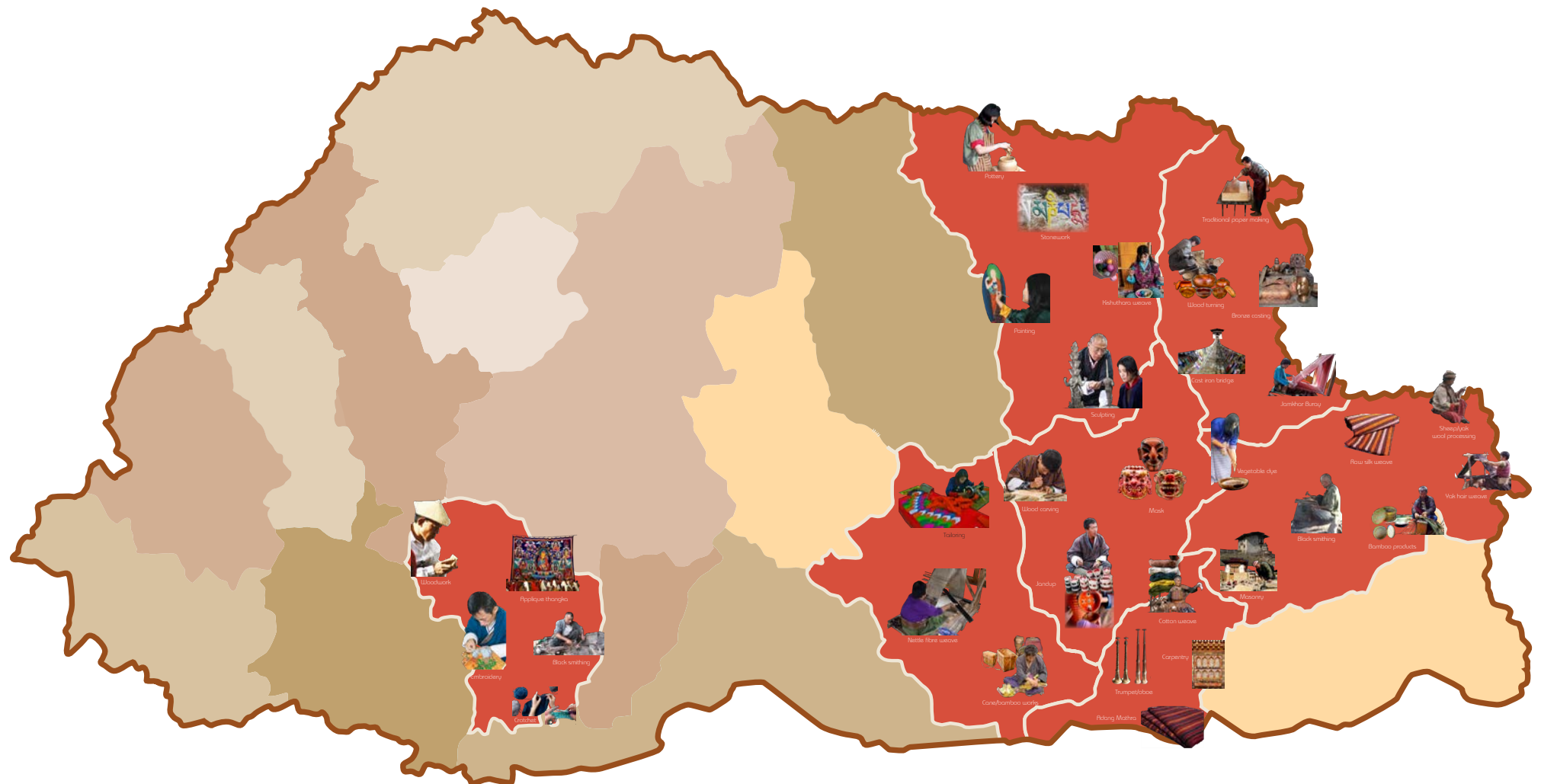


Photo Courtesy: Fb, Tshewang Dorji

HANDICRAFTS

HANDICRAFTS

- Zhemgang • Dagana • Lhuentse • Mongar
- Trashigang • Trashi Yangtse • Pemagatshel



Tsharzo



Tsharzo is the art of weaving cane and bamboo to produce household products like containers and serving plates (bangchung), tshogtrhung (vessels for serving food), baekhu (container for wool and threads), and patshadromchung (container for jewelry). Apart from agriculture, the villagers in parts of eastern and central Bhutan practice Tsharzo as a supplementary income. The residents of Kangpara in Trashigang and the Bjokaps in Zhemgang are especially known for their skills in Tsharzo. Apart from baskets, winnowers, mats and containers, they also produce musical instruments, and the traditional bow, arrow and quiver.



D L M P TG TY Z

Thagzo



From the elaborate and expensive Kisuthara from Khoma village in Lhuntse to Bura of Radhi and Bidung in Trashigang, and Bumthap Mathra and Yathra woven out of yak hair and sheep wool, Thagzo or the art of weaving is one of the oldest crafts practiced in the country. Weaving is an integral part of Bhutanese life and culture and widely practiced across the country. It is a skill that is predominantly practiced by women.

The patterns woven include vertical strips for men and horizontal for women. For women, more ornamental styles such as flowers and motifs are woven. Textiles vary in raw material, design and patterns according to

the region. The weavers use three types of looms - backstrap, horizontal-framed, and the card-loom. Most weavers in the east use the backstrap loom.

Mentsi Matha and Aikapur and the cotton fabric Dungsam Kamtham are produced in Pemagatshel; Adang Mathra, Adang Rachu, and Adang Khamar in Adang village in Wangduephodrang while Nabji and Korphu inhabitants in Trongsa weave cloths from nettle fibers. The highlanders of Merak and Sakteng, the Brokpas also weave their own clothes from sheep and yak wool.



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Shagzo



Shagzo or the art of woodturning traditionally originated from Trashiyangtse in eastern Bhutan. Exquisite Dapas (wooden bowls) and dza phobs (wooden cups) which come in various shapes and sizes, and ara (alcohol) container, utensils and kettles are the most popular products in this craft. A variety of woods is used to produce the items. Craftsmen chisel cups and bowls from the burls of trees hidden in the forests. One highly prized raw material for shagzo is dza (special wooden knots). The wooden products are keepsakes not only for their utilitarian value but also as souvenirs. They are considered to be valuable and often offered as

gifts to visitors. Kengkhar village in Mongar is famous for traditional wooden alcohol containers called Jandup.



D L M P TG TY Z

Lhazo



Bhutanese painting has developed over the centuries from techniques in neighbouring countries into an original display of master craftsmanship by traditional painters (Lhadrips) whose work including murals and frescoes adorn the walls of massive dzongs, temples and monasteries. Traditional symbols and motifs, chosh-am (altar), thangka or thongdroel (religious scrolls) with the images of Buddha and other deities are a trademark of traditional art painted following precise, symbolic iconometric and iconographic rules codified in ancient Buddhist texts. They depict the relationship that human-beings share with nature, animals and religion.



Another singular feature of Bhutanese paintings is anonymity. Lhadrips never sign on their works as it is believed that the mere creation of the religious art is an action that is worthy of merit and that it should be done with a pure mind. The natural pigment in soils (sa-tshoen) are used in Bhutanese paintings as they are commonly found in the country such as the black soil (sa-na), red (sa-tsag) and yellow (sa-ser).



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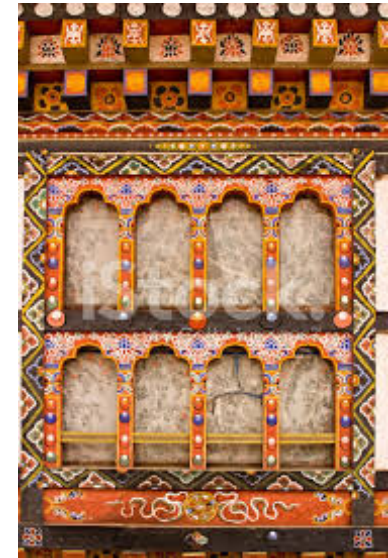
Shingzo



Bhutan's distinctive architecture is one of the most striking and ubiquitous features visible from the towns to the remote areas. Shingzo or carpentry has produced Bhutan's majestic dzongs, temples, palaces and bridges in an inimitable manner. The exquisite design and intricate details which characterize Bhutanese architecture are created by master carpenters known as Zo-Chen and Zo-Wo. Dzongs or the ancient fortresses are some of the finest examples of woodwork in the country and lauded for their unique style, design and methods of architectural form.

A distinctive feature in traditional architecture is

the omission of nails to join different parts of woodwork in a building. Bhutanese architecture that way is outstanding and curiously native to the land. In present times, residential buildings still maintain the basic traditional form and structure so that the unique brand of architecture endemic to Bhutan serves as a symbol for its cultural and traditional heritage.



D L M P TG TY Z

Dozo



Dozo is the art of masonry or building structures using stones. This craft is used to build stupas, Dzongs, temples and buildings plus walls and, sometimes, flat stones to lay courtyards. Classic stone works include the stupas of Chorten Kora in Trashi Yangtse in the east and Chendebji in central Bhutan. Dozo is also used to construct farmhouses using stones.

Dzongs perhaps mirrored the best form of Dozo throughout Bhutanese history. The task consisted of working a block out of a rock which fitted next to or on top of another stone. The master-mason would supervise the angles of the wall. Chortens are sometimes linked

with mani - a continuous length of stone wall inscribed with religious paintings and prayers. Houses in the south and east, Bumthang in central Bhutan, and Laya and Lingshi in the north use stone walls in construction.



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Parzo



Parzo or carving is extensively practiced in the country to produce items such as printing blocks for religious text, furniture, altars, and slate images embellished on shrines. Wooden masks donned by mask dancers during annual religious festivals are also carvings in wood. Parzo is typically done on stone, wood and slate. Slate carvings of the Buddha and various other deities can be found in temples across the country. Apart from these, parzo is used to make the eight lucky signs and even phalluses in various sizes and shapes. The wooden carvings use wood like blue pine or walnut which are then painted in vibrant colors. Additionally,

parzo is used to create traditional motifs on buildings and traditional architecture like Dzongs.

Stone carvings are the least popular among the types of parzo but it still exists in rural communities - examples of this can be found in stone mills, troughs for cattle, and water mills that are turned by a natural brook or rivulet in the villages.



D L M P TG TY Z

Jinzo



Jinzo is the art of sculpting clay, bronze and other metals into religious statues and ritual objects, clay masks and pottery. It involves the art of using mortar, plaster and rammed earth to construct buildings. Usually, the mixture is combined with other materials such as desho paper or beaten bark of the Daphne plant.

Bhutanese clay sculptures are one of the finest in the Himalayan region. In fact, renowned Bhutanese sculptors were invited to build statues in several ancient monasteries in Tibet. Another popular clay product is the traditional earthen pots. Only a few places in the country still make earthen pots such as Gangzur gewog in Lhuntse.

While men are associated with metal sculpting, women, especially those of Lhuntse, Paro and Trongsa are associated with clay sculpting. A good example of clay sculpting is Tsatsa (sacred object molded of clay) commonly found in caves, underneath rocks, inside stupas, alongside roads or places that are sheltered from the elements.



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Lugzo



Lugzo is the art of casting statues, sertog (pinnacles on roofs), and other ornaments to decorate temples and monasteries using bronze. This craft is practiced by only a handful today. The art was introduced by visiting Newari artisans from Nepal invited by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in the 17th century. These craftspeople taught Bhutanese to cast bronze statues and religious artifacts such as bells and bowls.

Casting involves a complex process and Bhutanese artisans usually use either sand or wax. Bronze was commonly used to cast containers such as cups, urns and vases and molded into weapons and armors including axes, helmets, knives,



swords and shields.

The Buddha Dordenma statue atop the Kuenselphodrang in Thimphu and the smaller 100,000 Buddha statues it houses are cast in bronze and gilded in gold.



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Garzo



Garzo or black smithing produces iron goods such as farm tools, knives, swords, horse shoes and bridles, metal tips for arrows, ploughs and utensils. A Buddhist saint, Dupthob-Thangtong Gyalpo, is credited with introducing the craft of blacksmithing in Bhutan in the 14th century. He was a master engineer who built iron chains used as bridges over gorges. Legend says that he erected eight iron suspension bridges, one of them the Tachog Lhakhang bridge which connects the temple across the Paro Chhu. The remains of another can be seen at the National Museum in Paro.

Though there are not many blacksmiths in the



country, the Tibetan settlers in pockets of eastern Bhutan still practice the craft. Wochu in Paro is also famous for its ironwork, especially the making of traditional sword or patag.



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Troezo



Troezo is a much sought-after craft in Bhutan for the fact that it produces beautiful, eye-catching and precious ornaments such as komas (brooches), necklaces, dopchu (bangles), (sinchu) earrings, rings, pendants and amulets that Bhutanese women particularly love to wear. Though Bhutanese jewelry is limited, they are spectacular works of art - gold and silver objects embossed or engraved with good luck symbols and other designs like the dragon and lotus, set with corals and turquoise, and often it includes elaborate pearl designs.

Rectangular doma boxes (chaka), round doma boxes (bathra), lime container (trimi), and ritual objects, altar

tables, swords that are decorated with silver buckles and used by the nobility, the scabbards of ceremonial swords that have silver and gold-leaf finishing, men's ceremonial belt (kochab) are other Bhutanese ornaments. The Dzi (Tiger's eye) are the most valued stones in troeko. It is said that the value increases with the number of eyes on the Dzi.



D L M P TG TY Z

Dezo



Dezo or the art of making traditional paper (desho) was popular in the past as most religious scriptures and text were written on desho using local ink or gold. The paper-making tradition has deep roots in Bhutan. Desho is made from the bark of Daphne tree. A kilometer away from Thimphu, a paper-making factory called the Jungshi paper factory uses bark from the Daphne and Dhekap tree to produce desho. In present times though, the modern paper has replaced the desho though it is still used to make carry bags, gift-wrap paper and envelopes sold in the market. Desho is also used for contemporary craft such as making



greeting cards, notebooks and calendars. The art is still alive in Trashiyangtse where raw material is readily available.



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Tshemzo



Tzhemzo or the art of tailoring comprises three other categories - Tshemdrup, the art of embroidery, Lhemdrup the art of appliqué, and Tsholham, the art of traditional boot-making. The art of embroidery and applique are commonly practiced to create Thangkas and Thongdroels. Tsholam is the craft of making knee-length traditional boots decorated with intricate designs to be worn most often by officials on occasion and during religious events. Villagers use leather and cloth to make Tsholam and also simple boots from uncured leather. Finally, Tshemzo is the sewing of the traditional Bhutanese garments - Gho and Kira plus associated wear.



D L M P TG TY Z



The Royal Bengal Tiger: Bhutan is a key player in the global effort for tiger conservation



NATURE & WILDLIFE

Photo Courtesy: yoair.com



Mammals

D L M P TG TY Z AE



Photo Courtesy: flickr.com

ASIAN GOLDEN CAT

Scientific name *Catopuma temminckii*

IUCN status **Endangered**

The animal is found in Bhutan, Nepal and northeast India through southeast Asia. It lives in rocky woodlands of deciduous and tropical rain forests. In Bhutan, it is protected within the boundaries of the protected areas. In Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park, it has been recorded by camera traps at an altitude of 3,738 meters.

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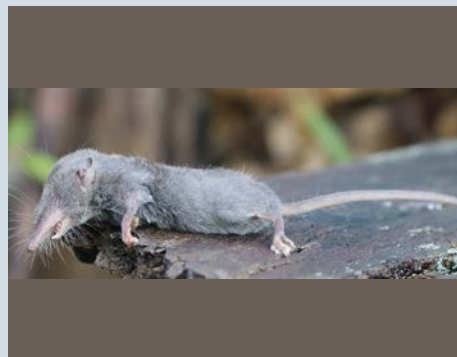


Photo Courtesy: Dorji Duba, BBP

ASIAN HOUSE SHREW

Scientific name *Suncus murinus*

IUCN status **Least Concern**

With a mouse-like appearance, this squirrel is native to south and south-east Asia. It lives in forests, grasslands, savannas, shrubland, wetlands, cultivated areas, and human habitations.

It is an omnivore, solitary and nocturnal, feeding on cockroaches, nuts, fruits, plants and even house mice. Due to its diet habits, the shrew plays a beneficial role in controlling harmful insect populations while also helping disperse seeds within its ecosystem.

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Photo Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

ASIAN PALM CIVET

Scientific name *Paradoxurus hermaphrodites*

IUCN status **Least Concern**

Also called common palm civet, toddy cat and musang, the Asian palm civet is native to south and southeast Asia. It is a small cat-sized mammal with long, stocky body covered with coarse, shaggy hair that is usually grayish in color. The tail is without rings, unlike in similar civet species. It leads a solitary lifestyle, except for brief periods during mating. An omnivore, it feeds on fruits such as berries and pulpy fruits. It is threatened by poaching and illegal pet trade.

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Photo Courtesy: Jangchuk Gyeltshen, BBP

ASIAN SMALL-CLAWED OTTER

Scientific name *Aonyx cinerea*

IUCN status **Vulnerable**

It is the smallest otter species, living in mangrove swamps and freshwater wetlands. In Bhutan, it has been sighted along the Manas and Sankosh river banks and, more recently, in the Phrumsengla National Park. It is seriously threatened by rapid habitat destruction.

Asian small-clawed otter is very social with extended family groups numbering 12 to 20 individuals. They are excellent swimmers.

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NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

ASIAN WILD BUFFALO

Scientific name *Bubalus bubalis*
IUCN Status **Endangered**

The water buffalo is known as Mahey in Bhutan. This large bovine is found in the hot and humid regions of Bhutan's southern foothills including Dagana, Pemagatshel and Zhemgang at altitudes below 1000 meters.

The farmers of Dagana are known to domesticate the water buffalo which are famed for its dairy, meat, manure and as draught power.

A survey conducted by the Department of Livestock in 2012 recorded about 750 domesticated water buffaloes in Bhutan.

D P Z



Photo Courtesy: Bhutan Bird Life Society

ASIATIC ELEPHANT

Scientific name *Elephas maximus*
IUCN status **Endangered**

The Asian elephant, also known as the Asiatic elephant, inhabits Bhutan's southern plains and foothills, migrating seasonally along the Bhutan-India border. The tusker occupies a habitat range of about 1,500 sq km within Bhutan, climbing to an altitude of about 300 meters.

As of 2018, 678 wild elephants were counted in Bhutan. The animal is protected under Schedule I of the Forest and Nature Conservation Act of Bhutan 1995. Elsewhere, the species is found across the Indian sub-continent and southeast Asia.

D P Z



Photo Courtesy: Bhutan Bird Life Society

ASIATIC WILD DOG

Scientific name *Cuon alpinus*
IUCN status **Endangered**

Also called Dhole, it is found in the Himalayas and a few other regions even as it once inhabited the alpine steppes extending into central and southeast Asia.

The dog's population is decreasing and it is estimated that there are fewer than 2,500 mature individuals left in the wild. It is threatened by loss of habitat and prey, competition with other species, and persecution due to livestock predation. Livestock predation by Dhole has been a problem in Bhutan since the late 1990s.

