

Wangchuck Centennial Park

Introduction

Wangchuck Centennial Park (WCP) was formally gazetted as a National Park under Bhutan's protected area system on June 10, 2008. It is the largest National Park amongst 10th National Parks in the kingdom of Bhutan with an area of 4914Km². WCP is declared as a tribute by the Government and people of Bhutan to the Wangchuck Dynasty for selflessly leading Bhutan for 100 years ensuring her sovereignty, stability and tranquility. The park is the most important high water towers feeding four major rivers of Bhutan, namely Punatsangchhu (Sunkosh), Mangdechhu, Chamkharchhu and Kurichhu (tributaries of Manas) covering large extent of critical watershed of the country. Permanent snow covered mountains such as Gangkar Puensum, Rinchen Zoegila and Jazayla are located in the park. In the winter, almost 85% of the park remains under snow cover for about four months.

Location

It is located in the central north part of the country. To the east, it is adjacent to Bomdeling Wildlife Sanctuary, and to the west it is adjacent to the Jigme Dorji National Park. In the south it is bordered by continuous biological corridor. Thus, WCP forms up the integral part of a protected area complex in the country and in the region transcending the boundaries of five political Dzongkhags and nine Gewogs. It encompasses parts of Gasa, Wangdue Phodrang, Bumthang, Trongsa and Lhuntse Dzongkhags. The following Gewogs fall under the park:

Chhokhor and Tang under Bumthang, Lunana in Gasa, Sephu, Dangchhu and Kazhi in Wangdiphodrang, Kurtoe Khoma and Gangzur in Lhuntse and Nubi in Trongsa.

Park's mission and goals

The park's main mission and goal is to conserve natural biodiversity in harmony with people's values and aspirations. It is pillared by following main goals as listed hereunder:

- ❖ To conserve, protect and maintain the viability of species community, ecosystems, species in a way that will allow natural process of succession and evolution to continue with minimal human interference.
- ❖ Protect cultural, historical and religious sites.
- ❖ Contribute to the socio-economic development of the park residents and local people in the Park premises through sustainable use of the park resources and wise management.

Management objectives

WCP has following management objectives:

- ❖ To establish infrastructure and place adequate human resources in the Park.
- ❖ To identify, prioritize and mitigate immediate threats to wildlife and their habitats.
- ❖ Facilitate the control of or reversal of negative land uses in the park.
- ❖ Build up scientific database on both society and biodiversity so that informed decisions can be made.
- ❖ Protect religious, cultural and historical sites of natural, regional or local importance.
- ❖ Enhance socio-economic development of the park residents through participatory programs such as community based eco-tourism and other ICDP packages.

Administrative Function

WCP has its head quarter presently at Dekiling in Bumthang Dzongkhag and is slated to be shifted to its new location at Nagesphel, about 23 kilometers from the town. It has been managed by the Chief Forestry Officer as head of the overall Park management and Project Team Leader and a Project Co-Manager from WWF Bhutan as project Deputy Team Leader. It is supported by Administrative Assistant and Accountant. Further, six independent units called Conservation Development and Environmental Education Section (CDEES), Species Management and Research Section (SMRS), Information & Management System Section (IMSS), Protection of Wildlife and Resource Management Section (PWRMS), Engineering Section and Plantation Section, are established, headed by the Forest Officers and Forest Rangers. To cover up large extent of areas, the three Range offices have been established viz. Central, Eastern and Western Park Range Offices. The Central Park Range Office is managed by a Senior Park Ranger - I and one Forest Ranger with 5 Foresters to run the daily activities of the range to serve in the interest of public. Two Guard posts are due to establish at Tang and Dhur, after receiving adequate numbers of staff respectively under Central Range. Western Range is managed by Senior Park Ranger – II and supported by 6 Foresters. Western Range Office is in government building constructed with the support from WWF Bhutan. The Eastern Park Range is also due to establish in the coming

year after receiving additional three new staffs most probably at Dungkhar, Kurtoe gewog under Lhuntse Dzongkhag.

Habitats and vegetation

Wildlife habitats in WCP ranges from Blue Pine forest to dry alpine scrubs which are relatively in good status as hereunder:

Flora

Within WCP, there are two major dominated groups of vegetation namely Fir dominated and Hemlock-spruce-juniper dominated. The two groups comprise of 18 species. The park comprises of three ecological zones with six different habitat types, namely cool broad leaf forest, mixed conifer forest, fir forest, juniper forest, alpine meadows and scrubs, and alpine scree and elevation ranging from 2700m to beyond 5000m. A total of 693 species of vascular plants are recorded in the last (October, 2008) survey.

