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A new subspecies of Rufous-vented Prinia *Prinia burnesii* (Aves: Cisticolidae) from Nepal

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On 1 April 2005 SB and BC located two prinias at Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, eastern Nepal which they submitted as Rufous-vented Prinia *Prinia burnesii cinerascens* to the Nepal Rare Birds Committee (NRBC). The NRBC could not make a decision because some information needed to confirm the species status was lacking. BC went back to the same locality on 7 April and saw the birds again, this time 3 individuals. The clearly visible light rufous undertail coverts led him to believe that the birds

were Rufous-vented Prinia *P. b. burnesii* as opposed to the previous claim. When BC submitted these records to NRBC, some members were still not clear about the birds' identity. On both occasions, the observers managed to obtain song recordings of the birds.

On 25 December 2005, the song recording was played in the vicinity of the grassland areas where these prinias were seen earlier, but both BC and HSB failed to locate any birds. On 21 January 2006 HC and BC saw up to 3 birds again in the same locality. On 25 January 2006, the song recording was played by BC and HSB was able to record fresh tape of the song. With the help of tape luring, one bird was trapped in a mist net at 0755hrs on 25 January 2006. At least 3 more individuals were seen in the area on this date. The trapped bird was thoroughly examined by HSB, SGC, BC, TG and HC. Between 1 and 4 March 2006, a total of 12 individuals was trapped and released, of which one was a retrap of the bird netted on 25 January 2006. All these birds were thoroughly examined by HSB, SGC and BC.

On 20 May 2006, four birds were collected from Madhuban area after receiving the necessary permission from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation.

The wing length (maximum chord), bill length (to skull, f) and tarsus length were taken of all the birds that were caught. In addition to these, weight and bill depth were also measured. All measurements of live birds were taken by HSB except one specimen taken by SGC and BC. The songs and calls of many birds were heard and the songs of two individual birds were tape-recorded using a Sony TCM 5000 EV recorder and a directional Sennheiser microphone. During the preparation of museum skins, we found it difficult to retain undertail coverts feathers, and more than 75% feathers fell off in all birds.

Most birds caught in the net were photographed before releasing. Photos of museum skins in possession of British Museum Natural History, Tring, UK and Bombay Natural History Society, Mumbai, India were studied. Measurements of these specimens were obtained from these museums as well as from Rasmussen and Anderton (2005).



This is the first record of Rufous-vented Prinia from Nepal. In addition to being a new record for Nepal birds found at Koshi (see Plates 1, 2, 3 & 4) the bird is believed to be a distinctive, hitherto unnamed subspecies, for which we propose the following name:

Nepal Rufous-vented Prinia *Prinia burnesii nipalensis* ssp. nov

Holotype

The Natural History Museum, Kathmandu labelled NHM-1.11.1011 adult male sexed by gonads, Madhuban, Koshi river, Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Sunsari District, Koshi Zone, Nepal, N26°39' E87°03', c. 85 m a.s.l., 20 May 2006. Collected and deposited in the Natural History Museum by HSB in Kathmandu.

Diagnosis

Adults: The new subspecies has overall olive-grey to light brown plumage. The head and nape is greyer compared to the browner back, wings and tail. In most individuals, there is faint whitish supercilium which reaches behind the eye. The head is densely streaked compared to back. On the back the streakings are bolder compared to on the head.

The Koshi birds differ from Graceful Prinia *Prinia gracilis* by its larger size, richer body coloration, completely different calls and song characteristics. It differs from Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* by being bulkier, and in its body coloration, calls and song characteristics. It is more skulking and more shy compared to Plain Prinia and Graceful Prinia. All three species of prinia were recorded in the same habitat at Koshi Tappu.

Juvenile: Similar to adults but slightly less marked on the head and body. Light rufous undertail coverts was visible in one young bird caught in May.

Description of the Holotype

Head: Crown greyish-brown with fine, dark-brown streaking denser than on the rest of the upperparts. Lores greyish-white. There is a greyer wash on the supercilium area compared to the rest of the crown with slightly browner ear coverts than on the supercilium area. The throat and breast are whiter than the rest of the underparts. The white eye-ring is incomplete, broken horizontally behind and in front of the eye.

The mantle, scapulars and back are streaked dark brown, with bolder streaking on the lower mantle and back. The streaking extends all the way to the rump.