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Photo Courtesy: Bhutan Bird Life Society

ASIATIC WATER BUFFALO

Scientific name *Bubalus arnee*
IUCN status **Endangered**

The Asian wild water buffalo is a huge animal with rounded chest and short legs with fluffy tips on their tails, curved and outstretched horns. Apart from the Royal Manas National park in Bhutan, it is found in Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

As grazers, its regular diet includes aquatic plants, crops, grasses, herbs, leaves and bark of trees. There are less than 4,000 wild buffaloes left in the world. Its threats include parasites and diseases, hunting, loss of habitat, interbreeding with domestic buffalo, and competition for water and food.

P Z



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

ASSAMESE MACAQUE

Scientific name *Macaca assamensis*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

The Assamese Macaque is the most abundant primate in Bhutan, found between 100 to 2,900 meters in the Royal Manas National Park, Phrumsengla National Park, Jomotsangkha Wildlife Sanctuary, Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary and Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary.

Assamese macaque is native to south and southeast Asia. It is omnivorous and feeds on fruits, leaves, invertebrates and cereals. Selective logging, hunting and trapping for sport, medicine, food, and the pet trade include its threats.

L TG Z



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

BARKING DEER

Scientific name *Muntiacus muntjak*
IUCN status Least Concern

Barking deer is the smallest deer in Bhutan, distinguishable by its deep red or bright chestnut coat on the back, paler on the flanks and almost whitish or buff underside of body and tail.

Native to south and southeast Asia, in Bhutan, the deer is found in all forest types between the altitudes of 120 to 3,700 meters. It is an omnivore. The deer often feeds on cultivated crops.

The deer's call sounds like barking, hence the common name "barking deer".

AE



Photo Courtesy: Choki Gyeltshen, NBC, BBP

BENGAL SLOW LORIS

Scientific name *Nycticebus bengalensis*
IUCN status Endangered

The slow loris is distributed across a variety of forests and plantations. In Bhutan, it has been sighted in the districts of Pemagatshel, Zhemgang and Sarpang and Samdrup Jongkhar, close to the Indo-Bhutan border adjoining the Indian states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

Despite being widespread, the slow loris is poorly known because of its nocturnal lifestyle, cryptic nature, and small size. It has a wet nose, a round head, flat face, large eyes, small ears, and dense, woolly fur. Gums (exudates) with supplements of nectar, fruits, leaves, and insects comprise its food.

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Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

BHUTAN GIANT FLYING SQUIRREL

Scientific name *Petaurista nobilis*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

One of the largest flying squirrel species in the world, endemic to Bhutan, India and Nepal, its natural habitat is the temperate broadleaved forests between 1,500 meters to 3,000 meters in elevation. It is nocturnal, lives on trees and breeds in March and April. Habitat loss and degradation threaten its survival besides being hunted for meat and trapped for use as pet.

M TG

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

BINTURONG

Scientific name *Arctictis binturong*
IUCN status **Vulnerable**

Also known as bearcat, Binturong is native to south and southeast Asia. In Bhutan, it has been recorded in the Royal Manas National Park.

The animal has a thick coat of coarse black hair with short and stout legs. It uses its tail to communicate, and is an omnivorous with small mammals, birds, fish, earthworms, insects and fruits being its main diet. Habitat loss, degradation of forest and illegal wildlife trade comprise its chief threats besides being consumed as a delicacy in some Asian countries.

Z



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

BLACK GIANT SQUIRREL

Scientific name *Ratufa bicolor*
IUCN status **Near Threatened**

This large tree squirrel is found in forests ranging from Bhutan, northern Bangladesh, northeast India, eastern Nepal and southern China to southeast Asia, at elevations varying from lowland tropical terrains to 1,400 meters in altitude. Its population has decreased 30 percent in the last 10 years due to habitat encroachment by agriculture, extraction of timber and human settlement.

Among the largest species of squirrels in the world, the black giant squirrel weighs between 1 to 1.5 kilograms.

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Photo Courtesy: natureweb.net

BLACK MUSK DEER

Scientific name *Moschus fuscus*
IUCN status **Endangered**

The black musk deer's population has been decreasing ever since its musk has been used to make perfume. At one point, the musk of the adult male deer was worth four times its weight in gold.

Today, the animal is found in Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, and Nepal in alpine forests and scrub-land at elevations between 2,200 and 4,300 meters. It has long, thick hind legs, no antlers, and large and well developed ears and eyes. The nocturnal and highly solitary deer mates in late November into December. Its natural predators include lynx, wolf and yellow-throated marten.

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Photo Courtesy: Leki Wangdi, NBC, BBP

BLUE SHEEP

Scientific name *Pseudois nayaur*
IUCN status **Least Concern**

The blue sheep or the Bharal possess a stocky body and stout legs, with robust shoulders and a broad chest. Its pelage ranges from grayish brown to slate blue, hence the common name blue sheep. It is found in the highlands of Bhutan, India, China, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan.

The blue sheep's colour perfectly blends in with its often barren and rocky habitat and remains motionless when approached. This ensures safety from predators, mainly the snow leopard. It is killed for meat and faces competition with livestock for food.

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Photo Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

BRUSH-TAILED PORCUPINE

Scientific name *Atherurus macrourus*
IUCN Status Least Concern

The rat-like brush-tailed porcupine has a long body covered with short quills. Its tail is similar to a rat but has a prominent tuft on the tip. It feeds on fruits, roots and carrion, and weighs up to four kilograms.

Shifting cultivation poses the biggest threat to the porcupine which is also hunted for food in some countries. It thrives in subtropical and warm broad-leaf forests. One of the rarest porcupines in South Asia, the species is protected under Schedule II of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act.

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Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

CAPPED LANGUR

Scientific name *Trachypithecus pileatus*
IUCN status Vulnerable

The capped langur is found in the Phrumsengla National Park, Royal Manas National Park and Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park. Native to Bhutan, northern India and Nepal where it inhabits the Himalayan foothills, it is believed that there are fewer than 10,000 mature individuals. It lives in habitats ranging from the moist deciduous forests to oak forests, at altitudes ranging from 150 to 1,600 meters in elevation.

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Photo Courtesy: Friends of Nature, THN

CHINESE PANGOLIN

Scientific name *Manis pentadactyla*
IUCN status Critically Endangered

The world's most evolutionarily distinct and globally endangered, this species is found in southern Bhutan, potentially in the central and western parts of the region. Its habitats include tropical, bamboo, broad-leaf and coniferous forests, and grasslands. It is threatened due to consumption of its meat and for its scales which is used in traditional medicines.

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Photo Courtesy: alumni.ox.ac.uk

CLOUDED LEOPARD

Scientific name *Neofelis nebulosa*
IUCN status Vulnerable

The clouded leopard's range comprises the Himalayan foothills of Bhutan and southeast Asia into China. Worldwide, fewer than 10,000 mature individuals exist with a further trend in population decline. Its biggest threat are large scale deforestation and commercial poaching.

The cat has been sighted from both within and outside the protected areas of Bhutan. Significantly, it has been sighted in the biological corridor linking Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park with the Wangchuck Centennial National Park. It preys on both arboreal and terrestrial vertebrates.

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NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: Dorji Nidup, NBC, BBP

COMMON LEOPARD

Scientific name *Panthera pardus*
IUCN status **Vulnerable**

The common leopard is found in Bhutan, Nepal and northeast India through southeast Asia. It lives in the rocky areas of deciduous woodlands and tropical rain forests. It is a protected species in Bhutan. In the Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park, it has been recorded by camera traps at an altitude of 3,738 meters.

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Photo Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

EURASIAN OTTER

Scientific name *Lutra lutra*
IUCN Status **Near Threatened**

Eurasian Otter is found in the Terai region of the Himalayas. It moves upstream in the summer to altitudes of 3,500 meters in the Himalayas. There is evidence that Eurasian and smooth-coated otters co-existed along Bhutan's Sankosh River in 1957. Worldwide, about 10,000 individuals exist.

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Photo Courtesy: Phuentsho, BBP

GAUR

Scientific name *Bos gaurus*
IUCN status **Vulnerable**

The global population of Gaur, or Indian Bison, was estimated at a maximum of 21,000 mature individuals in 2016. It has declined by more than 70% during the last three generations, and is extinct in Sri Lanka.

Gaur is largely confined to evergreen or semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests. It can be found from the sea level to an altitude of at least 2,800 meters. In Bhutan, Gaur exists all over the southern foothill zone, notably in the Royal Manas National Park, Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary and Khaling Wildlife Sanctuary.

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Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

GOLDEN LANGUR

Scientific name *Trachypithecus geei*
IUCN status **Endangered**

The golden langur is one of the most endangered primates, found only in Bhutan and in a small region west of the Indian state of Assam, flanked by the Brahmaputra river in the south, on the east by the Manas river, on the west by the Sankosh river and on the north by the Black Mountains. Bhutan has become the last bastion for its survival as a species. There are fewer than 4,000 golden langurs left in the wild.

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Photo Courtesy: english.xtbg.cas.cn

HAIRY-FOOTED FLYING SQUIRREL

Scientific name *Belomys pearsonii*
IUCN status Least Concern

The flying squirrel is found in the mountains of the eastern Himalaya, southeast Asia, southern China, and the island of Taiwan at elevations of 800–2,400 meters above sea level.

The squirrel's fur is red-brown on the top and white at the bottom. Its other characteristic is long hair at the feet which protects against higher altitude cold. It is nocturnal.

M



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

HIMALAYAN BLACK BEAR

Scientific name *Ursus thibetanus*
IUCN status Vulnerable

The Himalayan Black Bear typically inhabits mixed deciduous and thorn brush forests at altitudes of around 3,500 meters in the Himalayas in summer and below 1,500 meters in winter. Its main threats consist of depletion of forests and excessive hunting as its paw, gall bladder and cubs fetch high prices in illicit trade.

The medium-sized bear is native to Asia inhabiting the Himalayas, Iran, the Korean peninsula, northeastern China, the Russian far east, and Japan.

AE



Photo Courtesy: Choki Gyeltshen, NBC, BBP

HIMALAYAN GORAL

Scientific name *Naemorhedus goral*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

The Himalayan Goral is believed to be significantly declining as it is hunted for food, meat, and its felt. Habitat loss is another threat. It inhabits the southern slopes of the Himalayas at elevations from 900 to 4,000 meters. The species is herbivore and breeds between November and December. It makes hissing or sneezing sounds when it senses danger. It has backward-curving horns.

D L M TG



Photo Courtesy: Heidi Zimmer, BBP

HIMALAYAN MARMOT

Scientific name *Marmota himalayana*
IUCN status Least Concern

The Himalayan marmot is one of the largest of its kind in the world, about the size of a large house cat. It is found in the Himalayas and Tibetan Plateau at altitudes of 3,000 to 5,500 meters. It lives in grass steppes or alpine habitats, typically above the tree line.

The marmot lives in colonies and excavates deep burrows that colony members share during hibernation from late autumn to early spring. Along with snow leopard, Tibetan wolves and red fox, large birds of prey like hawks, vultures, and eagles are its predators.

M

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: Phuentsho, NBC, BBP

HIMALAYAN MUSK DEER

Scientific name *Moschus leucogaster*
IUCN status **Endangered**

Illegally hunted for its valuable musk, the Himalayan musk deer is protected by law in Bhutan. Highly coveted, musk has been used in perfumes and traditional medicines for over 5,000 years.

The distribution of the musk deer in Bhutan is quite widespread-from alpine scrub and moist sub-alpine to temperate conifer forests straddling many districts across Bhutan.

TG TY



Photo Courtesy: Choki Gyeltshen, NBC, BBP

HIMALAYAN SEROW

Scientific name *Capricornis thar*
IUCN Status **Near Threatened**

The Himalayan Serow is in significant decline from being hunted and loss of habitat. In Bhutan, it exists in the sub-tropical and temperate zones. It is listed under Schedule I of Bhutan's Forest and Nature Conservation Act, 1995.

Serows inhabit forests and wooded gorges, are solitary and can be found from 1,828 meters to 3,048 meters living on mostly mountainous terrain.

D L TG TY



Photo Courtesy: Phuentsho, NBC, BBP

HIMALAYAN STRIPED SQUIRREL

Scientific name *Tamiops mccllelandii*
Horsfield, 1840
IUCN status **Least Concern**

The Himalayan striped squirrel is also known as Burmese striped squirrel. It is found in tropical to sub-tropical forests in Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, and Vietnam. The species feeds on fruits, vegetable matter, and insects. It uses tree holes for shelter and is often seen in small groups.

TY



Photo Courtesy: .india.com

HIMALAYAN RED FOX

Scientific name *Vulpes vulpes*
IUCN status **Least Concern**

The Himalayan red fox is found on every continent, except Antarctica. It inhabits the Himalayas at altitudes between 2,100 meters and 5,000 meters. The fox has a beautiful, bushy tail, with a signature white patch at the tip. The tail helps with balance, and keeps the animal warm in the region's long, harsh winters.

Red foxes have exceptional hearing and sense of smell. These traits enable them to hunt effectively especially in winter.

TG



Photo Courtesy: wildkratts.fandom.com

HISPID HARE

Scientific name *Caprolagus hispidus*

IUCN status **Critically Endangered**

The hispid hare, also called Assam rabbit and bristly rabbit, is native to South Asia. It is found in isolated pockets mainly along the southern foothills of the Himalayas. In Bhutan, images of this elusive animal have been caught on camera traps in the Royal Manas National Park.

It inhabits tropical grassland ecosystems, the preservation of which is vital to ensure the survival of this critically endangered species. Its threats consist of habitat destruction, burning of grasslands during the dry season, invasion of habitat by weeds, overgrazing by cattle, and hunting for meat.

P Z



Photo Courtesy: Kado Rinchen, BBP

HOARY-BELLIED HIMALAYAN SQUIRREL

Scientific name *Callosciurus pygerythrusa*

IUCN Status **Threatened**

Also called Irrawaddy squirrels, the hoary-bellied Himalayan squirrels are native to Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal. They live in a wide variety of forests, including deciduous broad-leaved woodlands, coniferous evergreen forests and mixed agricultural areas. It is threatened by habitat loss. The species eat nuts, seeds, fruits, bark, lichen, and various types of vegetation. A few may also eat insects and small vertebrates.

TG TY

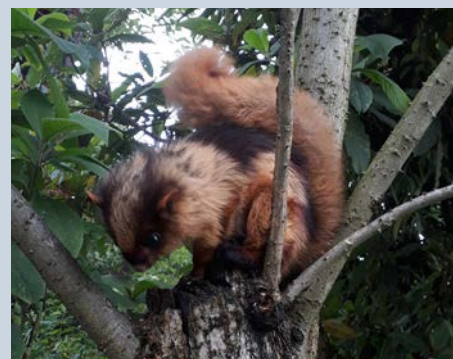


Photo Courtesy: Susmita Subba, IBP

HODGSON'S GIANT FLYING SQUIRREL

Scientific name *Petaurista magnificus*

IUCN status **Least Concern**

This squirrel is native to the Himalayan region of Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, and the Indian states of Sikkim, West Bengal and much of Arunachal Pradesh. It lives at altitudes between 400 and 3,700 meters in tropical and sub-tropical forests and temperate broad-leaf forests.

The Hodgson's giant flying squirrel feeds on nuts, young leaves, buds, flowers, grass, tree resin and insects. Its main threat is habitat loss and degradation while it is also hunted for bushmeat and its pelt. Sometimes it is captured for local pet trade.

D M Z



Photo Courtesy: in.pinterest.com

INDIAN CRESTED PORCUPINE

Scientific name *Hystrix indica*

IUCN status **Least Concern**

The Indian Crested Porcupine is native to southern Asia and the Middle East. It is a large rodent weighing 11–18 kilograms. Its body measures between 70 and 90 centimeters with the tail adding an additional 8–10 centimeters. It prefer rocky hillsides, but are also common in tropical and temperate shrub-lands, grasslands, forests, plantations, and gardens.

Bhutan currently has two additional species of porcupines: Asiatic brush-tailed porcupine, and Himalayan crestless porcupine.

TG TY

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

INDIAN GREY MONGOOSE

Scientific name *Urva edwardsii*
IUCN status Least Concern

This mongoose is native to the Indian subcontinent and West Asia and inhabits grasslands, rocky patches, scrub, thickets and bushy vegetation. It is an omnivore and an opportunistic hunter preying on mice, rats, lizards, snakes, and beetles.

The species mates between March and October and breeds two to three times a year. Its fur is illegally traded to make paint and shaving brushes, thus hunting is one of its main threats. Some people keep the mongoose as a pet and to keep rats and other pests away.

M



Photo Courtesy: Lynn Griffiths, flickr.com

JUNGLE CAT

Scientific name *Felis chaus*
IUCN status Least Concern

Although it has been sighted in just a few national parks, the jungle cat is widespread, found all over Bhutan. It resembles an ordinary grey house cat and is differentiated by a yellowish red tinge on its grey coat while the tips of its ears have a small tuft of black hair.

It prefers wetlands such as swamps and areas with dense vegetation for habitat. It is also called reed cat and swamp cat and is native to south and southeast Asia among other regions.

TG TY



Photo Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

LARGE INDIAN CIVET

Scientific name *Viverra zibetha*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

The large Indian civet with a large brown or gray body is found exclusively in south Asia and south-east Asia. It lives in a habitat of grasslands, scrub and densely forested areas, up to 1,600 meters. In Bhutan, it is found in the Royal Manas National Park and the adjoining areas.

The species is solitary and nocturnal. It travels extensively preying on birds, frogs, snakes, chickens, hens and small mammals. Habitat loss and degradation are its most significant threats. It is also hunted for food and scent glands.

P



Photo Courtesy: Choki Gyeltshen, NBC, BBP

LEOPARD CAT

Scientific name *Prionailurus bengalensis*
IUCN status Least Concern

The leopard cat is the most widely distributed Asian small wild cat with its habitat ranging from the Russian far east to the Korean Peninsula, China, Indochina and the Indian Subcontinent.

Otherwise alike, the leopard cat's longer legs differentiate it from the domestic cat while its body spots and marks make it appear like a tiny leopard. It feeds on small mammals, lizards, amphibians, birds and insects. It is hunted for its fur and as food and pet.

L M



Photo Courtesy: alamy.com

MARBLED CAT

Scientific name *Pardofelis marmorata*

IUCN status Near Threatened

The marbled cat has been sighted in the Royal Manas National Park, Wangchuck Centennial National Park and the broadleaved and mixed conifer forests of Jigme Dorji National Park up to 3,810 meters in altitude. It is found in the foothills of the eastern Himalayas and tropical Indo-Malaya, China and Indonesia.

Similar to a domestic cat in size, the species has rounded ears and a very long tail. It is coveted for its skin, meat, and bones. Widely prevalent indiscriminate snaring is cited as its main threat.

D L M P TY Z



Photo Courtesy: Sonam Wangchen, BBP

MOUNTAIN WEASEL

Scientific name *Mustela altaica*

IUCN status Near Threatened

Found in Bhutan, Tibet and Ladakh (India), besides a few other places, it lives primarily in high-altitude environments and grassy woodlands. It is a solitary animal known for being excellent climbers, runners, and swimmers. It excretes a foul odor from its anal gland to ward off predators. The mountain weasel is a carnivore which is today threatened by habitat loss and degradation. Excessive grazing by cattle, goats, and sheep has considerably reduced its food.

