

NEPAL

LAND AREA 147,181 km² HUMAN POPULATION 24,350,000 (165 per km²)

NUMBER OF IBAs 27 TOTAL AREA OF IBAs 26,119 km² STATUS OF IBAs 12 protected; 2 partially protected; 13 unprotected



Alpine habitats in Annapurna Conservation Area (IBA 12), a very large protected area which includes a wide diversity of Himalayan biomes and species. (PHOTO: MIKE CROSBY/BIRDLIFE)

KEY HABITATS AND BIRDS

- The dominant habitats of Nepal are montane forests and open habitats above the treeline (*Biome 05: Eurasian high montane – Alpine and Tibetan, Biome 07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest, Biome 08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest, EBA 128: Western Himalayas, EBA 129: Central Himalayas and EBA 130: Eastern Himalayas*), which support several threatened species including Cheer Pheasant *Catreus wallichii* and Wood Snipe *Gallinago nemoricola*.
- Dry dipterocarp forests are found in the lowlands of Nepal, and a few areas of moist lowland forest survive in the east (*Biome 09: Indochinese tropical moist forest and Biome 11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone*).
- The original habitat of much of lowland southern Nepal was grassland (*Biome 12: Indo-Gangetic plains and EBA 131: Assam plains*), but this is one of the most densely populated parts of the country, and virtually all of the remaining natural grasslands are inside a few large protected areas. These grasslands are the stronghold for several threatened species, including Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis*, Swamp Francolin *Francolinus gularis*, White-throated Bushchat *Saxicola insignis*, Slender-billed Babbler *Turdoides longirostris* and Finn's Weaver *Ploceus megarhynchus*.

CONSERVATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM

In Nepal, a number of Government departments and organisations have partially overlapping responsibilities for planning, coordinating, implementing and monitoring Government policies and legislation on the environment. As far as flora and fauna including birds are concerned, the main responsibility lies with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation

(DNPWC) under the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation of His Majesty's Government of Nepal.

A national conservation programme was initiated by His Majesty's Government of Nepal in 1971. This was given a legal basis following the passing of the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 2029 in March 1973 (with amendments in 1974, 1982, 1989 and 1991), which guides the policies and actions of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation. This act enables the government to establish any area as a national park, wildlife reserve, conservation area or hunting reserve, and provides for the administration of these protected areas and 'the conservation of animals and birds and their habitats.'

A National Conservation Strategy for Nepal was completed in 1987 and endorsed as policy in 1988. The Environment Protection Act (1997) authorises the government to monitor and implement activities that directly affect the environment, such as pollution, negative impacts on ecosystems, etc. It ensures that an Initial Environment Examination (IEE) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) are carried out where necessary by any industry or where dams, bridges or similar development activities are planned. This work is monitored and coordinated by the Ministry of Population and Environment.

There are currently nine national parks, three wildlife reserves, one hunting reserve and three conservation areas in Nepal. These cover a wide range of habitat types and fauna, but omit a few important forest types, notably the remaining areas of subtropical and tropical moist forest in the foothills of eastern Nepal. Some areas are better protected than others.

OVERVIEW OF THE INVENTORY

- Of the 27 IBAs in Nepal, 24 support globally threatened species, 13 have restricted-range species, 23 have biome-restricted species

and nine qualify as IBAs because they hold large congregations of waterbirds.

- Nepal’s IBAs cover about 18% of the total land area of the country, and include several very large IBAs such as Shey-Phoksundo National Park (IBA 6) and Annapurna Conservation Area (IBA 12).
- Twenty-two IBAs (81%) contain examples of terrestrial forest ecosystems, with all major forest types and areas of forest bird endemism in Nepal well represented.
- There are lowland grasslands in seven IBAs (26%), including some outstanding examples of this threatened habitat such as at Royal Sukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve (IBA 1), Royal Chitwan National Park (IBA 16) and Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve and Koshi Barrage (IBA 24).
- Eight IBAs (30%) contain freshwater ecosystems, with the largest concentrations of waterbirds occurring at the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve and Koshi Barrage (IBA 24).