Wings: Primaries, secondaries and tertials are plain grey-brown. The first two primaries are the shortest and the fifth and sixth are the longest. The first primary is longer than the longest primary coverts. The second primary is longer than the first, but shorter than all other primaries. Emargination up to 6th primary is clear. The outer webs of the feather are more olive-brown compared to the greyer inner web. The shaft of the feather is grey to dark grey. Wing formula P5/6, E6, 2>1 but <other primaries.

Tail: Unstreaked greyish brown with horizontal bars. The central tail feathers are the longest; the others are proportionately shorter.

Bare Parts: The colour of the upper mandible is horny grey with pale edges; the lower mandible is pale with a darker shade

towards the tip. Legs, toes and claws are flesh-colored. The eye colour is medium to dark brown.

Overall: The upperparts are greyish-brown, the underparts are greyish-white with light rufous undertail coverts. There is a distinct, white eye-ring broken in the centre forming nearly symmetrical upper and lower halves. The lower half eye-ring is more distinct compared to the upper half.

Measurements: Body length 146mm, bill length (from the distal edge of the feathering) 10.1mm, tarsus 21.3mm and wing length 54mm, tail length: 70mm, tarsus 21.7mm.

Paratypes

All paratypes are housed in The Natural History Museum, Kathmandu labelled NHM-1.11.1012 adult male, NHM-1.11.1013 adult female and NHM-1.11.1014 a juvenile, Madhuban, Koshi river, Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Sunsari District, Koshi Zone, Nepal, N26°39' E87°03', c. 85 m a.s.l., 20 May 2006. All collected and deposited in the Natural History Museum in Kathmandu by HSB.

Paratyptic variation

Two paratypes NHM-1.11.1012 and NHM-1.11.1013, although sexed by gonads as male and female, are morphologically similar to the holotype. Another paratype of a young bird (NHM-1.11.1014) that shows less streaking on the head and body. Feathers looked greyer on the young bird partly because of fewer and fainter streaking.

Measurements of paratypes (in mm)

Male NHM-1.11.1012 wing length: 55, bill (f) 11.5, tarsus 22.2, body length 164, tail length: 78

Female NHM-1.11.1013 wing length: 54, bill (f) 10.1, tarsus 20.1, body length 150, tail length: 75

Juvenile NHM-1.11.1014 wing length: 54, bill (f) 9.3, tarsus 21.5, body length 140, tail length: 66

Etymology

The subspecific name indicates the country Nepal where the birds were noted.

Sexing, Ageing and Moul

Both sexes show light rufous undertail coverts although some show a lighter-coloured undertail coverts than others. Although not all the birds trapped were sexed, it is likely adult males have a slightly brighter undertail coverts. One young bird trapped on 20 May 2006 for collection showed pale upper and lower mandibles. The undertail coverts of this young bird was lighter rufous compared to other birds.

Morphological comparison with other taxa

The newly described taxon differs from *P. b. burnesii* in being greyer above, having a lighter rufous undertail-coverts, and finely streaked head and back. Compared with the nominate subspecies it has thinner and fainter streaking on the upperside as well on the sides of breast and lacks the prominent cinnamon colouration on the hind collar. The tail is clearly shorter.

The Koshi birds differ from *P. b. cinerascens* in having slightly richer body coloration, presence of distinct light rufous undertail coverts and longer wing length. Most Koshi birds also show greyer sides to the breast. Faint grey stripe is also visible behind the ear coverts and on the lateral sides of the head.



For comparison and details on the measurements and body parts see Tables 1, 2 and 3.

Table. 1. A comparison of morphological characters and measurements (in mm) of all 3 subspecies.