M TG TY



Photo Courtesy: bhutannewsnetwork.com

ONE-HORNED RHINO

Scientific name *Rhinoceros unicornis*

IUCN status Vulnerable

The greater one-horned rhinoceros, also known as the Indian rhinoceros, is second only to an elephant in size and weighs more than two tons. It is found only in south Asia and southeast Asia with its population down to a mere 3,700 individuals in the wild. Five Asian countries - Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Nepal - have committed to carry out joint conservation works besides separate joint efforts by Bhutan and India.

The rhinos feed on grasses, leaves, branches of shrubs and trees, fruits and aquatic plants.

Z



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

ORANGE-BELLIED HIMALAYAN SQUIRREL

Scientific name *Dremomys lokriah*
Hodgson, 1836

IUCN status Least Concern

This medium-sized forest squirrel is found in Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan. In the Apatani community in north-east India, it is used for medicinal purposes, hence a 40-fold increase in its monetary value in the last few decades.

Hunting is perceived to be the primary cause of its decline. The squirrel's habitat comprise of tropical evergreen or semi-evergreen forests where it thrives on fruits, nuts and berries.

TY

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: alchetrn.com

PARTI-COLORED FLYING SQUIRREL

Scientific name *Hylopetes alboniger*
IUCN status **Endangered**

The parti-colored flying squirrel is a medium-sized squirrel with a white throat. Its ears are covered with minute black hairs on both sides. It is found in oak and rhododendron forests as high as 3,400 meters in the eastern Himalayas through Myanmar, Thailand, China, Laos and Vietnam.

It forages at night on fruits, flowers and leaves, and nests in tree hollows. It is threatened by habitat loss.

M TY



Photo Courtesy: astronomy-to-zoology.tumblr.com

PYGMY HOG

Scientific name *Porcula salvania*
IUCN status **Critically Endangered**

The world's smallest and the rarest, the pygmy hog is at the brink of extinction with barely over 250 matured individuals worldwide. It is listed in Schedule I of the Forest and Nature Conservation Act of Bhutan, 1995. In Bhutan, there have been some indications of the existence of this hog species in the Royal Manas National Park and Jomotsangkha Wildlife Sanctuary.

Z



Photo Courtesy: Choki Gyeltshen, NBC, BBP

RED PANDA

Scientific name *Ailurus fulgens*
IUCN status **Vulnerable**

Bhutan has five protected areas which support red panda population. There are fewer than 10,000 mature individuals worldwide.

The species is native to the eastern Himalayas and southwestern China preferring coniferous, temperate broad-leaf and mixed forests with steep slopes and dense bamboo cover. It feeds on bamboo shoots and leaves, fruits and blossoms. With a reddish-brown fur, black belly and legs and white-lined ears, the red panda is threatened by poaching and habitat loss.

D L M TG TY Z



Photo Courtesy: ukposters.co.uk

ROYAL BENGAL TIGER

Scientific name *Panthera tigris*
IUCN status **Endangered**

A survey in 2015 found that there are 103 tigers in Bhutan, making it one of only 13 remaining countries with tiger population. Tigers in Bhutan can be found from the warm sub-tropical forests in the south to the cold alpine forests in the north, between 100 to 4,200 meters.

Bhutan has a strict tiger conservation program with poaching strictly prohibited and almost non-existent. Bhutan provides a critical link between tiger populations in Nepal and northeastern India which is vital for strong genetic diversity.

D P TY Z



Photo Courtesy: Seynam Yangden Tenzin, NBC, BBP

SAMBAR

Scientific name *Rusa unicolor*
IUCN status **Vulnerable**

Among the largest of Southeast Asia's deer, with a head-body length of up to two meters and weighing up to 260 kilograms, the Sambar deer is found in Bhutan, south and southeast Asia. The deer lives in a wide range of habitats but primarily in mature secondary forests. It is threatened by habitat encroachment and hunting resulting in a substantial population decline.

The deer feeds on a wide variety of vegetation including grasses, foliage, fruit and water plants. The males live mostly alone while females are found in small herds.

L TG Z



Photo Courtesy: animals.fandom.com

SLOTH BEAR

Scientific name *Melursus ursinus*
IUCN status **Vulnerable**

Bhutan promises a relatively safe haven for the sloth bear whose population is diminishing in the Indian sub-continent where it is exclusively found. It is already extinct in Bangladesh. The bear lives in entirely tropical and sub-tropical areas, along the Himalayan foothills where its range overlaps slightly with that of the Asiatic Black Bear.

D P



Photo Courtesy: Tshering Tobgay, BBP

SMOOTH-COATED OTTER

Scientific name *Lutrogale perspicillata*
IUCN status **Vulnerable**

In Bhutan, the smooth coated otter, known for its short and smooth fur, is not legally protected unlike the rest of South Asia. It is found in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia where fresh water is plentiful. Its range and population are shrinking due to loss of wetland habitat and contamination of waterways. It is often bred in captivity, trained, and used to chase fish into fishing nets.

The animal communicates by using scent within the otter species as well as with other animals. It also whistles, wails and chirps.

D Z



Photo Courtesy: pixabay.com

SNOW LEOPARD

Scientific name *Panthera uncia*
IUCN status **Endangered**

The snow leopard is one of the least known elusive cats in the world which lives above the tree-line and hunts the blue sheep, snow cock and partridge for food. Its sighting is extremely rare. Snow leopards are well-adapted in its high altitude habitat of over 3,000 meters on scree slopes and alpine meadows.

Only about 4,000-6,000 snow leopards exist in the world today. Bhutan has about 100-200 individuals, making it one among 12 countries in Asia that harbor the snow leopard population in its natural habitat.

TY

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

SPOTTED LINSANG

Scientific name *Prionodon pardicolor*
IUCN status Least Concern

The spotted linsang inhabits lowland, montane, secondary and bamboo forests at 3,000 to almost 4,000-metre elevations. Weighing up to 600 grams, it is both terrestrial and arboreal. It feeds on small vertebrates but also may scavenge at times. Its body fur has patterns of dark spots, while its tail has numerous dark rings.

Widely distributed, the species is known to occur in northern India, Bhutan, Nepal, southern China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar.

M Z



Photo Courtesy: wall.alphacoders.com

TIBETAN WOLF

Scientific name *Canis lupus chanco*
IUCN status Least Concern

Also known as the Himalayan wolf, Tibetan wolf is a sub-species of the grey wolf, found in the Himalayas the Tibetan Plateau, and the Central Asian highlands predominantly above 4,000 meters.

In Bhutan the wolf is found in the Jigme Dorji National Park. They are efficient pack hunters and their diet ranges from small to large sized mammals, birds, carrion, and vegetation as well as domestic livestock such as sheep, horses, cattle and yaks.

Tibetan wolves exhibit territorial defense behavior such as urine scent marking. They may pretend to be 'dead' to escape their enemies.

TG TY



Photo Courtesy: Tandin Jamtsho, BBP

YELLOW-THROATED MARTEN

Scientific name *Martes flavigula*
IUCN Status Least concern

The Yellow-throated Marten is native to Asia. It is the largest marten in the Old World, with the tail making up more than half its length. Its fur is brightly colored, consisting of a unique blend of black, white, golden-yellow and brown. It is an omnivore, whose sources of food range from fruit and nectar to small deer.

The yellow-throated marten is a fearless animal with few natural predators, because of its powerful build, its bright coloration and unpleasant odor. It shows little fear of humans and dogs, and can be easily tamed.

L TG TY



Fishes

D L M P TG TY Z AE

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

BROWN TROUT

Scientific name *Salmo trutta fario*
IUCN status Least Concern

The brown trout was introduced in Bhutan in 1941 from a hatchery in Kashmir. It prefers fast-flowing, gravelly freshwater rivers and is an aggressive predator of small fish and flying insects. It has a golden-brown body, flanked with pale-ringed, dark spots, and creamy-yellow belly.

The brown trout is not believed to be endangered although it is threatened by human interference, habitat loss and climate change. The fish is predominantly sighted in Chamkhar Chu which flows through Zhemgang district.

Z



Photo Courtesy: Sangay Dema, BBP

CHOCOLATE MAHSEER

Scientific name *Neolissochilus hexagonolepis*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

Chocolate Mahseer is coveted as a food and game fish. It is found in the major rivers of southern Bhutan where its migration routes are being studied for conservation purpose.

The adult fish occurs in fast flowing streams and rivers with rocky bottom. It is omnivorous and migrates upstream during the breeding season from April to October. The fish has a huge market demand.

D P Z



Photo Courtesy: Tandin wangchuk, BBP

CRETEUCHILOGLANIS BUMDELINGENSIS

Scientific name *Creteuchiloglanis bumdelingensis*
IUCN status Not assessed

This fish was discovered in 2018 in the Kuktorgangchhu stream near Tshaling in Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary. It is found in the three tributaries of the Dangmechhu: Kuktorgangchhu, Sherichhu, and Gamrichhu.

It can be distinguished by its large, flattened head which rises gradually from tip of snout to dorsal-fin origin. The tip of snout has a prominent cleft while the teeth on upper jaw form an oval to slightly arched palate which is largely exposed when mouth is closed. The overall body color is pale and tanned.

TG TY



Photo Courtesy: Dhan Bdr Gurung, BBP

GIANT DANIO

Scientific Name *Devario aequipinnatus*
IUCN status Least Concern

The giant danio is a tropical fish and can be found up to 300 meters in fast-flowing streams, usually in hilly areas with shaded and clear water. They also prefer gravel or sand sediment and are a shoaling fish, meaning they are found in social groups. It can grow to a maximum length of 10-15 cm and is characterized by a blue and yellow, torpedo-shaped body with gray and clear fins.

D



Photo Courtesy: Sangay Dema, BBP

GOLDEN MAHSEER

Scientific name *Tor putitora*

IUCN status **Endangered**

The rivers of southern Bhutan are considered to be the greatest hope for the survival of Golden Mahseer. The Mahseer Research and Conservation Project in Bhutan has been studying its migratory pattern using radio telemetry technology. Bhutan also hosted the first International Mahseer Conference where scientists from 11 countries recommended the establishment of community-based conservation and initiating recreational fishing in Manas and its tributaries to control illegal poaching.

The species is threatened due to pollution, habitat loss and over-fishing.

D M P TG Z



Photo Courtesy: en.bdfish.org

HAMILTON'S BARILA

Scientific Name *Barilius bendelisis*

IUCN status **Least Concern**

It has an elongated body with a moderately compressed cleft mouth. It grows to a maximum length of about 15.5 cms. Adults occur in streams and rivers along the base of hills with pebbly and rocky bottom. It is found in the rivers of Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Myanmar.

D



Photo Courtesy: planetcatfish.com

HEART THROAT CATFISH

Scientific Name *Glyptothorax cavia*

IUCN status **Least Concern**

This fish is widely distributed in Bhutan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and China. It inhabits the sandy or rocky bottoms of mountain rapids. It is adapted to attach themselves to rocks and boulders against strong currents. The fish is known to take only live food like blood worms.

M



Photo Courtesy: Phuntsho, BBP

KHALING TORRENT CATFISH

Scientific name *Parachilopterus bhutanensis*

IUCN status **Not assessed**

Named in honor of being the first fish species scientifically described from within Bhutan, the common name, Khaling torrent catfish, refers to the village of Khaling through which flows the stream where it was discovered. Besides the Khaling stream, it is found in the headwaters of the Drangmechhu river.

The fish is found in clear, cold-water environments, sourced from mountain springs, precipitation runoff, and snow-melt. It has paired fins to cling to rocks and mouth adapted to scrape algae and invertebrates.

P TG

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: Dorji Duba, BBP

SNOW TROUT

Scientific name *Schizothorax richardsonii*

IUCN status **Vulnerable**

Found in the Himalayan regions, the common snow trout is adapted to fast-flowing, cold-water streams of the Himalayan rivers. It is sighted among rocks, feeding on algae and aquatic plants. It usually breeds in April through May.

The snow trout is widely consumed and thus has a great commercial value. However, its population is decreasing due to overfishing, pollution, damming of rivers and the introduction of predatory exotic fish like brown trout.

L M P TG Z

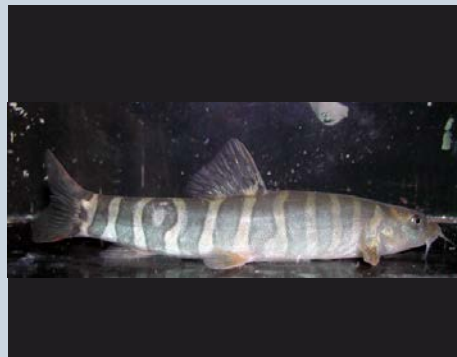


Photo Courtesy: loaches.com

STONE LOACH

Scientific name *Schistura multifasciata*

IUCN status **Least Concern**

Stone Loach is a species of ray-finned fish, found in the eastern Himalayas. In Bhutan, it lives on the gravel bottoms of fast flowing hill streams. The fish is bony, territorial and associated with freshwater habitat. It grows to a maximum size of 8 to 11 centimeters. The females are plumpier than males.

M



Photo Courtesy: Sonam Rinzin, BBP

SUCKER THROAT CATFISH

Scientific name *Pseudecheneis sulcata*

IUCN status **Least Concern**

Known as Kabre in the Nepalese language, sucker throat catfish has a short head and a longer upper jaw while the body is flattened ventrally to pelvic fins. It is grayish-brown or black with a narrow band running longitudinally on the side of the body. Fins are yellowish with black patches.

The fish grows up to 20 centimeters and is found in the freshwater environment in Bhutan, India, Nepal and Bangladesh. It is occasionally reported from Tibet and Myanmar.

TG



Photo Courtesy: Dorji Wangdi, BBP

TUNGA GARRA

Scientific name *Garra annandalei*

IUCN status **Least Concern**

Tunga Garra is a species of ray-finned fish found in Bhutan, northern Bengal, Bihar and Assam in India, Nepal and Myanmar. It inhabits rocky, clear and fast flowing mountain streams.

The species is easily identified by its nearly cylindrical body shape and small mouth with well-developed mental disc.

M



Birds

D L M P TG TY Z AE

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

BEARDED VULTURE

Scientific name *Gypaetus barbatus*

IUCN Status Near Threatened

The bearded vulture is a large bird of prey whose population is on constant decline. The bird lives in high mountains in southern Europe, the Caucasus, the Indian subcontinent, and Tibet around or above the tree line at up to 5,000 meters.

It thrives in mountains with plentiful cliffs, precipices, canyons and gorges preferring desolate, lightly-populated areas. Its diet comprises mostly mammals followed by birds and reptiles. It is the only living bird that specializes in feeding on bone marrow. Its population decline is due to decrease in habitat space, reduced food availability, poisoning and trophy hunting.

M

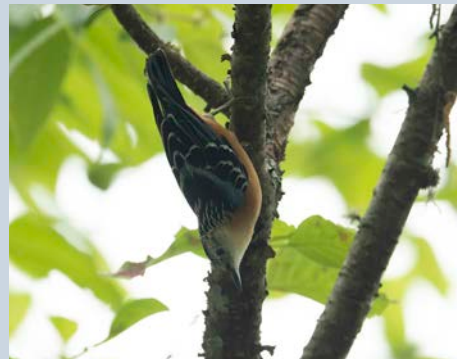


Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

BEAUTIFUL NUTHATCH

Scientific name *Sitta formosa*

IUCN status Vulnerable

Recent records suggest that apart from Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh in India, north Myanmar and Laos support the most important populations of this bird. The global population is estimated at 2,500 to 9,999 mature birds. It is sighted primarily in the Phrumsengla National Park.

Beautiful nuthatch has an orange belly, white face, and dazzling blue banding on the wings. It feeds beneath bark and leaves of primary forests.

M

P



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

BHUTAN LAUGHING THRUSH

Scientific name *Trochalopteron imbricatum*

IUCN Status Least Concern

This bird is also known as the Himalayan streaked laughing thrush. It is commonly found in the sub-tropical regions of Bhutan and in adjoining India between 1,000-3,000 meters of elevation. It prefers bushes and long grass, scrub and thickets for habitat.

The bird is brown with gray-powdered cheeks. It forages on the ground, mostly in pairs or small groups, and makes a whistled sound usually of two to three notes.

P



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

BLACKISH-BREASTED BABBLER

Scientific name *Sphenocichla humei*

IUCN Status Near Threatened

There have been a few recent records of the sighting of this bird in Bhutan which is also found in the adjoining Indian states. There are possibly fewer than 10,000 mature individuals worldwide. It inhabits broadleaf evergreen forest and bamboo groves at 900-1,950 meters. It occupies lower elevations only during winter.

D



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

ALEXANDRINE PARAKEET

Scientific name *Psittacula eupatria*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

This medium-sized parrot is named after Alexander the Great who took the bird from Punjab to Europe where it was prized by the royalty and noble families. Alexandrine parakeet lives in woodlands, agricultural lands and mangrove forests at altitude of up to 900 meters feeding on a variety of seeds, buds, fruits and nuts.

The bird makes a variety of calls, including a ringing trrriew, loud keek, and deep klak-klak-klak-klak. Alexandrine parakeet's population is on decline because of habitat loss and excessive capture to meet the demands of the illegal wildlife trade.

D

M



Photo Courtesy: uk.inaturalist.org

ASHY-HEADED GREEN-PIGEON

Scientific name *Treron phayrei*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

The bird is widely distributed across south Asia, south Yunnan (China), Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam. It is found in lowlands and moist-deciduous forests up to 1,500 meters in the Himalayas. In Bhutan, the species has been sighted below 400 meters.

Its call is a high-pitched whistling "coo". Adult males are green with an orange chest, dark cinnamon shoulders, and a bright orange patch under the tail. Females are more predominantly green without any orange. It is threatened by habitat loss and hunting.

M



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

BAER'S POCHARD

Scientific name *Aythya baeri*
IUCN Status Critically Endangered

The global population of Baer's Pochard is believed to be in the range of 250-999 individuals. In Bhutan, the bird has been seen significantly decreasing in its breeding and wintering grounds with hunting and wetland destruction being the key reasons for its decline. Studies have now been initiated to protect and conserve the bird. It is found in Bangladesh, China, Bhutan, and other South East Asian countries.

D

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Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

BAR-WINGED WREN-BABBLER

Scientific name *Spelaornis troglodytoides*
IUCN Status Least Concern

Bar-winged wren-babbler is found in Bhutan, China, India, and Myanmar in subtropical or tropical moist mountain forest. The birds has three subspecies, one of which was recorded in 1934 from eastern Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh. The bird lives in thick undergrowth and forages in the leaf litter and on the base of tree trunks. It produces a series of high-pitched, slightly hoarse, notes. The species is reported to be rare and local with a population that is suspected to be in decline due to habitat destruction and fragmentation.

M

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

BLACK-NECKED STORK

Scientific name *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*

IUCN status Near Threatened

The black-necked stork is a resident species across the Indian sub-continent and southeast Asia and Australia. It is a large carnivore, 129–150 cm tall having a 230-centimetre wingspan, and lives in a variety of natural and artificial wet-land habitats. Its population in south and southeast Asia is estimated to be less than 1,000 individuals. It is threatened by habitat loss and destruction, overfishing, pollution, collision with electricity wires, and hunting.

