




SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN NEPAL, KENYA AND UGANDA

Local communities engage in the
2020 Biodiversity Goals



*Jyotendra Jyu Thakuri: Ashy-throated Warbler,
Reshunga, Nepal*

In November 2018, the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will meet in Egypt at the CBD COP 14. Here the United Nations will call on decision makers from more than 190 countries to step up efforts to halt biodiversity loss and protect ecosystems that support food and water security for millions of people around the world. One of the topics on the agenda will be to discuss the long-term strategic directions to the 2050 vision for biodiversity, and approaches and preparation for the post 2020 global biodiversity framework.

With only two years left to reach the 2020 Biodiversity Goals, it is essential that civil society organisations increase their engagement in integrating conservation with human well-being. BirdLife Denmark (DOF) and our partners in the global BirdLife International Partnership contribute to the goals and targets of the CBD through our work in forests with high biodiversity in Asia and Africa. This publication shows examples on how we work with the 2020 Biodiversity Goals while at the same time contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Published by: Dansk Ornitologisk Forening

Text: Signe Cecilie Mathiassen

Photo front cover: Doug Janson, Fischer's Turaco, Dakatcha Woodland, Kenya

Layout: STEP A/S

Context

The *People Partner with Nature* Programme is a cooperation between DOF and three BirdLife partners: Nature Kenya, Nature-Uganda and Bird Conservation Nepal. The Programme began in 2015 and is implemented at seven forest sites in Kenya, Uganda and Nepal.

The Programme addresses a global concern for unprecedented forest loss. The depletion of forests and their biodiversity is due to complex factors, including the quest for economic growth leading to unsustainable use of natural resources, failing implementation of national laws, poverty among forest adjacent communities and conflicts about rights to the forest. As a result, biodiversity is often threatened and basic ecosystem services negatively affected compromising sustainable living of local communities. Access to healthy environments is a human right and a precondition for survival, not the least for the many people, who subsist directly on local natural resources and arable land. They are seriously affected when forests disappear, water sources are drying up, soil fertility reduced and the climate changes adversely.

The long-term objective of the Programme is to improve and qualify the management of natural resources, especially of forested Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs). Activities include support to participatory forest management, strengthening of civil society and improving livelihoods of women, men and children in local communities, who are dependent on and have impact on the forest. An important goal is to ensure long-term protection of biodiversity based on participatory management of forests and to secure legal, equitable and sustainably managed access to natural resources and ecosystem services by local communities. The Programme strengthens partner capacity to engage in advocacy for mainstreaming biodiversity and to build public awareness on the value of biodiversity.

In its current phase (2018-2021) the Programme focuses on realising best participatory forest management practices for the benefit of biodiversity and human well-being. It also supports partner engagement in the 2020 process, both nationally and internationally.

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Sustainable Development Goals

The *People Partner with Nature* Programme is informed by a number of strategic priorities and targets, primarily the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its 2020 Biodiversity Goals, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Facts

An Important Bird and Biodiversity Area is an area identified using an internationally agreed set of criteria as being globally important for the conservation of bird populations. The BirdLife International Partnership, which is also responsible for identifying and monitoring the sites, developed the IBA concept, which is now an integral part of the IUCN-led Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) database. Key Biodiversity Areas are the world's most important biodiversity areas.

The 2020 Biodiversity Goals

In 2010 the 196 parties of the CBD adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011–2020), a ten-year framework for action by all countries and stakeholders to save biodiversity and enhance its benefits for people. The Strategic Plan functions as a flexible framework for the formulation of national and regional goals and supports a comprehensive and effective implementation of the goals of the CBD. The strategic plan is comprised of a shared vision, a mission, 5 strategic goals and 20 ambitious yet achievable targets, collectively known as the 2020 Biodiversity Goals or the Aichi Targets.

The Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are comprised of 17 global goals and 169 targets set by the United Nations. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved between 2015-2030. The goals build on the Millennium Development Goals and seek to complete what these did not achieve. The SDGs recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including health, gender equality and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.



Jyotendra Jyu Thakuri: Green-backed Tit,
Reshunga, Nepal

2020 Biodiversity Goal A

Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society

Target 1: By 2020 at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably

The *People Partner with Nature* Programme addresses the target by empowering civil society to engage in advocacy and political processes, which address human well-being and biodiversity concerns. The objective is to involve civil society groups in decentralised political processes, hereby achieving improved management of forests and ecosystem services and prioritizing the main concerns of communities. Partners are engaged in sensitising local civil society on biodiversity conservation, enhancing the national debate on biodiversity and ecosystem services and influencing

local policy and legislation formulation. The Biodiversity Goal A shares its objective on raising awareness of biodiversity and integrating this awareness in local and government planning with the Sustainable Development Goal 15, Life on Land, especially target 15.9: By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts.