Taxa	Wing	Tail	Bill	Tarsus	Body Coloration	Undertail coverts
<i>Prinia burnesii burnesii</i>	53-57 (AR), 57 (MA)	103-116 (RA)	14.1 (MA)	20-21 (AR), 21 (MA)	rufescent grey to brown	rich chestnut/rufous
<i>P. b. nipalensis</i>	55.31 (n=16)	72.25 (n=4)	11.08 (n=16) measured to feathering (f)	21.53 (n=15)	olive-grey with light rufous tinge	light rufous
<i>P. b. cinerascens</i>	51-52 (AR, MA)	71-79 (RA)	13.7 (MA)	c. 21 (AR, MA)	olive-grey coloration	grey

Table. 2. A comparison of habitats and distribution of all 3 subspecies

Taxa	Habitat	Distribution
<i>Prinia b. burnesii</i>	<i>Saccharum</i> grasses in pure stands or where mixed with acacias and tamarisks mainly in the vicinity of large rivers and their tributaries	Pakistan and adjacent Punjab in India
<i>P. b. nipalensis</i>	<i>Saccharum</i> grasses mixed with tamarisks mainly in the larger grassy islands of Koshi river in Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve	East Nepal
<i>P. burnesii cinerascens</i>	Ekra or elephant grasses <i>Saccharum</i> sps. in the vicinity of large rivers and in swamps	Assam and adjoining states of India, Bangladesh

Sources for nominate and *cinerascens* information: wing and tarsus measurements, Ali and Ripley 1987 (AR), Mark Adams *in litt.* 2006 (MA), tail measurements Rasmussen and Anderton 2005 (RA), bill measurements Mark Adams *in litt.* 2006 (MA). For body and undertail coverts coloration photos of the skins housed in British Museum and Bombay Natural History Society Museum were studied with reference to literature consulted for their habitat and distribution eg. Ali and Ripley (1987), Grimmett *et al.* (1998) and Rasmussen and Anderton (2005).

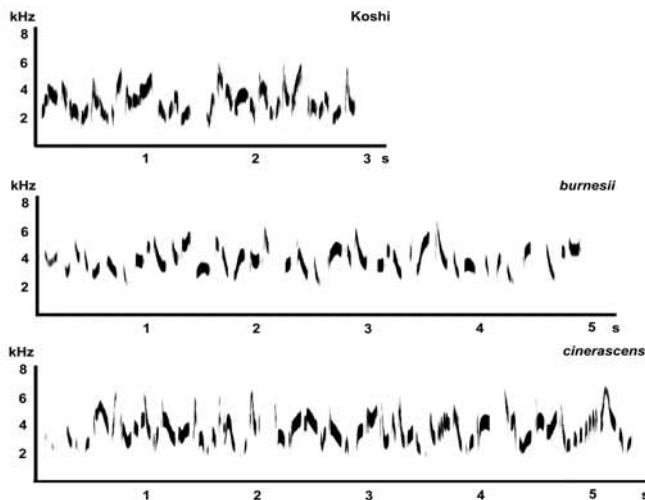
Table. 3. Details of various measurements (in mm) of *P. b. nipalensis* with mean, standard deviation and ranges.

	Wing	Bill	Bill depth	Tarsus	Weight
Mean	55.3125	11.0812	3.3090	21.5266	13.4166
Standard Deviation	1.4008	0.7547	0.1136	0.8987	0.6685
Minimum	52	9.3	3.1	20.1	12.5
Maximum	58	11.9	3.5	23.9	15
No of samples	16	16	11	15	12



Vocalisations

The song is unlike that of other prinias in Nepal, being rather melodious and long. Calls and songs of the prinia were taped which to our ears closely resemble calls and songs of the nominate form which are available to us for comparison. We are unfamiliar with calls and songs of the eastern subspecies *cinerascens*, however Rasmussen and Anderton (2005) have shown variation in the songs of two (sub)species *cinerascens* and *burnesii*. Sonograms of *burnesii*, *cinerascens* and *nipalensis* are shown below.



Systematics

Based on the song characteristics of birds placed within *Prinia*, Roberts (1992) mentioned that 'When more is known about these prinias it may seem logical to subdivide them into more than one genus.' He also points that Blyth, E. *Journ. Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. 14, p596, 1845 originally places it in a separate genus, *Laticilla* on the basis of its exceptionally long tail, but it has subsequently been included in the genus *Prinia* (Ripley 1961).

This bird's habits closely resemble those of Rufous-rumped Grassbird *Graminicola bengalensis*, a grassland specialist. Morphological characters, especially the shape of head, bill and tail, more closely resemble *Graminicola* than any other prinia. *Graminicola* has been now shown to belong to the Timaliidae family (Alström *et al.* 2006). It is likely that future studies may recommend a new genus or revert back to one of the old genera (Walden 1874, Oates 1889). Ongoing study on DNA by Urban Olsson and Per Alström should help to ascertain the link of this species to other species (Per Alström *in litt.* to Hem Sagar Baral 2007).