Z



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

BLACK-RUMPED MAGPIE

Scientific name *Pica bottanensis*

IUCN status Least concern

Its comparatively reduced gloss in plumage and its stouter bill to differentiate the black-rumped magpie from the other magpie species. On the whole, it is a very distinctive magpie, mainly black and white, with long, graduated tail, and mid-sized bill relatively wide at base. The bird also makes various chattering sounds which is hoarser than those of the oriental magpie.

In Bhutan, the black-rumped magpie is found in the central and eastern highlands.

TG



Photo Courtesy: getalper.com

BLACK STORK

Scientific Name *Ciconia nigra*

IUCN status Least Concern

The black stork is a large bird which was recorded for the first time in Wangchuck Centennial National Park in 2016. It is usually an uncommon and local winter visitor along the southern foothills of Bhutan.

The black stork has black plumage, white underparts, long red legs and a long pointed red beak. It is a shy and wary species and is seen singly or in pairs, usually in marshy areas, rivers or inland waters. It feeds on amphibians, small fish and insects. They are found in Bhutan, eastern Asia, and west and central Europe.

D



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

BLACK-THROATED PARROTBILL

Scientific Name *Suthora nipalensis*

IUCN Status Least Concern

The black-throated parrotbill is found across Bhutan, India, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Thai-land, Tibet and Vietnam in subtropical or tropical moist mountainous forests. The bird's population trend is not known but is not believed to be decreasing significantly.

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Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

BLACK-CHINNED YUHINA

Scientific name *Yuhina nigrimenta*
IUCN status Least Concern

The black-chinned yuhina is found at an altitude of 200-2,800 meters. It is distributed across Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Tibet and Thailand. In Bhutan, it is commonly found throughout the temperate zone and foothills. With black crest and chin, and brown body, the bird gives a buzzy chatter and a ringing, repetitive song composed of high whistles.

Z



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

BLACK DRONGO

Scientific name *Dicrurus macrocercus*
IUCN status Least concern

The black drongo is also known as king crow for its aggressive and fearless behavior. Found across much of tropical southern Asia to southern China and Indonesia, the bird is an aerial predator of insects but, sometimes, glean from the ground. It feeds on insects but may attack much larger species which enter its nesting territory.

Smaller birds can often be seen breeding in the close proximity of a black drongo's nest for safety from predators. Notable as a songbird, the black drongo can mimic other species.

TY



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

BLACK-NAPED MONARCH

Scientific name *Hypothymis azurea*
IUCN status Least Concern

Featured on a Bhutanese stamp in 1999, the black-napped monarch is found in the Indian subcontinent, southeast Asia, Taiwan and China in altitudes from 0 to 1,500 meters. It breeds from March to September in India and hawks flying insects, grasshoppers, moths, beetles, wasps and bees for food. It is a resident non-migratory bird. Its compact and conical nest, usually on a fork of a tree branch, is bound with spider web.

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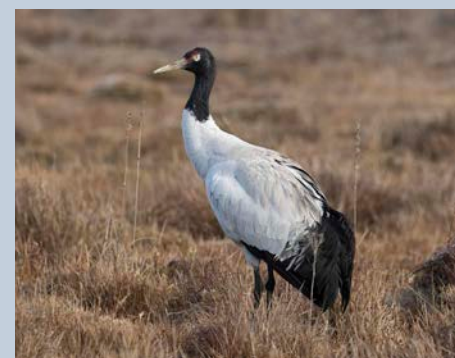


Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

BLACK-NECKED CRANE

Scientific name *Grus nigricollis*
IUCN status Vulnerable

The Black-necked Cranes are winter visitors to Bhutan. They come during late October through mid-February from their breeding grounds in the Tibetan Plateau. They inhabit mainly the Phobjikha valley in west-central Bhutan and Bumdeling valley in eastern Bhutan. Other places in Bhutan where it is sighted in small numbers include Mongar, Tangmachu, Samtengang, Gyetsa, Khotekha valley and Gogona. The crane is legally protected in Bhutan.

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Photo Courtesy: birdsoftheworld.org

BLUE-NAPED PITTA

Scientific name *Hydornis nipalensis*
IUCN Status Least Concern

It is a brightly colored bird found in Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, and Vietnam. It lives in bamboo jungles of subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests, and feeds on ground insects and other small animals.

It ventures out of its roosting place only early in the morning and late in the evening. It breeds from April to August with both the male and female sharing the parental duties. Its call is a double whistle.

M



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

BLUE-WINGED LAUGHINGTHRUSH

Scientific Name *Trochalopteron squamatum*
IUCN Status Least Concern

The blue-winged laughing thrush is brownish with a black brow and a bright silvery-azure panel on the wing. It is not as social and is thus found in small groups, pairs, and sometimes even alone. It is not very visible because it forages in tangled undergrowth. Its high-pitched whistles occasionally give it away. The bird is found in the eastern Himalayan region of Bhutan, Yunnan and Myanmar.

L

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Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

BLYTH'S KINGFISHER

Scientific name *Alcedo hercules*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

Blyth's kingfisher is the largest bird in the kingfisher family and is also known as the great blue kingfisher. It breeds between March and June and frequents waterways feeding on fish and insects. It is found between the altitude of 200 and 1,200 meters in Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. In Bhutan, apart from Mongar, the bird has been sighted in Samdrup Jongkhar and the adjoining areas. The population is believed to be small.

M



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

BLYTH'S TRAGOPAN

Scientific name *Tragopan blythii*
IUCN status Vulnerable

Blyth's Tragopan's population is small, declining and scattered within a severely fragmented range. It is found in eastern Bhutan through northeast India, north Myanmar to southeast Tibet. It has not been recorded in Bhutan since the early 1970s. This bird is legally protected in all the countries in which it is found. Its estimated global population is said to be just around 2,500 to 9,999 individuals.

The bird makes a loud, wailing "ooooaahh" call from its habitat in dense evergreen montane forests. Shifting cultivation, loss and fragmentation of habitat, and hunting for food are its major threats.

TG



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLS

BLACK-THROATED PRINIA

Scientific name *Prinia atrogularis*
IUCN Status Least Concern

Found in Bhutan, China, India and Nepal, the grey-throated prinia favors scrubby open areas such as clearings and forest and field edge. It inhabits hilly and montane areas and descends into foothills in winter. Its calls are simple, usually buzzy or raspy-sounding.

The bird has a ridiculously long tail.

P



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLS

BLOOD PHEASANT

Scientific name *Ithaginis cruentus*
IUCN status Least Concern

The Blood Pheasant is found mostly in the mountains, in coniferous or mixed forests and scrub areas near the snowline. However, they change their habitat depending on the seasons. They are mostly sighted in the high-altitude areas of Bhutan, and elsewhere across India, Nepal, China, and Myanmar. The males are highly territorial and showy while the female tends to be quiet. Breeding begins at the end of April.

TG



Photo Courtesy: birdsoftheworld.org

BLOSSOM-HEADED PARAKEET

Scientific name *Psittacula roseata*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

This parrot is a resident breeder in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Northeast India, Nepal, South-east Asia and China. It is a noisy species which makes a range of raucous calls.

Blossom-headed parakeet inhabits farmlands, subtropical forests, tropical moist lowlands and deciduous woods, from 0 to 1,500 meters in elevation. Its diet consists of mostly fruits, nuts, berries, leaves, seeds, shoots and grain.

Its global population is decreasing owing to the degradation of habitat and trapping for pet trade.

M



Photo Courtesy: Bhutan Bird Life Society

BLUE-BEARDED BEE-EATER

Scientific name *Nyctornis athertoni*
IUCN status Least Concern

This bird is found in India, Nepal, China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Bhutan and Laos. It has a high forest dependency, inhabits both artificial and natural ecosystems, and can be seen from 0 to 2,200 meters in elevation.

The bird is non-migratory and eats mostly honeybees, wasps and hornets. The overall population of the bird is considered to be stable. Deforestation is its main threat. Its calls include deep throaty clucks, low growls, and dry croaks.

D

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

CINEREOUS VULTURE

Scientific name *Aegypius monachus*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

This vulture - also called 'monk vulture' because of its neck feathers that resemble the monk's hood - is one of the heaviest and largest raptors around. Over the past 200 years, its number has decreased steadily due to poisoning, habitat destruction and lack of food supply. In much of Europe, the species has already disappeared.

Cinereous vulture feeds mostly on carrion of any type, from the largest mammals to fish and reptiles. In the Himalayas, the carcasses consumed include yak, bharal, Tibetan gazelle, Himalayan marmot, domestic sheep and even humans from "sky burial" grounds.

M



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

COLLARED FALCONET

Scientific name *Microhierax caerulescens*
IUCN Status Least Concern

The collared falconet is a bird of prey found in the Indian subcontinent and southeast Asia, from Bangladesh and Bhutan to Thailand, Malaysia, and Vietnam. It lives in temperate forest, often on the edges of broad-leaf forest from the sea-level up to 1,800-2,300 meters of elevation.

The bird produces a high-pitched "kli-kli-kli" or "killi-killi-killi" call and hunts from perch with preys often caught in mid-air. The preys include butterflies, dragonflies, grasshoppers, beetles and cicadas.

P



Photo Courtesy: Tshulthrim Drukpa Wangyel, BBP

COLLARED SCOPS OWL

Scientific name *Otus lettia*
IUCN status Least Concern

The collared scops owl is a resident breeder in south Asia. It is found in open wooded habitats from lowlands to foothills, and preys on insects. It lays 3 to 5 eggs in tree hollows and are often found roosting in temples, houses, and gardens.

With a significant variation in plumage and vocalizations across its large range, the owl makes incisive, short hoots, belched out at well-spaced intervals.

Z



Photo Courtesy: Seangyeal Chhopheal, BBP

COMMON CHIFFCHAFF

Scientific name *Phylloscopus collybita*
IUCN Status Least Concern

This bird is named for its simple chiff-chaff song. It is found in Asia, Europe, and Africa and migrates in winter to southern and western Europe, southern Asia, and north Africa. It usually breeds in open woodlands.

The bird eats mainly flies along with other invertebrates. To hear the call of Common chiffchaff is to know that spring has come. Its common call is a soft 'hooet' or 'hweet' while mates communicate with each other using short 'drit' or 'it'.

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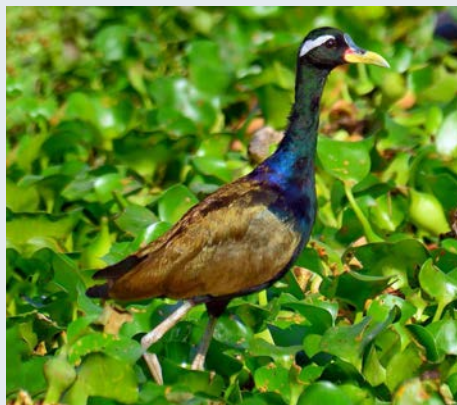


Photo Courtesy: Gyeltshen, WDFPS, BBP

BRONZE-WINGED JACANA

Scientific name *Metopidius indicus*

IUCN status Least concern

The bronze-winged jacana dwells in wetlands, marshes, ponds and other water habitats across south and southeast Asia from 0-100 meters in elevation. It breeds from July to early September and forages on lilies and other floating aquatic vegetation.

The bird has an interesting sexual behavior. The polyandrous female keeps a harem of several males during the mating season. The male yells to gain attention and the louder it is the better the prospect of copulation with the female.

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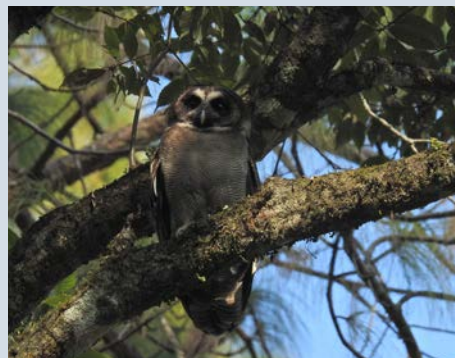


Photo Courtesy: Tashi, BBP

BROWN WOOD-OWL

Scientific Name *Strix leptogrammica*

IUCN Status Least Concern

The brown wood owl is a resident breeder in south Asia found in India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Taiwan, and south China. It is highly nocturnal and feeds on small mammals, birds, and reptiles. It is large and solemn-looking with deep black eyes and gives a short burst of loud, reverberating hoots.

M



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

CHESTNUT-BREASTED PARTRIDGE

Scientific name *Arborophila mandellii*

IUCN status Vulnerable

Very little is known about this bird which has a worldwide population of 2,500 to 9,999 mature individuals. In Bhutan, it is almost entirely confined to areas with extensive old-growth forest. Endemic to the eastern Himalayas, it is sighted in Phrumsengla National Park, Bumdelling Wildlife Sanctuary and Zhemgang district.

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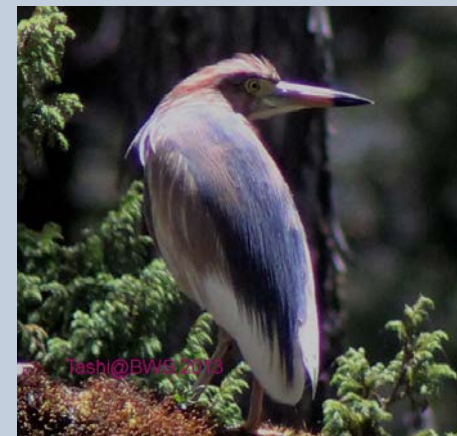


Photo Courtesy: Tashi Dendup, BWS, BBP

CHINESE POND HERON

Scientific name *Ardeola bacchus*

IUCN status Least concern

A moderately small population, this bird is found in Mongar in Bhutan, Nepal and India. It inhabits dense undergrowth of moist evergreen forest from 1,500 to 2,500 meters. The bird is threatened by the destruction of forest, chiefly logging and shifting cultivation.

P



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

CORAL-BILLED SCIMITAR BABBLER

Scientific Name *Pomatorhinus ferruginosus*

IUCN Status Least Concern

This is a large and vocal babbler of evergreen forests and shrubby edges. The bird is active and not shy but usually moves through dense patches of vegetation and can be difficult to spot.

It is found in Bhutan, India, Nepal, China, Thailand. Its natural habitat is sub-tropical moist montane forest.

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Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

CROW-BILLED DRONGO

Scientific name *Dicrurus annectens*

IUCN status Least Concern

The crow-billed drongo is found in south Asia, southeast Asia and China in the subtropical or tropical forests and mangrove forests at an altitude range of 0 to 2,000 meters. It breeds between April and June building its cup-shaped nest between the fork of tree branches.

Z



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

DARK BREASTED ROSE FINCH

Scientific name *Procarduelis nipalensis*

IUCN status Least Concern

The dark-breasted rose finch is found in Bhutan, China, India, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, and Vietnam. It inhabits boreal forests and subtropical or tropical high-altitude shrub land. The male bird is dark pink with a lighter throat and eyebrows. Dark-breasted rose forages on the ground in montane and hill forests, along forest edges, rocky meadows and slopes. Its telltale sound is a wheezy sparrow-like "wheer."

TG



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

DARK-RUMPED SWIFT

Scientific name *Apus acuticauda*

IUCN status Vulnerable

This species is known from just a few breeding colonies in the Himalayan foothills in Bhutan, and the hills of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram in north-east India. It has a small population of just 250 to 999 individuals worldwide. It breeds in colonies in the crevices of rocky cliffs between 200 to 1,350 meters.

D M P



Photo Courtesy: Tandin Jamtsho, BBP

COMMON HOOPOE

Scientific name *Upupa epops*
IUCN status Least Concern

The common hoopoe is a very colorful bird which inhabits open country with pastures, woods, and fields. Known for its unmistakable spiky crown feather at the top of the head, the bird is found across Europe, Asia and Africa. It breeds from January to August.

It feeds mainly on insects although its diet may also consist of small lizards, snakes and frogs. Its flight is fast and direct, with rather deep wing beats.

TG



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

COMMON POCHARD

Scientific name *Aythya ferina*
IUCN status Vulnerable

Common pochard loves water bodies - lakes, reservoirs, and slow moving rivers. It is omnivorous and feeds on aquatic plants, algae, aquatic insects, small mollusks and crustaceans, and occasionally small fish. The mid-sized diving duck breeds throughout large swaths of Europe and Asia but winters in southern and eastern Asia, western Europe, and northern Africa. The population of Common Pochard is decreasing owing to urbanization of the natural habitats and over-hunting.

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Photo Courtesy: birds.kz

COMMON RAVEN

Scientific name *Corvus corax tibetanus*
IUCN status Least concern

This is the national bird of Bhutan. Locally known as Jarog, the common raven is found in Bhutan, Tibet, Sikkim and Ladakh, mainly in upland habitation and alpine and trans-Himalayan regions. During winters, they migrate to lower lands. It feeds on vegetable or animal matter.

Sometimes the bird perform acrobatic flying stunts in high winds and tricks like twisting, turning and nose-diving. The female raven starts building the nest around February from twigs while the male brings moss and hair to make it comfortable for the young ones. The nest can last for many years.

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Photo Courtesy: Dorji Duba, BBP

COMMON SANDPIPER

Scientific name *Actitis hypoleucos*
IUCN status Least Concern

In one Pacific island, the common sandpiper is called Matakakoni, meaning "bird that walks a little, then copulates". It breeds across much of Europe and Asia, and migrates to Africa in winter. It forages on insects, crustaceans and other invertebrates. When at risk, the young clings to a parent's body and is flown to safety.

The bird is distinguishable through its grayish-brown upper-parts, white under-parts, dark-yellowish legs and feet. It is a sociable bird often seen in large flocks.

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NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: Tandin wangchuk, BBLP

FERRUGINOUS FLYCATCHER

Scientific name *Muscicapa ferruginea*
IUCN Status Least Concern

This bird is found from northeast Indian subcontinent and central China to Taiwan, and winters in Southeast Asia. Its habitat consists of forest, parks, gardens and wooded areas in subtropical or tropical moist montane regions. It has a distinctly large-head, and large-eye.

P



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLP

FIRE-TAILED MYZORNIS

Scientific name *Myzornis pyrrhura*
IUCN status Least concern

Considered to be one of the most beautiful birds on the Indian sub-continent, the global population of the fire-tailed myzornis has not yet been compiled but its status is generally described as “uncommon” in Nepal, “frequent” in the temperate zones of Bhutan, “uncommon” in Myanmar and “rare” in China. This species can be found all over Bhutan but sightings are most common between the Sengor and Namling areas in Mongar.

M TG TY



Photo Courtesy: dibird.com

GOULD'S SHORTWING

Scientific Name *Heteroxenicus stellatus*
IUCN Status Least Concern

Gould's shortwing breeds in the rocky terrains above the tree-line in the eastern Himalayas. In winter, it migrates to the wooded valleys at a lower altitude. It is found in the Indian states of Uttarakhand and Sikkim, and in Bhutan, Yunnan and northern parts of Myanmar and Vietnam. The bird has small white spots or stars on its belly and long brown legs and a black bill.

