**Region: Himalayas**

Countries Include: Bhutan, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan

**Biodiversity and Global Environmental Benefits Regional Highlights:**

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| Country | Country-level biodiversity significance |
| Bhutan | * Bhutan is located in the Eastern Himalayas, identified as a global biodiversity hotspot. Bhutan is home to six agro-ecological zones: alpine, cool temperate, warm temperate, dry subtropical, humid subtropical, wet subtropical.[[1]](#footnote-0) Bhutan has significant, and stable forest cover accounting for over 65 percent of its land area in 2010.[[2]](#footnote-1) Bhutan’s high precipitation levels and glacial resources feed a strong riverine and inland water network home to an array of fish species. * Species biodiversity is high for the region given Bhutan’s size, with a number of endangered/vulnerable species and one critically endangered species. The geographic scope of species range-size rarity however indicates that there are few critical areas of importance in the country, namely on the Southern border. * Key Biodiversity Areas within the country are protected at a rate just below the global average, 42.92 to 44 percent, respectively. Large KBAs outside of/or partially within Protected Areas (PAs) are found throughout the country, but mainly are comprised of KBAs that are only partially protected; and include: [Samtse](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/15215), [Kamji](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/15210), [Bumdelling Wildlife Sanctuary](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/15203), [Sakteng](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/23444), and [Sarpang-Gelephu foothills](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/15216). PA protection of KBAs has risen from 2000, from 38.56 percent. * While there are relatively few recent prioritization mapping efforts for Bhutan, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), has identified several transboundary programs that are engaged in Bhutan, specifically at the intersection of [adaptation](https://www.icimod.org/initiative/himalica/) and [resilience building](https://www.icimod.org/initiative/rms), [transboundary landscapes](https://www.icimod.org/initiative/klcdi), and [river basins](https://www.icimod.org/initiative/hycos-rfis/) and the [cryosphere](https://www.icimod.org/initiative/cryosphere). While not all efforts directly engage with IPs, ICIMOD has a strong focus on the livelihoods of the people of HKH. * Stores of irrecoverable carbon are moderately high in Southern Bhutan, with a considerable decline as the elevation rises to the North. * The primary land cover types are Forest - 3.32Mha; Grassland - 467kha; Shrubland - 292kha; and Agriculture - 161kha. * Bhutan has 3 ramsar sites with additional context [here](https://rsis.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/rsiswp_search/exports/Ramsar-Sites-annotated-summary-Bhutan.pdf?). * Bhutan is landlocked and thus has no marine data. |
| India | * India is one of the world’s megadiverse countries, home to 7 - 8 percent of recorded species, and several biodiversity hotspots (prominently the Himalayas and Western Ghats). India has high rates of both species richness and endemism. The varied landscape of India is home to forests, grasslands, wetlands, deserts, and coastal and marine ecosystems.[[3]](#footnote-2) The Himalayan region of India has high species endemism relative to the rest of the country (outside of the Western Ghats), with the geographic scope of species range-size rarity importance in the states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand bordering Nepal. The Himalayan region has a diverse set of non-mountain ecosystems, ranging from alluvial grasslands, (mixed) conifer forests, and alpine meadows above the treeline.[[4]](#footnote-3) * Key Biodiversity Areas within the country are protected at a rate well below the global average, 26.06 to 44 percent, respectively. Large KBAs outside of/or partially within Protected Areas (PAs) are found throughout the states of the Himalayan region of India; and include: [Chamba Valley](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/29854), [Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/18418), [Upper Pindar Catchment in East Almora Forest Division](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/18452), [Nandhour Wildlife Sanctuary](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/46952), and [Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/18156). PA protection of KBAs has risen from 2000, from 21.69 percent. * There have been few IPLC-specific prioritization mapping efforts for the Himalayan region of India. India’s 5th national report identified Alliance for Zero Extinction [(AZE) sites](https://zeroextinction.org/site-identification/2018-global-aze-map/) as the “highest priority in initiating on-the-ground conservation action”; one site exists in the Himalayas: Chamba Valley also highlighted above.[[5]](#footnote-4) * The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), has identified several transboundary programs that are engaged in India, specifically in the [Koshi Basin](https://www.icimod.org/initiative/koshi-basin-initiative), and at the adaptation [study basins](http://hi-aware.org/study-basins/) under the Hi-Aware program. While not all efforts directly engage with IPs, ICIMOD has a strong focus on the livelihoods of the people of HKH. * Stores of irrecoverable carbon are moderately high in the Himalayan region of India, with a considerable decline as the elevation rises to the North. * The primary land cover types for the states of Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, and Himachal Pradesh that comprise Himalayan region of India, are Forest - 7.34; Agriculture - 4.67; Grassland - 6.728; Bare - 3.854; Permanent Snow and Ice - 1.799; and Shrubland - 0.281. * India has 37 ramsar sites with additional context [here](https://rsis.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/rsiswp_search/exports/Ramsar-Sites-annotated-summary-India.pdf?). * The Himalayan region of India is landlocked and thus has no marine data. |