Habitat

All birds seen and heard were located on grassland patches (age c. 5 years) on small islands of the Koshi River. These islands are separated from the closer eastern dyke by a small channel of the river. All grasslands were subject to some degree of human disturbance. Prinias were absent from heavily disturbed grasslands by the eastern embankment or very short grasslands (<1m high).

Grass species composition

The grass species included *Saccharum spontaneum*, *S. arundinacea*, *Typha elephantine*, and *Phragmites karka*. Sparsely dotted young sissoo *Dalbergia sissoo* trees and xeric bushes *Casurina* sps. (c. 3 m tall) were also present.

Physical structure

The grasslands had a sward height of >2 metres. Adjacent to these tall grassland patches, there were several areas where habitat was dominated by cut over 'grass stumps' with few unburnt and uncut tall grass patches and young trees. The average height of these grass stumps was 1.5 m.

Behaviour

During the field visits, we spent several hours watching behaviour of several individuals.

Its behaviour was considerably different to that of most other prinias, the habit and pattern of movement were different, for example. Their movement through the grasses was unpredictable, quick and hard to discern. They moved through the grasses without coming to the exposed area similar to Rufous-rumped Grassbird or other skulking babbler species. Even when the tape was played, birds were reluctant to show themselves to observers. Most birds were found to be very shy. Baker (1924) describes *cinerascens* as 'not shy' although he describes *burnesii* as 'skulking'.

We located several birds singing amongst unburnt tall grasses and reeds. The singing birds kept mostly hidden in the tall reeds. This habit is in contrast with most other prinias which choose perches on the exposed parts or tops of vegetation when singing.

Their extensive song and calls indicated that they were beginning to breed as early as March. Five birds caught in March showed signs of brood patch. In May, a young bird was netted indicating their breeding at Koshi. The song could be also heard during January, February and April.

Status, distribution and population

In Koshi Tappu, within the surveyed areas this subspecies was found to be locally fairly common. It was present in the northern half of the reserve, mainly in the grasslands along the inner sections of the two embankments.

No suitable grasslands were observed towards Haripur, the southern end of Koshi Tappu. However it is likely that birds could move here in the future if suitable habitats are formed. Within Nepal, future surveys might reveal its presence in grasslands along the Narayani River in Chitwan National Park, Bardia National Park along the Karnali River and in the vast expanse of grasslands in Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve. The bird may also occur in parts of Bihar, where grasslands have somehow survived in spite of the increased human pressure.

Based on available habitat and its contiguity at Koshi, current Nepal population is estimated to be less than 500 individuals.

Discussion

Rufous-vented Prinia was previously represented by two subspecies; nominate *burnesii* found in the Indus River System mainly in Pakistan and adjoining parts of Punjab in India (Ali and Ripley 1987, Grimmett *et al.* 1998). The other known subspecies *cinerascens*, is found mainly in Assam, India although there are historic records from Bangladesh and western Bihar, India (Grimmett *et al.* 1998, BirdLife International 2001). The new subspecies has intermediate characters between the two strikingly different subspecies, and appear to form a link between them.





1 and 2. Different individuals of *Prinia burnesii nivalensis* showing lateral view.
3. Dorsal view showing wing details.





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10



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1, 2 and 3. Close up of lateral view, three different individuals.
4. Undertail coverts showing light rufous feathers.
5, 6, 7 and 8. Dorsal view, four different individuals.
9 and 10. *Prinia burnesii nipalensis* habitat.

All photos by Hem Sagar Baral/Bird Conservation Nepal



This colour page is kindly sponsored by



1. *Prinia burnesii nipalensis* juvenile, May 2006.
2 and 3. Dorsal and ventral views of *Prinia burnesii nipalensis*

