

SAVING THE WHITE-BELLIED HERON FROM EXTINCTION

The White-bellied Heron (WBH) is a Critically Endangered bird in the world with less than 60 individuals remaining in the fresh water ecosystems of the Eastern Himalayas. This bird is reported to have gone extinct from Nepal and Bangladesh. Its population continues to decline rapidly across its range countries due to habitat loss and fragmentation, human disturbances, illegal fishing, and climate change. Bhutan is home to 50% of the global population and active nests and breeding populations are only known from Bhutan and India.

Since 2003, the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN), Bhutan's oldest Environmental Non-Governmental Organization has been dedicated to conserving and protecting this magnificent bird through scientific research, education, outreach, and community-based conservation projects.

Following the resolution of the International Conference on WBH Conservation held in Bhutan in 2015, RSPN established the White-Bellied Heron Conservation and Breeding Center, the first of its kind in the world. The Center will secure an ex-situ gene pool; rear, raise and breed herons, supplement the wild population, conduct research and development and serve as a global information hub on WBH.

For more information and to save the WBH from extinction, contact RSPN at rspn@rspnbhutan.org or donate directly into Bhutan Airlines account.



DID YOU KNOW?

- » Fewer than 60 of them are left in the world.
- » World's Rarest Heron - Guinness Book of World Records, 2013.
- » Less than five known actively breeding pairs in the world.
- » Conservation Center established in Bhutan - to secure ex-situ gene pool, breed and reintroduce to safer wild habitats.
- » First nest in Bhutan was discovered in 2003 - it was also rediscovery for the world after more than seven decades of previous record.
- » 25-30 birds and four breeding pairs in Bhutan.
- » Found in Bhutan, India and Myanmar - endemic to Himalayan foothills.
- » Bhutan is home to 45% of global population.