CONSERVATION ISSUES

- The pressures on biodiversity in Nepal’s forest IBAs include illegal logging, collection of fuelwood and other minor forest products, overgrazing and construction of hydroelectric dams. Nepal’s wetland IBAs are threatened by drainage, water abstraction, siltation, eutrophication, overfishing, pollution and the use of poisons for fishing. Nepal’s once extensive grasslands have been greatly reduced by conversion to agricultural land, and intensive annual cutting and burning, human disturbance and livestock grazing affect the remaining grassland fragments. A strong emphasis on management of grasslands for large mammal populations is a significant factor contributing to the decline of grassland bird populations within many protected areas. Hunting has been a threat to large waterbirds and galliforms in many IBAs, but is currently greatly reduced because of the Maoist problems, as it is very dangerous to be seen carrying a gun.
- Of Nepal’s 27 IBAs, 12 (44%) are wholly within protected areas, two (7%) are partially protected and 13 (48%) are unprotected. However, the protected areas are mainly large and, in terms of area, about 81% of Nepal’s IBA network is included within protected areas. Certain habitats are not (or very poorly) represented in the current protected areas system, and new reserves need to be established to protect the remaining areas of subtropical and tropical moist forest (e.g. IBA 22: Tamur valley, IBA 23: Dharan forests and IBA 27: Mai Valley forests).



Subtropical forest at Phulchoki mountain (IBA 19), a habitat which is not adequately represented in Nepal’s protected areas system. (PHOTO: ANDREW TORDOFF)

SOURCES OF IBA DATA

The information presented here is taken from Baral and Inskipp (in prep.).

REFERENCES

BARAL, H. S. AND INSKIPP, C. (in prep.) *Important Bird Areas in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Bird Conservation Nepal.