When the birds were sighted first at Koshi Tappu, the observers' immediate guess was Swamp Prinia *P. burnesii cinerascens*. Most birds found in Koshi and east Nepal typically show an affinity to birds found in the east Himalaya and northeast India (Inskipp and Inskipp 1991). Later, when the birds' lighter colored rufous undertail coverts was confirmed, the observers considered the birds to be Rufous-vented Prinia *P. burnesii burnesii*. It seems improbable that a bird at Koshi should be of the same race as one occurring nearly 2000 km to the west in Pakistan and northwest India especially considering the bird is, as far as known, a sedentary resident grassland species. When the birds were finally netted, it became clear that the birds at Koshi did not fit either of the subspecies already described. The lack of rich chestnut/rufous undertail coverts, shorter tail and overall greyer coloration of the body distinctly separate this subspecies from the nominate taxon. However Baker (1924) describes the distribution of *burnesii* as 'Sind [Pakistan], Rajputana [= Rajasthan], Punjab [now split in Pakistan and India], United Provinces [= Uttar Pradesh] and extreme Western Bengal, where it has been obtained in Monghyr, suggesting that it may have had a wider range in the past. If this is correct then it is possible that he was referring to this new taxon.

At this stage we do not know how far east or west the birds with lighter rufous undertail coverts are distributed. It is possible that this race is present in India, especially in the western side of the *P. b. cinerascens* distribution range (Choudhury *in litt.* 2006). However this has not been confirmed yet. One bird seen in Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam showed off-white undertail coverts with a greyish tinge (Barua 1995). None of the observers have mentioned this subspecies having lighter rufous undertail coverts. In the light of these findings, more careful observations are needed from Assam and eastern part of the bird's range.

To a normal ear, songs of all 3 subspecies sound very similar. The calls and songs of the entire complex needs further investigation.

Although Rasmussen and Anderton (2005) have treated *cinerascens* as a separate species, we continue to follow previous taxonomic treatments in which it is considered a subspecies of *burnesii* (Inskipp *et al.* 1996). Following Inskipp *et al.* 1996, the species is now considered to be represented by three different forms: the nominate in the Indus river system, *nipalensis* in the Ganges river system (or at least in the tributaries of Ganges) and *cinerascens* in the Brahmaputra river system. If the new taxonomic treatment by Rasmussen and Anderton (2005) is followed then one or both species might qualify for globally threatened status. The Rufous-vented Prinia is currently listed as near-threatened by BirdLife International (2001). Genetically Nepal birds have been found markedly different from *burnesii* but no DNA analysis has been carried out on *cinerascens* to determine their genetic identity (Per Alström *in litt.* 2007 to Hem Sagar Baral). Following Rasmussen and Anderton (2005), the new race would fall within the species Swamp Prinia *P. cinerascens* as its subspecies. Further research and exploration are needed to fully understand the status of these taxa.

Recommendations for conservation

Although a number of birds has been seen at Koshi, the taxon's actual population size and distribution remain unknown. As it has been found in a narrow belt of remnant grassland patches there is an urgent need to establish its status, distribution pattern and population as soon as possible. Currently no specific threats have been definitely identified for this bird although it is likely

that some continual threats are pushing this subspecies to the verge of extinction. The following are some recommendations for future research and conservation:

1. Assess location, habitat use and conservation issues of birds during the monsoon season (June-October).
2. Assess possible threats, including the effects of fire, flood, grass cutting and other human-induced disturbances.
3. Assess status, distribution and population within Koshi Tappu and other areas in Nepal and India.
4. Study behaviour and breeding of the species by applying suitable methods/techniques/equipments.
5. Promote genetic study of this and the other two subspecies found in Indus and Brahmaputra river systems (currently underway, Per Alström *in litt.* 2006 to Hem Sagar Baral).
6. Restrict grass cutting in potential habitat of this bird. Where deemed necessary apply other grassland management tools in consultation with experts.
7. List Rufous-vented Prinia complex (with splits/without splits) as globally threatened based on its disjunct, small and declining populations.

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Nepal Rare Birds Committee (NRBC) Report 2007

Suchit Basnet

List of Accepted Records by NRBC

Taxonomy and nomenclature follow *An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of the Oriental Region* by Tim Inskipp, Nigel Lindsey and William Duckworth (1996), Oriental Bird Club, Sandy, UK.

Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo *Hierococcyx fugax*
Found in the Himalayas from Nepal east to Arunachal Pradesh; NE India and Bangladesh

One heard calling and seen on 29 April 2006, by Dr Hem Sagar Baral (HSB), Badri Choudhary (BC), Sarah Gee (SG) and Michael Gee (MG) on the Phulchowki hill. One seen at Koshi Tappu on 11 March 1988.