| Nepal | * Nepal is situated in the center of the Himalayas, and home to significant geographic diversity which is divided by physiographic zones: High Himal, High Mountains, Middle Mountains, Siwalik, and Tarai.[[6]](#footnote-5) Climates range from alpine quasi-desert to tropical humid areas in the Tarai. The country’s location at the intersection of several biogeographic regions creates high biodiversity. The geographic scope of species range-size rarity importance is found in the northern border with China, and the Eastern Development Region bordering Bhutan. * Key Biodiversity Areas within the country are protected at a rate well above the global average, 54.64 to 44 percent, respectively. Large KBAs outside of/or partially within Protected Areas (PAs) are found in the West and Eastern Development regions; and include: [Tamur valley and watershed](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/14346), [Dharan forests](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/14327), [Mai Valley forests](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/14337), and [Farmlands in Lumbini area](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/14335). PA protection of KBAs has risen from 2000, from 42.24 percent. * There have been several academic prioritization or conservation mapping efforts for Nepal in recent years, highlighting [ecosystem service benefits](https://www.mdpi.com/1999-4907/9/9/554) and the longstanding tensions between government recognition of [ICCAs](http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/bitstream/handle/10535/8843/ConservatSoc11129-4761032_131330.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) and national parks. The following report provides additional [historical context on ICCAs](https://www.iccaconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/kalpavriksh_nepal_report.pdf) in Nepal. * Stores of irrecoverable carbon are moderately high in the High Mountains, Middle Mountains, Siwalik, and Tarai regions, with a decline in the High Mountains and Southern Tarai. * The primary land cover types are Forest - 1.70Mha; Agriculture - 862kha; Grassland - 120kha; Shrubland - 119kha; Permanent Snow and Ice - 38.7kha. * Nepal has 10 ramsar sites with additional context [here](https://rsis.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/rsiswp_search/exports/Ramsar-Sites-annotated-summary-Nepal.pdf?). * Nepal is landlocked and thus has no marine data. |
| Pakistan | * Pakistan encompasses a large variety of landscapes, ranging from mangrove forests to Hindu Kush mountain range. The area of interest of the Hindu Kush mountains, part of the HKH region, are found within the Gilgit-Baltistan political region (which includes the contested Kashmir region). There is relatively sparse information on the representativeness of protected areas within this region, though Pakistan’s 5th National Report cited that the Tibetan Plateau Steppe, and Western Himalayan Temperate Forests had ‘Adequate’ coverage.[[7]](#footnote-6) * Key Biodiversity Areas within the country are protected at a rate below the global average, 36.64 to 44 percent, respectively. Few large KBAs outside of/or partially within Protected Areas (PAs) are found in Gilgit-Baltistan; and include: [Mangla Lake](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/16397), [Palas valley](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/16412), [Duber valley](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/16417), and [Kayal valley](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/16418). PA protection of KBAs has risen from 2000, from 32.29 percent. * There are few examples of prioritization or conservation mapping efforts for Pakistan, [highlighting ecological values to identify target conservation priority areas](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234556400_Ecological_ranking_of_districts_of_Pakistan_A_geospatial_approach), and an ICIMOD study which mapped [Access and Benefit Sharing Framework for Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge](https://www.iccaconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/ABS-Himalayan-Region-2010.pdf). The following report provides additional [historical context on ICCAs](https://www.iccaconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/kalpavriksh_pakistan_report.pdf) in Pakistan. * Stores of irrecoverable carbon are moderate in the Northern Areas, Pakistan. * The primary land cover types for Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan, are Grassland - 4.21Mha; Bare - 1.63Mha; Permanent Snow and Ice - 1.46Mha; Agriculture - 518kha; Shrubland - 344kha; Forest - 185kha. * Pakistan has 19 ramsar sites with additional context [here](https://rsis.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/rsiswp_search/exports/Ramsar-Sites-annotated-summary-Pakistan.pdf?). * The Himalayan region of Pakistan is landlocked and thus has no marine data. |

1. <https://www.cbd.int/countries/profile/?country=bt> [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. <https://www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/country/BTN> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. <https://www.cbd.int/countries/profile/?country=in#facts> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/in/in-nr-05-en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/in/in-nr-05-en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/np/np-nr-05-en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/pk/pk-nr-05-en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)