Floristic Composition and its importance to wildlife management

Three of six zones showed are identified in this park, namely cool temperate zones (2500-3000m), sub alpine zone (3000-4000m), and alpine zone above 4000m. Within these ecological zones, the following forest types which have been described and identified are as hereunder:

- ❖ Cool broadleaved forest
- ❖ Mixed conifer forest
- ❖ Fir forest
- ❖ Juniper forest
- ❖ Alpine meadows and scrubs
- ❖ Alpine scree

Species of ethno-botanical value

In keeping with the legendary myth of Bhutan known to the outside world as “Druk Lhomenjong” meaning the land of medical herbs, this park also has a plethora of medicinal plants. So far, a total of 33 species have been documented in the areas covered by the survey. This includes the highly priced Yartsa Goenbup and the Himalayan Yew *Taxus baccata wallichiana*, which is found to be rare throughout its range in this park. The national tree of Bhutan *Cupressus corneyana*, is not only a valuable timber species but its leaves find its use in incense making too.

Fauna

The park straddles two zoogeographic realms (ecotone of the Palaearctic and Indo Malayan) with wide range of habitats. It is rich in overall species

diversity. Several of these species are rare, endangered, or endemic to the region.

Mammals

A total of 39 mammals species were recorded during the survey including 8 species which are totally protected. They are Royal Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*), Common Leopard (*Panthera pardus*), Snow Leopard (*Uncia unica*), Himalayan Black Bear (*Ursus thibetanus laniger*), Leopard cat (*Felis bengalensis*), Himalayan Musk bear (*Moschus chrysogaster*), Himalayan Serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis thar*), Bhutan Takin (*Budorcas taxicolor*)

Birds

A total of 250 species of birds have been recorded in the park. Amongst 250 bird species, 130 are confirmed to breed in the park. During the last survey in the October 2008, *Leucosticte brandti* (Brandt's Mountain Finch) was recorded for the first time in Bhutan. The *Leptopoecile sophiae* (White-browed Tit warbler) was recorded for the second time at a different location from its earlier record. Both species are recorded breeding in Bhutan for the first time. 42 species of butterflies have been recorded from the park and its buffer zone.

Staff List

Park Head Office

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Qualification</i>
1	Mr. Damber Singh Rai	Chief Forestry Officer	M Sc. (Env. Management & Restoration)
2	Mr. Karma Thukten	Forestry Officer	M Sc. Forestry (IFS)
3	Mr. Tashi Dorji	Forestry Officer	PG Diploma in Forestry
4	Mr. Tenzin	Senior Forest Ranger - II	Diploma in Forestry
5	Mr. Phub Dorji	Forest Ranger - II	Diploma in Forestry
6	Mr. Karma Tempa	Account Assistant	Diploma in Accounts and audit
7	Mr. Thinley Dorji	Administrative Assistant	Class X passed

8	Mr. Yonten Jamtsho	Forest Ranger - II	Diploma in Forestry
9	Mr. Kinley Dema	Receptionist	Class X passed
10	Mr. Sujan Subba	Caretaker	Class X passed
11	Mr. Yeshe Dorji	Driver	Class IX passed

Western Park Range Office, Sephu

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Qualification</i>
1	Mr. Tandin Namgay	Senior Forest Ranger II	Diploma in Forestry
2	Mr. Sither Dorji	Forester	Certificate in Forestry
3	Mr. Dechen Norbu	Assistant Forester	Certificate in Forestry
4	Mr. Jigme Rinzin	Assistant Forester	Certificate in Forestry
5	Mr. Rinzin	Assistant Forester	Certificate in Forestry
6	Mr. Chogyel	Assistant Forester	Certificate in Forestry
7	Mrs. Mindu Lham	Assistant Forester	Certificate in Forestry

Central Park Range Office, Nagsephel

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Qualification</i>
1	Mr. Kelzang Tenzin	Senior Forest Ranger - I	Diploma in Forestry
2	Mr. Tandin Wangchuk	Forest Ranger - II	Diploma in Forestry
3	Mr. Lekey Dorji	Forester	Certificate in Forestry
4	Mr. Kinga	Assistant Forester	Certificate in Forestry
5	Mr. Choki Gyeltshen	Assistant Forester	Certificate in Forestry
6	Mr. Jampel Nidup	Assistant Forester	Certificate in Forestry
7	Mr. Ngawang Tashi	Assistant Forester	Certificate in Forestry

Eastern Park Range Office, Dungkar

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Qualification</i>
1	Mr. Kuenga	Forest Ranger - I	Diploma in Forestry
2	Mrs. Yeshi Peldon	Forest Ranger - I	Diploma in Forestry
3	Mr. Pema Tshering	Forester	Certificate in Forestry

WWF Co-Management

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Qualification</i>
1	Mr. Netra Binod Sharma	Project Co-Manager	M Sc. Biotechnology
2	Mr. Sangay Dorji	Project Accountant	Diploma in Accounts and Audit
3	Mr. Pema Dorji	Driver	Class VIII passed

WCP- Organogram