Long-tailed Sibia *Heterophasia picaoides*
Himalayas in EC Nepal and from Sikkim east to Arunachal Pradesh; NE India

Two adult birds, sexes unknown, seen on 22 April 2006 in the Mule Khola (stream) upper part of the Churiyal Hill nearly 1 km south from Pairebas inside Royal Chitwan National Park about 19 km south of Sauraha. by Hem Subedi, Kapil Pokhrel, Tulasi Magar, Tek Bahadur Gurung, Sanjaya Pariyar, Brendra Chaudhary, Ganesh Dhanuk, Santa kumar Lama, Jit Bahadur Tamang, Ramgir Chaudhary, Shiva Dahal, Suresh Mahato, Phuleswor Chaudhary, Rajan Chaudhary, Krishna Bhujel and Bikram Dhungana

Previous to this only 19th century records for Nepal.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva parva*
An adult male Red-throated Flycatcher *Ficedula parva parva* was seen on 3 occasions. One was observed on 17 February 2002 at Hariपुर by Badri Chaudhary and Som GC, followed by another male seen on 18 January 2006 and 1 March 2006 at Madhuban (N26°39' E87°03') observed by Badri Chaudhary, Tika Giri, Som GC, Anish Timsina, Krishna Bindari, and Dr Hem Sagar Baral. It was photographed by Dr. Hem Sagar Baral on 1 March 2006.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*

A resident subject to local movements depending on water conditions. Throughout most of the Indian subcontinent except parts of northwest, northeast and N Himalayas. A species getting rare and very few records from Nepal since the last 10 years.

A juvenile bird was seen on 17 May 2006 on the eastern bank of the Mai River, near Sukrabare, Danabari VDC, Ilam district. by Yub Raj Basnet, Dhan Bahadur Thebe and Purna Pakhrin

Slaty-bellied Tesia *Tesia olivea*

Himalayas from E Nepal east to Arunachal Pradesh; NE India. First recorded in Nepal on 30 August 1986.

Seen by Yoav Perlman above the small village of Hanga Tham. During the day he saw two Slaty-bellied Tesias in two different localities, one about 3 km up the ridge above the village, at about 2200 m, and another singing bird about 1 km above the village, at about 2100 m.

Rufous-backed Sibia *Heterophasia annectans*
Resident on the Himalayas from E Nepal east to Arunachal Pradesh; NE India. Subject to altitudinal movement.

On 27 April 1999 a single bird was seen by Yoav Perlman near the village of Ghorepani in the Annapurna region actively feeding on a Rhododendron bush with a flock of various bird species.



Vernal Hanging Parrot *Loriculus vernalis*

Resident subject to poorly understood local movement; a winter visitor in some areas and a monsoon visitor in others. Mainly NE India and Bangladesh, Western Ghats and E India from Orissa south to Tamil Nadu.

A single bird of unknown sex was seen on 7 November 2006, 2 km west of Ramawadahawa, Kapilvastu district by Jack H. Cox, Jr.

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Together for birds and people

BirdLife International is a global conservation federation with a worldwide network of Partner organizations, Representatives and committed individuals.

BirdLife International seeks to conserve all bird species on earth and their habitats and, through this, it works for the world's biological diversity. It recognizes that the problems affecting birds, their habitats and our global environment are linked inseparably with social, economic and cultural factors and that these can only be resolved if human societies function in an ecologically sustainable manner and if the needs, welfare and aspirations of people form a part of all conservation action.

Birds provide BirdLife International with a uniquely valuable focus: they are sensitive indicators of biological richness and environmental trends and fulfil many key ecological functions; they contribute greatly to our understanding of natural processes; they are an important economic resource; and they have inspired and delighted people of many cultures for centuries, which makes them excellent ambassadors for the promotion of conservation awareness and international collaboration.

BirdLife International pursues a programme of:

- ◆ Scientific research and analysis to identify and monitor worldwide the most threatened bird species and the most critical sites for the conservation of avian diversity;
- ◆ Advocacy and policy development to promote the conservation of birds and biodiversity through sustainability in the use of all natural resources;
- ◆ Field action and country conservation programmes, ranging from community-based land-use and management projects to species recovery programmes benefiting both wildlife and humans;
- ◆ Network and capacity building to expand and strengthen the global partnership of conservation organizations and to promote worldwide interest in the conservation of birds and the wider environment.

