

BHUTAN

LAND AREA 38,394 km² HUMAN POPULATION 734,340 (19 per km²)

NUMBER OF IBAs 23 TOTAL AREA OF IBAs 12,133 km² STATUS OF IBAs 8 protected; 15 unprotected



Phopjika and Khatekha valleys (IBA 9) support the only major wintering populations of Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis* outside China. (PHOTO: ANDREW TORDOFF)

KEY HABITATS AND BIRDS

- Bhutan has an admirable national policy to maintain forests in over 60% of the country, and retains large areas of pristine Himalayan forests and alpine habitats (*Biome AS05: Eurasian high montane – Alpine and Tibetan*, *Biome AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest* and *EBA 130: Eastern Himalayas*). These support threatened species such as Chestnut-breasted Partridge *Arborophila mandellii* and Blyth's Tragopan *Tragopan blythii*.
- The forests on the lower slopes of the Bhutan Himalayas (*Biome AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest*, *Biome AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest* and *Biome AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone*) are particularly important, as low-altitude forests have been extensively cleared in Nepal and parts of north-east India. Bhutan is therefore a stronghold for birds such as Rufous-necked Hornbill *Aceros nipalensis*.
- There are some areas of grassland (*Biome AS12: Indo-Gangetic plains*) in the lowlands along the southern border of Bhutan.
- Several high-altitude valleys in Bhutan have wintering flocks of the threatened Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis* or non-breeding concentrations of Wood Snipe *Gallinago nemoricola*.

CONSERVATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM

The Nature Conservation Division of the Department of Forest, Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for wildlife conservation in Bhutan. Laws and regulations relevant to the conservation of wildlife and habitats include: the Forest and Nature Conservation Act (1995), the National Environment Strategy (“The Middle Path”) (1998), the Environment Assessment Act (2002), the Biodiversity Action Plan (2002), the Forest and Nature Conservation Rules Volumes I & II (2002) and the National Biodiversity Act (2003).

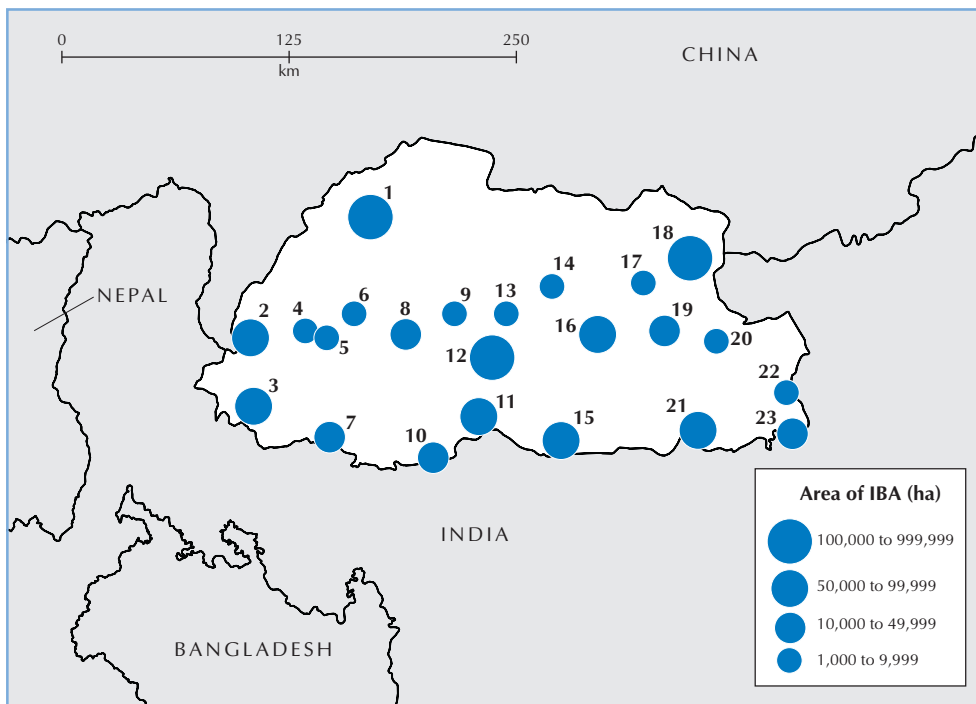
At April 2004, four national parks, four wildlife sanctuaries and one strict nature reserve and biological corridor had been established in Bhutan. These nine protected areas cover 35% of the total land area of the country.