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

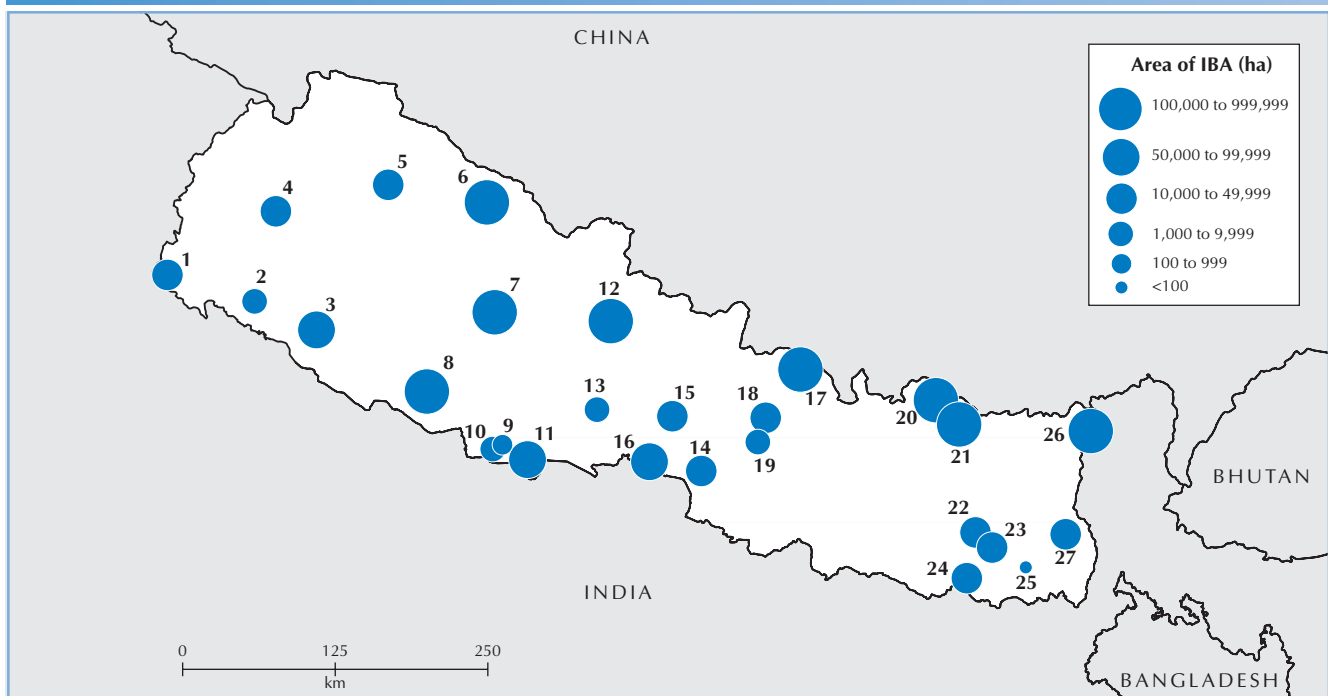


Table 1. Important Bird Areas in Nepal.

R = IBA is wholly or partially a Ramsar Site; WH = IBA is wholly or partially a World Heritage Site

1	Royal Sukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve	Protected	■ A1	■ A3	■ A4i
<p>Admin region Mahakali Coordinates 28°53'N 80°11'E Altitude 150–600 m Area 30,500 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Grassland; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>, <i>Aquila hastata</i>, <i>Aquila clanga</i>, <i>Falco naumanni</i>, <i>Francolinus gularis</i>, <i>Grus antigone</i>, <i>Houbaropsis bengalensis</i>, <i>Sypheotides indica</i>, <i>Saxicola insignis</i>, <i>Chrysomma altirostre</i>, <i>Chaetornis striatus</i>, <i>Ploceus megarhynchus</i> ■ Biomes AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest; AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone; AS12: Indo-Gangetic plains ■ Congregatory waterbirds <i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>, <i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>, <i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>, <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Sterna acuticauda</i></p>					
2	Chodaghodi Lake	Unprotected^R	■ A1	■ A3	■ A4i
<p>Admin region Seti Coordinates 28°41'N 80°56'E Altitude 200–250 m Area 5,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>, <i>Aquila hastata</i> ■ Biomes AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone Congregatory waterbirds <i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>, <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i></p>					
3	Royal Bardia National Park	Protected	■ A1	■ A3	■ A4i
<p>Admin region Bheri Coordinates 28°28'N 81°28'E Altitude 152–1,441 m Area 96,800 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Grassland; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>, <i>Aquila hastata</i>, <i>Aquila clanga</i>, <i>Francolinus gularis</i>, <i>Grus antigone</i>, <i>Houbaropsis bengalensis</i>, <i>Sypheotides indica</i>, <i>Prinia cinereocapilla</i> ■ Biomes AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest; AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone; AS12: Indo-Gangetic plains ■ Congregatory waterbirds <i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>, <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Sterna acuticauda</i></p>					
4	Khaptad National Park	Protected	■ A1	■ A2	■ A3
<p>Admin region Seti Coordinates 29°22'N 81°07'E Altitude 1,250–3,300 m Area 22,500 ha Habitats Forest; Grassland Threatened species <i>Gyps bengalensis</i> ■ Endemic Bird Areas 128: Western Himalayas ■ Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest</p>					
5	Rara National Park	Protected	■ A1	■ A2	■ A3
<p>Admin region Karnali Coordinates 29°34'N 82°05'E Altitude 2,800–4,048 m Area 10,600 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Grassland Threatened species <i>Catreus wallichi</i> ■ Endemic Bird Areas 128: Western Himalayas ■ Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest</p>					
6	Shey-Phoksundo National Park	Protected	■ A1	■ A2	■ A3
