

Project Update: March 2017

The first round of presence-absence surveys and preliminary assessment of habitat for white-bellied heron in Mangdechhu and Kurichhu was conducted in February 2017. Both the river basins were traversed and potential occurrence has been assessed for the detail survey. In case of Drangmechhu, the potential habitat extends between Reserboo (lower stretch) and Gongja Ngye (upper stretch). Both the major tributaries of Drangmachhu – Kholong chhu and Gamrichhu were assessed for the potential occurrence of WBH. These tributaries might be useful for dispersal in winter but potential feeding grounds are not seen on both the stretches. Kholongchhu is under hydropower construction and the entire basin will be under disturbance for next 10 years. The Kurichhu basin is topographically more suitable and likely for white-bellied heron to occur. More effort will be required to cover long stretches of river basins. In the current survey, no herons could be sighted in both the river basins. The other water birds sighted were mostly the cormorants.

On rapid assessment of threats, there are numerous sand extraction sites that might temporarily disturb the feeding and movement of birds. The other disturbances could be from small scale activities like brick factories, construction of cross bridges.

Some pictures from the study areas:



Picture (left) Drangmechhu-Gamrichhu confluence (right) Upper Kholongchhu black-necked crane habitat.