OVERVIEW OF THE INVENTORY

- All 23 IBAs in Bhutan support globally threatened species, 12 have restricted-range species, 15 have biome-restricted species and four qualify as IBAs because they hold more than 1% of the regional population of a waterbird species.
- Bhutan's IBAs cover about 26% of the total land area of the country, and several of them are very large, reflecting the intact nature of natural habitats in many parts of the country.
- Forest is the main habitat in sixteen IBAs (70%), although most of these also contain areas of grassland, alpine habitat or wetlands. Several of these IBAs are globally outstanding because of they contain extensive areas of pristine Himalayan forest and other habitats. One IBA is selected to cover the inland cliffs and rocky slopes favoured by the threatened Dark-rumped Swift *Apus acuticauda*.
- Six IBAs are in high-altitude valleys, and support concentrations of the threatened Black-necked Crane or Wood Snipe. Phopjika and Khatekha valleys (IBA 9) and Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary (IBA 18) support the only major wintering populations of Black-necked Crane outside China.

CONSERVATION ISSUES

- Bhutan's forest IBAs are relatively secure, particularly at higher altitudes, but there are localised pressures caused by development, forest grazing and fires. The IBAs in high-altitude



Map 1. Location and size of Important Bird Areas in Bhutan.

valleys are more densely populated, and are threatened by wetland drainage, development and disturbance to birds.

- Eight (35%) of Bhutan’s 23 IBAs are protected areas, and 15 (65%) are unprotected. However, the protected areas are all large and, in terms of area, about 77% of Bhutan’s IBA network is included within protected areas.
- In August 2003, a further three of Bhutan’s IBAs were designated as Conservation Areas under the management of the Royal Society for Protection of Nature, a national conservation NGO.

SOURCES OF IBA DATA

An initial list of IBAs in Bhutan was prepared by Mike Crosby, and further developed by Rebecca Pradhan (Royal Society for Protection of Nature), Carol and Tim Inskipp and Andrew Tordoff, to produce the IBA list presented here. Jigme Tobgay (UNDP) provided information on the conservation infrastructure and protected areas system of Bhutan. Data on land area and human population are from the Bhutan National Statistical Bureau (2003).

Several protected areas in Bhutan contain large tracts of pristine forest, including Jigme Dorji National Park (IBA 1). (PHOTO: ANDREW TORDOFF)