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Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLP

GREAT CORMORANT

Scientific name *Phalacrocorax carbo*
IUCN Status Least Concern

The bird was once seen as a competitor for fish by fishermen and almost hunted to extinction. However, conservation efforts in recent years have restored the population to a healthy level.

Found in the northern hemisphere and the Indian sub-continent, the great cormorant is a widespread member of the cormorant family of seabirds. It feeds on the sea, and in freshwater lakes and rivers. It often nests in colonies near wetlands and rivers, breeding in the same nesting site for several years. It dives into water to catch fish.

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Photo Courtesy: Phuntsho Wangdi, PNP, BBP

DUSKY THRUSH

Scientific name *Turdus eunomus*
IUCN Status Least Concern

The dusky thrush is a migratory bird which breeds from central Siberia to Kamchatka and winters in open woodland areas in south and south-east Asia. Tolerant of mountainous and tundra habitats, it is an omnivore preying on several insects. It also eats berries.

Dusky thrush has a dark brown back and rump while the belly and under-tail are white. In both songs and calls, it is very vocal, delivering loud chattering notes.

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Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

EURASIAN CURLEW

Scientific name *Numenius arquata*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

One of the most widespread of the curlews, the bird's global population is estimated to be between 77,000 to 1,065,000 individuals. In winter, it migrates to Africa, southern Europe and south Asia. It breeds from April to August in solitary territorial pairs and sometimes forming small colonies. With a decreasing population, the bird's status was elevated to "Near Threatened" in 2008. The bird makes a loud "curloo-oo" sound.

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Photo Courtesy: cms.int

EURASIAN GRIFFON

Scientific name *Gyps fulvus*
IUCN Status Least Concern

Encompassing a very large range, the bird is found across the Middle East, north Africa, Europe and the Indian sub-continent. It plays a unique and irreplaceable role in the food chain: it specializes in eating animal carcasses and so prevents the spread of disease.

The bird is not seen as globally threatened but faces several threats such as poisoned carcasses in agricultural lands, illegal shooting, disturbance, and electrocution on power lines. It is monogamous with lifelong bond among pairs.

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Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLS

FERRUGINOUS POCHARD

Scientific name *Aythya nyroca*
IUCN status Near threatened

The sighting of this bird has been recorded in the major river basins of Bhutan. The population fluctuates considerably every year. Chiefly migratory, the bird breeds from April or May until late June. It is threatened by degradation and destruction of wetland habitats.

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NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: [Thttps://ebird.org/species/grtsun1](https://ebird.org/species/grtsun1)

GREEN-TAILED SUNBIRD

Scientific name *Aethopyga nipalensis*

IUCN status Least Concern

The male species of this bird sports a yellow breast and belly streaked with red along with a metallic blue-green crown and tail. The female is plain greenish all over except for its long graduated tail with white tips.

The green-tailed sunbird inhabits temperate and subtropical or tropical moist montane forests. It is also found in open mountain woods from 1,825 to 3,350 meters elevation. Its range stretches from the northern regions of the Indian subcontinent to parts of southeast Asia.

Z



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

GREY BACKED SHRIKE

Scientific name *Lanius tephronotus*

IUCN status Least Concern

Found at the edges of forests and farmland, this adaptable and elegant small shrike is a common sight across much of its range. Its gray crown and back contrasts sharply with the white throat, black eye rings and wings, and bright orange sides. It regularly settles on exposed perches such as telephone lines and posts.

Its birdsong is musical and variable, and incorporates the mimicry of other species. Calls include repeated harsh chattering notes, as well as high barking and piping notes.

TG



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

GREY-CROWNED PRINIA

Scientific name *Prinia cinereocapilla*

IUCN Status Vulnerable

The bird has been spotted primarily at the Royal Manas National Park and few other districts in Bhutan. Besides Bhutan, it is found in northern India and Nepal. Its global population is estimated at 10,000-19,999 individuals, and declining rapidly. It inhabits grasslands with scrubby undergrowth, scattered trees and shrubs from the lowlands up to 1,350 meters.

The bird is threatened by habitat loss.

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Photo Courtesy: Tshulthrim Drukpa Wangyel, BBP

GREY-HEADED WOODPECKER

Scientific name *Picus canus*

IUCN status Least Concern

The grey-headed woodpecker is fairly widespread, found in Europe and across Asia all the way to the Pacific coast. It breeds in May, laying five to ten eggs, while wood ants and termites make up most of its diet, particularly in spring and summer. In late autumn and early winter, they switch to vegetable matter, such as berries and fruits.

The bird inhabits deciduous forests and excavates into dead or dying trees to build its nest. Its population is in decline.

TG



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLS

GREAT HORNBILL

Scientific name *Buceros bicornis*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

This bird is fairly common in Bhutan in large dense stretches of forest. It is the biggest of the Asian hornbill species with calls that can be heard about 800 meters away. The great hornbill is known for its long lifespan, strong pair bonds and elaborate courting rituals. The male bird is the sole protector and provider of food during the breeding season from January to April. Therefore, sometimes it dies of exhaustion.

The sighting of a great hornbill is every birder's dream but illegal wildlife trade, logging, clearance for farming and the fact that it commands a sky-high price as pets constitute its major threats.

D L M P Z



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

GREAT SLATY WOODPECKER

Scientific name *Mulleripicus pulverulentus*
IUCN status Vulnerable

The great slaty woodpecker is found across the Indian subcontinent and southeast Asia in semi-open, moist deciduous and tropical evergreen forests. It is usually found below an elevation of 600 meters but sometimes up to 1,100 meters. The bird's global population is in decline because of the loss of forest cover and logging. The habitat loss is most pronounced in Myanmar, Cambodia and Indonesia, the countries that harbor the majority of the bird's global population.

L M



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE

Scientific name *Clanga clanga*
IUCN status Vulnerable

Also known as the spotted eagle, this is a large bird of prey typically found from the sea level to mostly below 300 meters. It is known to breed across eastern Europe and partially in central Europe migrating in winter to South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean basin. It lives in wet habitats. The bird feeds on small mammals, principally rodents, and aquatic animals like frog. The greater spotted eagle is fairly rare, with its populations threatened mainly by habitat destruction caused by humans. Persecution and collisions with objects are the other causes of the bird's declining numbers.

L M



Photo Courtesy: Kado Rinchen, BBP

GREEN-BILLED MALKOHA

Scientific name *Phaenicophaeus tristis*
IUCN status Least concern

This is a gray cuckoo which sports a remarkably long tail, dark red skin around the eyes, a pale greenish-yellow bill, and dark green gloss on the wings and tail. It is distributed in southern China, south-east Asia, eastern India and Sumatra in a variety of habitats from primary and secondary forests to bamboo groves, thickets and cultivated areas. It feeds on insects and reptiles.

TG

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: Phuentsho, BBP

HIMALAYAN GRIFFON

Scientific name *Gyps himalayensis*
IUCN status Near Threatened

This vulture is native to the Himalayas and the adjoining Tibetan Plateau from 1,200 to 5,500 meters. One of the largest vultures of Asia, with a wingspan of about three meters and weighing more than 10 kilograms, it glides at considerable altitudes, up to 5,000 metres.

The bird's breeding season begins in January. They have been recorded eating carrion exclusively. On the Tibetan Plateau, a bulk of their diet is obtained from dead domestic yak. The bird is also known to regularly feed on human corpses left out on "celestial burial grounds".

The Himalayan Griffon's population is threatened by toxicity induced by diclofenac, a drug whose residue is found in domestic animal carcasses.

L M



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

HIMALAYAN MONAL

Scientific name *Lophophorus impejanus*
IUCN status Least concern

Besides several other places in Bhutan, the Himalayan Monal is found in the high mountain passes of Nyagchungla, Pelela, Chelela and Thrumshingla. Its population is decreasing worldwide. The bird has a prominent build, brilliant plumage and strong association with local folklore. The male monal has been under heavy hunting pressure for its crest feather, which is used for ornamental decorations.

D TG TY



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

HOARY-THROATED BARWING

Scientific name *Actinodura nipalensis*
IUCN status Least Concern

The bird has a unique combination of pale throat and weak eye-arcs. It is found at 1,800-3,400 meters of elevation in oak and mixed oak, conifer and rhododendron forests. It makes a melancholy-sounding "wheew-wheew," often followed by a short trill. The bird is distributed from Nepal through Bhutan and north-east India to adjacent areas of south China.

Z



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

HODGSON'S FROGMOUTH

Scientific Name *Batrachostomus hodgsoni*
IUCN Status Least Concern

It is an uncommon night bird which thrives in evergreen, mixed and montane forests from 900-2000 meters in elevation. Both sexes have lichen-like plumage, the male grayish and the female rusty brown. In Bhutan it is found in Mongar and is also spotted in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia.

This nocturnal bird survives on a mainly insect diet such as moths, beetles and other large insects. Hodgson's frogmouth makes a long, haunting whistle, often repeated in series.

M



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

GREY PEACOCK-PHEASANT

Scientific name *Polyplectron bicalcaratum*

IUCN status Least Concern

Featured on a Bhutanese stamp in 1968, Gray peacock-pheasant is distributed in the lowland and hill forests of Bangladesh, Northeast India and Southeast Asia. The bird's diet consists mainly of seeds, termites, fruits and invertebrates. The bird is a protected species in many countries. It is the national bird of Myanmar.

The bird has a greyish brown with finely spotted green eyespots, an elongated bushy crest, bare pink or yellow facial skin, and white throat.

D



Photo Courtesy: Sonam Wangyel, SWS, BBP

GLDENSTDT'S REDSTART

Scientific name *Phoenicurus erythrogaster*

IUCN Status Least concern

Gldenstdt's redstart, also called the white-winged redstart, is found in the high mountains of central and south Asia. It breeds at high altitudes from 3,600 to 5,200 meters in alpine meadows, moving slightly lower to 1,500 to 4,800 meters in winter to the sub-alpine scrub. It is among a handful of birds which breeds in the high glacial passes of the Himalayas. It feeds on fruit and a wide variety of invertebrates.

M



Photo Courtesy: sibirsk.ru

HEUGLIN'S GULL

Scientific name *Larus heuglini*

IUCN status Least concern

Heuglin's gull or the Siberian gull migrates to its wintering habitat in southwest Asia, the Indian subcontinent, east Asia, and east Africa from its breeding grounds in the tundra of northern Russia. The bird also breeds in Finland. Molluscs, worms, and crustaceans are its primary food which is foraged along coastal fringes, and around large lakes and major rivers.

L



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLS

HIMALAYAN CUTIA

Scientific Name *Cutia nipalensis*

IUCN Status Least Concern

The Himalayan Cutia is a beautiful, stocky inhabitant of high-elevation broad-leaf and mixed forests. It resembles a babbler but is much more closely related to laughingthrushes. It gives a loud song which is an extended series of high-pitched, piercing "chee!" notes. It is found in Bhutan, Nepal, India and Thailand from the foothills upwards of 1,500 - 2500 meters.

L

M

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

INDIAN POND-HERON

Scientific name *Ardeola grayii*
IUCN Status Least Concern

This small heron is common in aquatic habitats across southern Iran to the Indian subcontinent, Burma, and Sri Lanka. The adult bird has a dark reddish brown back and a yellowish head, neck and breast. It feeds in marshy wetlands, usually at the edge of ponds, on crustaceans, aquatic insects, fishes, and tadpoles. Occasionally, it swims on water or fish from the air. The bird begins breeding with the onset of the monsoons laying three to five eggs in nests built on platforms of sticks in trees or shrubs.

P



Photo Courtesy: K.W, Birds of Bhutan, NBC

JACOBIN CUCKOO

Scientific name *Clamator jacobinus*
IUCN status Least Concern

This bird was first sighted in Bhutan at Lhamoidzingkha by foresters Rinchen Tshewang and Nim Tshering Tamang in 2015.

Jacobin cuckoo is an African migrant bird which is resident and a partial migrant in India. The bird lives mainly in thorny, dry scrub or open woodland avoiding areas of dense forest or extremely dry environments.

D



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

JAPANESE QUAIL

Scientific name *Coturnix japonica*
IUCN status Near threatened

The Japanese quail is found in east Asia in grassy fields, bushes along the banks of rivers, and agricultural farms.

The quail's unique characteristic is that it is an ardent dust bather, doing it several times a day. This behavior is believed to be a routine function for feather maintenance and parasite removal. It has also been farmed in large quantities all over the world as it is easily managed, fast growing, small, and can produce eggs at a high rate. The bird's use in research has increased especially after 1957 when its value in biomedical research was discovered.

L

M



Photo Courtesy: Tshulthrim Drukpa Wangyel, BBP

KENTISH PLOVER

Scientific name *Charadrius alexandrinus*
IUCN Status Least Concern

This bird breeds on the shores of lakes, lagoons, coasts, semi-arid desert, and tundra from 0 to 3,000 meters in elevation. It has a large distribution from north Africa, central Asia and Europe. Some are migratory and often winter in Africa.

It is a ground-nesting bird which prefers low elevation, low vegetation, high moisture and places far from human settlements. It either forages individually or in loose flocks of 20-30 individuals, the main source of food being miniature aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates.

A major threat to this bird is habitat loss and disturbance.

P



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

HODGSON'S REDSTART

Scientific name *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*

IUCN status Least Concern

Found in Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, and Nepal, Hodgson's redstart dwells in temperate forests and visits the Himalayas mainly in winter. It breeds in various semi-open mountain forests and forest edge, often near streams, up to 4,000 meters in altitude.

Male birds have white fore-crown while female is colder-toned with a single dark stripe down the tail. The wings are black, with narrow white wing patch. The rump and tail are orange.

TY



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

HUME'S LARK

Scientific name *Calandrella acutirostris*

IUCN Status Least Concern

Hume's lark is a small, pale brown lark with distinct white eyebrows and a slender bill. It breeds in high-altitude grassland and upland regions, usually dry areas with little vegetation, at elevations of 1000–5000 meters. The bird winters in similar habitats at lower elevations.

It makes a whistled, warbled, and harsh buzzing notes with long pauses in between. Its call is a rolling, buzzy "cheer".

M



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

IBISBILL

Scientific Name *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*

IUCN status Least Concern

The ibisbill is a bird related to the waders and is found in Bhutan's river banks. A peculiar looking bird, its long, down-curved bill is red as are its eyes. They are found on stony riverbanks of the high plateau of Central Asia and the Himalayas, from Kazakhstan to China and southwards to India.

Except during the breeding season, the ibisbill is a solitary bird. It uses its long bill to search for small fish and invertebrates under rocks.

D



Photo Courtesy: Kado Rinchen, DoFBS, BBP

INDIAN PEAFOWL

Scientific name *Pavo cristatus*

IUCN status Least Concern

In Bhutan, the Indian peafowl is found mostly in the southern region with a few unusual sightings in the higher altitudes. The bird has also been depicted on one of Bhutan's stamps.

It is a resident breeder across the Indian subcontinent usually below an altitude of 1,800 meters, and inhabits moist and dry-deciduous forests. As omnivores, the bird eats seeds, insects, fruits, small mammals and reptiles. Their predators are leopards, dholes, wolves, lions and tigers. They are also hunted by large birds of prey such as the hawk-eagle and rock eagle-owl.

D

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

LITTLE GREBE

Scientific name *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

IUCN Status Least Concern

This is a small water bird commonly found in open bodies of water in its habitat across Europe, much of Asia and most of Africa. The bird breeds in freshwater lakes, sheltered bays, reservoirs, lagoons, swamps, and rice fields. In the Indian subcontinent, the breeding usually occurs during the rainy season. The chicks are often carried on the backs of the swimming adults.

The bird is an excellent swimmer and diver, pursuing its prey underwater. Its diet consists of insects, small fish, mollusks, and amphibians. Little grebes suffer from the destruction of the wetland habitat and pollution.

M



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

LONG-BILLED WREN-BABBLER

Scientific Name *Napothera malacoptila*

IUCN Status Least Concern

This streaky, short-tailed brown bird is the only wren-babbler in its range to have a long bill. It is shy and reclusive and forages in dense undergrowth and among the leaf litter of foothill and broadleaf forests. It is usually seen singly or in pairs and gives a clear, piercing whistle.

The bird is found in the Himalayas from north-eastern India to southern China.

L

M



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

LONG-TAILED BROADBILL

Scientific name *Psarisomus dalhousiae*

IUCN Status Least Concern

This bird is found in the Himalayas, extending east through Northeastern India to Southeast Asia. They inhabit broad-leaved evergreen forests, within the altitude range from 150 to 2,500 meters. Long-tailed broadbills often move down to lower altitudes during cold winter months.

The bird can be identified by its shrill call. It lives on a diet of insects, is very sociable and travels in large, noisy groups barring the mating season. It builds a pear-shaped nest in a tree where it lays between five and six eggs. Both the male and female help to feed the young.

M



Photo Courtesy: Tashi, BBP

MALAYAN NIGHT-HERON

Scientific name *Gorsachius melanolophus*

IUCN status Least Concern

The Malayan night heron is found in the forests, streams, and marshes in south Asia, southeast Asia, China and Japan. It is a solitary and bizarre-looking bird with the squat, staring appearance of a toad. The bird roosts in trees and feeds in open areas, and produces a deep oo call and hoarse croaks. It thrives on a diet of earthworms, frogs, and fish. Its estimated global population is between 2,000 and 20,000 individuals.

In Bhutan, the bird was first sighted in the Royal Manas National Park.

Z



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

LARGE NILTAVA

Scientific name *Niltava grandis*
IUCN status Least Concern

The bird is found in dense foliage of sub-tropical and tropical montane forests across much of south Asia, south-east Asia and China. A typical male is bright blue and the female plain brown. Its song consists of an ascending series of 3 to 4 short, highly musical whistled notes. It can often be found, solitary or in pairs, on a perch making forays on preys of small to medium invertebrates, large crickets and small snakes.

TY



Photo Courtesy: birdsoftheworld.org

LESSER FISH EAGLE

Scientific name *Lchthyophaga humilis*
IUCN status Near Threatened

In Bhutan, this species is very rare and spotted at lower altitudes in Samdrup Jongkhar district, and the Royal Manas National Park. The global population is estimated to number 10,000-50,000 mature individuals. The bird frequents large forested rivers and wetlands in the lowlands and foothills up to 2,400 meters.

Elsewhere, the bird is found in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, China, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Indonesia. It feeds on fish using perch to spot and catch prey, and breeds from March to August.

P



Photo Courtesy:oiseaux.net

LESSER SAND-PLOVER

Scientific name *Charadrius mongolus*
IUCN Status Least Concern

The bird breeds above the tree-line in the Himalayas and north-eastern Siberia from 0 to 5,500 meters in elevation. It nests in a bare ground scrape, laying three eggs, on the margins of high-elevation lakes and rivers.

The species is strongly migratory, wintering on sandy beaches in east Africa, south Asia and Australasia. It feeds on insects, crustaceans and annelid worms.

M



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

LITTLE FORKTAIL

Scientific name *Enicurus scouleri*
IUCN status Least concern

The little forktail is a bird of mountain streams and waterfalls, breeding between 1,200-3,700 meters of altitude. Found in the Tian Shan and Himalayan mountain ranges, the bird's habitat consists of subtropical or tropical moist lowland forest .