News

Cheer Policy Document

On the occasion of its 25th anniversary and to mark the 4th International Galliformes Symposium 2007, Chengdu and Olang, China BCN jointly with DNPWC, NTNC and WPA has published 500 copies of Cheer policy document. The document is the outcome of Cheer Pheasant Conservation workshop held in Kathmandu on 3-8 April 2006.

25th Annual General Meeting

BCN organised its 25th AGM on 17th November 2007 at Lazimpat, Kathmandu. General Secretary Mr. Sarbendra Pachhai presented the work progress of FY 2063/64 including major achievements in the avifaunal conservation and also highlighted the focus areas of BCN in running fiscal year. Treasurer Mr. Bhesh Raj Ghimire presented actual and forecasted financial report of fiscal year 2063/064 and fiscal year 2064/065 respectively.

Koshi Wetland Project Activities

Experts from WWT, Stirling University and CABI of UK visited Koshi Tappu from 28 October – 6 November 2007 to carry on scientific field assessment on hydrology, invasive species, fisheries and participatory biodiversity. During the visit various formal and informal discussions about issues and opportunities were also hold amongst the local communities.

CEPF Project Activities

A three day "conservation education and biodiversity monitoring training for SSGs" was organized in Phidim from 17-19 September 2007. The training was conducted with an aim of orienting the SSG members about the concepts of biodiversity conservation and monitoring. The training was participated by 8 SSG members, rangers of the project area and CFUG members.

Bagmati River Nature Park (BNP) Activities

The visitor centre at BNP is now running more effectively with regular interaction and information dissemination among visitor. School visits and environmental education to the students is also carried on regularly. Regular bird survey of the park has been initiated. Tagging of plants along the trails has been completed with support from the volunteers. This will help visitors to identify the plant species at BNP. A Reed-bed of 10 x6.5 m is constructed in the Park.

Staff Appointment

Ms Menuka Basnyat with Masters in Zoology (Ecology) from TU has been appointed as Membership and Education Officer. Like wise **Mr Tulsi Ram Subedi** and **Mr Ganga Ram Regmi** both with Masters in Zoology (Ecology) from TU have been appointed as Field Biologist for vulture conservation programme. **Mr Tej Bahadur Basnet** holding Masters in Zoology from TU has been appointed as short term Field Officer for project at Baglung District.

Donation

Mr Brain Parkinson has kindly donated NRs 4618 to support our conservation activities. Mr Shyam Khatri patron and long time supporter of BCN has kindly donated NRs 24, 256.25 to support our education and awareness programme.



The newsletter is produced quarterly for members of Bird Conservation Nepal. The aim of the newsletter is to inform BCN members on the recent development of ornithology in Nepal and any other relevant news on birds. It is circulated to all members free of cost. The individual annual membership is NRs. 200 for any SAARC nationals and equivalent Nepali rupees of US\$ 10.00 for others.

Those who would like to donate to or be a member of BCN can do so by a direct bank transfer, to the bank details below, or via cheque. Cheques should be made payable to Bird Conservation Nepal and sent to the address below.

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A/C No: 172510J
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नेपाल पंछी संरक्षण संघ

Bird Conservation Nepal

Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) is the largest and oldest civil society organization dedicated to the interests of ornithologists, birdwatchers and conservationists in Nepal. It seeks to promote an interest in birds among the general public, encourages research on bird biology and ecology, identifies the major threats to birds' continued survival, and acts to conserve birds and their habitats. It also provides the most authentic information on birds and their habitats all over Nepal.

BCN is a membership based organisation. At present it is supported by a Founder President, 17 Patrons, 118 life members and several ordinary members. Members are the major strength of this organisation and people from various backgrounds viz. students, teachers, professionals, bird enthusiasts, conservationists, and the general public are involved.

It is committed to educate the public on the value of birds and the relationship between birds and people. It has also prioritized the significance of peoples participation as future stewardship to attain long term conservation goal.

Our staff form the heart of BCN but the lifeline is provided by the invaluable contributions of volunteers and supporters. Both financial and in-kind support is greatly appreciated and we welcome any kind of help that can be offered. For further information please write to:

Bird Conservation Nepal

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