Table 1. Important Bird Areas in Bhutan.			
1	Jigme Dorji National Park	Protected	A1 A2 A3 A4i
Admin region Gasa; Paro; Punakha; Thimphu; Wangdi Phodrang Coordinates 27°55'N 89°42'E Altitude 200–7,313 m Area 390,000 ha Habitats Forest; Grassland; Shrubland Threatened species <i>Ardea insignis</i> , <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i> Endemic Bird Areas 130: Eastern Himalayas Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest Congregatory waterbirds <i>Ardea insignis</i>			
2	Toorsa Strict Nature Reserve	Protected	A1 A2 A3
Admin region Ha; Samtse Coordinates 27°21'N 89°04'E Altitude 2,000–5,000 m Area 64,400 ha Habitats Forest; Grassland; Shrubland Threatened species <i>Arborophila mandellii</i> , <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i> , <i>Aceros nipalensis</i> Endemic Bird Areas 130: Eastern Himalayas Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest			
3	Samtse	Unprotected	A1 A3
Admin region Samtse Coordinates 27°01'N 89°05'E Altitude 200–3,500 m Area 60,000 ha Habitats Forest Threatened species <i>Aceros nipalensis</i> Biomes AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest			
4	Chele La	Unprotected	A1 A3
Admin region Ha; Paro Coordinates 27°23'N 89°22'E Altitude 2,300–4,200 m Area 5,000 ha Habitats Forest; Grassland; Shrubland Threatened species <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i> Biomes AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest			
5	Paro wetlands	Unprotected	A1
Admin region Paro Coordinates 27°21'N 89°29'E Altitude 2,280–3,000 m Area 2,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Shrubland; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i>			
6	Thimphu wetlands	Unprotected	A1
Admin region Thimphu Coordinates 27°28'N 89°38'E Altitude 2,300–3,000 m Area 2,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Shrubland; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i>			
7	Kamji	Unprotected	A1 A3
Admin region Chhukha Coordinates 26°52'N 89°30'E Altitude 700–1,500 m Area 14,000 ha Habitats Forest Threatened species <i>Aceros nipalensis</i> Biomes AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest			
8	Ada lake / Puna Tsangchu	Unprotected	A1 A4i
Admin region Dagana; Punakha; Thimphu; Tsirang; Wangdi Phodrang Coordinates 27°22'N 89°55'E Altitude 200–2,000 m Area 35,000 ha Habitats Forest; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Ardea insignis</i> , <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i> , <i>Prinia cinereocapilla</i> Congregatory waterbirds <i>Ardea insignis</i> , <i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>			
9	Phopjika and Khatekha valleys	Unprotected	A1 A2 A4i
Admin region Wangdi Phodrang Coordinates 27°28'N 90°11'E Altitude 2,000–3,200 m Area 3,500 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Shrubland; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Arborophila mandellii</i> , <i>Grus nigricollis</i> Endemic Bird Areas 130: Eastern Himalayas Congregatory waterbirds <i>Grus nigricollis</i>			
10	Phipsoo Wildlife Sanctuary	Protected	A1 A2 A3
Admin region Sarpang Coordinates 26°46'N 90°4'E Altitude 150–1,600 m Area 27,800 ha Habitats Forest; Grassland; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Arborophila mandellii</i> , <i>Aceros nipalensis</i> Endemic Bird Areas 130: Eastern Himalayas Biomes AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest			
11	Sarpang-Gelephu foothills	Unprotected	A1 A3
Admin region Sarpang Coordinates 26°58'N 90°19'E Altitude 200–2,000 m Area 60,000 ha Habitats Forest Threatened species <i>Aceros nipalensis</i> Biomes AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest			
12	Jigme Singye Wangchuk National Park	Protected	A1 A2 A3
Admin region Sarpang; Shemgang; Tongsa; Tsirang; Wangdi Phorang Coordinates 27°14'N 90°22'E Altitude 1,500–4,925 m Area 130,000 ha Habitats Forest; Grassland; Shrubland Threatened species <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i> , <i>Aceros nipalensis</i> , <i>Prinia cinereocapilla</i> , <i>Sitta formosa</i> Endemic Bird Areas 130: Eastern Himalayas Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest; AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest			
13	Tshangkha	Unprotected	A1 A2
Admin region Tongsa Coordinates 27°28'N 90°28'E Altitude 1,500–2,000 m Area 1,500 ha Habitats Forest; Rocky areas Threatened species <i>Apus acuticauda</i> Endemic Bird Areas 130: Eastern Himalayas			
14	Bumthang wetlands	Unprotected	A1
Admin region Bumthang Coordinates 27°36'N 90°43'E Altitude 3,000–3,400 m Area 2,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Wetlands Threatened species <i>Grus nigricollis</i> , <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i>			
15	Royal Manas National Park	Protected	A1 A2 A3
Admin region Samdrup Jongkhar; Sarpang; Shemgang Coordinates 26°51'N 90°46'E Altitude 150–3,000 m Area 97,500 ha Habitats Forest; Grassland; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i> , <i>Gyps bengalensis</i> , <i>Arborophila mandellii</i> , <i>Aceros nipalensis</i> , <i>Prinia cinereocapilla</i> , <i>Sitta formosa</i> Endemic Bird Areas 130: Eastern Himalayas Biomes AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest; AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest; AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone; AS12: Indo-Gangetic plains			
16	Thruming La National Park	Protected	A1 A2 A3
Admin region Bumthang; Lhuntshi; Mongar; Shemgang Coordinates 27°22'N 90°58'E Altitude 600–4,500 m Area 74,800 ha Habitats Forest; Grassland; Shrubland Threatened species <i>Arborophila mandellii</i> , <i>Aceros nipalensis</i> , <i>Prinia cinereocapilla</i> , <i>Sitta formosa</i> Endemic Bird Areas 130: Eastern Himalayas Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest			
17	Menji wetland	Unprotected	A1
Admin region Lhuntshi Coordinates 27°37'N 91°13'E Altitude 2,000 m Area 2,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Shrubland; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i>			