Found either solitary or in pairs, the male and female are alike with black and white plumage. It feeds on moss-covered and wet slippery rocks, and occasionally dive underwater to prey on aquatic insects.

TY



Photo Courtesy: commons.wikimedia.org

NAUMANN'S THRUSH

Scientific name *Turdus naumanni*
IUCN Status **Least Concern**

This bird breeds in northern Asia, preferably in woodland areas, and migrates to its wintering grounds from South Asia to Southeast Asia. It eats a range of insects from mosquitoes to earthworms, and also forages on berries.

Naumann's thrush has pale brown back and head. The face, breast, flank spots and rump are reddish, and the belly and under-tail are white. In Bhutan, the bird has been spotted along the forests from Ura towards Thrumsingla National Park, Sengor and Yongkola.

M



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

NORTHERN LAPWING

Scientific name *Vanellus vanellus*
IUCN Status **Near Threatened**

This is a highly migratory bird covering an extensive range in temperate Euro-Siberia, and wintering as far south as north Africa, northern India, Nepal, Bhutan and parts of China. It migrates mainly by day, often in large flocks.

Northern lapwing is a vocal bird in the breeding season. The typical contact call is a loud, shrill "pee-wit". It feeds on insects and other small invertebrates. Loss of breeding habitat and hunting are the bird's biggest threats.

M



Photo Courtesy: photos.chiencllee.com

ORIENTAL BAY-OWL

Scientific name *Phodilus badius*
IUCN Status **Least Concern**

The sighting of this bird in Bhutan was at first disputed but later observations by at least two birding groups confirmed its presence. It is distributed across Nepal, Sikkim, north-east India, Burma and Thailand, east to south China through to the Malay Peninsula.

The bird inhabits woodland, plantations and mangrove swamps at altitudes of up to 1,040-2,050 meters but its sighting is quite rare. It breeds from March through May, and preys on small rodents, bats, birds, snakes, frogs, lizards and magpies.

D

M



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

ORIENTAL TURTLE DOVE

Scientific name *Streptopelia orientalis*
IUCN status **Least concern**

The bird has an attractive plumage which varies considerably among different subspecies. It has a wide native distribution from Europe, and across Asia to Japan. Those which inhabit higher latitudes migrate south in winter. Rather shy, the bird hides itself under tree canopy and breeds in open lowland woods.

The oriental turtle dove feeds on the seeds of hemp, sunflower, wheat, millet and amaranth.

TY



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

MANDARIN DUCK

Scientific name *Aix galericulata*
IUCN Status Least Concern

This bird is widely regarded as the world's most beautiful duck. In China, it is regarded as a symbol of fidelity and gifted to bride during wedding.

The duck lives in small wooded ponds. The breeding habitats preferred are the dense, shrubby forested edges of rivers and lakes up to 1,500 meters. It eats mainly plants and seeds, snails, insects and small fish. Mink, raccoon dogs, otters, polecats, Eurasian eagle-owls, and grass snakes are all predators of the mandarin duck apart from the threat it faces from habitat loss and hunting.

M



Photo Courtesy: peruaves.org

MERLIN

Scientific name *Falco columbarius*
IUCN Status Least concern

Known as pigeon hawk in America, the bird breeds in the northern hemisphere with some migrating to the subtropical and northern tropical regions in winter.

The merlin is a skilled hunter which catches most of its prey, mostly small birds, in mid-air using speed and agility. It prefers a mix of low and medium-altitude vegetation but can be found anywhere from the sea level to the tree-line.

The bird is monogamous during the breeding season. Its biggest threat is habitat destruction in their breeding areas.

M



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

MOUNTAIN HAWK EAGLE

Scientific name *Nisaetus nipalensis*
IUCN status Near Threatened

The mountain hawk-eagle is a large, bulky eagle breeding in the Indian sub-continent from India to Nepal, and Thailand, Taiwan, Indonesia and Japan. It has a small head, immensely broad wings, and large, often fanned-out tail. The bird is highly forest dependent and its population has declined rapidly, about 20% between 2016 and 2020 alone, due to habit degradation and loss. It is also hunted for its feather.

In Bhutan, the mountain hawk-eagle is distributed fairly and, compared with other hawk species, is more commonly found.

Z



Photo Courtesy: Lagay Tshering, BBP

MRS. GOULD'S SUNBIRD

Scientific name *Aethopyga gouldiae*
IUCN status Least Concern

Mrs. Gould's sunbird is found all over Bhutan between 1,000 and 3,400 meters mainly in forest with rhododendrons. The bird is described as frequent in Bhutan, and generally uncommon in India. Worldwide, it is distributed from the Himalayas through north-east India and southern China to Indochina, Myanmar and Thailand.

The male has olive-green wings, yellow rump and blue tail. The female is olive-green with brownish wings.

TG

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER

Scientific name *Ficedula parva*
IUCN Status Least Concern

The red-breasted flycatcher is a small fig-eating bird which breeds from spring to summer in the deciduous mixed forests of eastern Europe and across central Asia. In winter months, it migrates to the Indian subcontinent where it inhabits forests, deciduous woodlands, orchards, parks and roadside trees. It is often distinguishable with its rattling “zrrrt” call.

The males have a reddish-orange throat that extends till the upper breast, whereas the females are overall brown. Both have creamy-white under-parts.

M



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

RED-BREASTED PARAKEET

Scientific name *Psittacula alexandri*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

Red-breasted parakeet is found in northeast India and most of southeast Asia. It was introduced to Europe by Alexander the Great. The bird is easily identified by the large red patch on its breast. Both sexes are bright green with gray-blue heads, and a black mustache. Males have a bright red upper bill, while females' bills are wholly black. They usually give off high-pitched, grating shrieks. They inhabit various forests and wooded habitats.

M



Photo Courtesy: cms.int

RED-HEADED VULTURE

Scientific name *Sarcogyps calvus*
IUCN Status Critically Endangered

The red-headed vulture has become extinct in its historical range in China, Thailand and Malaysia and is now found only in south Asia, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Also known as the Asian king vulture, it is usually found in semi-desert areas, deciduous forests and foothills up to an altitude of 3000 meters.

Its population has halved every other year since the late 1990s. In Bhutan, a project has been undertaken to collect data about the bird at the Royal Manas National Park.

M



Photo Courtesy: Tshering Tobgay, BBP

RIVER LAPWING

Scientific name *Vanellus duvaucelii*
IUCN status Near Threatened

This bird breeds from the Indian sub-continent eastwards to southeast Asia. As the name suggests, the species is primarily found in rivers, usually at altitudes from 0 to 100 meters. It feeds on insects, worms and molluscs. It breeds on sand banks from March to June.

The bird's population is decreasing with just between 15,000 to 30,000 individuals estimated to be found worldwide. A moderately rapid population decline is expected over the next three generations due to human pressures on riverine ecosystems and dam constructions.

L

M

Z



Photo Courtesy: Deo Man Rai, BBP

OSPREY

Scientific Name *Pandion haliaetus*
IUCN status Least Concern

The osprey, also called sea hawk, river hawk, and fish hawk, is a diurnal, fish-eating bird of prey reaching more than 60 cm in length and 180 cm across the wings. It is brown on the upper parts and predominantly grayish on the head and underparts. The bird is the second most widely distributed raptor species, after the peregrine falcon, and is one of only six land-birds with a worldwide distribution. It is found in temperate and tropical regions of all the continents, except Antarctica.

D



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

PALLAS'S FISH EAGLE

Scientific name *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*
IUCN status Vulnerable

The bird's global population is reported to be fewer than 10,000 mature individuals worldwide. It inhabits wetlands, mainly large lakes and rivers, from the lowlands up to 5,000 meters. It generally nests in trees near water.

D

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Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

PEREGRINE FALCON

Scientific name *Falco peregrines*
IUCN status Least Concern

The peregrine falcon is renowned for its speed, reaching up to 389 kilometers per hour, and making it the fastest in the animal kingdom. It is found almost everywhere because of its adaptability and versatility. Its main diet is medium-sized birds although it occasionally hunts small mammals and reptiles.

Historically, it was used as a falconry bird given its immense power, versatility and effectiveness. It has thus often depicted as symbols of religion, royalty and others denoting power. The bird is threatened by the widespread use of pesticides.

Z



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

PIED HARRIER

Scientific name *Circus melanoleucos*
IUCN Status Least Concern

This small prey bird is distributed across Asia, Indian Subcontinent, and Southeast Asia. It breeds mainly in northern Asia. As a migratory bird, it winters in the Indian sub-continent and southeast Asia.

The male makes shrill call with repeated "kiiy-veee" sounds. It inhabits open lands, grasslands, steppe, wet meadows and marshes, and feeds on small mammals like rats and mice, birds, reptiles, and frogs.

Pied harrier's global population is estimated to be around 10,000 individuals with loss of habitat and drying of marshes and wetlands its biggest threats.

M

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

RUFIOUS-THROATED WREN-BABBLER

Scientific name *Spelaornis caudatus*

IUCN status Near Threatened

In Bhutan, this bird has been sighted in Mongar within an altitude range of 1,400 to 2,400 meters, suggesting a close link between warm and cool broadleaf-forest zones. It has a restricted global range with a moderately small population which is likely to be declining owing to habitat loss. The bird appears like a tiny ball with a gray face and often remains well hidden in dense undergrowth. Its song is a loud, bright “witchity-witchity-witchity!”

L

M



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

RUFIOUS VENTED TIT

Scientific name *Periparus rubidiventris*

IUCN status Least Concern

In Bhutan, the rufous-vented tit is found throughout the year in moist fir forests 3,000 to 4,000 meters in elevation. This songbird is widespread in its natural habitats of boreal forests and temperate forests across western Himalayas, China, India, Myanmar and Nepal. It is a small but active and social bird which gives high thin calls as it flies in flocks overhead.

TG



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

RUSSET BUSH WARBLER

Scientific name *Locustella mandelli*

IUCN Status Least Concern

This small songbird stays hidden in thickets and shrubbery, seldom exposing more than one part of its body at once except when singing. It is found in the eastern Himalayas, southern China, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

It prefers brushy edge habitats and thickets of dense vegetation but can also be found on edges of farmlands. It sings with a buzz-like introductory note followed by a series of paired ticks.

Z



Photo Courtesy: Tshering Tobgay, BBP

RUSSET SPARROW

Scientific name *Passer cinnamomeus*

IUCN status Least Concern

With its vocalizations described as “the sweetest and most musical” of any sparrow, in the Himalayas the russet sparrow is found in Tibet, Bhutan, India and Afghanistan. It has a short breeding season of about three months, usually between April and August. In Bhutan, it nests in holes in the outer walls of monasteries. The bird feeds on the seeds of herbs, grains, berries and insects.

M



Photo Courtesy: Mahendra Timsina, BBP

RUFOUS-BELLIED EAGLE

Scientific name *Lophotriorchis kienerii*

IUCN Status Near Threatened

The rufous-bellied eagle is a medium sized bird of prey which is distributed in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Indochina, Southeast Asia, and the Philippines.

It inhabits evergreen and moist deciduous forests in foothills where it feeds on birds, reptiles and small mammals. It breeds in late winter in the Indian subcontinent. The bird's global population is estimated to be 1,000 to 10,000 individuals. Habitat destruction and lack of food are the main threats to their survival.

The bird makes a high pitched fwick sound.

D L M P Z



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

RUFOUS-GORGETTED FLYCATCHER

Scientific name *Ficedula strophilata*

IUCN status Least Concern

Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher is a bold little flycatcher of mid to high-altitude forests with a flashing black-and-white tail. It is found in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia, from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, India, Laos and Myanmar to Thailand, and Vietnam. It lives in subtropical or tropical moist montane forests and, sometimes, temperate forests. They are known for their reddish brown color with a distinctly colored patch on their throat.

D M Z



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

RUFOUS-NECKED HORNBILL

Scientific name *Aceros nipalensis*

IUCN status Vulnerable

Rufous-necked hornbill numbers less than 10,000 individuals worldwide. In Bhutan, apart from the Phrumsengla National Park, it is found in Gongphu, Buli and Tshaidang in Zhemgang, Trongsa in central Bhutan, and Mongar, Lhuentse, Trashigang and Samdrup Jongkhar in eastern Bhutan. It is most commonly found between 150 to 2,200 meters, in mature, dense, evergreen and broad-leaf forests. The number of stripes on its beak represents its age.

D



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

RUFOUS-THROATED PARTRIDGE

Scientific Name *Arborophila rufogularis*

IUCN Status Least Concern

Found in Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, and Vietnam, the rufous-throated partridge inhabits oak forests between 1,800–3,000 meters. It feeds in groups of five to ten birds on seeds, plant shoots, berries, insects and snails. Its breeding season is from April to July in India and from February to May in China.

The bird makes a hu-hu whistling sound and sings melodically and loudly at dusk and dawn.

M



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

SIKKIM WEDGE-BILLED BABBLER

Scientific name *Sphenocichla humei*
IUCN Status Near Threatened

Named after the Indian state of Sikkim, this bird is also known as blackish-breasted babbler. It is distributed in Bhutan, India, Myanmar and Nepal besides the nearby regions of Southeast Asia.

Its natural habitats are subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests and subtropical or tropical moist montane forests. In Bhutan, it inhabits westward facing slopes of broad-leaf evergreen forest and bamboo groves at 900 to 1,950 meters. It migrates to the lower elevations during winter. The bird occurs in small parties and feeds on insects. Its population is dwindling steadily due to habitat loss.

M



Photo Courtesy: birdsofindia.org

SLENDER-BILLED GULL

Scientific name *Chroicocephalus genei*
IUCN Status Least Concern

The slender-billed gull breeds on deltas, marshes and grassland around lagoons and lakes around the Mediterranean Sea and countries bordering the northwestern part of the Indian Ocean. It mainly lives off fish but is also known to be feeding on landfill sites. It breeds in colonies, makes nest on the ground lined with feathers and bits of vegetation.

M



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

SLENDER-BILLED SCIMITAR BABBLER

Scientific Name *Pomatorhinus supercilialis*
IUCN Status Least Concern

The slender-billed scimitar babbler is found from the Himalayas to north-western Vietnam in subtropical or tropical moist montane forests. It has a bill shaped like a curved sword and is predominantly orange-brown with a gray head and jagged white eyebrow. The bird moves through the lower levels of the forest in large, noisy flocks.

M



Photo Courtesy: Tashi, BBP

SPOTTED ELACHURA

Scientific Name *Elachura formosa*
IUCN Status Least Concern

The spotted elachura or spotted wren-babbler is found in the forests of the eastern Himalayas and southeast Asia. It lives in undergrowth and dense thickets of subtropical or tropical moist montane forests of Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, and Vietnam. It is typically found in hilly forests, particularly next to well-shaded small streams and other damp areas. The bird is detected by its song, a drawn-out series of high chinking notes.

M



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

SALIM ALI'S SWIFT

Scientific name *Apus salimalii*
IUCN Status Least Concern

The scientific name of this bird means "without feet" and Salim Ali's Swift spends most of its life in the air, living on insects. A small bird, superficially similar to a house martin, it uses its short legs only for clinging to vertical surfaces. The bird breeds from the eastern Tibetan plateau through western Sichuan province but migrates in winter. It builds its nests on cliffs, buildings and rock crevices.

M

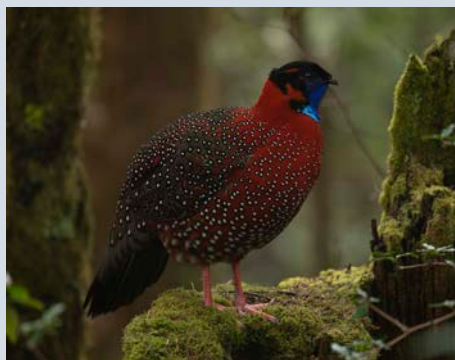


Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

SATYR TRAGOPAN

Scientific name *Tragopan satyra*
IUCN status Near Threatened

In Bhutan, Satyr Tragopan is found mainly in Dochula, Chelela and Phrumsengla National Park. They reside in moist oak and rhododendron forests with dense undergrowth and bamboo clumps at elevations ranging from 2,440 to 4,300 meters in summer and around 1,800 meters in winter. Satyr Tragopan has a moderately small population that is subject to hunting and habitat loss in most of its range.

L

M

Z



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

SHORT-EARED OWL

Scientific name *Asio flammeus*
IUCN Status Least concern

Except for Antarctica and Australia, this owl is found on all continents. It inhabits in the northern hemisphere but partially migrates to the south in winter. It hunts at night, flying low in open fields and grasslands until swooping down on its prey. Its food consists mainly of rodents and other small mammals like mice, ground squirrels, shrews, rats and bats.

The owl has rounded heads with short tail, and broad and smoothly rounded wings. It makes a scratchy bark-like call - raspy waowk, waowk, waowk or toot-toot-toot-toot.

M



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

SHORT-TAILED SHEARWATER

Scientific Name *Ardenna tenuirostris*
IUCN status Least Concern

Recently sighted in Bhutan, shearwaters are a medium-sized bird with narrow, crooked wings. It is common in the Pacific Ocean, especially around Australia and New Zealand. The parent feeds their chick for 2–3 days and then leaves for up to three weeks in search of food. These foraging trips can cover a distance of 1,500 kilometers.

The bird is known to nest only in Australia and New Zealand.

D

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: Leki Wangdi, BBP

TIBETAN SNOW-COCK

Scientific name *Tetraogallus tibetanus*

IUCN status **Least concern**

The Tibetan snow-cock is a bird in the pheasant family found in high-altitude regions of the Western Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau. Its head is grayish with a white crescent patch behind the eye and white and black-striped underside.

Although its loud, hoarse calls can often be heard echoing in the high mountain slopes, this large game bird can often prove difficult to sight.

TY



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

WARD'S TROGON

Scientific name *Harpactes wardi*

IUCN status **Near Threatened**

The Ward's Trogon is found in Lingmethang and Korila in Mongar, and Punakha, among others. Its natural habitats are temperate forests and sub-tropical or tropical moist lowland forests. This species is threatened by forest clearance and degradation in much of its range, particularly through subsistence logging and shifting cultivation.

L M P TY



Photo Courtesy: Kado Rinchen, BBP

WHITE-BELLIED HERON

Scientific name *Ardea insignis*

IUCN status **Critically Endangered**

The White-bellied Heron, also known as the Imperial Heron or Great White-bellied Heron and locally as Chhubja, is found in the foothills of the eastern Himalayas. Almost close to extinction and so rare that from the estimated global population of 50 to 200, only 22, as of March 2021, are believed to be in Bhutan, with most of the sightings around the major river basins. This was a decline by five compared with 27 birds in 2020.

D L M TY Z



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

WHITE-NAPED YUHINA

Scientific name *Yuhina bakeri*

IUCN status **Least Concern**

The white-naped yuhina is distributed from eastern Nepal through Bhutan to north Myanmar and southern China from 300 to 2,200 meters. The bird is very rare and local in Nepal but Bhutan harbors a significant population as the country's large tracts of intact forest falls within the bird's habitat range.

Temperate forests and subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests are its natural habitats. The bird feeds on insects and berries and often stay in flocks.