Programme results

- Local communities in the Programme areas have been sensitised about biodiversity conservation through the celebration of environmental events such as important global environment days, environmental education and public awareness raised through various media
- The establishment of learning centres, forest management

and bird survey trainings, education on sustainable development in primary schools and participation in development plans of local governments have empowered local communities with knowledge, inspiration, and abilities for sustainable use and management of natural resources.

- The Programme has been a catalyst for multi-stakeholder dialogue about biodiversity and ecosystems

Key lessons

- Involving local government and higher-level officials is important for continuity and for providing buy-in to policy formulation and programme implementation. Laws and policies on forest and natural resource management have more impact if they are implemented on the ground and their effectiveness documented
- Having dynamic, diverse and respected leadership within community groups increases chances of success
- Community empowerment and skills development, and the engagement of multiple stakeholders involved in forest protection is key to ensuring ownership and sustainability of conservation efforts and enhancing the understanding of roles and responsibilities. The local people progressively get to understand and appreciate the importance of the forest for their own well-being and forest workers and officials increasingly get to understand that forest management is much more than a technical operation.

Working closely with the Kilifi County Government, Nature Kenya has provided expertise in policy and legislation formulation. Three policy frameworks were formulated on fuelwood regulations, forest policy and the Forest Bill. These policies were developed consultatively through the county level natural resource sector based forums coordinated by the relevant county ministry. As a result, the policies were submitted to the county assembly for scrutiny prior to passing them as law to guide the county forest conservation agenda.

As a means of encouraging community participation and responsibility towards the conservation of Echuya and Kayoha-Kitomi Central Forest Reserves, NatureUganda has been supporting local partners, who are now actively engaged in joint forest conservation activities. These activities have resulted in increased community sense of ownership, responsibility and sustainability in forest protection and results show improved forest regeneration and a remarkably reduced frequency of illegal activities. The forest that used to be referred to by adjacent communities as “their forest,” is now talked about as “our forest”.

The detailed biodiversity surveys carried out by Bird Conservation Nepal have contributed to the recognition of Reshunga forest as a new IBA by BirdLife International and as a Protected Forest by the Government of Nepal. Biodiversity and ecosystem services are now being incorporated into forest operational plans.



Thomas Lehmborg, women group meeting, Uganda

2020

Biodiversity Goal B

Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use

Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.

Target 7: By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

The *People Partner with Nature* Programme addresses the targets by supporting participatory forest management and sustainable agriculture, engaging local communities in forest conservation and restoration and creating opportunities for alternative nature based income that reduces the pressure on the forest. The Biodiversity Goal B shares its objective of reducing the pressure on biodiversity and promoting the sustainable use of natural habitats with the Sustainable Development Goal 15, target 15.1: By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements; and Target 15.2: By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

Programme results

- The development and implementation of participatory forest management plans, which involve locally based monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services, patrolling of the forest and forest rehabilitation activities have resulted in an increased feeling of forest ownership among local communities and better forest protection
- Activities ensuring conservation of biodiversity and access to ecosystem services include the establishment of no grazing zones, conservation of soil and water resources, forest fire control, the promotion of sustainable resin tapping and the construction and use of energy efficient stoves reducing wood consumption
- Alternative nature based activities have increased opportunities for alternative household income, resulting in reduced pressure on forest resources and contributing to long-term conservation
- Farmers' implementation of soil and water conservation and agro-forestry options has contributed to soil enrichment, increased food security and reduced soil erosion and landslides resulting in sustainable land-use practices and biodiversity conservation in agricultural landscapes.



Key lessons

- Livelihood enhancement interventions have greatly contributed to improved forest management through the reduction of pressure on forest resources. There is now a diversification of economic activities and thus survival choices.
- As women are highly involved in the use of forest resources, the Programme recognizes the importance of having women represented in decision-making bodies. Giving women knowledge and a voice has allowed them to actively participate in conservation activities
- Climate change being a major challenge to agricultural and other livelihoods activities adopting climate smart agriculture will be emphasized in the future



Uffe Rasmussen, Sokoke Scops Owl,
Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, Kenya

Bird Conservation Nepal trained a women's group in rearing animals by stall feeding and in the use of climate smart technologies in farming. As a result, the women have improved their agricultural production. Empowerment of women has increased their representation in Community Forest User Groups and has nearly achieved the 33 % as per the constitution of Community Forestry User Groups

In Kenya local schools with feeding programs for the students rely on fuel wood supplied by parents. As a result, unchecked fuel wood use has had an impact on local forest resources. By installing energy saving cooking stoves, fuel wood consumption was significantly reduced. In addition, cooking time was also reduced allowing timely meal provisioning for the students thereby increasing teacher-student contact time. This has had a positive impact on exam results.