<p>Admin region Karnali Coordinates 29°26'N 82°56'E Altitude 2,700–6,883 m Area 355,500 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Grassland Threatened species <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i> ■ Endemic Bird Areas 128: Western Himalayas ■ Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest</p>					
7	Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve	Unprotected	■ A1	■ A2	■ A3
<p>Admin region Dhawalagiri; Rapti Coordinates 28°36'N 83°00'E Altitude 2,000–5,500 m Area 132,500 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Grassland Threatened species <i>Catreus wallichi</i> ■ Endemic Bird Areas 128: Western Himalayas ■ Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest</p>					
8	Dang Deukhuri foothill forests and west Rapti wetlands	Unprotected	■ A1	■ A3	
<p>Admin region Bheri; Lumbini; Rapti Coordinates 28°00'N 82°25'E Altitude 200–900 m Area 125,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Grassland Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i> ■ Biomes AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest; AS12: Indo-Gangetic plains</p>					
9	Jagdishpur Reservoir	Unprotected^R	■ A1		
<p>Admin region Lumbini Coordinates 27°35'N 83°05'E Altitude 197 m Area 225 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Wetlands Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>, <i>Aquila hastata</i></p>					
10	Nawalparasi forests	Unprotected	■ A1		
<p>Admin region Lumbini Coordinates 27°33'N 83°00'E Altitude 350 m Area 4,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>, <i>Aquila clanga</i></p>					
11	Farmlands in Lumbini area	Unprotected	■ A1	■ A3	■ A4i
<p>Admin region Lumbini Coordinates 27°29'N 83°17'E Altitude 95–1,219 m Area 141,367 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Wetlands Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>, <i>Aquila hastata</i>, <i>Grus antigone</i>, <i>Saxicola insignis</i>, <i>Chaetornis striatus</i> ■ Biomes AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone; AS12: Indo-Gangetic plains ■ Congregatory waterbirds <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Grus antigone</i></p>					
12	Annapurna Conservation Area	Protected	■ A1	■ A2	■ A3
<p>Admin region Dhawalagiri; Gandaki Coordinates 28°32'N 84°00'E Altitude 790–8,091 m Area 762,900 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Grassland Threatened species <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>, <i>Aquila clanga</i>, <i>Aquila heliaca</i>, <i>Falco naumanni</i>, <i>Catreus wallichi</i>, <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i> ■ Endemic Bird Areas 128: Western Himalayas; 129: Central Himalayas ■ Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest; AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest</p>					
13	Rampur valley	Unprotected	■ A1		
<p>Admin region Gandaki; Lumbini Coordinates 27°51'N 83°54'E Altitude 440 m Area 3,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest Threatened species <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i></p>					
14	Parsa Wildlife Reserve	Protected	■ A1	■ A3	
<p>Admin region Narayani Coordinates 27°20'N 84°50'E Altitude 200–950 m Area 49,900 ha Habitats Forest; Grassland Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>, <i>Prinia cinereocapilla</i> ■ Biomes AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone</p>					