Z



Photo Courtesy: Karma Lhundup, BBP

STEPPE EAGLE

Scientific name *Aquila nipalensis*
IUCN Status **Endangered**

This large bird of prey appears on the flag of Kazakhstan and is the national bird of Egypt. Among its unique characteristics, it is a specialized predator of ground squirrels and is the only eagle to nest primarily on the ground. It is also remarkable for its sluggish and almost passive feeding behavior in winter.

The steppe eagle's entire population has declined alarmingly, especially in its European range. The threats consist of increasing steppe fires and pests around nests, disturbance by humans, and electrocutions.

D M Z



Photo Courtesy: ebird.org

STRIATED GRASSBIRD

Scientific name *Megalurus palustris*
IUCN Status **Least Concern**

This noisy bird, often seen sitting and calling from tops of grasses and bushes, is found in south Asia, southeast Asia and China. It has a large range and is not under any immediate threat although the population is considered to be decreasing. The bird lives in fields, scrubby edge, and dense thickets. It gives repetitive "piht" calls and its song usually starts off with a few introductory notes.

M



Photo Courtesy: Tandin Jamtsho, BBP

STRIATED HERON

Scientific name *Butorides striata*
IUCN status **Least Concern**

Also known as mangrove heron, the striated heron is a small non-migratory bird noted for its interesting behavioral traits. Generally solitary, it can be found standing quietly around wetland habitats such as marshes, agricultural fields, rivers, and lakes waiting. It breeds in small wetlands and is common across much of the globe.

Small size and overall gray color differentiates it from most other herons. It survives on small fish, frogs and aquatic insects. Interestingly, it sometimes drops a feather or leaf on the water surface as a bait and catches fish that come up to investigate.

Z



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

TAWNY FISH OWL

Scientific name *Ketupa flavipes*
IUCN status **Least Concern**

The tawny fish owl is generally seen in sub-tropical to temperate forests in southern Nepal, northern India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Laos, Myanmar, Taiwan, and Vietnam. It dwells in forest tracts with mountain streams at elevations of 1,500 to 2,450 meters.

It is a large brown owl with wide yellow eyes and sideways-drooping ear tufts. It can be sighted near rivers or lakes where it hunts fish from a low perch at dusk and at night. It is an iconic species popular among birders.

D M

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

YELLOW-RUMPED HONEYGUIDE

Scientific name *Indicator xanthonotus*
IUCN status Near Threatened

Considered a very rare bird, its population is declining due to habitat loss and honey extraction by humans. It occurs in rocky gorges and valleys with broad-leaved or coniferous forest, usually between 1,450 and 3,500 meters. In Bhutan, it is found in Trongsa, Bumthang, Yongkola (Mongar), Punakha and Khelekha (Wangduephodrang).

L M P TY Z



Photo Courtesy: Tshulthrim Drukpa Wangyel, BBP

WOOD SNIPE

Scientific name *Gallinago nemoricola*
IUCN status Vulnerable

Wood snipe breeds in the Himalayas of Bhutan, northern India and Nepal, and southern China in alpine meadows above 3,000 meters, moving to lower altitudes in winter. Its global population is estimated at less than 10,000 birds with habitat loss and hunting being its major threats.

D L M TY



Photo Courtesy: Tandin Jamtsho, BBP

WREATHED HORNBILL

Scientific name *Rhyticeros undulatus*
IUCN status Vulnerable

This bird inhabits large areas of undisturbed forests from 0 to 2,560 meters in Northeast India, Bhutan, mainland Southeast Asia and the Greater Sundas in Indonesia. It feeds on large fruits but leaves the seeds intact, thus playing an important ecological role for long-distance seed dispersal in forest ecosystems. The wreathed hornbill is threatened by hunting, habitat fragmentation and deforestation.

Bhutan has four out of 57 species of hornbills in the world.

D L M P Z



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Wangchuk, BBLs

YELLOW-BELLIED FANTAIL

Scientific name *Chelidorhynch hypoxanthus*
IUCN status Least Concern

The yellow-bellied fantail is found in the Indian sub-continent, the Himalayas, and parts of south-east Asia. It is an active little bird with a bright yellow belly and a pale-tipped fan-like tail, most commonly seen in foothills and sub-montane broad-leaf forests. It primarily hunts for flying insects.

The bird makes a series of high "tsit" notes intermingled with twitters and trills.

TY



Photo Courtesy: Phuentsho, BBP

WHITE-RUMPED VULTURE

Scientific name *Gyps bengalensis*
IUCN Status Critically Endangered

Found in parts of southern Bhutan, this bird has suffered an extremely rapid population decline primarily as a result of feeding on carcasses of animals treated with the veterinary drug, diclofenac. Its global population is estimated at 999-2,500 mature individuals. It breeds in colonies in tall trees, often near human habitation.



Butterflies

D L M P TG TY Z AE



ALBOCERULEAN

Scientific name *Udara albocaerulea*
albocaerulea Moore, 1879

Status Rare

Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Penjor, BBP

AUTUMN LEAF

Scientific name *Doleschallia bisaltide*

Status Rare

Distribution Lhuentse.

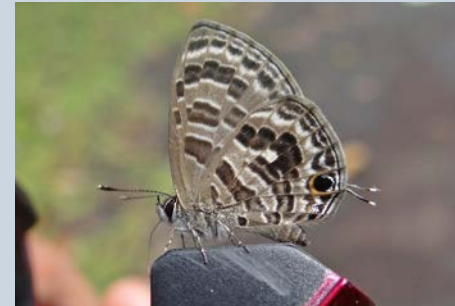


Photo Courtesy: Sarangapani Neog, BBP

BARRED LINE BLUE

Scientific name *Prosotas aluta*
coelestis Wood-Mason & de Nicéville, 1886

Status Rare

Distribution Dagana.



Photo Courtesy: Tashi, BBP

BATH WHITE

Scientific name *Pontia daplidice*
(Moorei Rober, 1907)

Status Common Sighting

Distribution T/gang.



Photo Courtesy: Phuntsho Wangdi, BBP

BHUTAN AZURE SAPPHIRE

Scientific name *Heliophorus moorei*
moorei

Status Rare

Distribution T/gang.



Photo Courtesy: Cheku, BBP

BHUTAN GLORY

Scientific name *Bhutanitis lidderdalii*
Atkinson, 1873

Status Rare

Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: Mer Man Gurung, BBP

BHUTAN SERGEANT

Scientific name *Athyma jina jina*
Moore, 1857

Status Very Rare

Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

BHUTAN SILVER HAIRSTREAK

Scientific name *Chrysozephyrus*
bhutanesis Howarth, 1957

Status Rare

Distribution T/yangtse.

NATURE/WILDLIFE

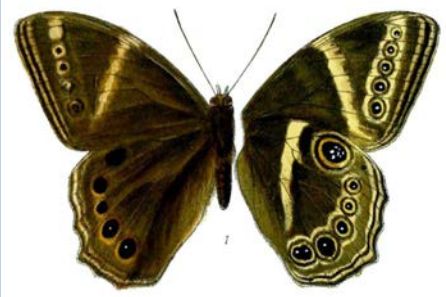


Photo Courtesy: gbif.org

BHUTAN TREEBROWN

Scientific name *Lethe margaritae*
Elwes 1882

Status **Very Rare**

Distribution P/gatshel.

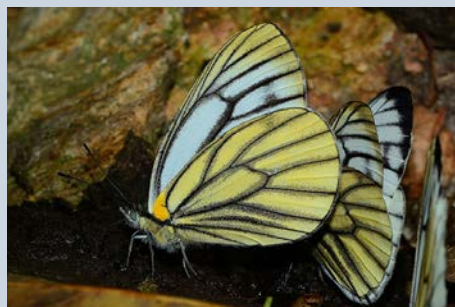


Photo Courtesy: www.uwice.gov.bt

BHUTAN WHITE / EXTENDED WHITE

Scientific name *Pieris extensa bhutya*
Talbot, 1939

Status **Very Rare**

Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: Kado Rinchen, BBP

BI-SPOT ROYAL

Scientific Name *Ancema ctesia*
(Hewitson, 1865)

Status **Rare**

Distribution Mongar.



Photo Courtesy: commons.wikimedia.org

BLACKVEIN SERGEANT

Scientific name *Athyma ranga ranga*
Moore, 1857

Status **Rare**

Distribution Dagana.



Photo Courtesy: Thomas Vattakaven, IBP

BLUE BARON

Scientific name *Euthalia telchinia*
Menetries, 1857

Status **Rare.**

Distribution T/gang and
T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

BLUE DUCHESS

Scientific name *Euthalia duda*
Staudinger, 1886

Status **Rare.**

Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

BLUE DUKE

Scientific name *Bassarona durga*
durga Moore, 1857

Status **Rare.**

Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

BLUETAIL JESTER

Scientific name *Symbrenthia*
niphanda niphanda
Moore, 1872

Status **Rare**

Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

BRONZE DUKE

Scientific name *Euthalia nara nara*
Moore, 1859

Status **Rare.**

Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

BROWN AWL

Scientific name *Badamia exclamatoris*
Fabricius 1775

Status **Rare**

Distribution P/gatshel.



Photo Courtesy: commons.m.wikimedia.org/

BROWN GORGON

Scientific name *Meandrusa lachinus*
Fruhstorfer, 1902

Status **Rare**

Distribution Dagana and T/yang-tse.



Photo Courtesy: YoyoFreelance, flickr.com

BUTTERFLY MOTH

Scientific Name *Callidula attenuata*
(Moore, 1879)

Status **Rare**

Distribution Dagana and Zhemgang.



Photo Courtesy: WCNP

CHINESE NAWAB

Scientific name *Charaxes narcaus*

Status **Rare**

Distribution Lhuentse.



Photo Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

CHOCOLATE JUNGLE

Scientific Name *Stichophthalma nourmahal*

Status **Rare**

Distribution Zhemgang.

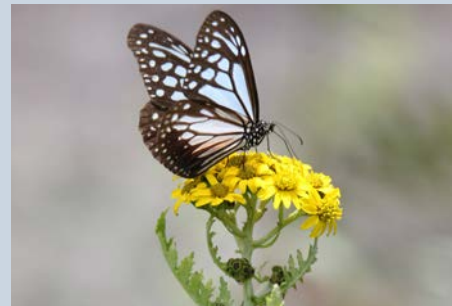


Photo Courtesy: Karma wangdi, BBP

CHOCOLATE TIGER

Scientific name *Parantica melaneus*

Status **Rare**

Distribution Lhuentse.



Photo Courtesy: utters.org

COMMON BROWNIE

Scientific name *Miletus chinensis assamensis* Doherty, 1891

Status **Rare**

Distribution T/yangtse.

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: learnaboutbutterflies.com

COMMON JEZEBEL

Scientific name *Delias eucharis*
Status **Very rare**
Distribution P/gatshel and T/gang.

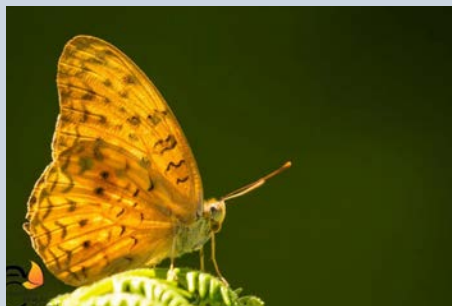


Photo Courtesy: Tshulthrim Drukpa Wangyel, BBP

COMMON LEOPARD

Scientific name *Phalanta phalantha*
Status **Rare**
Distribution Lhuentse.



Photo Courtesy: Lynn Barreto Miranda, IBP

COMMON MIME

Scientific name *Chilasa clytia*
 Linnaeus 1758
Status **Fairly Common**
Distribution Dagana.



Photo Courtesy: Thinley Penjor, BBP

COMMON MORMON

Scientific name *Papilio polytes*
 Linnaeus 1758
Status **Least Concern**
Distribution Dagana and T/gang.



Photo Courtesy: Singye Wangchuk, BBP

COMMON PEACOCK

Scientific name *Papilio bianor*
Status **Least Concern**
Distribution Dagana and T/gang.



Photo Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

CORNELIAN

Scientific name *Deudorix epijarbas*
amatus Fruhstorfer, 1912
Status **Very Rare**
Distribution Dagana.



Photo Courtesy: Kado Rinchen, BBP

CREAMY SAILER

Scientific name *Neptis soma* Moore, 1858
Status **Common**
Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: commons.wikimedia.org

CRENULATE BROWNIE

Scientific Name *Allotinus drumila*
 (Moore, 1865)
Status **Rare**
Distribution Mongar.



Photo Courtesy: Sarangapani Neog, IBP

DARK VELVET BOB

Scientific name *Koruthaialos butleri*
de Niceville 1883
Status Rare
Distribution Dagana.

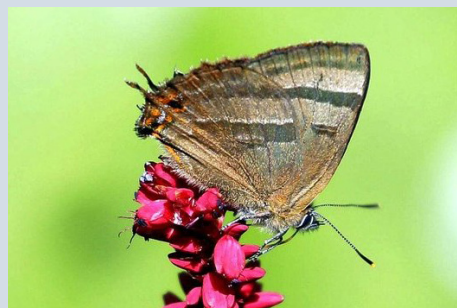


Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

DULL GREEN HAIRSTREAK

Scientific name *Esakiozephyrus*
icana Moore, 1875
Status Rare
Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

DUSKY LABYRINTH

Scientific name *Neope yama*
Status Rare
Distribution Lhuentse.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

EASTERN COURTIER

Scientific name *Sephisa chandra*
chandra Moore, 1857
Status Very Rare
Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: bt.chm-cbd.net

EUASPA MOTOKII

Scientific name *Euaspa motokii*
(Koiwaya, 2002)
Status Not assessed
Distribution Zhemgang.



Photo Courtesy: species.wikimedia.org

EUASPA PAVO

Scientific Name *Euaspa pavo*
(de Nicéville, 1887)
Status Rare
Distribution Zhemgang.



Photo Courtesy: Tandin wangchuk, BBP

EVENING BROWN

Scientific name *Melanitis leda*
(Linnaeus, 1758)
Status Rare
Distribution Zhemgang.



Photo Courtesy: Kado Rinchen, BBP

FLUFFY TIT

Scientific name *Zeltus amasa*
(Hewitson, 1865)
Status Rare
Distribution Mongar and
Zhemgang.

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: pamsbutterflies.com

FOREST QUAKER

Scientific Name *Pithecopis corvus*
(Fruhstorfer, 1919)
Status Rare
Distribution Dagana and
Zhemgang.



Photo Courtesy: Jatishwor Singh Irungbam, BBP

FORGET-ME-NOT

Scientific name *Catochrysops strabo*
(Distant, 1886)
Status Rare
Distribution Zhemgang.

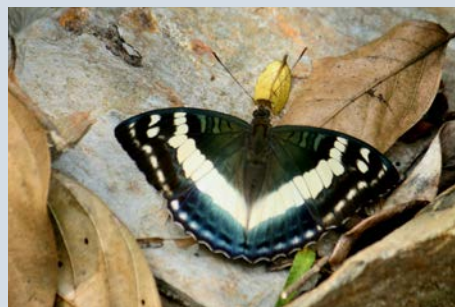


Photo Courtesy: Karma wangdi, BBP

FRENCH DUKE

Scientific name *Euthalia franciae*
Gray, 1846
Status Rare.
Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: SierraSunrise, flickr.com

GREAT EGGFLY

Scientific name *Hypolimnas bolina jacintha* Drury, 1773
Status Very Rare
Distribution Dagana.



Photo Courtesy: Jatishwor Singh Irungbam, BBP

GREAT EVENING BROWN

Scientific name *Melanitis zitenius zitenius* Herbst, 1796
Status Common
Distribution Dagana.



Photo Courtesy: Tandin wangchuk, BBP

GREEN DUKE

Scientific name *Euthalia sahadeva sahadeva* Moore,
1859
Status Rare
Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: commons.wikimedia.org

GREY SCRUB HOPPER

Scientific name *Aeromachus jhora*
Status Rare
Distribution Lhuentse.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

HAIRY ANGLE

Scientific name *Dharpa hanria* Moore
Status: Rare
Distribution Lhuentse.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

HOCKEYSTICK SAILER

Scientific name *Neptis nycteus* de Niceville, 1890

Status **Very Rare**

Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: Kado Rinchen, BBP

INDIAN CABBAGE WHITE

Scientific name *Pieris canidia* (Linnaeus, 1768)

Status **Common Sighting**

Distribution T/gang.

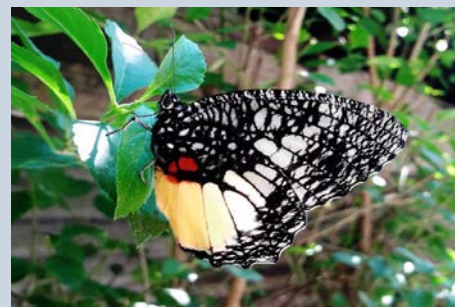


Photo Courtesy: gbif.org

JEZEBEL PALMFLY

Scientific name *Elymnias vasudeva* Moore 1857

Status **Rare**

Distribution Dagana.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

LARGE FOUR-LINE BLUE

Scientific name *Nacaduba pactolus continentalis* Fruhstorfer, 1916

Status **Rare**

Distribution Dagana.

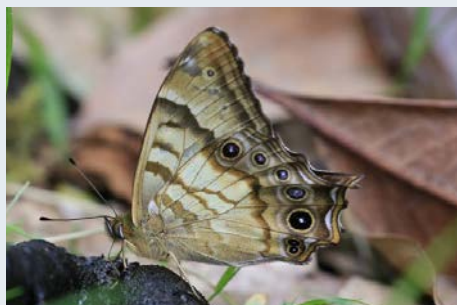


Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

LARGE GOLDENFORK

Scientific name *Lethe goalpara gana* Moore, 1866

Status **Common**

Distribution T/yangtse.

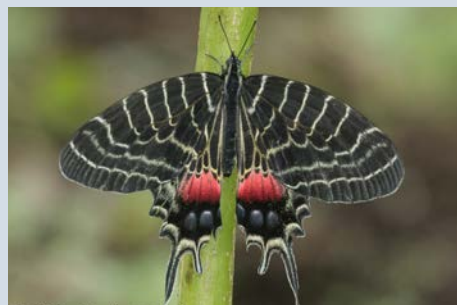


Photo Courtesy: Tshulthrim Drukpa Wangyel, BBP

LUDLOW'S BHUTAN SWALLOWTAIL

Scientific name *Bhutanitis ludlowi*

Status **Vulnerable**

Distribution Mongar and T/yangtse.

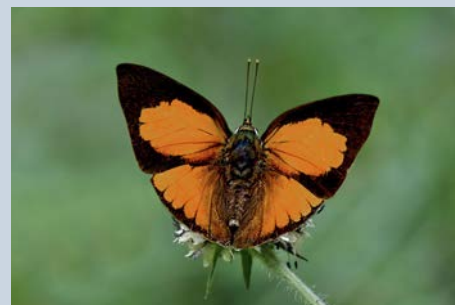


Photo Courtesy: bugs-alive.blogspot.com

MALAYAN SUNBEAM

Scientific name *Curetis santana* (Moore, 1858)

Status **Rare**

Distribution Zhemgang.