Important Bird Areas in Asia – Bhutan

Table 1 ... continued. Important Bird Areas in Bhutan.			
18	Bumdelling Wildlife Sanctuary	Protected	■ A1 ■ A2 ■ A3 ■ A4i
<p>Admin region Lhuntshi; Mongar; Yangtse Coordinates 27°43'N 91°27'E Altitude 2,000–5,000 m Area 125,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Grassland; Shrubland; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Grus nigricollis</i>, <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i>, <i>Prinia cinereocapilla</i> ■ Endemic Bird Areas 130: Eastern Himalayas ■ Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest ■ Congregatory waterbirds <i>Grus nigricollis</i></p>			
19	Kori La	Unprotected	■ A1 ■ A3
<p>Admin region Lhuntshi; Mongar Coordinates 27°23'N 91°20'E Altitude 1,200–2,000 m Area 35,000 ha Habitats Forest Threatened species <i>Aceros nipalensis</i> ■ Biomes AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest</p>			
20	Kanglung wetlands	Unprotected	■ A1
<p>Admin region Tashigang Coordinates 27°20'N 91°37'E Altitude 2,000 m Area 1,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Shrubland; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i></p>			
21	Deothang / Narphang / Samdrup Jongkhar	Unprotected	■ A1 ■ A2 ■ A3
<p>Admin region Pemagatsel; Samdrup Jongkhar; Tashigang Coordinates 26°54'N 91°31'E Altitude 200–1,700 m Area 50,000 ha Habitats Forest Threatened species <i>Arborophila mandellii</i>, <i>Apus acuticauda</i>, <i>Aceros nipalensis</i>, <i>Prinia cinereocapilla</i>, <i>Sitta formosa</i> ■ Endemic Bird Areas 130: Eastern Himalayas ■ Biomes AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest; AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest; AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone</p>			
22	Thimsing La	Unprotected	■ A1 ■ A2 ■ A3
<p>Admin region Samdrup Jongkhar Coordinates 27°05'N 92°00'E Altitude 1,500–3,000 m Area 3,500 ha Habitats Forest Threatened species <i>Arborophila mandellii</i>, <i>Tragopan blythii</i> ■ Endemic Bird Areas 130: Eastern Himalayas ■ Biomes AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest</p>			
23	Khaling / Neoli Wildlife Sanctuary	Protected	■ A1 ■ A2 ■ A3
<p>Admin region Samdrup Jongkhar Coordinates 26°53'N 92°02'E Altitude 150–1,500 m Area 27,300 ha Habitats Forest; Grassland Threatened species <i>Arborophila mandellii</i>, <i>Aceros nipalensis</i> ■ Endemic Bird Areas 130: Eastern Himalayas ■ Biomes AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest; AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest; AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest; AS12: Indo-Gangetic plains</p>			