

Project Title - Status, Distribution and Conservation of Pheasants (Phasinidae) and Finches (Fringillidae) in Eastern Himalayas.

About the Project:

India hosts several species of Phasinidae (Pheasant) and Fringillidae (Finch), most of which are endemic to the Himalayan region. Most of them are range restricted species and are habitat specialist. Shrinking habitats combined with several biotic factors, along with trapping and poaching pressures in many areas may have pushed several of them to near extinction. Deforestation and erratic forest fires in the Himalayan region can lead to severe fragmentation of habitats, thus isolating populations of many bird species from each other. Decreasing size of habitat patches means better accessibility to hunters and trappers, which is likely to become an ever-increasing problem for these bird species. A population which is relatively safe survives under protected area (PA) network. However, bird species, including pheasants and finches, traverse freely across boundaries.

This project envisages distribution of species in and outside the protected areas to measure impact of climate change. The aim of this project is to assess the status of Phasinidae and Fringillidae, particularly globally threatened species found in the Eastern Himalayas and evaluate their distribution across the landscape. This will include existing literature review, conducting field surveys and interviews with various stakeholders including species experts, concerned forest departments, local experts, game-hunters and medicinal plant collectors. The project also seeks to use an ecological niche model to assess and visualise the impact of climate change on the habitat and the distribution of the mentioned species. This will enable to formulate strategies for future conservation of the species.