Photo Courtesy: yutaka.it-n.jp

MANIPUR FIVERING

Scientific name *Ypthima persimilis*

Status **Very Rare**

Distribution P/gatshel

NATURE/WILDLIFE

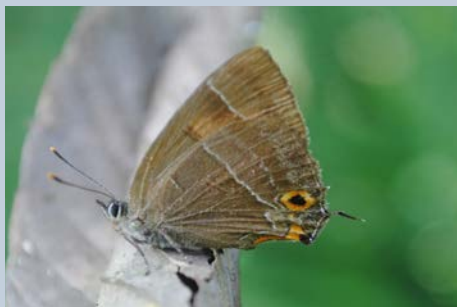


Photo Courtesy: Karma wangdi, BBP

METALLIC GREEN HAIRSTREAK

Scientific name *Neozephyrus duma*
(Hewitson)
Status **Rare Sighting**
Distribution T/gang.



Photo Courtesy: commons.wikimedia.org

MULTI-SPOTTED SNOW FLAT

Scientific name *Tagiades parra*
Fruhstorfer 1910
Status **Rare**
Distribution P/gatshel.

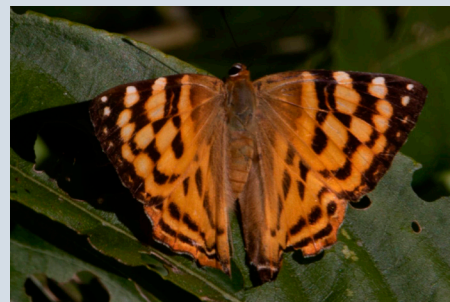


Photo Courtesy: Karma Wangdi, BBP

ORANGE PUNCH

Scientific name *Dodona egeon*
Status **Least concern**
Distribution T/gang.



Photo Courtesy: Kado Rinchen, BBP

ORANGE-BACKED FREAK

Scientific name *Calinaga buddha*
Status **Rare**
Distribution Lhuentse.



Photo Courtesy: Phuntsho Wangdi, BBP

PALE HOCKEY-STICK SAILOR

Scientific name *Neptis manasa*
Status **Rare**
Distribution Dagana and
Lhuentse.

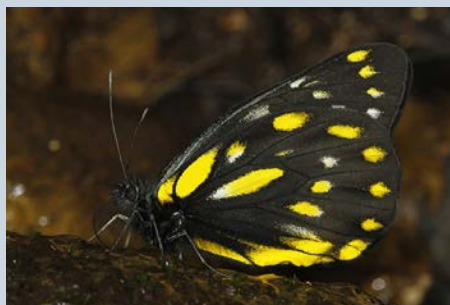


Photo Courtesy: www.ifoundbutterflies.org

PALE JEZEBEL

Scientific name *Delias sanaca bhutya*
Talbot, 1937
Status **Rare**
Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: www.ifoundbutterflies.org

PALE WANDERER

Scientific name *Pareronia avatar*
Moore, 1857
Status **Rare**
Distribution T/yangtse.

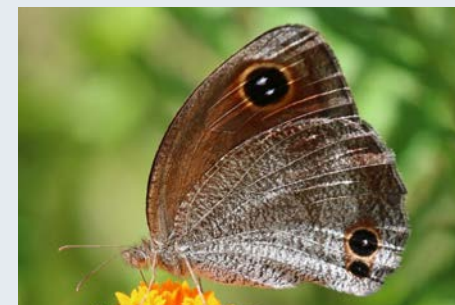


Photo Courtesy: Kado Rinchen, BBP

PALLID ARGUS

Scientific name *Callerebia scanda*
Kollar, 1844
Status **Rare**
Distribution T/yangtse.

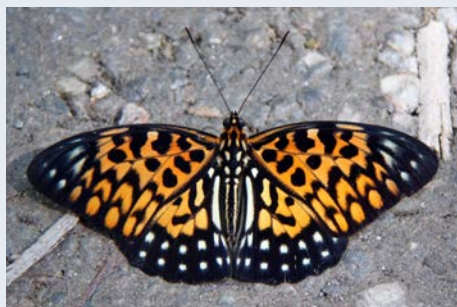


Photo Courtesy: Sonam Dorji, BBP

PANTHER

Scientific name *Neurosigma siva siva*
Westwood, 1850
Status Rare
Distribution Dagana, Lhuentse
and T/yangtse

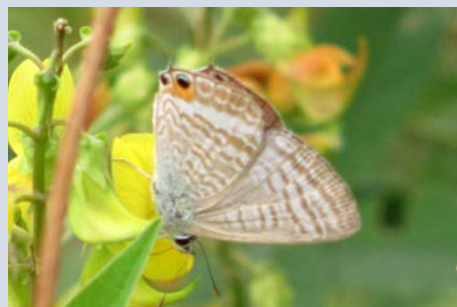


Photo Courtesy: Jatishwor Singh Irungbam, BBP

PEA BLUE

Scientific name *Lampides boeticus*
Linnaeus, 1767
Status Common
Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: commons.wikimedia.org

PEACOCK ROYAL

Scientific name *Tajuria cippus*
(Fabricius, 1798)
Status Least Concern
Distribution Dagana.

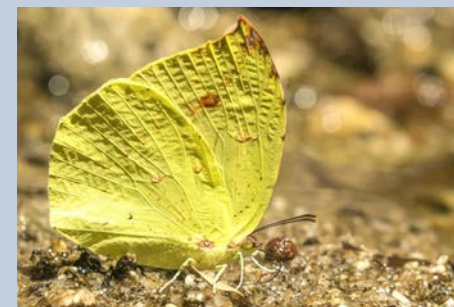


Photo Courtesy: Tshulthrim Drukpa Wangyel, BBP

PLAIN SULPHUR

Scientific name *Dercas lycorias*
Status Rare
Distribution Zhemgang.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

ROUNDED PIERROT

Scientific name *Tarucus nara*
(Kollar, 1848)
Status Rare
Distribution Zhemgang.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

SCARCE BANDED FLAT

Scientific name *Celaenorrhinus*
badius
Status Rare
Distribution P/gatshel.

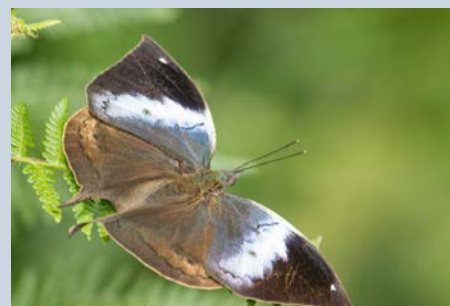


Photo Courtesy: Tshulthrim Drukpa Wangyel, BBP

SCARCE BLUE OAKLEAF

Scientific name *Kallima knyvetti* de
Niceville, 1886
Status Rare
Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: thaibutterflies.com

SCARCE WHITE ROYAL

Scientific name *Tajuria illugioides* de
Niceville, 1890
Status Rare
Distribution T/gang and
T/yangtse.

BUTTERFLIES



Photo Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

SILVERLINE

Scientific Name *Cigaritis rukma*
(de Niceville, 1886)
Status **Rare**
Distribution Mongar.



Photo Courtesy: commons.wikimedia.org

SMALL GREEN AWLET

Scientific name *Burara amara*
Moore, 1865
Status **Rare**
Distribution Dagana.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

SPOTTED BLUE CROW

Scientific name *Euploea midamus rogenhoferi*
Felder & Felder, 1865
Status **Rare**
Distribution Dagana.

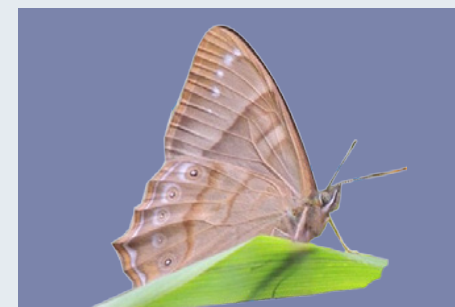


Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

SPOTTED MYSTIC

Scientific name *Lethe tristigmata*
Elwes, 1887
Status **Rare**
Distribution Zhemgang.



Photo Courtesy: Tandin wangchuk, BBP

SPOTTED SAWTOOTH

Scientific name *Prioneris thestylis*
(Doubleday, 1842)
Status **Common Sighting**
Distribution T/gang.



Photo Courtesy: Kado Rinchen, BBP

STRIPED PUNCH

Scientific name *Dodona adonira*
adonira Hewitson,
1865
Status **Rare**
Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: Tandin wangchuk, BBP

STUDDED SERGEANT

Scientific name *Athyma asura asura*
Moore, 1857
Status **Rare**
Distribution Dagana.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

TAILLESS LINEBLUE

Scientific Name *Prosotas dubiosa*
(Semper, 1879)
Status **Rare**
Distribution Mongar.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

TREBLE SILVERSTRIPE

Scientific name *Neptis zaida*
Status **Rare**
Distribution Lhuentse.



Photo Courtesy: Rison Thumboor, IBP

TWOBAND PLUM JUDY

Scientific name *Abisara bifasciata*
 (Moore, 1877)
Status **Rare**
Distribution Monagr and Zhemgang.



Photo Courtesy: Karma wangdi, BBP

VARIEGATED RAJAH

Scientific name *Charaxes kahruba*
 Moore, 1895
Status **Rare**
Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: Antonio Giudici, flickr.com

VARIEGATED SAILER

Scientific name *Neptis armandia*
 Oberthur, 1876
Status **Very Rare**
Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: commons.wikimedia.org

WHITE COMMODORE

Scientific name *Parasarpa dudu dudu*
 Westwood, 1850
Status **Rare**
Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: uk.naturalist.org

WHITE-EDGED BUSHBROWN

Scientific name *Mycalesis mestra vetus*
 Fruhstorfer, 1911
Status **Rare**
Distribution Dagana.



Photo Courtesy: Kado Rinchen, BBP

WHITE-EDGED WOODBROWN

Scientific Name *Lethe visrava* (Moore, 1866)
Status **Rare**
Distribution Dagana and Zhemgang.



Photo Courtesy: commons.wikimedia.org

WHITE TUFTED ROYAL

Scientific name *Pratapa deva* Moore, 1881
Status **Rare**
Distribution T/yangtse.

NATURE/WILDLIFE



Photo Courtesy: Seangyeal Chhopheal, BBP

YELLOW COSTER

Scientific name *Acraea issoria*
Status Common
Distribution Dagana, P/gatshel and T/gang.



Photo Courtesy: Kado Rinchen, BBP

YELLOW DRYAD

Scientific name *Aemonia amathusia*
(Hewitson, 1867)
Status Rare
Distribution Zhemgang.



Photo Courtesy: ifoundbutterflies.org

YELLOW OWL

Scientific name *Neorina hilda*
Westwood, 1850
Status Rare
Distribution T/yangtse.



Photo Courtesy: Pramita Roy, IBP

YELLOW SAILER

Scientific name *Neptis ananta ochracea* Evans, 1924

Status **Rare**

Distribution Dagana.

The picturesque Buli heritage village is famous for the Buli Manmo Tsho (lake) and a temple founded by the great “Treasure Revealer” Pema Lingpa





Photo Courtesy: jeninbhatan.wordpress.com

TRADITIONAL SPORTS



Photo Courtesy: bhutantimes.bt

ARCHERY

Archery is Bhutan's national game played in every valley across the country. The traditional bow is made of bamboo while the arrow is made of bamboo, cane or reed. The tips of the arrows are fletched with the feather of birds. The sport is often hotly contested among various teams with much at stake in terms of both pride and reputation. Contested between villages, communities and regions, the winner has a bragging right until the next tournament which would declare the new winner. Even deities are invoked and propitiated for favorable divine intervention.



Photo Courtesy: passudiary.com

DEGOR

It is one of the oldest and crude forms of traditional sport which doesn't demand any special equipment or preparation. In a game of Degor, a pair of round stones is hurled at two designated targets, usually a spot on the ground. The targets - usually about 20 meters apart - are actually pegs driven into the ground with their heads visible at the surface so that the players can calibrate the flight of their Degors.

The players try to land their stone as close to the target-peg as they can. However, even if a stone has fully covered the peg or lands closest, it can be displaced by stones thrown later, thus invalidating the points that may have been earned. The size and weight of the stones chosen depend on the strength of the player. Degor can be played as a team or as an individual sport.

In the past, the game was usually played among cattle herders who would sneak in between their leisure for a brief game of Degor. Today, the sport has lost its sheen even among the rural communities who are more enthralled by other sports.

PUNGDO

Pungdo, which translates to 'Round Stone' in Dzongkha, is a sport equivalent to shot put. In Pungdo, participating players hold spherical stones that weigh a few kilograms and try to throw them as far as possible. The stone is rested on the palm before being thrown, and the propulsion comes with the movement of the shoulder. The one who throws the furthest wins the game. It is a game that pits the strength of young men against one another, usually during festivals and public gatherings.

JIGDUM

In Jigdum, about a foot-long sharp-ended piece of wood is thrown at a target. Two targets are placed at opposite ends of a range which is usually about 20 meters apart. Jigdum is played in two ways: one with a straight piece of wood, and the other with a two-pronged piece of wood. Traditionally, Jigdum and Soksom were considered to be a sport for cow herders, who would gather on a meadow and play the game after letting their cows graze on open pastureland.

Like in most traditional Bhutanese sports, women form an integral part of the sporting gala as they take part as cheerleaders, mockers and singers and serve the men and spectators gathered with alcohol, other traditional home-made brews and refreshments.

Despite a few rural communities still trying to keep the tradition alive, the onslaught of modern sports has pushed these conventional sports into the background.

TRADITIONAL SPORTS



Photo Courtesy: norbulingkabhutan.com

KESHEY

Keshey, meaning “to hold the waist”, is a Bhutanese form of wrestling more akin to the Japanese Sumo wrestling technique.

In a game of Keshey, two men hold each other along the waist, often latching onto the belts, and try to wrestle each other and pin their opponent to the ground. The spectators form a circle, and the two opponents wrestle at the centre and the game continues until one of them is tossed off or is pressed on the ground. In the past, the winner was awarded a baetrum (an old copper coin) whereas the loser’s face was smeared in ash in good jest.

Today, this sport is confined to a few national occasions where strongmen from various regions are made to wrestle amongst each other.



Photo Courtesy: Fb, Heavenly Bhutan Travels

SOKSOM

Soksom is similar to the international sport of javelin, except the distance and target required for the game. Participants are mostly men, who throw long slender bamboo spears, usually six to seven foot, at targets placed at a distance of around 25 metres. The targets which are about the size of a cricket bat are usually made of banana trunks or other softwoods to prevent gears from being damaged.

A game of Soksom can be teamed up or played individually depending on the availability and number of players. Each player is allocated a pair of Soksoms and they take turns shooting across both ends of the target. The ones who hit the target or land closest to it gets the scoring point.

Like other traditional sports played by cattle herders, the game of Soksom is also gradually waning in popularity in most communities across the nation.



KHURU

Khuru is a popular outdoor team sport often played during festivals and other leisure time. It is equivalent to the game of darts played internationally and players are allocated a pair of Khurus each. The barrel of the dart is made of wood or, in some rare cases, with animal bones while the shaft (dart) is fashioned from bird feathers or commonly-available plastic materials. Finally it is tipped with a sharp pointed metal.

Khurus are thrown at targets, measuring about 4"x12", which are placed about 20 metres apart and the game is usually played between two teams and points allocated as in archery.. A game of Khuru can take an entire day and is often accompanied by songs, dances and a lavish measure of alcoholic brews.

While the game was considered a men's discipline in the past, today womenfolk have also started to take keen interest in the sport.





Rice fields in Bazur Village, Drametse Gewog

RITUAL & FESTIVALS

Photo Courtesy: Eo, Trans Bhutan Trail

RITUAL & FESTIVALS



Photo Courtesy: heavenlybhutan.com

JOMO – FEMALE RITUAL HEALER

Ama Jomo is the quintessential protecting deity of the nomads living in Merak and Sakteng. Within this community are women, known as Jomo, who invoke the deity and through unique rituals cure the sick. This practice has spread to other parts of eastern Bhutan too.

The Jomo possesses the divine powers of healing. Before rituals begin, a special altar for Ama Jomo and her nine (sometimes seven) daughters is built. This is followed by “Mo,” a divination to identify other female spirits called Khandroms, apart from Ama Jomo, who would help them. After this, the Jomo is said to be possessed and lose her normal state of consciousness. The rituals continue with what appears like a heated exchange between the Jomo and the evil spirits, the ones responsible for making someone sick. During the process, the Jomo embodies these spirits by changing her voice and language. She yawns, shivers and commands the evil spirits to leave the bodies of those sick.

Apart from individual healing rituals, the Jomo performs annual household rituals to ensure the vitality and fertility of household members, animals, and crops.



Photo Courtesy: twitter.com/sonamktobgay

TSHOGCHANG: A GIFT OF ALCOHOL

One vintage attribute of Eastern Bhutan communities is serving alcoholic beverages on, almost, all occasions of festivity and merriment. Among these, the age-old culture of serving Tshokchhangs indisputably reigns supreme on the list.

The offering of Tshochangs, used to refer to alcohol served during feasts, gatherings and gaiety is also part of tantric religious ceremony and is a popular custom in parts of eastern Bhutan. It is customary for women in villages to gather and welcome or bid farewell to a guest and, serve it as refreshment during festivals and archery/khuru tournaments.

The women carry the Tshogchang in decorated wooden/bamboo casks (Ara Palangs) and often in bison or buffalo horns complete with offerings of rice, cornflakes, eggs and chilies. The offering of Sinchang, fermented beer, is also common as substitute for Ara, distilled local wine, which is either served cold or heated with butter and scrambled eggs.

Tshogchang sessions are often accompanied by lively songs and dances, and are also taken as an opportunity for communal bonding. The honored guests then tip the ladies for their generous hospitality.



Photo Courtesy: impakter.com

THE MEETING OF NINE EVILS

According to legend, the demonic couple—Dorji Lokthreng and Sasin Barma—had four daughters, and a son named Rahula. The five siblings made a journey around Rirab Gyalpo, the tallest and mightiest of mythic mountains, but became separated during the journey. Years later, the son, a grown man, met one of his sisters and consummated an incestuous relationship with her, not understanding they were brother and sister. This unnatural union led to negative conditions that gave birth to the “meeting of the nine evils.”

Considered the most inauspicious day of the year, the Day of Nine Evils recurs each year on the eleventh month of the Bhutanese calendar. Since traditional injunctions are to do nothing important, requiring good results on this day—as nothing on this day will bear fruit, according to belief—locals spend the day feasting and playing archery instead.



Photo Courtesy: wainando.de

CHUNIPAI LOSAR

In the 17th century, chieftains from the various regions of Bhutan traditionally made their Buelwa or tribute offerings to Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, the spiritual and temporal unifier of Bhutan, on the first day of the 12th month of the Bhutanese calendar. The Bhutanese people now mark the day as the Chunipai Losar, or the ‘New Year of the 12th Month.’

Today, many Bhutanese consider it the true Bhutanese New Year, as it arrives after the annual harvests, and does not take its origins from the Tibetan, Mongolian or Chinese New Year celebrations. Historically, the Chunipai Losar lasted 15 days, a duration that has shortened in modern times.

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