

Full Project Report 2000
BT0863: Conservation Management Planning for ThrumshingLa NP

Project Summary:

Transcending across the political boundaries of three districts (dzongkhags), namely Bumthang, Lhuentse and Mongar, ThrumshingLa National Park occupies 768 km² of mountain forest landscapes in the central region of Bhutan. It was notified a national park in 1993 and gazetted in 1998. The project seeks to implement a series of baseline surveys on the socio-economic situation of the resident communities and the biological composition of the area and, subsequently, develop a five-year conservation management plan based on the information derived from these surveys.

Project Background:


A major accomplishment in the field of environmental conservation in Bhutan is the establishment of a national protected areas system that is representative of the full range of all major ecosystems found in the country. The system, which encompasses more than a quarter of the country's total geographical area, comprises four national parks, four wildlife sanctuaries and a strict nature reserve. ThrumshingLa National Park, 768 km², which was gazetted as a protected area in 1998 and inaugurated in May 1999, lies in the central region of the country and encompasses varied habitats ranging from subtropical broadleaf forests at the lower elevations to sub-alpine coniferous forests and alpine meadows at the higher elevations. The park is extremely rich in bird life; 276 species, including 6 of the 12 globally threatened species known to occur in the country, have been recorded so far. The red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) occur in abundance in the high altitude bamboo/ conifer forests. Other key wildlife species found in the area include serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*), Himalayan black bear (*Selenarctos thibetanus*), Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) and leopard (*Panthera pardus*). The park forms the centerpiece of the contiguous distribution of the tiger population in Bhutan and, hence, is a very critical area from the tiger conservation point of view as well. In addition, the spectacular mountainscapes and rich culture of the residents offer considerable opportunities for ecotourism development on the lines of integrated conservation and development.

The overall aim of the project is to formulate a five year management plan, containing a comprehensive set of workable management strategies and actions, for conservation of the environmental resources of the park for their ecological, social, economic, spiritual, aesthetic and educational values to the resident communities, the larger Bhutanese population and the world in general.

Project Objectives:

The project specifically seeks to:

- Complete a comprehensive series of baseline surveys on the biological resources of the park;

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- Complete a comprehensive series of baseline surveys on the socio-economic situation of the resident communities;
 - Examine the existing park boundaries for their appropriateness particularly in terms of their ecological functions, and modify the boundaries if necessary;
 - Zone the park into appropriate management zones to allow for a versatile and complementary range of conservation management interventions that are compatible with the varying biophysical and socio-economic situations in the area;
 - Establish a GIS database on the park and its resources to aid conservation management planning and monitoring;
 - Formulate a five-year conservation management plan, inclusive of all fundamental elements such as community development conservation, conservation research and information building, species protection, infrastructure development and staff training.

Evaluation Criteria:

Activities:

- Vegetation surveys totaling 4.5 months;
- Avifauna survey for 1 month;
- Wildlife surveys totaling 4.5 months;
- Socio-economic surveys totaling 3 months;
- An inter-agency meeting to review the draft conservation management plan;
- Construction of park management headquarters, including park manager's residence and staff quarters;

Outputs:

- Reports and baseline information on the vegetation and wildlife resources of the park published;
- Reports and baseline information on socio-economic situation of the park communities published;
- A five-year conservation management plan interlacing biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development being developed;
- Establishment of park management headquarters;

Indicators:

- Wildlife survey and socio-economic survey completed and reports published;
- Utility of the various reports and baseline information in conservation management planning;
- Conservation management plan document;
- Park headquarters completed