Table 1 ... continued. Important Bird Areas in Nepal.			
15	Barandabhar forests and wetlands	Unprotected	A1 A3 A4i
<p>Admin region Narayani Coordinates 27°48'N 84°33'E Altitude 150–400 m Area 12,300 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>, <i>Aquila hastata</i>, <i>Aquila clanga</i> Biomes AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest; AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone Congregatory waterbirds <i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>, <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i></p>			
16	Royal Chitwan National Park	Protected ^{WH}	A1 A3 A4i
<p>Admin region Narayani Coordinates 27°28'N 84°20'E Altitude 100–815 m Area 93,200 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Grassland; Wetlands Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Leptoptilos dubius</i>, <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>, <i>Aquila hastata</i>, <i>Aquila clanga</i>, <i>Aquila heliaca</i>, <i>Falco naumanni</i>, <i>Francolinus gularis</i>, <i>Grus antigone</i>, <i>Houbaropsis bengalensis</i>, <i>Sypheotides indica</i>, <i>Rynchops albicollis</i>, <i>Saxicola insignis</i>, <i>Chrysomma altirostre</i>, <i>Turdoides longirostris</i>, <i>Prinia cinereocapilla</i>, <i>Chaetornis striatus</i> Biomes AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest; AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest; AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone; AS12: Indo-Gangetic plains Congregatory waterbirds <i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>, <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Sterna acuticauda</i></p>			
17	Langtang National Park	Protected	A1 A2 A3
<p>Admin region Bagmati Coordinates 28°10'N 85°38'E Altitude 1,300–7,042 m Area 171,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Grassland Threatened species <i>Aquila clanga</i>, <i>Aquila heliaca</i>, <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i> Endemic Bird Areas 129: Central Himalayas Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest; AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest</p>			
18	Shivapuri National Park	Partially protected	A2 A3
<p>Admin region Bagmati Coordinates 27°48'N 85°20'E Altitude 1,400–2,700 m Area 11,200 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest Endemic Bird Areas 129: Central Himalayas Biomes AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest; AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest</p>			
19	Phulchowki mountain forests	Unprotected	A2 A3
<p>Admin region Bagmati Coordinates 27°37'N 85°16'E Altitude 1,400–2,800 m Area 5,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest Endemic Bird Areas 129: Central Himalayas Biomes AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest; AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest</p>			
20	Sagarmatha National Park	Protected ^{WH}	A1 A3
<p>Admin region Sagarmatha Coordinates 27°56'N 86°48'E Altitude 2,845–8,848 m Area 114,800 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Grassland Threatened species <i>Aquila heliaca</i>, <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i> Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest</p>			
21	Makalu Barun National Park	Protected	A1 A2 A3
<p>Admin region Koshi Coordinates 27°45'N 87°00'E Altitude 435–8,400 m Area 150,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Grassland Threatened species <i>Aquila heliaca</i>, <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i> Endemic Bird Areas 129: Central Himalayas; 130: Eastern Himalayas Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest; AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest</p>			
22	Tamur valley	Unprotected	A2 A3
<p>Admin region Koshi Coordinates 26°55'N 87°10'E Altitude 100–3,800 m Area 20,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest Endemic Bird Areas 129: Central Himalayas; 130: Eastern Himalayas Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest; AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest</p>			
23	Dharan forests	Unprotected	A1 A2 A3 A4i
<p>Admin region Koshi Coordinates 26°49'N 87°17'E Altitude 100–1,300 m Area 40,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i> Endemic Bird Areas 130: Eastern Himalayas Biomes AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest; AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest; AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone Congregatory waterbirds <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i></p>			
24	Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve and Koshi Barrage	Partially protected ^R	A1 A3 A4i,iii
<p>Admin region Koshi; Sagarmatha Coordinates 26°35'N 87°04'E Altitude 75–81 m Area 21,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Wetlands Threatened species <i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>, <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Leptoptilos dubius</i>, <i>Aythya baeri</i>, <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>, <i>Aquila hastata</i>, <i>Aquila clanga</i>, <i>Aquila heliaca</i>, <i>Falco naumanni</i>, <i>Francolinus gularis</i>, <i>Houbaropsis bengalensis</i>, <i>Sypheotides indica</i>, <i>Rynchops albicollis</i>, <i>Saxicola insignis</i>, <i>Chaetornis striatus</i>, <i>Ficedula subrubra</i> Biomes AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone; AS12: Indo-Gangetic plains Congregatory waterbirds <i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>, <i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>, <i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>, <i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>, <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>, <i>Aythya nyroca</i>, <i>Aythya baeri</i>, <i>Sterna acuticauda</i>, <i>Rynchops albicollis</i></p>			
25	Urlabari forest groves	Unprotected	A1 A4i
<p>Admin region Koshi Coordinates 26°39'N 87°36'E Altitude 75 m Area 100 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i> Congregatory waterbirds <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i></p>			
26	Kanchenjunga Conservation Area	Protected	A1 A2 A3
<p>Admin region Mechi Coordinates 27°42'N 88°08'E Altitude 1,200–8,567 m Area 203,500 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest; Grassland Threatened species <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i> Endemic Bird Areas 129: Central Himalayas Biomes AS05: Eurasian high montane; AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest; AS08: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest</p>			
27	Mai Valley forests	Unprotected	A1 A2 A3
<p>Admin region Mechi Coordinates 26°55'N 87°55'E Altitude 70–3,050 m Area 30,000 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>, <i>Gyps bengalensis</i>, <i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>, <i>Aquila clanga</i>, <i>Falco naumanni</i>, <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i> Endemic Bird Areas 129: Central Himalayas; 130: Eastern Himalayas Biomes AS07: Sino-Himalayan temperate forest; AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest; AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest; AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone</p>			