Nature Uganda's support to bamboo domestication in the Echuya landscape only gave few results in the initial stages. When heavy rainfalls resulted in erosion and landslides claiming lives of animals and people, as well as sweeping crops and gardens away, the areas managed by people who had participated in soil and water conservation and had planted bamboo appropriately on their land were not seriously affected. Now, the demand for bamboo domestication by the households has increased significantly



Thomas Lehmborg, Echuya skoven, Uganda

2020

Biodiversity Goal C

Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity.

Target 12: By 2020 the extinction of known species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained..

The *People Partner with Nature* Programme addresses the target by reducing pressure on forest sites and local engagement in monitoring of biodiversity thus sustaining and improving the ecosystems that trigger and biome restricted species are dependent on. Specific activities have contributed to the protection of these species, some of which are globally threatened. The 2020 Biodiversity Goal C and the Target 15.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals both specifically target the extinction of known and threatened species, ordering an end to the decline and extinction in 2020.

Programme results

- Since the beginning of the programme in 2015 no extinction nor any decline in the number of trigger species populations has been observed in Kenyan and Ugandan Programme areas
- In Nepal, repeat surveys of biome-restricted species – that is species whose distributions are largely or wholly confined to one biome – clearly show their continued presence in the Programme IBAs
- Specific activities such as feeding of vultures and domestication of indigenous bamboo have helped the conservation of species

Key lessons

- Continuous locally based monitoring of biodiversity at low cost is very important for the sustainability of species monitoring programmes and has enhanced identification knowledge of trigger species
- Though important for ownership and gathering of data, local community involvement poses a challenge, as the community continuously has to be involved in planning and conservation efforts that do not provide immediate benefits to them

The Reshunga Forest is culturally important to Hindus because of the temple at the top. Being holy in the Hindu culture cows are often offered to the temple by devotees. Earlier when a cow died it was thrown down into the forest. The local vultures, most of which belong to globally threatened species, were unable to feed on the carcasses due to difficulty in reaching them. Because of Programme support, the carcasses are now put in a place where the vultures can reach them leading to an increase in the number of vultures and other raptor species.

The Taita Hills Forest in Kenya is part of the biodiversity hot spot of the Eastern Afrotropical zone and host the globally critically endangered and endemic Taita Apalis where only approximately 200 individual birds remain in the world. The forest faces threats mainly by incursion of exotic tree species planted in the early 19th century. Local communities now recognize the importance of forest restoration and have been in the forefront in planting indigenous trees and supporting pilot forest restoration actions which involve exotic trees extractions. To date they have propagated and planted over 25,000 indigenous trees in the forest and other trees on farms for fuel wood production. They aim to restore suitable habitats for the Taita Apalis and to improve ecosystem services such as water.

Echuya Central Forest Reserve is one of the unique bamboo forests in Uganda. Through the Programme, Nature-Uganda has been able to curb the degradation of the forest, which was at its peak at its start. This was made possible by a number of initiatives, which have improved the livelihoods of many local people and reduced pressure on the forest. Endangered species such as Grauer's Swamp Warbler are now safe in one of only a few known sites for this species in Uganda. The same is true for those restricted to the Afrotropical Highlands biome like the Strange Weaver, Handsome Francolin, and Dusky Crimsonwing.

*Achilles Byaruhanga, Northern Double-collared
Sunbird, Echuya, Uganda*





Thomas Lehmberg, Fishpond, Uganda

2020 Biodiversity Goal D

Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services

Target 14: By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

The *People Partner with Nature* Programme addresses the target by integrating poverty reduction and nature protection. Participatory forest management contributes to improved livelihoods of poor communities, taking into account the needs and rights of women and indigenous peoples, and reducing pressure on essential ecosystem services including water-related ecosystems and fuel wood. The Biodiversity Goal D shares its objectives about

safeguarding ecosystem services and addressing the needs of vulnerable groups with several of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 6, Clean Water and Sanitation: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Programme results

- The needs of poor local communities was addressed through support to nature based livelihood initiatives such as bee keeping, fish farming, ecotourism, butterfly rearing, honey and butternut production. As a result, they have begun to generate revenues from alternative income opportunities and reduced the pressure on forest resources and ecosystems
- Women-initiated enterprises have helped women achieve

greater economic independence and flexibility in managing domestic affairs resulting in reduced gender based violence and enhanced gender equality at both household and community levels.

