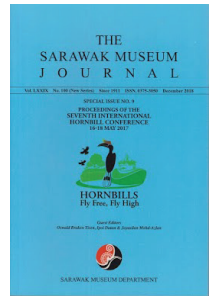




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Citation: *Sarawak Museum Journal*, LXXIX (100) (2018): 25-58**HABITAT AND CONSERVATION STATUS OF RUFOUS-NECKED HORNBILL IN JIGME SINGYE WANGCHUCK NATIONAL PARK, BHUTAN**

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ABSTRACT

The Rufous-necked Hornbill habitat characteristics and conservation was studied in Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park (JSWNP). The focal-bird approaches was used to determine the habitat components such as, the structure on vegetation, species composition; food-trees and nesting were assessed in the hornbill habitat. A total of 78 respondents were interviewed from five villages using semi-structured questionnaires. Vegetation assessment showed that the evergreen broad-leaved tree has the highest percentage share of 62.5%. A total of 42 tree species and 9 food-tree species, dominated by Lauraceae family in Tingtibi, and 35 tree species and 8 food-tree species, dominated by Hemamelidaceae in Nabji were recorded. Diameter at breast height size of tree species ranges from 14 cm to 250 cm. Nests were found in the cavities of living tree trunks of different tree species having large girth and tall trees. Rural timber extraction, land use changes, cattle grazing, and the roads and utility corridors contribute significant threats to the hornbill habitat. About 93.6% of the respondents had strong liking towards hornbill. Using hornbill as flagship or umbrella species would contribute to long-term conservation of hornbill.

Keywords: Rufous-necked hornbill, habitats, conservation, species composition, threats, perception, JSWNP and Bhutan

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INTRODUCTION

Rufous-necked Hornbill (RNH) is a Critically Threatened species, categorised as vulnerable species. This large hornbill qualifies as vulnerable because it has a small, rapidly declining population as a result of destruction of evergreen forest and hunting. Its population has declined dramatically and is now very rare across much of its historical range (Birdlife International 2001). In Bhutan, RNH is listed in totally protected species under the schedule I and listed as endangered in the status of the Forest and Nature