- Through involvement and affirmative approaches, indigenous groups have been actively participating in conservation and livelihood improvement activities. The participatory approach has resulted in improved relations between indigenous groups and the other communities.
- Reduced pressures on forest resources has improved the state of the watershed areas and ensured sustainable supply of water to the benefit of surrounding communities. Local communities are now engaged in the conservation of forest ecosystems with crucial water catchment functions.

Key learning

- Improving livelihoods where forest conservation meets the demands of local communities provides an overall incentive for sustainable forest conservation, including safeguarding essential ecosystem services. Nature based income generation encourages local communities to conserve forest resources.
- There are gender challenges due to the patriarchal nature of many communities, which continues to hinder women in actively participating and benefiting from natural resource related activities. Tailored women empowerment initiatives are important to ensure equity in benefits

- Integration of reproductive health and population planning issues is fundamental to achieving sustainable conservation outcomes in areas with high population growth
- Indigenous groups need affirmative action and integrated approaches to conservation and livelihood improvement activities if they are to become fully self-supporting and sustainable. They continue to face challenges from members of other local communities.

Bird Conservation Nepal has supported the processing of butternut (Chiuri) by establishing a mill. This encourages local communities to conserve the butternut trees that benefit the people who are collecting the nuts and selling the products from the nuts. The trees are also important for bee keeping and honey production and play a role in controlling landslides.

Nature Uganda has long cooperated with the indigenous Batwa people, a marginalised indigenous group that depends solely on forest resources. The Batwa were initially evicted from the forest in an attempt from the authorities to reduce pressure. With support from the Programme, the Batwa have now joined the restoration teams. They participate in conservation initiatives and are members of the Executive Committees of the Collaborative Forest Management groups, which make decisions regarding the welfare of the forest and the people



2020

Biodiversity Goal E

Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building.

Target 17: By 2015 each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

Target 19: By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequence of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

The *People Partner with Nature* Programme addresses the targets by supporting partners to participate in relevant poverty and nature protection planning and 'think tank' groups, and to be recognized as contributing to best practices for the integration of poverty reduction and nature protection nationally and within the BirdLife Partnership. The Programme has contributed with capacity building and skills development of Programme partners and national stakeholders, participatory knowledge sharing, providing inputs to regional and national biodiversity legislation and the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), as

well as publishing ongoing status and trend reports on Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas. The Biodiversity Goal E shares its objectives about shared knowledge and participatory processes with the Sustainable Development Goal 17, Target 17.16: Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries *rdensmålene for bæredygtig udvikling, især udviklingslandene.*

Programme results

- The NBSAPs are the principal instruments for implementing the Biodiversity Convention at the national level. Updating the NBSAPs is an ongoing process. Programme partners have provided guidance and data to their legislative bodies about mainstreaming biodiversity into society and on the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity into local development plans
- IBA Status and Trends Reports describe the biodiversity profile of IBA sites and provide science based knowledge for local duty bearers to use in national policy formulation

Key lessons

- Skills development of legislators, government staff and other stakeholders involved in forest protection is key to ensuring ownership and sustainability of conservation efforts
- Continued coordination of relevant national stakeholders is important for the IBA process. So is capacity building of stakeholders in monitoring IBAs
- The level of awareness on biodiversity mainstreaming in the wider society is still low, though sector stakeholders are willing to engage if they receive guidance.




Achilles Byaruhanga, Batwa family, Uganda

A concrete result of the political work of the Programme and the partnership between DOF, BCN, Nature Kenya, and NatureUganda is a project with the BirdLife Secretariat to enhance BirdLife Partners' capacity to work with biodiversity mainstreaming across sectors, which is an important 2020 goal. One of the main products is a manual, which introduces BirdLife Partners to the CBD and other important political processes and provides tools for planning and implementing advocacy. The Programme also supports Programme partners to participate in CBD meetings.



Charlotte Mathiassen, Rhododendron trees,
Reshunga, Nepal



DOF, Bird Conservation Nepal, Nature Kenya and NatureUganda are country partners in BirdLife International, a global partnership of 121 nature conservation organisations in 121 countries that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources. It is the world's biggest conservation partnership.

DOF/BirdLife Denmark has as its goal to protect and collect data on Danish birds. DOF has for the past 30 years also worked in and around Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas in Africa and Asia with focus on involvement of local communities in the sustainable management of natural resources, mainly forests. Nature Kenya NatureUganda and Bird Conservation Nepal are well established nature conservation organisations in their countries, which all have as their goal to gain knowledge and show the value of birds and biodiversity and to engage local communities in the management of important biodiversity areas.

For more information:

www.dof.dk/internationalt
www.birdlife.org
www.naturekenya.org
www.natureuganda.org
www.birdlifenepal.org



Charlotte Mathiassen, view from
Reshunga, Nepal



Colin Jackson, Clarke's Weaver,
Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, Kenya

